PERSON, PROCESS, CONTEXT, TIME: A BIOECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON TEACHER STRESS AND RESILIENCE

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CONTROLLAH GABI

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT, EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT
Contents

List of tables .................................................................................................................. 8
List of figures .................................................................................................................... 9
Abstract ............................................................................................................................. 11
DECLARATION .................................................................................................................. 12
COPYRIGHT STATEMENT ................................................................................................. 13
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................ 14
Dedication .......................................................................................................................... 15
Preface .................................................................................................................................. 17

Chapter 1: Introduction ..................................................................................................... 19
  1.1 Overview ..................................................................................................................... 19
  1.2 Background, rationale and purpose ............................................................................ 19
  1.3 Importance of this study ............................................................................................. 21
  1.4 Urban schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage ......................... 22
  1.5 Thesis overview ......................................................................................................... 24

Chapter 2: Review of the literature .................................................................................... 25
  2.1 Chapter purpose and overview .................................................................................... 25
  2.2 Background to stress and resilience ............................................................................ 26
  2.3 Historical perspective ................................................................................................. 29
  2.4 Conceptualisation of stress ......................................................................................... 32
    2.4.1 The engineering model of stress .......................................................................... 33
    2.4.2 The medical model of stress ................................................................................ 35
    2.4.3 The transactional model of stress ...................................................................... 36
  2.5 Sources of teacher stress ............................................................................................ 38
  2.6 Coping with stress ...................................................................................................... 40
    2.6.1 Direct and palliative coping strategies .................................................................. 40
    2.6.2 The coping process .............................................................................................. 42
  2.7 Resilience ................................................................................................................... 43
    2.7.1 Risk to resilience: A paradigm shift ................................................................... 44
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.7.2 Models of resilience</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7.3 Determining resilience</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8 Self-efficacy</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9 Summary</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 3 : Methods and methodology</strong></td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Introduction</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Research paradigm</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 A brief review of stress and resilience research methods and methodologies</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 Merits and limitations of mixed methods</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Research design, procedures and phases</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1 Instrumentation: Questionnaire</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.2 Instrumentation: Interview Schedule</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.3 Research phases</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Ethical issues</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Summary</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 4 : Descriptive Analysis</strong></td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Introduction</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Recruitment and composition of the sample</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Self-efficacy of this sample of teachers</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Sources of stress in the sample schools</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Stress symptoms of these teachers</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 Job-related stress experienced by these teachers</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6.1 Stress level by teacher grade</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6.2 Stress level by main subject category</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6.3 Stress level by previous career</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7 Coping strategies these teachers employ</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8 Comparison of at-risk and resilient teachers</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5: Factor Analysis

5.1. Introduction

5.2 Section C: Your perceptions

5.3 Section D: Sources of stress

5.4 Section E: How you have been feeling?

5.5 Section F: How you have coped with pressure

5.5.1: Subsection overview

5.5.2 Part I: How frequent coping strategies have been used in the past two years

5.5.3: Part II: Effectiveness of coping strategies

5.6 Resilient/At-risk teacher scores across factors

5.7 Conclusion

Chapter 6: Regression Analysis

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Diagnostics

6.1.2 Model selection

6.2 Which variables impact on teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline?

6.3 Which variables impact on teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues?

6.4 Which variables impact on teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment?

6.5 Which variables impact on effectiveness of palliative coping strategies?

6.6 Which variables impact on effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies?

6.7 Which variables impact on stress level?

6.8 Conclusion

Chapter 7: Pen-portraits and Case Studies

7.1 Introduction

7.2 School 1 Overview

7.2.1 Background
7.2.2 Pupil GCSE results over time .................................................. 160
7.2.3 School 1 teachers ................................................................. 162
7.3 School 1 Pen-portraits .............................................................. 163
7.3.1 Background ......................................................................... 163
7.3.2 Pen-portrait 1: Ivy, Teacher in charge of on-the-job staff wellbeing .............. 164
7.3.3 Pen-portrait 2: Gabrielle, Teacher of Maths ..................................... 168
7.3.4 Pen-portrait 3: David, Union representative .................................... 180
7.3.5 Pen-portrait 4: Zoe, Teacher of English ....................................... 185
7.3.6 Pen-portrait 5: Grace, Teacher of ICT ........................................ 192
7.4 School 1 Case Analysis .............................................................. 198
7.4.1 Person characteristics ............................................................. 198
7.4.2 Proximal processes ............................................................... 203
7.4.3 Context ................................................................................. 207
7.4.4 Time .................................................................................... 216
7.5 School 10 Overview .................................................................. 224
7.5.1 School 10 background ............................................................ 224
7.5.2 Pupil GCSE results over time .................................................. 224
7.5.3 School 10 participants ............................................................. 226
7.6 School 10 Pen-portraits .............................................................. 228
7.6.1 Background ......................................................................... 228
7.6.2 Pen-portrait 1: Enoch, Teacher of Work-Related Learning ..................... 228
7.6.3 Pen-portrait 2: Josephine, SEN coordinator and union representative ........ 242
7.6.4 Pen-portrait 3: Rumbi, Teacher of English .................................... 245
7.7 School 10 Case Analysis ............................................................ 252
7.7.1 Teachers’ person characteristics ................................................... 252
7.7.2 Proximal processes ............................................................... 260
7.7.3 Context ................................................................................. 266
7.7.4 Time ........................................................................................................................................... 273
7.8 Cross-case analysis .......................................................................................................................... 278
7.8.1 Teachers’ person characteristics (RQ1) ......................................................................................... 278
7.8.2 Stress risks and their effects on the teachers (RQ2) ................................................................. 288
7.8.3 Teachers’ coping strategies and their effectiveness (RQ3) .................................................. 303
7.8.4 Teachers’ protective factors (RQ4) .............................................................................................. 309

Chapter 8: Discussion .......................................................................................................................... 319
8.1 Overview ............................................................................................................................................ 319
8.2 RQ 1: What person characteristics do teachers in urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage have? ................................................................. 320
  8.2.1 Force characteristics .................................................................................................................. 320
  8.2.2 Resource characteristics ......................................................................................................... 332
  8.2.3 Demand characteristics .......................................................................................................... 336
8.3 RQ 2: Which stress risks do these teachers report and how do these risks affect them? .................................................................................................................................................. 336
  8.3.1 Person risks ............................................................................................................................ 337
  8.3.2 Proximal processes risks ...................................................................................................... 340
  8.3.3 Context risks .......................................................................................................................... 345
  8.3.4 Time risks .............................................................................................................................. 360
  8.3.5 Symptoms of stress experienced by the teachers .................................................................. 362
8.4 RQ 3: What coping strategies do these teachers employ and how effective are they? .................................................................................................................................................. 366
  8.4.1 Direct-action coping strategies ............................................................................................. 367
  8.4.2 Palliative Coping Strategies ................................................................................................. 368
8.5 RQ 4: What protective factors enhance the resilience of urban secondary school teachers? ............................................................................................................................................... 368
  8.5.1 Person protective factors ..................................................................................................... 369
  8.5.2 Proximal processes protective factors .................................................................................. 377
  8.5.3 Context protective factors .................................................................................................... 378
8.5.4 Time protective factors .................................................................................................. 379

8.6 Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... 387

Chapter 9: Recommendations and Conclusion ................................................................. 390

9.1 Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 390

9.2 Key findings ...................................................................................................................... 390

9.2.2 RQ1: What person characteristics do teachers in urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage have? .................................................. 390

9.2.1 RQ2: Which stress risks do these teachers report and how do these risks affect them? ........................................................................................................................................... 393

9.2.3 RQ3: What coping strategies do these teachers employ and how effective are they? ........................................................................................................................................... 394

9.2.4 RQ4: What protective factors enhance the resilience of these urban secondary school teachers? .................................................................................................................. 396

9.3 Contribution to knowledge ............................................................................................... 397

9.4 Implications for practice and policy .................................................................................. 398

9.5 Parameters and limitations of the research ..................................................................... 399

9.6 Recommendations for further research work .................................................................. 401

References ........................................................................................................................... 402

Appendices ........................................................................................................................... 445

Appendix 1: Main survey questionnaire .............................................................................. 445

Appendix 2: Scope of interview schedule ............................................................................ 449

Appendix 3: Letter to head teachers ..................................................................................... 451

Appendix 4: Literature search results ................................................................................... 452

Appendix 5: Pilot interview schedule ................................................................................... 454

Appendix 6: Pilot interview transcript 1 ............................................................................... 456

Appendix 7: Pilot interview transcript 2 ............................................................................... 465

Appendix 8: Pilot interview transcript 3 ............................................................................... 475

Appendix 9: Travers and Cooper (1996) stress questionnaire ............................................. 489

Appendix 10: Gibson and Dembo (1984) Teacher Efficacy Scale ...................................... 493
Appendix 11: Interview annotation example .............................................................. 495
Appendix 12: Example of interview data initial codes ............................................. 508
Appendix 13: Example of emerging themes from interview data ............................. 510
Appendix 14: Example of codes and emerging themes by research question ......... 517
Appendix 15: Theme review ..................................................................................... 518
Appendix 16: Theme links ....................................................................................... 520
Appendix 17: Final thematic map ............................................................................. 521
Appendix 18: Resilient and at-risk teacher scores on selected variables and factors . 523
Appendix 19: Literature search strategy ................................................................. 524
Appendix 20: Historical overview of stress research .............................................. 526
Appendix 21: Pilot questionnaire ............................................................................. 527
Appendix 22: Criteria for and characteristics of award of statuses ..................... 531
Appendix 23: School 1 and 10 teachers’ self-efficacy table .................................... 533
Appendix 24: Discussion/ Research question overview ........................................... 534
Appendix 25: Section C variables ........................................................................... 535
Appendix 26: Section D variables ........................................................................... 536
Appendix 27: Section E variables ........................................................................... 538
Appendix 28: Section F variables ........................................................................... 539
Appendix 29: Interview analysis flow model .......................................................... 540

Word count: 110 309
List of tables
Table 2.1: Key personal and contextual factors influencing resilience .......................... 27
Table 2.2: Coping Techniques................................................................................. 42
Table 2.3: Matrix of coping success outcomes of combinations of variables ............ 43
Table 3.1: Research question/Questionnaire Overview............................................ 66
Table 3.2: Number of teachers per school ............................................................... 77
Table 4.1: Participants by gender .......................................................................... 92
Table 4.2: Selected descriptive statistics ................................................................ 92
Table 4.3: Overview of approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities ................................................................................................................................. 93
Table 4.4: Number of teachers per school ............................................................... 93
Table 4.5: Qualified teacher status ......................................................................... 93
Table 4.6: Overseas-trained ................................................................................... 93
Table 4.7: Qualifications ....................................................................................... 94
Table 4.8: Current teacher grade .......................................................................... 94
Table 4.9: Main subject taught ............................................................................. 95
Table 4.10: Descriptive Statistics for teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs ....................... 96
Table 4.11: Teachers’ sources of stress ................................................................... 98
Table 4.12: Stress symptoms descriptive statistics .................................................. 99
Table 4.13: Stress level across schools .................................................................. 100
Table 4.14: Descriptive statistics for stress level by current teacher grade .......... 103
Table 4.15: Descriptive statistics for stress level by main subject category .......... 103
Table 4.16: Descriptive statistics for stress level by previous career ..................... 104
Table 4.17: Descriptive statistics for frequency of coping strategies ..................... 105
Table 4.18: Descriptive Statistics for effectiveness of coping techniques ............... 106
Table 5.1: ‘Your perceptions’- Total variance explained ........................................ 113
Table 5.2: ‘Your perceptions’- Rotated component matrix ..................................... 114
Table 5.3: ‘Sources of stress’- Total variance explained ......................................... 118
Table 5.4: ‘Sources of stress’ component matrix ................................................... 119
Table 5.5: ‘How you have been feeling’- Total variance explained ....................... 127
Table 5.6: ‘How you have been feeling’ rotated component matrix ....................... 127
Table 5.7: Total Variance Explained - How frequent coping strategies have been used ................................................................................................................................. 130
Table 5.8: Rotated component matrix – How frequent coping strategies have been used ................................................................................................................................. 130
Table 5.9: Total Variance Explained – Effectiveness of coping strategies ............... 133
Table 5.10: Pattern Matrix – Effectiveness of coping strategies ............................. 133
Table 6.1: Summary of regression statistics – Teachers’ efficacy in influence on pupil discipline ................................................................................................................................. 144
Table 6.2: Summary of regression statistics – Teachers’ efficacy in influencing colleagues ................................................................................................................................. 147
Table 6.3: Summary of regression statistics – Teachers’ efficacy in pupil attainment .. 149
Table 6.4: Summary of regression statistics – Effectiveness of palliative coping strategies ................................................................................................................................. 152
Table 6.5: Summary of regression statistics – Effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies ................................................................................................................................. 155
Table 6.6: Summary of regression statistics – Stress level .................................... 157
Table 7.1: Selected School 1 descriptive statistics .................................................. 162
Table 7.2: Selected School 10 descriptive statistics .................................................. 227
List of figures
Figure 2.1: Stress as stimulus ................................................................. 34
Figure 2.2: Bioecological system ............................................................ 47
Figure 4.1: Mean stress level by age group by gender .......................... 101
Figure 4.2: Mean stress level by age group and core subject category ...... 102
Figure 4.3: Proportions of teachers across stress levels ....................... 107
Figure 4.4: Distribution of resilient/at-risk teachers across schools .......... 108
Figure 4.5: Resilient/At-risk teachers' mean teaching experience and years in present school .......................................................... 108
Figure 4.6: Resilient/At-risk teachers' PPA and total weekly workload hours .......... 109
Figure 5.1: Histogram – Teachers' self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline .......... 115
Figure 5.2: Histogram – Teachers' self-efficacy in their influence on colleagues .......... 116
Figure 5.3: Histogram – Teachers' self-efficacy in their influence on pupil attainment .. 117
Figure 5.4: Histogram - Workload/Time constraints .................................. 121
Figure 5.5: Histogram - Organisational processes .................................... 122
Figure 5.6: Histogram - Stress associated with pupil behaviour problems .......... 123
Figure 5.7: Histogram - Stress associated with cover .................................. 124
Figure 5.8: Histogram - Stress associated with Intra/inter departmental climate .... 125
Figure 5.9: Histogram - Stress associated with level of parental support .......... 126
Figure 5.10: Histogram - Experience of mental symptoms ......................... 128
Figure 5.11: Histogram - Experience of emotional symptoms ................. 129
Figure 5.12: Histogram - How frequent direct-action coping strategies have been used .... 131
Figure 5.13: Histogram – How frequent palliative strategies have been used ...... 132
Figure 5.14: Histogram – Effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies .......... 134
Figure 5.15: Histogram – Effectiveness of palliative coping strategies .......... 135
Figure 5.16: Resilient/At-risk teacher scores across factors ......................... 136
Figure 6.1: Normal p-p plot of regression standardised residual – Teachers' self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline .................................................. 144
Figure 6.2: Scatterplot - Teachers' self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline .......... 144
Figure 6.3: Normal p-p plot of regression standardised residual - Teachers' efficacy in influencing colleagues .......................................................... 146
Figure 6.4: Scatterplot - Teachers' efficacy in influencing colleagues .......... 146
Figure 6.5: Normal p-p plot of regression standardised residual - Teachers' efficacy in pupil attainment .......................................................... 149
Figure 6.6: Scatterplot - Teachers' efficacy in pupil attainment ........................................ 149
Figure 6.7: Normal p-p plot of regression standardised residual - Effectiveness of palliative coping strategies .......................................................... 151
Figure 6.8: Scatterplot - Effectiveness of palliative coping strategies .......... 152
Figure 6.9: Normal p-p plot of regression standardised residual – Effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies .......................................................... 154
Figure 6.10: Scatterplot – Effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies ........ 154
Figure 6.11: Normal p-p plot standardised residual - Stress level .................. 156
Figure 6.12: Scatterplot - Stress level ......................................................... 157
Figure 7.1: School 1 5+A*-C (and equivalent) GCSE results over time .......... 161
Figure 7.2: School 1 5+ A*-C (and equivalent) including English and Maths GCSE results .......... 161
Figure 7.3: School 1 resilient/at-risk teacher proportions .................................. 163
Figure 7.4: School 10 5+A*-C (and equivalent) GCSE results over time .......... 225
Figure 7.5: School 10 5+ A*-C (and equivalent) including English and Maths GCSE results .......... 226
Figure 7.6: School 10 resilient/at-risk teacher proportions .................................. 227
Figure 8.1: Resilient/ At-risk teacher means across force characteristics .................. 375
Figure 8.2: Frequency and effectiveness of support sought by resilient and at-risk teachers .................................................................................................................................................. 381
Figure 8.3: Work activities time per week ................................................................................................................................. 382
Figure 8.4: Stress from time spent on schoolwork at home ............................................................................................................. 382
Figure 8.5: Workload/ time constraints stress ............................................................................................................................... 383
Figure 8.6: I feel I don’t have work-life balance .......................................................................................................................... 384
Figure 8.7: Frequency and effectiveness of considering alternatives ............................................................................................... 386
Figure 8.8: Experience aspects ....................................................................................................................................................... 387
Abstract

This study focused on stress and resilience among teachers in 15 urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage in the Greater Manchester and Merseyside regions of England (UK). It utilised the mixed-methods approach to gather and analyse the data. This consisted of a questionnaire survey of 150 teachers and interviews of 20 teachers. It examined person characteristics of teachers in these schools; key stress risks in the schools; coping strategies employed by these teachers and their protective factors. The main quantitative analysis methodologies used in the study were descriptive analysis; factor analysis and regression analysis. Qualitative findings were analysed using thematic analysis and teacher pen portrait and school case study presentations. Integrative analysis of quantitative and qualitative findings was then conducted in the discussion of main findings. This study found that the teachers’ major force characteristics were self-efficacy; persistence; personal attitudes towards one’s job; personality and temperament and commitment to the job. Their main resource characteristic was experience while their major demand characteristic was their professional role. These teachers were also exposed to person, proximal processes, context and time risks. There were risks associated with force and demand person characteristics. The main process risks were within their interactions with pupils, parents, colleagues and senior management. There were also context risks in their microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. There were also time risks across the microtime, mesotime and macrotime. To cope, teachers in this sample utilised both direct-action and palliative coping strategies. Results also indicated that these teachers’ protective factors were in their resource and force characteristics; proximal processes; context and time.
DECLARATION

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Dr Graeme Hutcheson – Second Supervisor
Professor Daniel Muijs – Former Second Supervisor
Dedication

To the most important people in my life
To Dr Josephine Gabi
My longsuffering wife and loyal friend
Unrelenting
Loved and loving
Never losing sight of the big picture
To Controllah Junior
My very dear only son
Unsung hero
My source of strength and encouragement
All these years hoping that one day this PhD will give you your Dad back
Now has come that day, when I can be all yours. Forever.
As my sufferings mounted I soon realized that there were two ways in which I could respond to my situation – either to react with bitterness or seek to transform the suffering into a creative force. I decided to follow the latter course.

– Martin Luther King Junior
Preface

My interest in teacher stress, coping and resilience is, in part, due to my own professional background. I have been a teacher since 1997 and, over that period, I have taught in primary and secondary schools and recently have been a further education lecturer. I first qualified as a primary school teacher in Zimbabwe in 1996 and taught in that country from 1997 to 2002. During that period, I became senior teacher, head of languages department and deputy head teacher. When I came to the UK I studied for an education honours degree and obtained qualified teacher status (KS3) in 2005 after which I went on to graduate with an MSc Educational Research degree in 2006. Having been a primary and secondary school teacher and further education lecturer over a fourteen-year period in two contrasting countries, it is apparent my broad professional background plays a significant role in my perspective of what it means to be an education professional. Thus, through conversations with different colleagues grappling with widely varied demands of teaching and my personal experience in these widely varied – yet high-pressure – contexts, I developed particular interest in stress and resilience among teachers.

My academic qualifications so far are:

- MSc, Educational Research
- BA (Hons) Business and ICT Education with Qualified Teacher Status
- Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)

In relation to this study, I have done the work:


Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

This thesis investigated stress and resilience among teachers in urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage. Its main purpose was to answer specific research questions, not to draw cross-school comparisons.

This chapter provides the background and context of the thesis. It introduces the research; gives a synopsis of the underpinning literature which situates the study within relevant existing empirical evidence; and offers a brief description of secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage, outlining the main characteristics of such schools and how these features are linked to teacher stress and resilience.

1.2 Background, rationale and purpose

In recent years, there has been an increase in interest in teacher stress research which has coincided with a rise in reported incidences of stress in UK schools (BBC, 2015a, b; Flook et al, 2013; NASUWT, 2013). In the UK, work-related stress accounts for a significant proportion of absences from work with some professionals ending up suffering from stress-related illnesses such as insomnia, unexplained tiredness and backaches (HSE, 2014a and b). Existing research (e.g. BBC, 2015a; HSE, 2014a; ATL, 2014; NASUWT, 2005 and 2013; Mintz, 2007; Howard and Johnson, 2004; Kyriacou, 2001) also suggests that, due to its intrinsic elements influencing job design, teaching is among the most stressful professions. Previous research (e.g. Smithers and Robinson, 2003) has revealed that a significant number of teachers leave the job in the first five years of their careers mostly due to being overwhelmed by the demands of roles. More recently, Riley and Gallant (2014) reported that attrition rate among early career teachers – those in their first five years of post-
graduating teaching – was between 40 and 50% in the UK, Europe, Australia, North America and Hong Kong. They identified burnout, lack of support for new teachers and general poor working conditions – particularly discipline, lack of administrative support and negative school cultures – as the main influences on this early career teacher turnover.

The link between stress and illness and sickness absence has drawn attention from the unions and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (BBC, 2015a). In spite of this interest, so far, there has been little discussion about resilience, particularly among teachers in UK schools. To date, academic literature searches of teacher stress resistance and resilience on major research databases has yielded rather limited returns, particularly in the UK. It is one of the central tenets of the present work that an exploration of risk and resilience among teachers in secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage will contribute towards the drawing up of interventions to enhance these teachers’ capacity to withstand and recover from the effects of the demands of their job.

On the basis of emerging evidence from a growing body of knowledge (e.g. Rothi, Leavey and Loewenthal, 2010) reporting a steady increase in incidences of stress among teachers in the UK, the case for research on stress and resilience among teachers in the country has never been more urgent.

This research set out to investigate stress, coping and resilience among teachers in urban schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage and to answer the following research questions:

1. What person characteristics do teachers in urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage have?
2. Which stress risks do these teachers report and how do these risks affect them?
3. What coping strategies do these teachers employ and how effective are they?
4. What protective factors enhance their resilience?

1.3 Importance of this study

The present study is important because it examines an area of much professional and academic interest in the field. As well as being consistent with stress and resilience processes and outcomes, the bioecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1995) utilised in the present study highlights the centrality of mutual, bidirectional interaction between an individual and their context in the experience of stress and resilience. This, therefore, helps contextualise individual stress and resilience explored in some of the literature (e.g. Jarvis, 2002; Wiley, 2000).

Furthermore, the present study's methodology is broader than similar research (e.g. Howard and Johnson, 2004) in that it used the mixed methods approach and the sample size ($N=150$) is relatively bigger than the one than commonly employed small scale qualitative studies in the field of stress and resilience. Thus, the present study provides both the explanatory and exploratory dimensions by combining quantitative and qualitative aspects. In addition, this investigation does not take a binarised view of resilience where individuals are placed on either side of the resilient-non resilient divide. Rather, because in this enquiry resilience is assumed to be along a high-to-low continuum, recruitment of participants was not purposive.

The current research is also important in that, unlike most stress studies conducted in UK schools (e.g. NASUWT, 2013), it sets out to explore both stress and resilience rather than just focusing on the prevalence of teacher stress. Kyriacou (2001), for example, noted an inclination of most studies in the field towards how teachers are breaking down under stress as opposed to looking at the resilience qualities of the teachers. The solution approach has been used in other fields such as HIV studies (e.g. Treatment Action Group, 2011) in an attempt to develop treatment by studying both the severely affected, to gain sufficient understanding of the ailment, and studying those who do not suffer ill effects under similar conditions, to explore ways of improving resilience qualities of the vulnerable. Similarly, it is hoped that concurrently studying stress and resilience
among teachers will contribute to knowledge by hopefully revealing key similarities and differences between resilient and at-risk teachers.

1.4 Urban schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage

Urban schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage as contexts for research continue to draw interest from researchers (e.g. Gu and Day, 2007; Howard and Johnson, 2004) who seek to understand coping and resilience in environments of great risk. Even though different labels are used in different countries, most features characterising these schools are common across milieus. In this section, a brief mapping of the literature on urban schools serving areas of complex and multiple disadvantages is given. Characteristics specific to these particular schools are examined, followed by an exploration of the general contexts in which these schools are usually situated. Prefacing the rest of the present work, an overview of this thesis concludes this chapter.

Inner-city, urban, hard-to-staff, at-risk and disadvantaged are some of the labels assigned schools in challenging contexts (Howard and Johnson, 2004; Prince, 2002). Regardless of the variation in labels, however, these schools share discernible similarities in their underlying characteristics. Internationally, schools in challenging contexts are characterised by socio-economic disadvantages which are not common among schools in relatively favourable contexts (Michalak, 2009). High unemployment, high crime rate (including anti-social behaviour), low education, dysfunctional families and low incomes are some of the disadvantages with which communities served by schools in challenging contexts frequently contend (Cullen and Swafield, 2007; Englefield, 2001). The implication of this is that many children attending schools in these contexts have reduced access to quality essential resources like food, healthcare, shelter and security. Furthermore, the literature (e.g. Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), 2008; Green and White, 2007) evidences that many of these children will not have a positive adult role model within
their families which, consequently, makes it more likely that they will be lacking motivation and opportunities to do well in their education. It has also been suggested that, in part due to a different values set connected to childhood socialisation, behaviour among pupils attending these schools is poor (McPhee and Craig, 2009). This, among other drivers, has been shown to link with poor educational outcomes (Ferguson, Bovaird and Muller, 2007).

Studies investigating how urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage are affected by unfavourable conditions in the communities they serve have revealed a strong negative correlation between the challenges in the community and school effectiveness (Chapman and Harris, 2004). Owing to these prevailing conditions, schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage find it hard to attract teachers and, to compound the problem, relative staff turnover is also high (Little and Bartlett, 2010). The principal contributory factors allied to this trend are the stressful working conditions in these schools. In a climate where perceptions of teacher effectiveness are predominantly outcomes-based, teachers can feel under-supported and less appreciated (Rothi, Leavey and Loewenthal, 2010).

In the UK, urban schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage tend to have pupils from socio-economically deprived households and are mainly viewed in terms of pupil attainment at GCSE and percentage of pupils on free school meals. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (Now renamed the Department for Education (DfE)) has also described urban schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage as 'vulnerable to missing the floor targets' (Flintham, 2005). Please note that when this study began in 2007, the DCSF had just been renamed from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

Existing body of research (e.g. Abel and Sewell, 1999) indicates that, due to their overarching context of disadvantage, teachers in urban schools
serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage have historically reported experiencing higher stress than their counterparts in other contexts (Durham-Barnes, 2011). Secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage tend to have distinguishing features of disadvantage which potentially cause teacher stress (Flintham, 2006; Muijs et al, 2004; Chapman and Harris, 2004).

1.5 Thesis overview

This thesis is subdivided into nine chapters. Following this chapter is the review of the literature on stress, coping and resilience. Chapter 3 details the data collection and analysis methodologies employed in this research. Chapter 4 analyses the relevant descriptive statistics of the survey sample while chapter 5 contains details of factor analyses done on the survey data. An ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis follows in chapter 6, looking at relationships between relevant variables. Chapter 7 comprises case study analyses of two schools and pen-portrait analyses of eight selected interviews. An integrative discussion of data from the survey and the interviews is then done in chapter 8. Finally, chapter 9 puts forward recommendations and conclusions of the study.
Chapter 2 : Review of the literature

2.1 Chapter purpose and overview

The purpose of this chapter is to review key literature on stress and resilience. The first part of the review, which focuses on stress, explores the history of stress, key models of stress, sources of stress and coping behaviours. The focal point of the second part of this literature review is risk and resilience, theoretical influences of resilience, models of resilience, identifiers of resilience, contexts of resilience and factors affecting teachers' resilience.

This chapter begins in section 2.2 with a background to the general study of stress and resilience. This is then developed in section 2.3 which offers a brief history of stress research, which provides background understanding of relevant key developments in the study of the stress phenomenon. Using this approach as a way to contextualise the present study will, hopefully, help locate where it is situated in the broader spectrum of stress research. Section 2.4 examines some key definitions of stress, treating key conceptual frameworks of stress as depicted in the literature and discussing a range of standpoints on what stress is and how these schools of thought influence how stress is researched, explained and understood. Common sources of stress are the subject of discussion in section 2.5 and then the focus progresses to individual coping behaviours (note coping strategies and coping techniques are interchangeably used to refer to coping behaviours) in section 2.6 Section 2.7 analyses key different conceptualisations of resilience and explores the debate surrounding the measurability of resilience and the challenges faced in developing and applying resilience-measuring instrumentation. Section 2.8 considers self-efficacy and its relationship with stress, coping and resilience. Finally, a summary concluding this chapter is presented in section 2.9.
2.2 Background to stress and resilience

The origins of resilience studies can be traced to epidemiology where attention is paid to factors within individuals which inhibit disease with the view to finding ways of using insights drawn from these studies to help those who may not be coping successfully (Garmezy, 1996). Resilience research generally began by focusing on traits in at-risk children and adolescents wherein confirmatory findings to the ability to efficiently recover from adversity in these young people emerged (Gu and Day, 2007). The past fifteen years have seen enquiry in the field extending to professional contexts such as teaching with most of this research being conducted in Australia and America (Howard and Johnson, 2000; 2001 and 2004; Brunetti, 2006; Johnson, 2008; Malcolm, 2007; Pearce and Morrison, 2011; Beltman, Mansfield and Price, 2011 and 2012; Johnson et al, 2015). As noted earlier, in the UK there is emerging evidence of a developing interest in the resilience concept. A case in point is Gu and Day’s (2013;2007) four-year longitudinal study of variations in teachers’ work, lives and their effects on pupils which, among other things, revealed that there was a positive correlation between teacher resilience and their effectiveness in their job.

Although still developing, research on resilience among teachers shows that internal coping assets are key to withstanding a stressful environment (Malcolm, 2007; Gabi, 2006; Howard and Johnson, 2004 and 2000; Oswald, Johnson and Howard, 2003). Meanwhile, in the UK, stress research has so far predominantly tended to concentrate on the prevalence of, rather than resilience to, stress among teachers (e.g. BBC, 2014a; ATL, 2014; NASUWT, 2005 and 2013; Kyriacou, 2001). This evidence supports the case for research on teacher stress and resilience in UK schools to further what is already known about stress and coping in schools.

Resilience cannot merely be conceived as a personal attribute as doing so would be discounting the interactive bioecological factors leading to
resilience. This would imply that resilience is “a discrete personal attribute, akin to intelligence or empathy” whereby people either have or do not have “what it takes” (Luthar et al., 2000:547) when, in fact, it is process-driven and conditional on two principal aspects – exposure to considerable risk and “evidence of positive adaptation” (p.547). From a bioecological perspective, stress and resilience thus depends on the fit between elements of an individual’s bioecological context, and this includes aspects internal to the individual.

Masten and Powel (2003) consider four broad categories of factors influencing stress or resilience outcomes – individual differences, interpersonal relationships, community resources and opportunities and life events (see table 2.1). Evidently, these take cognisance of both internal and external elements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table 2.1: Key personal and contextual factors influencing resilience</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual differences</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive abilities (IQ scores, attentional skills, executive functioning skills, intellectual competences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-perceptions of competence, worth, confidence (self-efficacy, self-esteem)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperament and personality (adaptability and sociability)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-regulation skills (impulse control, affect and arousal regulation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive outlook on life (hopefulness, belief that life has meaning, faith)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpersonal relationships</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close relationships with competent others (relatives, senior colleagues)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections to pro-social and rule-abiding peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community resources and opportunities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections to pro-social organisations (e.g. clubs or religious groups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood quality (public safety, libraries, recreation centres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of social services and healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Life events</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continued good health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities at major life transitions e.g. qualifying, post-qualifying, promotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving into a more supportive community e.g. work community, neighbourhood.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Masten and Powell, (2003:13)

The individual differences factor – comprising cognitive abilities, self-perceptions, temperament and personality, self-regulations skills and positive outlook on life – have to do with those qualities directly influenced
by personal attributes of the individual. In an education context, cognitive abilities can be taken to refer to allied attributes such as a teacher’s mastery of their subject, their pedagogical competence in delivering it and problem-solving skills within the context of their job. It is important to note that pedagogical competence goes beyond just knowledge of one’s subject. Rather, it also encompasses the novelty or resourcefulness and humour with which the teacher motivates their learners in order to yield positive classroom experiences and successful teaching/learning outcomes. Successful classroom experiences tend to be rewarded by other members within the teacher’s environment through professional respect from colleagues and management and appreciation by parents and students (Hoover-Dempsey et al, 2005). There are also possibilities of career advancement. Effectiveness at one’s job, linked to positive classroom processes and experiences, tends to have a significant contribution towards one’s job satisfaction (Pearson and Moomaw, 2005). As well as being good for students, these positive classroom processes and experiences also help enhance the teacher’s self-efficacy and self-esteem, which form part of the internal protective factors (Zellars et al, 2011; Bassi et al, 2007).

Temperament and personality attributes, particularly adaptability and sociability, also have an important influence on resilience (Kesebir et al, 2013; Wachs, 2006). Research (e.g. Howard and Johnson, 2004) provides evidence that there is a positive correlation between adaptability and resilience. The constantly changing nature of the teaching job makes it imperative that, to effectively cope with the demands of the teaching job, teachers need to be versatile, having a readiness for changes in their roles, syllabi and processes within their job.

Self-regulation skills, concerned with the control an individual has over their impulse, affect and arousal, also form an important part of the factors affecting resilience (Luthar et al, 2000). Against the backdrop of teaching being a profession requiring independent discretionary
judgment, poor self-regulation skills would therefore likely lead to negative resilience outcomes.

A considerable proportion of the existing body of evidence (e.g. Walsh, 2006; Mandleco and Peery, 2000) links general positive outlook on life to resilience. Teachers who do not feel their views are valued are likely to have low self-efficacy and self-esteem and, therefore, are unlikely to adjust positively to the demands of their role (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2010). A teacher’s lack of belief in the difference they make to their workplace adversely impacts on their adaptive coping resources (Oliver, 2010) and, therefore, exposes them to ecological risk elements.

It is clear that, though conceived as a separate factor (Masten and Powell, 2003), relationships are closely linked to some aspects of individual differences. As proposed earlier, positive professional and personal relationships augment the teacher’s coping assets as they are a source of support socially, emotionally and professionally.

Significant life events also play an important role in the adaptive capabilities of the teacher, that is whether or not they will experience resilience outcomes (Howard and Johnson, 2004). More importantly, sustained good health is pivotal to work attendance record and the standard at which one performs their classroom and school duties. Obviously, adverse life events such as ill health have a negative impact on performance and this can adversely affect the teacher’s self-efficacy and self-esteem (Nettles et al, 2000). Equally (ibid), significant positive life events like prospects of promotion within one’s job or moving into a supportive community is likely to improve a teacher’s resilience.

2.3 Historical perspective

There has been a marked increase in the number of studies on teacher stress and burnout (Jarvis, 2002; Wilson 2002; Bibou – Nakou, Stogiannidou and Kiosseoglou, 1999; Griffith, Steptoe and Crolely, 1999;
Green and Ross, 1996) since the word stress was first introduced in the work of an endocrinologist called Hans Selye in 1926 (Kyriacou, 2001; University of Greenwich, 1986). Prior to 1926, as early as 1891, phenomena linked to stress in adolescents had been linked to pedagogical problems by eminent psychologists (e.g. Burnham, 1891). Mosso’s writings in the early 20th century about fatigue, a contributing factor to stress, drew wide interest among educationists who sought to understand how children’s stamina to endure long teaching sessions might be increased (Mosso, 1915).

By 1938 research reports by the National Education Association (e.g. National Education Association, 1938) had begun revealing that teachers were already perceiving themselves to be under strain, tension and anxiety in the classroom (Wiley, 2000). This showed a shift from the perception of stress as something unique to children to a realisation that stress occurred in adults as well. This somewhat contradicts Hepburn and Brown’s (2001) position that this shift has only happened in the past 28 years. To the contrary, a significant number of studies (e.g. National Education Association, 1938; Kyriacou and Satcliffe, 1978) indicate that focus on stressed teachers has been there for a longer time now.

In the mid-1950s, Selye’s efforts (e.g. Selye, 1956) in attempting to understand the stress phenomenon led to the perception of stress as a neutral physiological phenomenon which could stimulate or threaten the individual experiencing it. This enhanced understanding of stress led researchers of that time to think of how stress could be reduced, paying particular attention to coping strategies (Dunham, 1992). Concurrently, research focus was also broadening into exploring contextual factors affecting at-risk children, initially examining their vulnerability and coping outcomes. For example, Werner and Smith (1992) commenced a longitudinal study on at-risk children in 1955 and, after 18 years, found that just a third of these children had survived adversity and gone on to thrive as adults.
Later on, Mechanic (1967) observed that coping strategies in an individual work effectively if the individual has supportive relationships at work, at home and in the community. This was an acknowledgement that the environment in which a person spends time impacts on the stress they may experience. Selye’s (1976) description of stress as the rate of wear and tear and Lazarus’ (1976) observation that stress occurs when there are demands on a person which tax or exceed their adjustive resources highlighted a growing consensus in those years that prolonged, unmitigated exposure to stressful experiences gives rise to burnout (Guglielmi and Tatrow, 1998; Vandenberghe and Huberman, 1999), a state of emotional, physical and attitudinal exhaustion (Marisa et al, 2005; Kyriacou, 2001).

The 1980s saw advances in the understanding of stress and, in particular, Dunham’s key contribution to the stress research dialogue – the conceptualisation of three models of stress, namely the engineering; physiological (or medical) and interactive models (Dunham, 1992). These models are treated in greater detail in sections 2.4. During the same period, researchers’ interest in resilience among at-risk children was beginning to grow. Research into resilience among adults, particularly professionals, began to gather momentum from late 80s into the 90s. Studies on resilience were hitherto more concerted in Australia and, to an extent, in America. The first decade of the twenty-first century has seen interest in resilience also begin to take root in the UK (e.g. Gu and Day, 2007).

Over time, the study of work stress and stress-related phenomena such as anxiety and depression has been steadily growing across different professions (Rusli et al, 2008). Results from stress and coping research (e.g. Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), 2014; National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT), 2013) in the teaching profession keep providing evidence inferring that teaching is one of the most stressful professions in the UK. A study on the experience of work-related stress across 26 occupations by Johnson et al
(2005) found that teachers reported the second highest stress level. More recently, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (2014a, b and c) Labour Force Survey revealed that teaching was one of the three most stressful professions over the three-year period covering 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2013/14.

2.4 Conceptualisation of stress

The conceptualisation of stress is contested in the literature. Some (e.g. NASUWT, 2013; Kyriacou, 2001) view it as an outright negative emotion. For example, the position taken by the HSE (2010), the regulator of workplace safety in the UK, is that stress is a negative adaptive outcome. This is consistent with the widely shared construction of stress among teachers and their professional bodies.

Others (e.g. Nelson and Simmons, 2011; the American Institute of Stress, 2010; Burg, 1992), however, contend that there is good stress (eustress) and bad stress (distress). Figure 2.1 in section 2.4.1 shows the human function curve based on the argument that stress exists in two states whereby stress is good up to a point, beyond which it begins to impact negatively on the individual. These widely different views demonstrate the complexity of conceptualising and defining stress.

From the literature (e.g. Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2006; Lazarus, 1999), it is evident that different individuals interact differently with aspects of their environments and these interactions yield varying outcomes which, in turn, influence these individuals’ perceptions of those aspects. From these perceptions, different meanings of the same environment are drawn. On this basis, there appears to be consensus in the literature on the notion that when individuals talk about stress they most likely do not refer to the same thing. So far, this has been the major criticism of stress research and others (e.g. Jones and Bright, 2001) have even questioned the justifiability of such research. However, although there is no universal conceptualisation of stress, there is commonality on certain aspects such
as effects and symptoms of stress. To shed more light on epistemological issues regarding stress and the theoretical framework adopted in this study, some key conceptualisations of stress are elucidated next.

2.4.1 The engineering model of stress

The engineering model is a view of stress as a load, a demand or a strain placed on a person beyond the tolerance capacity of their elastic limit (Wilson, 2002; Kyriacou, 2000; Galloway et al, 1982). In this regard, the load, demand or strain is the stimulus. This school of thought conceptualises stress in terms of an individual’s response to threatening or disturbing stimuli. Depending on extent of the demand, the literature indicates that there is a link between a person’s productivity and demands placed on them. For instance, knowledge that their lesson is to be observed may, although not always the case, lead to a teacher to more consummately prepare than they otherwise would in normal circumstances. Thus, in this example, productivity improves with strain. It is, however, important to bear in mind that the increase in productivity occurs up to a point beyond which it begins to fall (American Institute of Stress, 2010).

This definition views stress as the intervening variable. The core assumption of this standpoint is that stress induces certain outcomes in individuals depending on magnitude (American Institute of Stress, 2010) (see figure 2.1) and not all stress is bad.
As illustrated in the previous example, moderate stress, also known as eustress (good stress), can have a positive effect on an individual such as motivating the individual to do well in an activity such as their day-to-day job. On the other hand, extreme stress (bearing in mind that elasticity differs between individuals) will lead to negative outcomes such as breakdown, exhaustion or general ill health.

While the engineering model enhances understanding of the finite nature and relativity of individuals' capacities to handle demands, it also carries with it some limitations. To view stress as something 'placed' rather than consciously accepted presumes the teacher is a passive receptor, which is not always the case. Research evidence (e.g. Wilson, 2002) suggests that stress tends to be a result of the imbalance in the interplay between the individual and their setting or their work. Thus, in this sense, it can be argued that teachers are actively interacting with their contexts. Additionally, the elastic limit theory states the obvious and falls short on explaining why elastic limits vary across individuals and how the elastic limit can, if at all, be increased. By assuming the existence of an elastic limit, it also ignores the role of experience and personal characteristics in
humans’ capacity to develop and improve their ability to handle the demands they encounter.

### 2.4.2 The medical model of stress

This model is consistent with the stimulus-response (S-R) theory originating from Pavlov’s (1927) classic work, whereby certain stimuli trigger certain responses. The medical model concerns itself with the physiological and psychological responses to stress, for example loss of weight, irritability and depression (Wilson 2002; Kyriacou 2000). It views stress as an independent variable where certain environmental conditions are believed to lead to ill health and disease (Fisher, 1986). It is concerned more with the diagnostic than the preventative aspect as it places significant emphasis on proving or disproving the existence of stress symptoms in the individual.

In contrast with the stimulus perspective, the conceptualisation of stress as a response variable considers stress as an outcome of, or maladaptive reaction to, negative life events such death of a family member or loss of a job (Lazarus, 1999). Such events set in motion a build-up of pressure within the individual which, if it persists, leads to negative or unpleasant emotions (distress). The negative life events are also referred to as stressors. Again, akin to the engineering model, it does not place emphasis on individuals who do well in spite of adversity. Instead, when the medical model is being used, investigations do not occur until when an individual has experienced stress (Larsen and Lubkin, 2009). This might be too late as the person will have suffered already. Another problem is that once one has been medically diagnosed as stressed, they are likely to subconsciously comply with the diagnosis as they begin to view themselves as vulnerable rather than resilient in line with the labelling theory of self-fulfilling prophecy (Haralambos et al, 1990). Thus it would be more useful to use a strategy which can help people with how to avoid being stressed in the first place.
The medical model has frequently been employed by studies investigating the prevalence of stress among certain populations such as teachers (e.g. McCormick and Barnett, 2011; Wilson, 2002). Such studies have tended to use questionnaires and interviews asking participants, among other things, questions relating to physiological symptoms they experience in respect of their workplace.

2.4.3 The transactional model of stress

The transactional model, credited to the work of Richard Lazarus, views stress as an intervening variable. In contrast with the first two models, this conceptualisation is interested in neither the cause nor effect of stress. The argument is that the stimulus on its own cannot cause stress. Instead, the stressfulness of a stimulus primarily depends on the individual’s personal attributes (Lazarus, 1999). Thus, the same stimulus can lead to different outcomes in different people. Context is also important in explaining the relational nature of stress outcomes. For example, an individual is more likely to tolerate a heavy workload if they are aware they are being considered for promotion, and conjecture that their positive adaptation may be considered as evidence of their ability to work under pressure.

According to the transactional model, when an individual encounters a potential stressor, they spontaneously engage in a two-stage cognitive appraisal of the situation. First, they determine the significance of the potential stressor which evaluation is referred to as primary appraisal. Subsequently, at secondary appraisal stage, the individual assesses the threat against their internal coping resources to determine extent to which it is taxing to them. If the demand is beyond what the person can cope with, the outcome will be stress. Conversely, if the individual appraises the threat as something their coping resources can handle, then there is likely to be no stress.
It can, therefore, be inferred that the underlying assumption of the transactional model is that stress is interactive or transactional and situational and its magnitude is determined by the individual’s context, circumstances and their response to stressful stimuli (Wilson, 2002). It is dependent upon the complex and dynamic interplay between the individual and their context. Different environments exert diverse levels of stress and the ultimate effect depends on the individual’s appraisal of the situation.

A study of stress based on the transactional approach would take the view that people influence and respond to their environments. Focus is neither on the stimulus nor on the response but on the interaction or transactions between the person and their environment. Positive transactions, those which are not stressful, are conditional on the event, the individual and the context and the interplay thereof which Jones and Bright (2001) refer to as the degree of fit between the person and their environment.

Bearing in mind that individual differences form the central argument of Lazarus’ transactional model of stress, the business of defining stress and a stressor becomes as complex as the range of intricate and dynamic processes connected to stress. Therefore, the limitation of the transactional model of stress is that it overlooks observable similarities across certain populations. A case in point is the fact that research (e.g. Le fever et al, 2006; Kaufman, 2005) has found certain aspects of the teaching job stressful to the generality of teachers in spite of their individual differences and the differences in schools in which they teach. There is compelling evidence indicating consensus on this between different stress studies. For instance, enquiries on teacher stress (e.g. Adera and Bullock, 2010; Brown et al, 2002) have generally found workload, pupil behaviour and change to be particularly stressful. Of course, there are likely to be variations between individuals in the kind of workload, pupil behaviour or change they can tolerate.
There are, however, many important merits of the transactional model of stress. First, it is helpful in its identification of the importance of the interplay between the individual and the stimuli in explaining stress outcomes. It also acknowledges the active role played by the individual in appraising whether a threat is stressful, an element ignored by the engineering and the medical models.

2.5 Sources of teacher stress

On the evidence of the existing body of knowledge (e.g. HSE, 2014a, NASUWT, 2013; Howard and Johnson 2004; Jarvis 2002; Kyriacou 2001; Wiley 2000; Griffith et al, 1999), teaching is inherently highly stressful. For example, in a study by the NASUWT (2013) 77% reported that their stress levels had increased over the twelve months prior to the research. Of the participants, 41% said that their job satisfaction had decreased and 47% had seriously considered leaving the profession during the same period. Although such studies give some important information about the existence of stress in teaching, they do not explain how, for example, other teachers thrive in the same stressful conditions.

A wide range of sources of teacher stress is identified in the literature (e.g. Evers, Tomic and Brouwers, 2004; Jarvis, 2002; Wiley, 2000; Lewis, 1999) of which ten are the most common among several survey reports. These are:

- workload and time constraints
- Ofsted inspections
- curriculum changes or reforms
- lack of motivation among pupils
- planning, preparation and assessment
- maintaining pupil discipline
- targets
- administration and management
- role conflict and ambiguity and
- poor working conditions

Although rankings of these stressors vary by study, the top three are generally consistent across studies.

Stressors from within an individual such as cognitive elements (Jarvis 2002) and other individual factors (Wiley, 2000) can greatly increase an individual’s level of stress. Individual factors refer to personal difficulties that may be magnified by work roles (Wiley, 2000) while cognitive factors refer to perceptive aspects affecting individuals’ susceptibility to stress (Jarvis, 2002). These factors determine how individuals appraise or perceive the significance of a particular situation (Carlson, 1993). Bibou-Nakou et al (1999) investigated the role of internal attributes in symptoms of burnout and found that teachers who blame themselves for difficulties are more vulnerable to stress. These findings confirm the view that there are elements within an individual which also contribute to them being stressed.

The environment also plays a key role in the teacher’s stress level. As part of their job, the teacher constantly influences, and is influenced by, their interaction with their immediate environment. Pupil behaviour, organisational demands and relationship with staff members and parents are elements of the teacher’s environment which constantly place taxing demands on the teacher (Balkin et al, 2002). A teacher in a supportive environment is less likely to be stressed than one in an unsupportive context (Howard and Johnson 2004; Griffith et al, 1999). Thus teachers’ unions constantly campaign for measures to make schools less stressful (ATL, 2014; NASUWT, 2013).

It should be noted, however, that not all stressors have negative effects on individuals. Some stressors, observed Selye (1956), can stimulate an individual. By the same token, there are also some factors which are not essentially directly ‘stimulating’ but, all the same, necessary for fulfilling education practice goals. These factors, though they place a certain load on the teachers, are intrinsic to teaching (Jarvis, 2002). In the same vein,
it would be difficult to require local authorities to lower teacher-pupil ratio when this may have adverse cost implications. Accordingly, as one of the areas for future research, Kyriacou (2001) proposes a study on teachers who have been teaching between five and ten years and have positively adapted in the face of severe teacher stress. This, Kyriacou (2001: 33) propounds, could provide an insight into “why and how some teachers are more able to successfully negotiate periods of career reappraisal and retain a positive commitment to the work”. This is an especially worthwhile direction of study given that, to date, focus has been placed on stressed teachers, how they have been affected and how, in turn, that has affected their work at the expense of success stories in coping with stress in teaching (Howard and Johnson, 2004; Griffith et al, 1999).

2.6 Coping with stress

Different people use different coping strategies due to personal and contextual differences. To this end, Carlton (1993) notes that some people are simply unperturbed by situations that others perceive to be stressful. Knowing more about resilience and coping strategies might provide insights into possible ways of promoting resilience among teachers. This might be helpful in improving teacher retention, job satisfaction and performance. As noted earlier, stress impacts negatively on teachers’ health. Therefore, promoting effective coping strategies among teachers may help improve teachers’ health. Two main coping strategies are identified in the literature, namely direct-action and palliative techniques (Kyriacou, 2001)

2.6.1 Direct and palliative coping strategies

Direct-action techniques refer to problem-focused adaptive behaviours aimed at eliminating the source of stress (Kyriacou, 2001, Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Carlson, 1993). Direct-action techniques are proactive and useful in averting many unpleasant situations a teacher may find himself or herself in. However, the technique is not readily usable in
situations which are beyond the realms of the teacher’s immediate control. Factors such as national changes in policy tend to be beyond the teacher’s direct control. There is probably very little the teacher can do to directly stop a new policy from being implemented. Rather, the teacher may need to adjust to the new changes and determine strategies to minimise the impact of these changes which in itself may be stressful (NASUWT, 2013 and Kyriacou, 2001).

In contrast, palliative coping strategies do not deal with the source of stress itself, but rather are aimed at lessening the feeling of stress (Kyriacou, 2001; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Thus these techniques are usually emotion-focused (Carlson, 1993). Teachers report using palliative coping strategies including recreational activities such as going to the gym, alcohol consumption, smoking and medication such as antidepressants (Griffith et al, 1999). The problem with these strategies is that they do not directly deal with the source of the problem. If, for example, a teacher’s stress emanated from unmarked coursework, undertaking recreational activities to lessen the experience of stress will not get the coursework marked. However, sometimes teachers can only use palliative techniques due to stressors being ones that cannot be dealt with directly. In table 2.2, frequently adopted coping behaviours based on the literature are identified.
Table 2.2: Coping Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct action techniques</th>
<th>Palliative techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Try to take some immediate action on the basis of your</td>
<td>▪ Try to keep things in perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understanding of the situation.</td>
<td>▪ Try to relax after work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Think objectively about the situation</td>
<td>▪ Make sure people are aware you are doing your best.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Try to nip potential sources of stress in the bud.</td>
<td>▪ Try to reassure yourself everything is to work out right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Do not let the problem go until you have solved it or</td>
<td>▪ Try to forget work when the school day is finished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reconciled it satisfactorily.</td>
<td>▪ Try not to worry or think about it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Consider a range of plans for handling the sources of stress</td>
<td>▪ Express your feelings and frustrations to others so that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– set priorities.</td>
<td>you can think rationally about the problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Express your irritation to colleagues at work just to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>able to let off the steam.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Derived from the literature

2.6.2 The coping process

Perhaps one of the most influential studies attempting to explain coping was by Mechanic (1967) which proposed that when people attempt to cope with heavy pressures they bring into operation their skills, experience, knowledge and personality characteristics in addition to supportive relationships at work, at home and in the community. Table 2.3 proposes outcomes of the interaction between given levels of intrinsic/person characteristics and support.
### Table 2.3: Matrix of coping success outcomes of combinations of variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low Support</th>
<th>Moderate support</th>
<th>High support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High intrinsic</strong></td>
<td>Moderate success</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>High Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderate intrinsic</strong></td>
<td>Low success</td>
<td>Moderate success</td>
<td>Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low intrinsic</strong></td>
<td>No success</td>
<td>Low success</td>
<td>Moderate success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table depicting likely outcomes given the relationship between support and intrinsic qualities

Here coping success outcomes refer to the extent to which an individual is likely to cope effectively with potentially stressful stimuli given different combinations of varying levels of intrinsic coping qualities and external support. Thus intrinsic qualities are internal protective or risk factors while support from one’s environment forms part of the external protective factors. Both internal and external factors are central to positive adaptive outcomes or resilience outcomes (O'Donnell, Schwab-Stone and Muyeed, 2002).

### 2.7 Resilience

The definition of resilience is contested throughout the literature which significantly accounts for the differences in approaches to researching it. Although most of these definitions take particular interest in individual adaptive outcomes, they are divergent on what variables to consider as paramount to the resilient outcomes. The dominant school of thought describes resilience as persistent positive outcomes in, or recovery from, significant adversity (Luthar et al, 2000; Masten, 1994; Rutter, 1990). Positive outcomes include functioning effectively in a pressurised context and persisting. Positive outcomes tend to be adaptive rather than anticipatory. Here successful adaptation in a threatening situation means one is either not stressed at all, thrives or quickly recovers from any resultant stress. In contrast, others (e.g. Brunetti, 2006) consider resilience to be a quality responsible for individuals’ loyalty to their values and practices in the face of challenging circumstances or persistent
setbacks. This definition, obviously, uses ‘not quitting’ as a measure or predictor of resilience rather than adaptability. The limitation of this perspective is that it overlooks other contextual factors which may be key to an individual not quitting. For example, a teacher may remain in their job even if it may be stressful because, in their judgment, they have limited alternatives (Butt, MacKenzie and Manning, 2010).

In spite of a lack of consensus in the various constructions of resilience in the existing body of knowledge, there are two underlying central assumptions: the existence of threat and the resultant positive adaptive outcome. The majority of published work (e.g. Ungar, 2004; Howard and Johnson, 2004) is convergent on the position that risk is a necessary antecedent of resilience where, in the absence of risk, resilience cannot be determined. Another a common characterisation of resilience is that it is underpinned by the biocultural systems theory (Howard and Johnson, 2001; Garmezy, 1991). The following sections consider this theory and its link with the resilience construct.

2.7.1 Risk to resilience: A paradigm shift

Most of what we know about resilience is grounded upon empirical studies carried out since the early 1970s that investigated at-risk children and adolescents who showed signs of invulnerability to harmful influences despite being exposed to such stress-inducing events as poverty, mistreatment, physical handicaps, alcoholism and criminal activities (Howard and Johnson, 2000; Schoon, 2006). This was a significant departure from the previously used deficit model which centred on susceptibility as an approach to understanding ways of improving at-risk children’s ability to cope with adversity. Initially, the change in trajectory from risk to resilience was brought about by a need to identify resources which made at-risk children stronger in the face of deprivation, an approach which was hoped to provide preventative, rather than just curative, solutions. Schoon (2006:7) observes that “the shift of focus from adaptational failures to positive outcomes in adverse conditions also
implies a new impetus for research aiming to inform the design of social policy interventions aiming to create opportunities for development and to promote a chance of positive chain reactions to environmental threats.

With the passage of time, research on resilience has gradually gained momentum whereby studies have steadily expanded from the initial investigations on children and adolescents (e.g. Howard and Johnson, 2000) to a broader focus which includes adults in work settings such as teachers, nurses and soldiers with the latter studies (e.g. Pearce, 2011; Le Cornu, 2009; Howard and Johnson, 2004; McGee, 2006; Bartone, 1999) benefiting from ground covered in the former approach. Thus, reminiscent of enquiries on children and adolescents, interest of the studies on adults has also been on those in risky or challenging circumstances.

As resilience research has progressed from predominantly being a discourse around at-risk children, researchers have also built on understandings gained from these studies by extending attention to adult communities surviving catastrophic events like war (e.g. Kaminsky et al, 2007) and other natural disasters (Kaminsky et al, 2007) and to adults in occupational contexts such as nursing (e.g. McGee, 2006; Jacelon, 1997), driving (e.g. Matthews, 2007), the military (e.g. Bartone, 1999) and, like in the case of the current study, teaching (e.g. Betoret and Artiga, 2010).

Researchers’ interest in teacher resilience stems from two fundamental factors. First, as noted earlier, teaching is a highly stressful profession and yet a significant proportion of teachers stay in teaching for significantly long periods of their careers with some even thriving in these conditions. Thus, interest is on what factors influence these teachers’ capacity to withstand the taxing circumstances of their job and how this affects their decisions to stay. This is a marked departure from the deficit model which has dominated most research on teacher stress whereby focus was more on teacher vulnerability than on resilience factors; on what weakens rather than what strengthens teachers’ staying decisions.
The other key factor to the surge in teacher resilience research, according to Gu and Day (2007), is the very nature of the teaching job – predominantly emotional. Consistent with this observation, evidence from research (e.g. Nieto, 2003) indicates that emotions form part of the drivers of relationships among teachers, among students and between teachers and students. Thus, expounds Nieto (2003), students’ and teachers’ experiences alike considerably hinge on passion or emotions. For instance, how students feel about their subject and the interactions they have with both their peers and their teacher plays a major role in educational experiences within the school (Baker, 2006). This also influences, and is influenced by, the teacher’s attitudes towards their students and their subject which eventually has a bearing on educational outcomes. In light of the volatility of school and classroom dynamics, and this directly influences stress and coping outcomes, researchers (e.g. Oswald et al, 2003) have identified resilience factors as important in teachers’ capacity to withstand these complex aspects of their job.

Research on risk and resilience is, to a larger extent, influenced by the bioecological, and later the bio-ecological framework grounded in Bronfenbrenner’s work (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998). This framework is a systemic approach to understanding resilience underpinned by the assumption that resilience is best understood through a holistic consideration of a contextual system which “includes nested contexts within systemic domains of bio-psycho-social-historical influences that affect individual development” (Stevens, 2005:47). This approach views individual development as influenced by person, process, context and time factors.
Figure 2.2: Bioecological system

Source: Santrock (2007:85)

Generally, the bioecological perspective refers to person; process; context and time (PPCT) elements affecting human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Person characteristics are force (dispositional); resource (assets and liabilities) and demand (attributes which trigger or inhibit reactions from an environment responsible for adaptive processes) (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). Process (proximal processes) refers to reciprocal interactions between the individual and their environment. Context (see figure 2.2 above) constitutes the microsystem; the mesosystem; the exosystem and the macrosystem. Finally, time comprises microtime (specific episodes); mesotime (frequency of those episodes) and macrot ime (also chronosystem) (changes in the wider society) (Bronfenbrenner, 1994 and Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). The bioecological perspective proposes that human behaviour is a process “patterned by a structure of relationships and is subject to changes in that structure” (McLaren and Hawe, 2005:10). In the case of
risk and resilience, the state of this pattern of relationships is the one
which influences individuals’ adaptive outcomes in the face of adversity. In
the teaching profession, the nested contexts would be constituted by, but
not limited to, the teacher’s school, department, family, friends, dominant
ideologies and values and historical events and transitions especially
those influenced by the government. In this respect, resilience, also
described as successful adaptive outcomes in spite of adversity, is,
therefore, dependent not only on the individual, but also on a range of
complexly interacting factors around and within them.

2.7.2 Models of resilience

Of the several models identified in the literature, three dominate the
resilience discourse, namely the compensatory model, the challenge
model and the protective factors model (Schoon, 2006; Fleming and
Ledogar, 2008).

In the compensatory model of resilience, a positive coping outcome is a
consequence of the moderating effect of a positive influence (Cook and
Du Toit, 2005). In this model, direct intervention can help reverse, or at
least stop, the negative effects of an aversive situation (Fergus and
Zimmerman, 2005). Thus the positivity of a mediating agent compensates
for the negativity of the adversity. For example, pupils engaging in
antisocial behaviour in their communities are capable of replicating this
behaviour in school but the presence and effective use of a behaviour
policy by teachers in school can minimise the likelihood of such serious
misbehaviour recurring in school without necessarily changing what
happens in the community around the school.

The challenge model of resilience holds that an individual’s resilience to a
threat or a challenge is developed and/or enhanced by moderate
exposure to threat or challenge (Cook and Du Toit, 2005; Ederm and
Slesnick, 2010). Here, resilience is viewed as an attribute that is learned
or acquired through prior experience of, or exposure to, a similar threat. If
an individual experiences an event which stresses them today, they have a better chance of successful adaptation should they encounter a similar threat in future. Most of existing literature (e.g. Schoon, 2006) confirms the notion that people who have previously experienced hardship are more likely to have positive adjustment outcomes in the face of challenges than those who have not.

In the protective factors model, protective factors are generally described as those elements and processes, both internal and external to the individual, which have a moderating effect on the negative effects of a risk factor (Kumpfer, 2002; Nettles and Pleck, 1996; Jacelon, 1997). The protective factors model, also descriptively referred to as the interaction effect model, places emphasis on the necessity of interaction between the protective factor and exposure to risk to having a positive adaptive outcome (Schoon, 2006). For example, a teacher’s positive adaptation to an occurrence of pupil misbehaviour in their classroom would be a result of a combination of their internal assets (competences), the support they get from the school (e.g. behaviour management policies and processes) and the domestic emotional support they may get from, say, their spouse to negate the adverse effects of the perceived challenging experience.

2.7.3 Determining resilience

The subjective nature of the resilience construct makes the business of determining its presence, and the extent to which it is present, complex. Different researchers use different variables in this respect. As a consequence, there is no standard measure of resilience. This is one of the main criticisms of resilience as a concept. However, rather than viewing this divergence as a methodological contradiction, it can be considered a complementarity of approaches, each unitary perception contributing to a whole understanding. This is bearing in mind that there is no singularity of reality, but rather an existence of reality in layers (Azevedo, 1997), each layer representing a different dimension of what resilience is, but not existing apart from other layers. Thus, the unity of
resilience cannot be understood from a singular perspective apart from the layers that make it up.

Another characteristic contributing to the problem of determining resilience is its relativity; that is dependence on person characteristics; proximal processes; context and time. For example, a teacher’s positive adaptation to an occurrence of pupil misbehaviour will also depend on other similar occurrences both within the classroom and in the wider school. If the teacher is going to seek support from colleagues in their department, for example, the effectiveness of the help they will get, if any, will depend on constantly changing internal and external coping assets. In keeping with the non-fixity of coping assets, determinants of resilience outcomes may not always be stable but sensitive to a range of dynamic factors which characteristic makes resilience a slippery concept (Howard and Johnson, 1999). Thus, due to these measurability obstacles, there continues to be an enduring lack of coherence among resilience researchers on a standard, consistent approach to evaluating resilience.

Constant change and consequent non-fixity of resilience are another set of challenges constantly besetting resilience researchers, generally, in their approach to researching the phenomenon and, particularly, in identifying stable and consistent predictors of resilience to assist in measuring it. As argued elsewhere, one of the key setbacks associated with the resilience construct is that it manifests in different forms and ways in and among different individuals in different situations and at different times. It is noted in the literature (e.g. Gu and Day, 2007) that resilience is not a stable trait solely attributable to individuals, but rather dependent on a range of factors – both internal and external. Its sensitivity to nested contexts – within and outside individuals – and dynamics within and among these contexts renders attempts to measure resilience in individuals the more treacherous.

In light of the above, Ahern et al (2006) conducted a study with the objective to review the psychometric properties and appropriateness of six
resilience-measuring instruments in adolescent studies. Of the six instruments, two could not be used due to limited prior application in research, three still needed further testing due to applicability limitations. Only one, the Resilience Scale, was found suitable for use among children across all age groups on the strength of its psychometric properties and relative applicability. Regardless, there continue to be difficulties associated with measuring resilience. Beltman et al, (2011:195) argue that measuring the resilience construct that has “multiple dependent variables, that varies for individuals over time and contexts, and may only be visible in the face of adversity” remains a challenge for researchers in the field and explains why “robust measures of teacher resilience have yet to be developed”.

In light of these epistemic challenges, it is therefore unsurprising that there are divergent resilience-measuring approaches adopted by different researchers. Individuals showing resilient outcomes may not possess the same internal assets, nor share the same external protective factors and yet positive adaptive outcomes may be experienced by all of them. It is these differentials across individuals and their contexts which are behind the argument that attempting to use standardised instruments to evaluate resilient outcomes in individuals may not always yield accurate and valid measures. A further criticism is that risk is not the same for every individual and, as such, certain people may inaccurately be assigned the resilient label when, in fact, they were not exposed to risk in the first place (Burack et al, 2007; Shaikh and Kauppi, 2010; Green et al, 2007). This argument questions how what researchers identify as risk can be reconciled with individuals’ perception of risk, given that resilience outcomes are dependent on the presence of risk. That is probably why several researchers have looked at the qualitative aspects of resilience such as successful outcomes relative to identified contextual risk. Methodologically, therefore – as well as utilising quantitative instruments – most resilience researchers (e.g. Brunetti, 2006) have incorporated interviews and other qualitative contextual data so as to take cognisance of subjective and relative characteristics of contextual resilient outcomes.
Over time, outcomes of these studies have shaped resilience research tradition and, subsequently, contributed towards the current understanding of resilient outcomes and factors influencing them.

As argues above, the existing body of knowledge (e.g. Howard and Johnson, 2000 and 2004; Schoon, 2006) suggests that resilience is not a directly measurable quality and can, at times, be elusive due to its dynamic nature. Researchers (e.g. Howard and Johnson, 1999; Moss et al, 2008) have attempted to tackle the problem of the slipperiness of the resilience concept by looking at individuals’ positive adjustment in relation to the existence of adverse circumstances in relevant aspects of their life to determine the individuals’ resilience. Resilience is thus generally determined on the basis of whether a person is positively adapting or thriving in circumstances of substantial adversity. Resilience qualities tend to be catalysed by, and noticed in, considerably challenging circumstances which, therefore, renders it difficult to identify resilience where no significant threat has been identified. The key identifier of resilience is the positive adaptive outcome in spite of facing or experiencing adversity.

The type of settings in which relevant research has hitherto been conducted is further illustrative of the necessity for the presence of risk in investigating resilience. In the work of Howard and Johnson (2004), risk was the central criterion when they selected extremely disadvantaged schools situated in areas of high “unemployment, poverty, family breakdown and interpersonal violence” (ibid p.404) to conduct their investigation on resilient teachers’ positive adaptation to stress and burnout. Results from the enquiry confirmed that the challenges the teachers in these schools faced brought the best out of them.

On the other hand, a variety of resilience-measuring instruments have been devised and used for a variety of purposes including screening, differentiating and identifying participants for research. Most of these instruments, for example Constantine et al (1999), have been
predominantly numerical. Although these instruments are helpful in quantifying resilience, they overlook the qualitative aspects of the phenomenon. In this respect, the argument in this treatise is that resilience is so complex that it cannot exclusively be determined quantitatively.

Some researchers (e.g. Green et al, 2007) have utilised quantitative methods to measure resilience in individuals. In Baron et al’s (1996) study on holocaust survivors’ children’s resilience, locus of control and religion measured resilience by way of a hardiness likert scale which examined three qualities – control, commitment and challenge – considered to be indicative predictors of resilience. Control has to do with individuals’ perception that they have direct influence on what happens to them be it positive or negative. Meanwhile, commitment relates to the value individuals attach to their actions and how this equates to the seriousness with which they approach their actions. Meanwhile, challenge is individuals’ attitude that “change, not stability, is the normative way of life” (Baron et al, 1996:517) which, therefore, prepares them for adversity and enables them to adapt accordingly. Though useful, using such instruments on their own assumes a mutual exclusivity of the measured variables and, in the process, overlooks other equally important factors contributory to resilience outcomes. The assumption here is that resilience is purely a personal attribute (Luthar and Cicchetti, 2000) which, inadvertently, discounts the bioecological dimension. Evidently, bioecological factors such as the family, the community and the individual’s background which influence the very aspects purportedly measured (i.e. control, commitment and challenge) and the individual’s life events seem to be overlooked. Furthermore, an exclusive use of the hardiness scale presupposes resilience is a personal trait rather than an outcome of the dynamic interaction between personal attributes and dynamics in an individual’s bioecological context. Luthar et al (2000) contend that this approach to resilience raises reliability concerns in that some individuals may be adjudged to be resilient when, in fact, the resilient result may be due to the fact that the individuals’ environments
may not have exposed them to severe risk compared to others on whom the same instrument will have been used. Thus, it is possible the scale may indicate the same resilience score for people in contexts with significantly contrasting risk factors.

Although, as being argued, there are divergent views on how to measure resilience, there is a discernible degree of consensus on key features of resilience. These include relatively speedy recovery from adversity, enduring in spite of severely challenging circumstances, remaining focused in the face of severe risk, maintaining a positive outlook irrespective of circumstance and adaptability to vicissitudes of life (Upton and Upton, 2015; Zautra et al, 2010). From a bioecological perspective, which is the dominant framework in resilience research, these characteristics of resilience are not confined to the individual, but rather are a dynamic process involving multi-directional transactions between and within nested contexts of which the individual is part. For there to be a resilience outcome, therefore, the interactions and transactions between the nested contexts should be such that the protective factors – internal and external – at least neutralise the risk factors, whether internal or external. This is then expected to lead to the resilience characteristics identified above.

In teacher resilience research conducted so far (e.g. Howard and Johnson, 2000 and 2004; Patterson et al, 2004) a range of variables have emerged as principal drivers of resilient outcomes. Factors affecting resilience are generally divided into two broad categories, namely internal and external protective factors where the former has to do with individual qualities and the latter, contextual factors.

### 2.8 Self-efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy, grounded in Bandura’s (1977 and 1997) social cognitive theory, is another key attribute related to stress and resilience due to its key role in determining individuals’ perseverance in the face of
adversity (Pajares, 1997). In the literature (e.g. Chan, 2002), self-efficacy is considered an important protective factor against negative psychological outcomes. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010:1059) conceive teacher self-efficacy as “beliefs in their own ability to plan, organize, and carry out activities that are required to attain educational goals”. From this definition, it can be inferred that self-efficacy forms part of internal protective factors (Zellars et al, 2011; Bassi et al, 2007) – those resilience-enhancing qualities to do with the individual’s person characteristics. Thus having self-efficacy about aspects of one’s job enhances their coping assets (Oliver, 2010; Chan, 2002) which help buffer the teacher from suffering adverse effects of those aspects. In this regard, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) postulate that there is a link between teachers’ self-efficacy and their sense of agency. Furthermore, Hamill (2003) states that there exists a positive correlation between self-efficacy and resilience whereby for every unit increase in self-efficacy, there tends to be a corresponding unit increase in resilience. To corroborate this, a study on teacher stress by Klassen and Ming (2010) revealed that teacher self-efficacy tends to have a moderating effect on stress level.

Although research evidence cited above makes it clear that self-efficacy has a moderating effect to stress – thereby enhancing resilience – it still remains difficult to establish the exact extent to which self-efficacy on its own influences teacher resilience and stress level. This is primarily due to the presence of other internal protective factors or person characteristics working in concert to have a collective, and cumulative, moderating impact leading to positive adaptive outcomes in individuals’ coping with demands placed on them (Morris, 2004).

2.9 Summary

In this chapter literature on stress, coping and resilience has been reviewed. It has shown that, as much as it is complex and multifaceted, stress and resilience are important concepts which enhance an
understanding of possible explanations of why certain individuals do well in spite of severely challenging circumstances.

Key literature reviewed in this chapter (e.g. Day and Gu, 2007; Kaufman, 2005 and Howard and Johnson 2004) demonstrates an existing link between stress and resilience and how an understanding of stress contributes to an understanding of resilience. This relationship emanates from the necessity of the presence of risk in the manifestation of resilience, where stress is the risk factor (Tait, 2008; Wilks, 2008). Consistent with this, Steinhardt and Dolbier (2008) observe that resilience tends to manifest when individuals have been exposed to potentially stressful stimuli. In agreement, Tait (2008) in a study of newly qualified teachers’ success, commitment and retention found that resilience is observable in situations of adversity. Perhaps this, in part, explains why most research on resilience (e.g. Howard and Johnson, 2004) tends to also address the subject of stress or risk factors.

The close link between resilience and Bronfenbrenner’s (1979,1995) bioecological systems theory of human development has also been explored demonstrating that resilience is not a mutually exclusive trait, but rather a process involving an interaction between and within different subsystems constituting an individual’s environment. It has been demonstrated that resilience thus depends on complex changing individual and contextual dynamics, a characteristic which significantly contributes to the difficulty of measuring the construct quantitatively. On the basis of the literature reviewed in this chapter, effective studies on resilience consider both personal and contextual factors and how they interact to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the construct. In the teaching context, this would include trying to understand key aspects of the teacher’s ecology and how these relate to their adaptive outcomes.

In light of the foregoing, the rationale of the present study was that its design was consistent with its purpose of investigating teacher stress and
resilience utilising Bronfenbrenner’s (1995) bioecological framework. The choice of urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage for this type of study was in keeping with research tradition in the field noting that resilience is relatively more observable where significant risk was present – a prevalent characteristic among such schools (e.g. Howard and Johnson, 2004). Investigating stress and resilience in concert, though still a developing approach in the teacher stress and resilience field, was appropriate as the two are linked. The mixed-methods design was appropriate for this research because it enabled triangulation of data, thereby offsetting limitations in one method with strengths in the other. In addition, the adoption of Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological framework suited the present investigation in that it enabled the consideration of the teachers’ contexts, and processes thereof, holistically – in so doing contextualising their experiences in a rigorous way. Thus, the overall design of the study was consistent with the pragmatist paradigm (see section 3.2) which tends to be adopted in mixed-methods designs.
Chapter 3 : Methods and methodology

3.1 Introduction

As stated in section 1.2, this work sought to answer these research questions:

1. What person characteristics do teachers in urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage have?
2. Which stress risks do these teachers report and how do these risks affect them?
3. What coping strategies do these teachers employ and how effective are they?
4. What protective factors enhance their resilience?

Focusing on teacher stress and resilience while utilising Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; 1995) bioecological framework, these research questions evenly covered stress and resilience. Consistent with the bioecological model adopted in the present study, these research questions allowed for the consideration of person characteristics, process, context and time (PPCT) in examining stress and resilience among the teachers in the current study.

In this chapter, research methods and methodologies adopted in an attempt to answer the above research questions are considered. The chapter commences, in section 3.2, with a description of the research paradigm adopted in the current study. Section 3.3 is a précis of key methods employed in stress and resilience research. This is followed by section 3.4 which is an account of research design, procedures and phases. Ethical issues are then considered in section 3.5 followed by, finally, a summary of the current chapter in section 3.6.
3.2 Research paradigm

Consistent with this research design, as posited in a wealth of mixed methodology literature (e.g. Robson, 2002; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003 and 2006; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004), the current study was underpinned by the pragmatist paradigm. The relationship between pragmatism and mixed methods research lies on shared assumptions about the nature of ‘knowledge’ and how we come to obtain or gather that ‘knowledge’. In contrast to the positivist/interpretivist dualism on how best to view ‘truth’ and ‘reality’, pragmatism seeks to accommodate both, acknowledging that both singular and multiple ‘truth’ and ‘reality’ perspectives do exist and can be empirically investigated side-by-side (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Rorty, 1999; Dewey, 1925). From a pragmatist perspective, ‘reality’ and ‘truth’ are best made sense of through the complementarity, rather than dichotomy, of quantitative and qualitative methods – capitalising on the strengths of each methodology and offsetting weaknesses in one with strengths in the other (Feilzer, 2010). Thus, this combining of methods – or ‘anti-dualism’ (Rorty, 1999) – enables researchers to integratively study ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ phenomena without paradigmatic constrictions. This enables a broader understanding of phenomena being investigated.

Stress and resilience research tradition shows evidence of paradigmatic flexibility, with quantitative (e.g. NASUWT, 2013), qualitative (e.g. Howard and Johnson, 2004) and mixed methods (e.g. Ungar and Liebernberg, 2011) research being accepted as legitimate approaches to design, implementation and analysis – an approach consistent with the pragmatist existentialist standpoint on ‘reality’ and ‘truth’. Furthermore, relevant literature (e.g. Oswald et al, 2003) indicates that the ontological perception of stress as an outcome of the subjective exchange between an individual and their environment is linked to the transactional model which, at the same time, is consistent with Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological framework. This is compatible with pragmatism which, among other things, recognises the interplay between the physical, the social and the
psychological contexts in shaping individual subjective thoughts (Feilzer, 2010). Consistent with the stress concept, pragmatism holds that knowledge is both constructed and based on the reality of the world an individual experiences and lives in (Greene, 2008). This is reflected in the existence of stress as a subjective (constructed) feeling with ‘actual’ (reality) symptoms such as backache and stomach-ache (Cooper, 2001). The pragmatist paradigm’s view of organisms as “constantly adapting to situations and environments” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004:18) further exemplifies the link between the mixed methods strategy, pragmatism and the operational model used in this study.

3.3 A brief review of stress and resilience research methods and methodologies

A survey of the literature indicates there is no singular dominant research approach among resilience researchers – a situation which enhances the complementarity between different enquiries. Investigations concerned with the link between long-term environmental factors affecting resilience and other individual attributes have tended to be longitudinal in nature and utilised both qualitative and quantitative strategies (e.g. Ungar and Liebernberg, 2005). Other enquiries such as Howard and Johnson (2004) have adopted semi-structured interviews to explore individual and environmental protective factors and their influence on resilience.

Quantitative methods, especially questionnaire surveys (eg. ATL, 2005, 2014; HSE, 2014; NASUWT, 2005, 2013), are the most commonly used in this field probably because they are widely considered more objective, enable data to be collected on large samples (Jones and Bright, 2001), enable collection of generalisable information and most quantitative data can be coded and standardised (Robson, 2002). This makes it possible to do inferential and descriptive statistical analyses (Agresti and Finlay, 1997) which are useful in, among other things, establishing trends within data on given populations.
However, while quantitative methods are high on their explanatory power, they are criticised by some psychology researchers (e.g. Mertens, 2015) for their lack of exploratory power primarily due to perceived oversimplification “of complex issues by reducing them to a limited number of questions and response options”. The main argument is that since stress and resilience are a subjective experience, it also requires subjective means of understanding it. This line of argument, which advocates for the use of qualitative data such as interviews and diaries, maintains that each individual experience of stress is unique and thus cannot be generalised to another (Mertens, 2015). What this view overlooks, however, is the evidence emerging from research suggesting a commonality in the experience of stress which makes possible the use of descriptive and inferential statistics to make sense of data and make generalisations beyond that data. For example, in a study to find out the role of the belief in families (familism) in stress and coping processes, Kim et al (2007) demonstrated the feasibility of carrying out complex statistical analyses in stress research. This study found that ‘familism’ had an adverse effect on coping outcomes. Such inferences would be difficult to objectively draw from a qualitative study.

### 3.3.1 Merits and limitations of mixed methods

It is against this background that some researchers (e.g. Cox, 1993) have advocated for the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods conjunctively in order to offset the weaknesses of one method with the strengths of the other.

In a milestone study in teacher occupational stress research, Travers (1991) demonstrated the feasibility of a mixed method approach consisting of interviews, a questionnaire survey and medical examinations (which measured blood chemical and blood pressure). From this study, she managed to observe relationships between physiological indices and characteristics of the job.
Despite the problems of using complex mixed methodologies such as those discussed above, the use of combined quantitative and qualitative methods (especially surveys and interviews) is widespread and has generally been effective (Bowling, 2014; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003; Creswell, 2003). Smith and Prior (1995) used observations and a questionnaire survey to assess resilience in 81 school-age children and found that positive temperament attributes significantly affected individuals’ capacity to maintain adaptive behaviours (ibid p.177). It has been noted in the literature (e.g. Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003; Creswell, 2003) that mixed methods designs are more advantageous than single method designs as they enable us to understand phenomena in a more comprehensive way. It is even more helpful to blend in secondary sources of data such as publicly available official reports and statistical data to provide a balance between self-reported and factual data thereby enhancing comprehensiveness in the depiction of the context.

However, it is important to also consider key limitations of mixed methods designs. Where the same research participants are involved in a study, they may decide against taking part in one phase thereby weakening cross-data corroboration (De Lisle, 2011). Another mixed methods problem specific to the nature of stress and resilience phenomena is that, where questionnaires and interviews are concerned, some participants may wish to be anonymous due to the sensitive nature of information they may have given in say, a questionnaire survey, thus leading to them opting out of the interview phase. This may significantly impact on the researcher’s ability to follow up on issues of interest arising from the survey. Second, according to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007:10), “it complicates the research” by combining traditionally dissimilar research approaches thereby increasing the demand for clarity in the presentation of findings to enhance readers’ understanding of it.
3.4 Research design, procedures and phases

In view of the complementarity of subjective and objective ‘truth’ and ‘reality’, explained previously, the utilisation of the mixed methods approach in the present study was appropriate and consistent with research tradition. This research approach was hoped to adequately explain and explore teacher stress, coping and resilience in the context of job stress risks in urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage.

This study utilised a questionnaire survey (N=150) and interviews (N=20). In addition, two key survey schools were identified for case study analysis. School Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) reports, area multiple deprivation index reports from the Department for Communities and Local Government (2008) and national statistics on school workforce in the UK by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (2008) were also considered.

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected using a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview schedule. These instruments were appropriate for the mixed methodology design of the current study in that they helped in explaining and exploring internal and external factors affecting resilience qualities and experiences of stress among teachers. The survey questionnaire was mostly comprised of Likert style questions. There were also some open-ended questions which were used to collect data specific to individual teachers not covered in the closed questions. The qualitative aspect of this study made use of a semi-structured interview schedule designed to make an in-depth follow-up on issues emerging from the questionnaire survey, particularly individuals’ own responses in the questionnaire. Thus, although using the same core questions in all interviews, an attempt was made to adapt the questions to how the interviewees had responded in the survey in order to capture participants’ individuality in their handling of the demands of their job and its effects on them.
3.4.1 Instrumentation: Questionnaire

In keeping with characteristics of a good questionnaire, during the questionnaire design stage, three key considerations were made: purpose of study, respondent time constraints and the subjective nature of stress and resilience.

One of the most important considerations made in designing the questionnaire was the medium of communication. Since the study was conducted in schools in the UK where English is the official language, a deliberate decision was made to design the questionnaire in English. Related to this, it was also important to design the questionnaire in at a level of language understandable by the target sample – the teachers, hence the drawing of some of the variables from existing context-specific teacher questionnaires such as Travers and Cooper (1996). Here the pilot also played an important role in determining context-specificity of the questionnaire.

A further consideration was time constraints. Acknowledging that teachers already had a busy schedule, a decision was made to design a questionnaire which typically would not take longer than fifteen minutes to complete so to encourage completion by participants.

It was also important that questions’ meaning to participants was consistent with their intended purpose. Care was, thus, taken to eliminate ambiguity. In the process, this ensured there was consistency in meaning across teachers – an aspect which was also enhanced by piloting the questionnaire. Allied to this, all questions had to fit the purpose (i.e. the research questions and aims). Therefore, the internal validity of the questionnaire was enhanced.

The only questions to be included in the questionnaire were those which were relevant and helped meet the goals of the study. It was hoped that
this ‘operationalisation’ of the questionnaire (Cohen et al, 2007) would enhance the quality and depth of treatment of the subject.

In view of respondent time constraints, it was important to keep the questionnaire succinct, unambiguous and easy to understand (Burns, 2000 and Newell, 1993). Leading, double-barrelled and hypothetical questions were avoided to ensure data generated would not be misleading.

Because stress and resilience are subjectively experienced, it was also important to ensure that what the questions meant was consistent across respondents. Consistent with Robson’s (2002) recommendation, the questionnaire was designed in a way that, as far as possible, avoided creating bias and clarified the frame of reference. To this end, effort was made to ensure “that the questions mean the same thing to all respondents” and that the only questions asked were the ones “… where respondents are likely to have the knowledge needed to answer” (p.246).

Questionnaire sections

The questionnaire comprised six sections arranged in the following order:

- Section A – About you
- Section B – Your workload
- Section C – Your perceptions
- Section D – Sources of stress
- Section E – How you have been feeling and
- Section F – How you have coped with pressure.
Table 3.1 shows foci of respective questionnaire sections in respect to set research questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Questionnaire Section</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A;C;F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>B;D;E;F</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A;C;F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sections A, B, D, E and F, which were adapted to outcomes of initial interviews in order to formulate an instrument contextualised to the research setting and dispensation, were largely drawn from the Travers and Cooper (1996) stress questionnaire (appendix 9). Section C was borrowed from the Gibson and Dembo (1984) teacher efficacy scale (appendix 10). The six sections of the questionnaire are each considered in turn below covering, inter alia, their constituents, the rationale for including these sections and how they fulfilled the goal of the research.

**Section A: About you**

As in Travers and Cooper’s (1997) research, this section was designed to collect participants’ biographical data, namely: gender, age, academic and professional qualifications, experience, number of schools taught, career before teaching, current job title, number of years in current position, main subject and other subjects taught. This information was intended to be used in establishing how much these factors impacted on the teachers’ stress and resilience. The assumption was that an interplay between these factors affected individual resilience. Previous studies (eg. Fisher, 2011) have found that biographical factors tend to determine individuals’ experience of occupational stress and how they cope with it. For example,
a study by Iwasaki, MacKay and Ristock (2004) identified experience, gender and main subject as key determinants of workers’ stress and coping. Drawing on such empirical evidence, it was thus assumed that an interaction between some or all of these biographical factors would impact on individual stress and resilience.

Section B: Your workload

This section asked teachers how much workload they had in terms of contact time; directed time, planning, preparation and assessment time (PPA), supervision duties, cover for colleagues, extra-curricular activities, planning, preparation and assessment outside designated PPA time and approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities. Collecting this data was consistent with tradition in both the teaching professional context and in stress research (e.g. NASUWT, 2013; Selwood and Pilkington, 2005; Michelson and Harvey, 2000 and Travers and Cooper, 1997) where how much time teachers spend on work activities is considered an indicator of their workload. Furthermore, research evidence (e.g. HSE, 2008) suggests a strong link between workload, work time and stress incidences in the workplace. Thus, the purpose of this section was to find out how much time teachers spent on schoolwork and the extent to which this affected their experience of stress.

Section C: Your perceptions

Section C, which was drawn from the Gibson and Dembo (1984) teacher efficacy scale, sought to determine teachers’ self-efficacy. This was in keeping with a number of studies in the field (e.g. Gibson and Dembo, 1984; Chan, 2002). The inclusion of this teacher self-efficacy section was a result of insights from preliminary questionnaire-design interviews during which, among other things, teachers had been asked to indicate their perceived skills competence in dealing with key aspects of their job.
Another reason for including this section was because it can be used as an indicator of resilience in an individual (Chan, 2002). This is consistent with Bandura (1997) who observes that self-efficacy or beliefs in one’s ability to exercise control over an event or adaptive outcome tends promote resilience in individuals. Among other things, self-efficacy has to do with an individual’s beliefs in their capabilities to exert control over a given event (Ozer and Bandura, 1990)

Section D: Sources of stress

Similar to Travers and Cooper’s (1997) purpose for using these questions in their study, this section was intended to find out the extent of stress individual teachers tended to experience in relation to specified variables. The slight difference from Travers and Cooper (1997) was the addition of part 1 wherein the teachers would indicate the extent to which each respective variable was an issue in the context of their school. The reason for this alteration was to determine whether each respective stress variable was also institutional or just individual.

As stated earlier, this section was comprised of two-part questions on common stress risks in the teaching job. The first part asked teachers to indicate, on a 1 (not an issue) to 5 (a serious issue) scale, the extent to which a given stress risk was an issue in the school. In the second part, respondents were asked to show the extent to which they perceived those aspects of their job as causing them stress from 1 (little stress) to 5 (high stress). It has been noted in the literature review that stress and resilience research predominantly relies on individual self-reports (e.g. Jones and Bright, 2001). Therefore, asking teachers to self-report in this section was in keeping with research tradition.

Section E: How you have been feeling?

Following Travers and Cooper (1997) and other key research in the field (e.g. NASUWT, 2013; Geving, 2007), section E was intended to find out
how frequently the teachers had experienced the given feelings in the previous two years on a scale of 1 (rarely) to 5 (frequently).

The last question in this section required respondents to indicate how stressed they had usually felt during term time over the past two years on a scale of 0 (not stressed) to 10 (extremely stressed). The rationale for this section was premised on the basis that the overall magnitude of stress experienced by individuals is directly related to how frequent they experience symptoms of stress. This assumption is consistent with the existing body of knowledge in the field (e.g. Hsiao, 2008) which indicates that there exists a link between stress symptoms and stress levels experienced by individuals.

Additionally, this stress scale was also a proxy measure of resilience. It has been expounded in the literature review that resilience relates to how, despite the presence of significant pressure and risk, individuals persistently experience positive adaptive outcomes or recovery from adversity (Ungar, 2004; Howard and Johnson, 2004; Luthar et al, 2000; Masten, 1994; Rutter, 1990). Therefore, low (0 to 2) and high (8 to 10) stress over two years on the scale were taken to indicate resilience and risk respectively (Bonanno et al, 2007; Luthar, 1991).

Section F: How you have coped with pressure

Following Travers and Cooper (1997), the primary purpose of section F was to find out the frequency with which they used specified coping strategies and how effective they found these strategies. This section consisted of two-part questions. In part 1, respondents were asked to indicate, on a scale of 1 (rarely) to 5 (frequently), whether in the past two years they had used given techniques to cope with pressure in their job. The aim here was to identify how often teachers used specified coping techniques and how this related with other variables. In part 2 of the same items, the teachers were required to indicate how effective they found each strategy using a scale of 1 (not effective) to 5 (very effective). This,
inter alia, would primarily help in understanding if perceived effectiveness of a coping strategy was consistent with how often it was used by individuals. In addition, effectiveness of coping strategies would be a helpful indicator insofar as individual resilience was concerned. As indicated elsewhere in this treatise, direct quantitative measurement of resilience is still in its infancy owing to the complexity of the resilience construct. There is yet to be developed a homogenous or standardised quantitative unit of measurement of resilience due to the ‘messy’ range of individual and contextual resilience factors. That said, previous studies (e.g. Fortes-Ferreira et. al, 2006) have shown effectiveness of coping strategies – especially direct-action – to be linked to individuals’ ability to recover from adversity. Furthermore, a study by Steinhardt and Dolbier (2008) found a link between resilience and coping strategies. On this premise, it was considered that data gathered from this section of the questionnaire would also help provide useful resilience indicators.

At the end of this questionnaire section, there was also an open question which invited participants to give other coping strategies than those specified which they used to cope with the demands of their job effectively.

3.4.2 Instrumentation: Interview Schedule

Interviews followed up on key issues emerging from the survey with the aim to expand on what had emerged from the questionnaire survey. Specifically, they sought to expand on the link between perceived stress, aspects of the teaching job, individual characteristics and stress and resilience. The semi-structured interview schedule (appendix 2) was informed by the literature and designed in such a way as to explore in more depth the research questions. Although all research questions would have been answered by the survey, the interviews provided in-depth understanding of particular personality and behaviour factors that protected teachers from adverse effects of stress. To ensure the interview schedule was effective and neutral, open-ended questions were used to
enable collection of detailed interviewee views and avoid interviewer bias (Turner, 2010; Creswell, 2003). Room for follow-up questions was also allowed for in order to enable the researcher to rephrase a question if the interviewee did not answer the question being asked (Creswell, 2007). Perhaps more obviously, all research questions were consistent with the focus of the present research.

3.4.3 Research phases

Access into the schools was pivotal to the execution of this study. As observed by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), access in sensitive enquiry such as stress and resilience research tends to be delicate and harder to obtain. It emerged from observing school response patterns that the access negotiation process for researching stress among teachers in secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage was determined by the sensitive and personal nature of individuals’ experience of stress, individual schools’ readiness and timing of the study and gatekeepers’ perceived usefulness of the study to their schools. To a large extent, how the decision-making process took place and the eventual outcome of the negotiations also hinged on those factors.

For the present study, letters were written to head teachers for permission to access their schools with a promise of analytical feedback to participating schools once analysis of the results of the study was completed. First, these letters were sent to ten secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage in one local authority during the pilot phase. Follow-up phone calls were then made to the schools to find out which schools were interested in the project and the approximate number of teachers who would be participating so that an adequate amount of questionnaires would be sent out. These telephone negotiations were done with head teachers’ personal assistants who would then relay the head teachers’ decisions to me. For the interviews, survey respondents were invited to indicate at the end of the
questionnaire whether they would be interested in taking part in the interviews that would follow the questionnaire survey.

This research project was done in the following phases:

- Phase 1: Instrument development and pre-test
- Phase 2: Pilot of the study
- Phase 3: Main study survey
- Phase 4: Main study interviews
- Phase 5: Quantitative, qualitative and integrative analyses

**Phase 1: Instrument development and pre-test**

Instrument development was informed by the literature survey and review which extended from my MSc dissertation. The instrument development process involved carrying out initial interviews involving two opportunity NQT participants to whom access was arranged by my thesis supervisor. The preliminary interview schedule was designed to explore contextualised meaning and occurrence of stress with the view to designing a context-relevant instrument.

Upon completion of these interviews, pre-existing questionnaires were examined for items which were potentially includable in the current study’s questionnaire. This was then followed by a second round of interviews aimed at teasing out contextualised meaning and occurrence of stress in the targeted region with the view to design a context-relevant instrument. Four interviewees for this phase – teachers I had graduate with on my initial teacher training course – were drawn from across a range of experience, age and subject areas which was intended to provide a balance between length of service, age and main subject. This was done for purposes of informing the development of a survey questionnaire which, apart from addressing generic teacher stress issues, would also address certain issues specific to the research context. Drawing on issues which had emerged from the interviews, questions from Travers and
Cooper (1996) were adapted for use in this study. Two pre-tests of the questionnaire resulted in further iterations of the initial draft questions.

Using themes which had emerged from the interviews, questions from the Travers and Cooper (1996) questionnaire were adapted for use in this study. Two pre-tests of the questionnaire involving 11 teaching acquaintances resulted in minor further changes to the original questions.

**Phase 2: Pilot of the study**

One LA was arbitrarily identified to pilot the research process. The pilot phase involved contacting schools to make access arrangements, sending out questionnaires and interviewing volunteers. This pilot set out to, among other things, test out the research design in the ‘real world’ in order to determine the appropriateness of the research design to stress research on the target population and likely participant recruitment rate.

The same access procedure described early on in this chapter was followed. Within the LA ten schools were identified and invited to take part in the pilot. Two of the schools agreed and two declined outright. One senior teacher from each of these schools was a contact person for the pilot. One school had agreed to participate but later pulled out when it received news that it would be closing. The other five schools did not give definitive responses and were, therefore, followed up with the aim to draft them into the main study.

The pilot survey was intended to improve the questionnaire’s reliability, validity and feasibility (Openheim, 1992). This followed initial amendments to the questionnaire used in the pre-test. The response rate would assist in predicting if there were going to be problems with access which would help determine whether to continue with the same target group. Immediately after the pilot survey data collection, quantitative data analysis of results was done on this dataset which then informed the pilot interviews. Clarity of survey questions was also determined by examining
respondents’ answers for consistency with what the questions were intended to find out in the first place thereby addressing construct validity issues. This ensured that, in the main survey, the variables used would generally be interpreted by participants as intended.

Overall 22 female and 16 male teachers participated in this pilot survey. Twenty-six teachers were from school 1 and twelve from school 2. The age range for all participants was 24 to 57 years and the mean age was 36.44. All teachers had at least a degree and 36 of them had qualified teacher status (QTS). Teaching experience ranged from one to 32 years. Twenty-two teachers had at least five years teaching experience. Nineteen had taught at only one school all their teaching careers and only two had taught at more than five schools during their careers at the time of the research. Fifteen had had previous careers before joining teaching. One was a student teacher, 24 were class teachers and 13 had additional managerial responsibilities to their normal teaching duties. All of them had at least a year’s experience in their current positions. Participants were spread across the following main subjects: Art; English; Geography; History; Information and Communication Technology (ICT); Mathematics; Modern and Foreign Languages (MFL); Music; Physical Education (PE); Religious Education (RE); Science; Design and Technology (DT) and Literacy.

Consequent to the pilot, few minor modifications were made to the questionnaire (Appendices 1 and 21). In section A the item: How many years have you been teaching altogether? was modified to: How many years teaching experience do you have altogether?. Section C options were changed from abbreviations: SA (strongly agree); A (agree); U (undecided); D (disagree); SD (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree); 4 (agree); 3 (undecided); 2 (disagree); 1 (strongly disagree). Owing to the size of the pilot sample, it was decided that determining significances of items in the questionnaire would be difficult and, therefore, conducting some statistical tests at pilot stage was not feasible.
Upon completion of the pilot survey analysis, three pilot interviews – two from School 1 and one from School 2 – further exploring issues emerging from the pilot survey were conducted. Interviewees were volunteers drawn from the pilot survey. Pilot interviews were meant to provide indications on what would happen in the main interviews if the same schedule was to be used. Furthermore, issues like length of interviews, appropriateness, sequencing of questions and potential sources of bias were considered at this stage. This was achieved by listening to the digitally recorded interviews; how interviewees responded and whether they asked for clarification in particular points of the interviews. After listening to the interviews, it was determined that sticking to the interview schedule would not allow for spontaneous conversation with interviewees and, therefore, limited the scope of what would be covered. Thus, the strategy was modified to allow for follow-up questions as appropriate to probe issues raised by interviewees further. This way, teachers’ individuality would be explored in relation to their experience of stress and resilience.

While it was highly likely that drawing interviewees from the preceding pilot survey would mean that interviewee responses would have been influenced by their participation in the survey, the advantage was researcher foreknowledge of an interviewee’s background information given in their questionnaire. This, it was felt, was an opportunity to gain further understanding by following up on what the respondent would have said in the former phase. It would, however, have been more helpful had this phase included both participants and non-participants of the first phase. On the basis of the pilot interviews, it was also decided that there was need to devote more interview time on stress, coping and resilience. Furthermore, it was also decided that the main interviews would need to be shorter to sustain participant interest and focus.

Due to the quality of data gathered and the very little modifications to the pilot questionnaire and interview schedule, a decision to incorporate the survey and qualitative datasets in the main study was made. As much as there is debate surrounding the incorporation of pilot data into main
findings datasets, it is generally acceptable to do so where no significant changes are made to the pilot instruments and design of the study (Remenyi, 2013; Plowright, 2011 and Taylor et al, 2006).

Phase 3: Main study survey

Of the thirty-one Greater Manchester secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage contacted across all local authorities, 12 agreed to participate. To increase sample size, further access letters were sent to ten Merseyside secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage requesting research access of which three indicated they would be willing to be involved. Schools with characteristics of School Facing Challenging Circumstances (SFCC) at the time were selected from a spreadsheet provided by thesis supervisor. They were all Teach First schools at the time of the research. The primary characteristics of these schools were high proportion of pupils on free school meals (FSM) and low proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C (Teach First, 2007). In addition, as discussed in section 1.4, such schools have been noted in the literature (e.g. Michalak, 2009; Cullen and Swafield, 2007 and Englefield, 2001) as drawing pupils from areas of severe socio-economic disadvantages, high unemployment rate, high crime incidence (including anti-social behaviour), low education rate, dysfunctional families (hence lack of positive role models for children growing up in these families) and low incomes. more likely that they will be lacking motivation and opportunities to do well in their education. Linked to this, behaviour among pupils attending these schools tends to be poor (McPhee and Craig, 2009) which, according to Ferguson, Bovaird and Muller (2007), is a factor in poor educational outcomes. Such adversity, influenced the selection of the 15 schools in the present study as interest was in the school teachers’ stress and resilience in the face of what seemed to be great adversity. In total, 150 questionnaires were returned (see table 3.2 below).
The frequency table revealed that nine schools had ten or more teachers in the sample.

### Phase 4: Main study interviews

During the fourth phase, immediately after the survey, respondents who had indicated their willingness to participate in the interview phase of the enquiry were contacted via e-mail or by phone, according to their indicated preferred means of communication, to arrange interview dates and times. Twenty teachers who honoured their offers to participate were eventually interviewed. Each interview (appendix 11), which was between 30 and 45 minutes long, was digitally recorded. Interviewee professional backgrounds, that is teaching experience; education and previous career, were widely varied. The teachers were drawn from Maths, English, Science, Modern and Foreign Languages, ICT, Religious Education and Design and Technology. The teachers ranged from those experienced with no previous careers; experienced with previous careers;
inexperienced teachers but with rich previous careers and inexperienced with no prior careers to teaching. None of them was trained overseas.

In these semi-structured interviews, teachers were first asked to briefly describe their careers. This question served two purposes; first, to help interviewees settle in and, second, to provide background to their responses to questions that ensued. This question was also intended to expand on biographical data generated in the survey by exploring how the experiences and skills gained shaped and reflected the teachers’ person characteristics. This approach was based on the premise that individual professional background plays an important role in one’s stress and resilience. To gain insight into the teachers’ execution of their duties, the proceeding question had to do with workload and the complexity of handling the different aspects of their role. The remainder of the questions dealt with stress risk factors of the teaching job, how they impacted on the interviewees and individual strategies employed in coping with related stress. This was intended to provide in-depth information on the presence of stress-inducing environmental factors, aspects of the job perceived as stressful, choice of coping strategies and their perceived effectiveness and how the teachers determined coping success or failure.

**Phase 5: Quantitative, qualitative and integrative analyses**

Due to the utilisation of mixed quantitative/ qualitative methodologies, the analysis of data was carried out using quantitative and qualitative analysis methodologies. At first quantitative and qualitative data were analysed separately. For quantitative data, primary methodologies employed were descriptive analysis, factor analysis and regression analysis.

On the other hand, qualitative data – used in two school case studies in chapter 7 – was examined using thematic analysis. This, consistent with Aronson (1994), involved mapping patterns of experiences, identifying
data which relates to classified patterns, combining and cataloguing related patterns into sub-themes, detailed exploration of these sub-themes and developing a story line. The case study approach was also employed to provide a descriptive analysis of two of the 15 participating schools with the principal aim to illustrate unique examples of resilience-promoting factors and practices in situ; in the context of real schools with real teachers (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). The two schools were selected because they had the two lowest stress level means. The case studies integrated qualitative and quantitative data.

Quantitative data analysis

Descriptive statistics, principal component analysis (PCA) and factor analysis, and regression analyses were used to analyse data collected in the survey using the SPSS software for statistical analysis. The object for descriptive statistics was to summarise and explore patterns (Agresti and Finlay, 1997) in the data. Principal components analysis and factor analysis were utilised to determine the underlying structure of the variables in sections C, D, E and F of the questionnaire. Regression analysis was employed to examine the predictive relationship between the identified resilience-related variables and, in the process, answer relevant research questions for the present study.

Data collected from the survey and from the interviews were integrated at analysis to provide in-depth insights on stress, coping and resilience among sample teachers through a combination of the strengths of the two datasets. Initially, to prepare the datasets for analysis, both the quantitative dataset and the interview transcripts were inspected for mistakes. For the quantitative dataset, this meant checking categorical and continuous data separately using SPSS software and correcting errors in the data file. On the other hand, interview transcripts were manually re-read and checked against respective audio recordings. Following this inspection was more systematic analyses of the qualitative and quantitative datasets – first separately and then integratively.
Qualitative data analysis

As indicated earlier, qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis whereby data was sorted into predetermined codes shaped by the research focus (Boyatzis, 1998). In chapter 7, eight selected interviews from School 1 and School 10 were then presented as pen-portraits to illustrate how work-related stress, coping and resilience constitute teachers’ subjectively experienced phenomena (Campbell, 2000; Campbell and Kane, 1998). As in quantitative write-up, teachers’ identities in the reporting of interview data were protected by use of pseudonyms.

To preserve the situated voices of the interviewees’ personal experiences (Kelchtermans, 1999), the thesis employs the pen-portrait strategy which Hustler et al (2003:131) describe as lived experiences of research participants “relating to the local cultural and structural circumstances” influencing their subjective positions.

For school case purposes, interview data is analysed following the thematic biographic-interpretive analysis method (also referred to as the interpretive biographical method) whose interest in the interviewees’ accounts centres on their life experiences (Denzin, 1989), particularly the “inter-relation between the lived-through past and the present story in the horizons of future expectations” (Wengraf, 2001:234). In accordance with Denzin (1989:14), this data analysis approach relies on “the subjective verbal and written expressions of meaning given by the individuals being studied, these expressions being windows into the inner life of the person.” This was achieved by analysing relevant emerging themes from the interviews.

The purpose of this analysis strategy was to explore how these aspects of the teachers’ lives would help us understand the genesis and intricacies of individual factors affecting their adaptive outcomes in relation to transactions within and between the interviewees’ nested
contexts (described in chapter 2). For pen-portrait presentation purposes, eight interview cases were selected for their depth and breadth in coverage of stress, coping and resilience.

The analysis model was derived from Braun and Clarke (2006), Wengraf (2001) and Aronson (1994) and undertaken in the following phases.

**Thematic analysis phase 1: Familiarising with the data**

This stage comprised repeated reading of the data, annotating and identifying ideas for coding and searching for meanings and patterns of the teachers’ ecologies (see appendix 11 for an example). Underpinned by Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) bioecological framework, the meanings, patterns and ideas which were searched for and identified had to do with the teachers’ nested contexts interacting with and impacting on them as professionals. As shown in the example in appendix 11, the identified ideas were highlighted and annotations were appended in the notes column.

**Thematic analysis phase 2: Generating initial codes**

The purpose of this stage was to identify elements of the interviews that could be of interest to the study. During this stage, the ideas, meanings and patterns from stage 1 were used to generate initial codes (example in appendices 11 and 12), where possible, in relation to the bioecological framework. Aspects of the interview data revealing person characteristics of the teachers, characteristics of the range of contexts impacting on the teachers, interactions between these contexts and interactions between the individual teachers and these contexts and the impact on the teachers were identified. This was achieved by focusing on the broad characteristics of the individual teachers, their microsystems, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem, paying particular attention on repeated patterns across the dataset.
**Thematic analysis phase 3: Searching for themes**

The next step (appendix 13) was searching for themes emerging from the initial codes. During this analysis stage, the initial codes were sorted into potential broader themes. Relevant coded interview extracts were also collated within the identified themes. Additionally, possible relevant bioecological level categories were assigned to the theme clusters which helped identify possible links with the underpinning bioecological framework.

**Thematic analysis phase 4: Reviewing themes**

The fourth phase (appendices 15 and 16) involved refining themes identified in phase 3. During this phase, some themes were merged while others were either collapsed or discarded as appropriate. The themes to be merged were put in clusters by internal homogeneity. Each cluster had to be externally heterogeneous enough to stand alone. The other key influences at this stage were the research questions and Bronfenbrenner’s (1979;1995;2006) bioecological framework. Themes without clear identifiable distinction between them collapsed into each other, for example *Implementation of government initiatives by Ofsted* and *Ofsted inspections* collapsed into *Ofsted*. Themes with insufficient supporting data, for example LA, were discarded. The next part of this phase was considering how well the eventual themes reflected meanings and patterns in the interview dataset (Braun and Clarke, 2006). To be able to do this, the interview dataset was reread examining consistencies and inconsistencies between the dataset and the themes. When a reasonable thematic map had been arrived at (appendix 16), the next phase was to define and name the themes.
**Thematic analysis phase 5: Defining and naming themes**

At phase 5 (appendix 17), the thematic map from the previous phase was further reconfigured. The process included defining and additional refining of the themes to be presented for analysis and analysing the data within them. This convoluted process integrated elements from the previous analysis phases in light of the bioecological framework in a coherent way. Furthermore, interview extracts collated for respective themes were re-examined and reorganised to enable a coherent and internally consistent analysis report. The naming and defining of the themes at this phase was grounded in the bioecological framework.

**Thematic analysis phase 6: Producing the report**

The final analysis and write-up of the report commenced upon completion of the final thematic map. This thematic map was utilised in conducting individual case analyses of School 1 (section 7.4) and School 10 (section 7.7), considering the scope and diversity of each theme. Respective school contextual data, including current Ofsted reports, GCSE results and school descriptions on respective websites, was used to give an overview of the contexts of the schools. Pen-portraits derived from the interviews were presented as examples of the teachers’ stories in their own words. Cross-case analysis followed the conclusion of the individual school case analyses with the primary purpose of highlighting common themes across Schools 1 and 10 in relation to the research questions.

**Integrative analysis: Case studies**

The purpose of integrative quantitative/qualitative analysis was to combine findings from two datasets. In chapter 7, qualitative and some quantitative data were also used in case-study analyses of School 1 and School 10. Case studies are characteristically used to illustrate a phenomenon in situ (Nisbet and Watt, 1984). According to Yin (1984:23),
a case study can be defined as an examination of “a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.” Cohen et al (2007) postulate that one of the key strengths of a case study is that it uniquely presents contextualised real-life situations in an easier-to-understand way than abstract principles and theories. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) note that a typical case study will have some or all of the following characteristics: provides detailed description of relevant events; chronologically chronicles relevant events and places emphasis on relevant aspects of the case. Additionally, Cohen et al (2007:254) emphasise that “it is important in case studies for situations to be allowed to speak for themselves rather than to be interpreted, evaluated or judged by the researcher”.

Different authors categorise case studies variously. Yin’s (1984) three types, namely exploratory, explanatory and descriptive, seem to be some of the most commonly used in relevant research. The main purpose of an exploratory case study is to reconnoitre an area of investigation prior to conducting the main study, which is usually done at the pilot phase of research (McDonough and McDonough, 1997). Meanwhile, an explanatory case study focuses on cause-and-effect relationships (Yin, 2003). On the other hand, a descriptive case study primarily provides narrative accounts (Cohen et al, 2007) covering “the scope and depth of the object being described” (Yin, 2003:23). In this thesis, the descriptive case study is utilised.

There are several merits of the case study approach. First, presenting findings in situ helps reduce chances of misinterpretation or misrepresentation (Zainal, 2007). In addition, case study results are generally easily accessible to a broader audience (Cohen et al 2007) because of the way findings are presented – allowing the data to speak for itself. This means readers from a much wider audience, including non-specialists, will find it easier to understand the findings. Among the merits of the case study approach, Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) note the
capacity of the approach to capitalise on uncontrolled-for yet significant variables.

The case study approach, however, has some noted limitations of which generalisability is one principally because of a relatively small number of subjects involved (Yin, 1984) thereby confining the findings to just the respective cases involved. Another limitation of the case study approach is its perceived lack of rigour (Zainal, 2007). Added to this, observer bias is a limitation the case study approach is exposed to due to the significant influence the research may end up having (Cohen et al, 2007). Critics also cite the tendency of case studies to generate excessive data most of which may end up hard to systematically organise and manage (Zainal, 2007 and Yin, 1984).

Data for the case studies was mainly drawn from interviews of teachers working in the two schools and relevant survey data. In addition, to offset some of the limitations of the case study approach identified above, factual secondary data from the schools’ websites, Ofsted reports and publicly available Office for National Statistics information about the schools’ geographical locations was incorporated in the case studies to, hopefully, produce rich and vivid descriptions (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). This multi-sourcing of information is consistent with the pragmatist paradigm in that it places emphasis on triangulation of data sources.

It was determined that case studies of the schools would provide prototypical instances of microsystem-level transactions and structures in light of their interactions with, and exchanges between, other nested contexts. It was hoped that this approach would contextualise individual factors’ contribution to individual adaptive outcomes within complex interactions within and between the nested contexts. These interactions directly and/or indirectly influenced eventual individual adaptive outcomes.
For the purpose of the school case studies, the two schools which were selected had the two lowest teacher stress means (School 1, $M=4.17, SD=2.29$; School 10, $M=5.42, SD=2.46$). They also had participants in both the survey and the interviews and had more than ten participants in the survey. Both stress level means were below the sample mean ($M=6.00, SD=2.55$).

As is being argued in this thesis, an individual’s stress and resilience is influenced by the complex bidirectional and somewhat reciprocal interactions or transactions (Bronfenbrenner, 2006; Lazarus, 1999) between and within sets of intricately connected contexts, some of which are not even physically present (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). At the centre of these nested contexts is the individual whose immediate context is the setting which contains him or her, such as the school (which includes all sub-settings within it, e.g. the classroom; the department) and their home or family (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This brings us to the conceived rationale for the present chapter: illuminating on the link between influences on and of a typical urban secondary school and individual adaptational outcomes in order to extrapolate the role of the school in the individual teachers’ risk or resilience. To achieve this, case studies of two of the 15 schools with two lowest mean teacher stress levels will be presented. Low mean stress is important because, when the decision to use this school choice criterion was made, it was hoped that good examples of resilience would be identified. This will be on the assumption that the significance of the organisation as a microsystem to individual risk and resilience lies as much in the immediate direct proximity of the individual and the microsystem as in the relational and operational significance of one to the other.

**3.5 Ethical issues**

Due to the sensitive and personal nature of the enquiry, measures were put in place to safeguard the welfare interests of the respondents during their participation in the project. To begin with, participants were informed
beforehand about the nature of the inquiry, how the results would be used and that they were free to withdraw should they have felt that they could no longer cope with the emotional demand of the inquiry. Participants’ anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed on the questionnaire and at the beginning of every interview. In addition, the research plan was subjected to the university’s ethics approval process during which it was confirmed that the research complied with set standards – primarily participant briefing and consent processes such as giving two weeks after consent to withdraw and then withdraw at any point subsequently without obligation to give a reason. Respondents were not identified directly or indirectly at any stage of the research, particularly in reporting the findings. Another measure put in place to minimise the experience of emotional distress was seeking direction from supervisors and their opinion on the interview questions before the interviews were actually carried out. All instruments were therefore used with the approval of supervisors. The head teachers of participating schools were also shown the interview schedules prior to the interviews to ensure any inappropriate questions were either rephrased or struck off as appropriate. Furthermore, due to a commitment to provide feedback on findings to schools, considerable care was taken in making sure no information from the study traceable back to participants was included in the feedback.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has accounted for research strategies employed in the present investigation. Reasons for the choice of strategies in light of relevant research tradition have been provided. It has been argued that mixed methods suited this particular research as it helped to both explore and explain the teachers’ stress and resilience. Mixing quantitative and qualitative data fostered complementarity between datasets as most of the themes emerging from the interviews were explained by quantitative data analyses. Relevant ethical considerations relating to the collection and processing of data have also been explored. Furthermore, a detailed account of the development of instruments used has been provided.
complex process of negotiating access for research on a subject most schools and teachers would have felt sensitive about has been detailed. In the next chapter, focus now shifts to the main descriptive statistics of the project.
Chapter 4 : Descriptive Analysis

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, descriptive analysis of the sample of teachers and their schools is given. In keeping with the mixed methods approach adopted in the present study, this analysis draws on both qualitative and quantitative data gathered. The purpose here is to provide an exploratory overview of the contextual and individual outlook of the teachers who participated in the current enquiry, only identifying aspects of interest for further exploration in factor (chapter 5) and regression (chapter 6) analyses.

This chapter begins by giving an overview of the sample in section 4.2 after which section 4.3 presents descriptive analysis of the teachers’ self-efficacy. In section 4.4, descriptive analysis of sources of stress results is conducted. Next, section 4.5 looks at stress symptoms results and then followed by an examination of these teachers’ stress level in section 4.6. Section 4.7 is a descriptive analysis of teacher coping behaviour results. Section 4.8 compares at-risk and resilient teachers on selected variables after which, finally, section 4.9 concludes the chapter.

4.2 Recruitment and composition of the sample

Unlike in similar previous work (e.g. Howard and Johnson, 2004), no screening for resilience was done during participant recruitment. It was envisaged that avoiding screening would increase the chance of involvement of a mixed group of teachers with different levels of resilience in order to allow for the possibility of making comparisons across the sample. This approach was also considered helpful given the conceptualisation of resilience as neither a discrete nor a fixed dichotomous trait, but rather as a spectrum of a quality possessed by individuals in different measures. Therefore, recruiting an indiscriminate sample in the study would thus make it possible to examine different levels of resilience factors in relation to other variables.
When survey data had been prepared, analysis began with the descriptive phase which entailed performing descriptive statistics for categorical and continuous variables in the survey data.

This non-random sample of teachers ($N=150$) was recruited from fifteen schools, 12 from Greater Manchester and three from Merseyside. Nine schools had at least ten participants (see table 4.4 below). The breakdown of the sample population (see table 4.1 below) was 98 females (65.3%) and 49 males (32.7%). There were three missing values (2%). This female: male teacher ratio was reflective of the national secondary teaching population figure of the UK which indicated that, numerically, there were more female than male teachers although the proportional national male : female ratio is different at 43:57 (Office for National Statistics, 2009 and Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007).

Table 4.2 below shows selected descriptive statistics, derived from different sections of the survey questionnaire, for age ($M=37.90, SD=10.90$); teaching experience ($M=12.67, SD=11.11$) which was consistent with the average age; average number of schools taught ($M=2.51, SD=1.79$); number of years in present school ($M=9.15, SD=9.38$) from section A (About You) and approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities ($M=44.65, SD=6.19$) from section B (Your workload).

As shown in table 4.3, the approximate work time per week range was 27 hours (38-65 hours). It was, however, observed that there were more teachers working between 35 and 45 hours per week (67.2%) than those doing 55 to 65 hours per week (4.9%). It is important to note that the proportion of main scale teachers with approximate weekly work time between 35 and 45 hours is much higher (86%) than middle management proportion of 44%. In contrast, the proportion of middle management working more than 45 hours a week was higher (56%) than the proportion
of main scale teachers (only 14%). Data from section B (section E) also showed data on the teachers’ term-time stress level in the past two years ($M=6.05, SD=2.60$).
### Table 4.1: Participants by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>98.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>65.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4.2: Selected descriptive statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>37.87</td>
<td>10.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experience (years)</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12.67</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools taught</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years in present school</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9.15</td>
<td>9.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>44.65</td>
<td>6.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress level in the past two years</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>6.054</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3: Overview of approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Main scale</th>
<th>Middle management</th>
<th>Senior management</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35 to 40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 to 45</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 to 50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 55</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 to 60</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 to 65</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Number of teachers per school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5: Qualified teacher status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6: Overseas-trained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.7: Qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>81.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPQH1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>94.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8: Current teacher grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main scale teacher</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>55.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle management</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 National Professional Qualification for Headship
Table 4.9: Main subject taught

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid English</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science/Chemistry</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern and Foreign Languages</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and Design</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Education</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Educational Needs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAL3/ESOL4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Technology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and Technology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>98.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentage of teachers with qualified teacher status (table 4.5 above) was 94.7 and none of them was trained overseas (table 4.6). 81.3% of the teachers had at a degree qualification (table 4.7). Eighty-three participants (55.3%) were main scale teachers while 66 (44%) were middle management and one (0.7%) was in senior management (table 4.8). As expected, English (21.3%), Maths (14.7%) and Science/Chemistry (8.7%) provided the biggest percentage of teachers respectively while the least percentage per subject taught were Pastoral (0.7%), Textile (0.7%), Design and Technology (0.7%) and Literacy (0.7%) (see table 4.9).

2 Information Communication Technology
3 English as an additional language
4 English for speakers of other languages
### 4.3 Self-efficacy of this sample of teachers

#### Table 4.10: Descriptive Statistics for teachers' self-efficacy beliefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Scores 4 &amp; 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are a very powerful influence on student achievement when all factors are considered</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the grades of my students improve, it is usually because I used more effective approaches</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I have significant impact on the school improvement effort in my school</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I really try I get through to even the most difficult pupils</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have enough experience to deal with almost any pupil discipline problem</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can often significantly help to resolve conflict between colleagues</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel my views are valued by my senior colleagues</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If students are not disciplined at home, they are still likely to accept discipline in school</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>143</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In section C of the questionnaire survey (*Your perceptions*), the teachers were also asked to respond to self-efficacy items on the following Likert type choices: strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2) or strongly disagree (1). Table 4.10 reveals that the teachers scored highest means in the following variables: *teachers are a very powerful influence on student achievement when all factors are considered* ($M=3.93, SD=.96$); *When the grades of my students improve, it is usually because I used more effective approaches* ($M=3.70, SD=.92$); *I feel I have significant impact on the school improvement effort in my school* ($M=3.63, SD=.95$) and *when I really try I get through to even the most difficult pupils* ($M=3.55, SD=1.05$). The variable on which the biggest proportion of respondents scored 4 and 5 was *teachers are a very powerful influence on student achievement when all factors are considered* (79%). The lowest mean was on the variable: *If students are not disciplined at home, they are still likely to accept discipline in school* ($M=2.49, SD=1.29$). This is also the variable on which the lowest percentage (27%) of the sample scored 4 and 5. This result implies that while the teachers generally had high efficacy beliefs in key aspects of
their job, relatively very few of them believed that if students are not disciplined at home, they were still likely to accept discipline in school.

4.4 Sources of stress in the sample schools

One of the purposes of the present study was to find out the stress risks present in the sample schools and the extent to which they caused teachers in these schools stress. Coleman and Hagell (2007) describe stress risks as those aspects of the job which are potential sources of, or have a catalytic effect to, the experience of stress in an individual. In table 4.11, generated from section D (sources of stress) of the questionnaire, the sources of stress were ranked in descending order by their rated mean stressfulness on a scale of 1 (little stress) to 5 (high stress).
### Table 4.11: Teachers’ sources of stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of stress</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean stress</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Scores 4&amp;5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall workload</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paperwork</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on schoolwork at home</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil behavioural problems</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time to solve problems with individual pupils</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant changes in national educational policy</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of consistent and robust school policy on pupil behaviour</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society’s diminishing respect for teachers</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal abuse from pupils</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression between pupils</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism of colleagues</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor communications within the school</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The inclusion of pupils with special educational needs</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large class sizes</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of league tables</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing demands of Every Child Matters</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building schools for the future (BSF)</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working through breaks and lunch times</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of control over my own work</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of resources</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The unpredictability of cover periods</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of parental support</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of non-contact time</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covering for absent colleagues</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of involvement in decision making</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low expectations from parents</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support staff</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truancy and absenteeism of pupils</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hierarchical structure of my school</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorly defined school policies and practices</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical aggression from pupils</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism of school premises</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ineffective implementation of change in my school</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support for my subject teaching</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support for my pastoral role</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of clarity concerning my role</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling that apart from teaching I have no other employable skills</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of professional development opportunities</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of promotion prospects</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with pupils</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support from the local authority</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending parents’ evenings</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abusive behaviour from parents</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing effective relationships with parents</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The inability of my department to plan strategically</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict between my department and others</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra-staff conflict</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial tensions within the school</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support from my union</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of social support from colleagues</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teachers in the present study reported that most of their stress came from overall workload (M=3.84, SD=1.23), paperwork (M=3.65, SD=1.32),
time spent on schoolwork at home \( (M=3.55, SD=1.23) \), pupil behavioural problems \( (M = 3.53, SD = 1.27) \) and lack of time to solve problems with individual pupils \( (M=3.51, SD=1.24) \) (see table 4.9 above). Overall workload \( (68\%) \) and paperwork \( (66\%) \) had the highest percentages of teachers who reported experiencing stress levels of 4 and 5.

### 4.5 Stress symptoms of these teachers

Section E (How you have been feeling), asked respondents to rate their experience of specified stress symptoms (see table 4.12 below) on a scale of 1 (rarely) to 5 (frequently).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress Symptoms</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Scores 4 &amp; 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel unduly tired</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I don’t have work-life balance</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel stressed for no obvious reason</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel uneasy and restless</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel anxious for no obvious reason</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel upset for no obvious reason</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I can’t make decisions</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that life is too much effort</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel stress at home has a significant impact on my work-related stress level</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Valid N (listwise) 105

Of the stress symptoms variables in the questionnaire (section E: How you have been feeling), the ‘I feel unduly tired’ variable had the highest score \( (M=3.63, SD=1.41) \) – an indication that, in the past two years, the teachers had felt tired more frequently than they had experienced other symptoms. It was also the variable with the biggest percentage (60%) of scores of 4 and 5 in the section.

### 4.6 Job-related stress experienced by these teachers

The last variable of section E (How you have been feeling) asked respondents, on a scale of 0 (not stressed) to 10 (extremely stressed), to
indicate how stressed they felt during term-time for the past two years. Please note that this item was also used as a proxy measure of resilience where teachers scoring 0 to 2 were considered resilient while those on 8 to 10 were at-risk. A word of caution in this approach, however, is that this is more indicative over two years than exact – given the difficulties of measuring resilience discussed in chapter 2. As depicted in table 4.13 below, mean stress level in the previous two years was just above moderate ($M=6.00, SD=2.55$). The most frequent score on the stress level scale was 8 (23%), which is very high and falling in the at-risk category. The overall percentage of teachers experiencing very high stress, and therefore at-risk, (8 to 10 on the questionnaire stress scale) was 39% which is a very significant proportion of the sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress Level scores frequency %</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13: Stress level across schools

The proportion of teachers experiencing low stress, hence resilient, in the past two years (0 to 2 on the stress scale) was 11%.

Figure 4.1 is a depiction of mean stress level among different age groups clustered by gender. The purpose of this graph was to show how much stress different age groups among males and females experienced.
Also drawn from the stress scale in section E of the questionnaire, from 0 (not stressed) to 10 (extremely stressed), male teachers (N=49) below the age of 27 experienced more stress (M=8.00) than their female counterparts (M=6.00) in the previous two years. Stress among male teachers dropped between under 27 and 33-40 years age groups before rising again, although male teachers’ stress level remained below that of female teachers. On the other hand, female teachers’ (N=98) stress level was constant across age groups until the 41-51 age group after which it began to rise.
In accordance with the questionnaire section E stress scale, stress levels across core and non-core subject categories were also worth examining for any patterns. Teachers of core subjects ($N=49$) reported lower stress level trend than non-core subject teachers ($N=42$) across all age groups – although the difference between the younger ($\leq 27$ years) teachers and middle-aged teachers (33-40 years), was very small. In both core and non-core subject categories, stress level trend was relatively high in the under 27 age groups and then dropped towards the 28-32 and 33-40 age groups respectively. This implies that younger teachers for both subject categories experienced more stress than their middle-aged colleagues.

4.6.1 Stress level by teacher grade

Based on data gathered from the stress scale of 0 (not stressed) to 10 (extremely stressed) in section E of the questionnaire, stress level by teacher grade was analysed (see table 4.14 below). Teachers in the sample were predominantly from two teacher grades, main scale and middle management. Since only one participant was from senior management, this teacher grade was excluded from the analysis.
Table 4.14: Descriptive statistics for stress level by current teacher grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current teacher grade</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Score 8 to 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stress Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main scale</td>
<td>5.87</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle management</td>
<td>6.37</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was a slight difference of stress level means between the two teacher grades (main scale: \( M=5.87, SD=2.52 \); middle management: \( M=6.37, SD=2.63 \)), although it was higher among middle management teachers. However, an examination of teacher grade proportions reporting extreme stress (stress levels 8 to 10), therefore at risk, showed there was a higher percentage (76%) of middle management respondents experiencing high levels of stress than the percentage of main scale teachers (49%).

4.6.2 Stress level by main subject category

Also using the stress scale, of 0 (not stressed) to 10 (extremely stressed), in questionnaire section E and main subject information from professional biographical data drawn from section A of the questionnaire, analysis of stress levels by subject category was conducted (see table 4.15 below).

Table 4.15: Descriptive statistics for stress level by main subject category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Subject Category</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Score 8 to 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stress Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Subject</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-core Subject</td>
<td>6.31</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stress level means between core (\( M=5.95, SD=2.67 \)) and non-core (\( M=6.31, SD=2.41 \)) subjects were similar to each other with non-core subject teachers reporting slightly higher mean stress levels. However, a significantly higher proportion of non-core subject teachers (67%) reported experiencing extremely high levels of stress of between 8 and 10 (at risk) than the proportion of core subject teachers (57%) scoring 8 to 10.
4.6.3 Stress level by previous career

Another independent variable of interest was previous career. Table 4.16 below was generated using data collected from the stress scale at the end of questionnaire section E and professional biographical data from section A of this questionnaire.

Table 4.16: Descriptive statistics for stress level by previous career

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress Level</th>
<th>Previous career</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>6.07</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6.18</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers with no previous jobs ($M=6.07, SD=2.51$) and those with previous careers ($M=6.18, SD=2.61$) reported almost identical scores in stress level. The proportion teachers with a prior career reporting stress level of 8 to 10 was higher than that of teachers without a previous career (66% and 58% respectively).

4.7 Coping strategies these teachers employ

Drawing on data from questionnaire section F (How you have coped with pressure), table 4.17 indicates that the teachers in this sample utilised a range of coping strategies in the past two years.
Table 4.17: Descriptive statistics for frequency of coping strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Scores 4 &amp; 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Try to see the humour in it</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep things in perspective</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek help from others in aspects of the problem I can’t deal with</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause and think objectively about the situation</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take immediate action according to my understanding</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think of good things ahead in future</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set priorities and consider a range of plans in dealing with the problem</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid confrontation</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to reassure myself everything will work right</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express my feelings and frustration to others</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep my feelings under control</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t let the problem go until I have satisfactorily dealt with it</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sure people are aware I am doing my best</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deal with the source of the problem so that it does not happen again</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try not to worry or think about it</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek social support to help me cope emotionally</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Valid N (listwise) 137

Part A of this section required respondents to indicate how frequently they used each coping strategy on a scale of 1 (rarely) to 5 (frequently). As shown in table 4.17 above, the most frequently used coping strategy was *try to see the humour in it* ($M = 3.81, SD = 1.29$). It is also the same variable with the biggest proportion of teachers, 69%, reporting frequency levels 4 and 5.

Other strategies the teachers preferred were *keep things in perspective* ($M=3.72, SD=1.08$); *seek help from others in aspects of the problem I can’t deal with* ($M=3.68, SD=1.13$); *pause and think objectively about the situation* ($M=3.62, SD=1.05$) and *take immediate action according to my understanding* ($M=3.59, SD=1.07$). The least used coping strategies were *try not to worry or think about it* ($M=2.9, SD=1.32$) and *seek social support to help me cope emotionally* ($M=2.7, SD=1.51$).
Table 4.18: Descriptive Statistics for effectiveness of coping techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Scores 4 &amp; 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keep things in perspective</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set priorities and consider a range of plans in dealing with the problem</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to see the humour in it</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek help from others in aspects of the problem I can’t deal with</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause and think objectively about the situation</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think of good things ahead in future</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take immediate action according to my understanding</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid confrontation</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to reassure myself everything will work right</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express my feelings and frustration to others</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deal with the source of the problem so that it does not happen again</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep my feelings under control</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t let the problem go until I have satisfactorily dealt with it</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sure people are aware I am doing my best</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek social support to help me cope emotionally</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try not to worry or think about it</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>126</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional to frequency of choice of coping strategies, part II of section F of the questionnaire asked the respondents to indicate how effective they found respective coping strategies on a scale of (1) not effective to (5) very effective. As depicted in table 4.18 above, the means suggest these teachers found the following coping strategies most effective: keep things in perspective ($M=3.61, SD=1.14$), try to see the humour in it ($M=3.60, SD=1.31$) and set priorities and consider a range of plans in dealing with the problem ($M=3.60, SD=1.12$)—although marginally higher than seek help from others in aspects of the problem I can’t deal with ($M=3.59, SD=1.08$). The means also suggest the least effective coping strategies were seek social support to help me cope emotionally ($M=2.87, SD=1.44$) and try not to worry or think about it ($M=2.79, SD=1.32$). The variables on which the biggest proportion of respondents reported high levels of effectiveness were try to see the
humour in it (62%) and seek help from others in aspects of the problem I can’t deal with (60%).

In general, there was consistency between the frequency with which coping strategies were used and their effectiveness. This probably suggests that the teachers chose their coping strategies in accordance with how effective they found them. This was an expected result since it would not make sense for teachers to use least effective coping strategies more frequently than the most effective.

4.8 Comparison of at-risk and resilient teachers

An examination of the pie chart (see figure 4.3 below) revealed that 10.67% of the teachers (N=16) reported experiencing low stress (0-2) on the 0 (low) to 10 (high) stress scale (questionnaire section E) over the past two years compared to 34% (N=51) who reported experiencing high stress (8-10) on the same scale. For purposes of this study, resilient teachers are those reporting low stress while those reporting high stress are considered at-risk.

Figure 4.3: Proportions of teachers across stress levels
The spread of at-risk and resilient teachers across schools – excluding those with less than 10 participants – is shown in figure 4.4 below. School 1 (case study school) had the highest proportion (23%) of resilient teachers and the lowest proportion of at-risk teachers (4%). School 7 had the highest proportion of at-risk teachers (36%). School 10 (case study school) had 22% resilient and 11% at-risk teachers.

Figure 4.4: Distribution of resilient/at-risk teachers across schools

Figure 4.5 below depicts resilient and at-risk teachers’ experience and number of years in present school.

Figure 4.5: Resilient/ At-risk teachers' mean teaching experience and years in present school
The mean number of years in present school for resilient teachers was higher \((M=14.33, SD=9.99)\) than that of at-risk teachers \((M=7.86, SD=8.46)\). Next, figure 4.6 shows \textit{PPA time per week; planning, preparation and assessment time outside designated PPA time and overall workload}.

![Figure 4.6: Resilient/At-risk teachers' PPA and total weekly workload hours](image)

At-risk teachers spent more hours on \textit{planning, preparation and assessment outside designated PPA time} \((M=10.86, SD=6.80)\) than resilient teachers \((M=6.55, SD=4.34)\). This indicates that resilient teachers’ mean time spent on planning, preparation and assessment outside designated PPA time was 39.69% of the time spent by at-risk teachers. Mean workload per week was higher among at-risk \((M=47.47, SD=7.61)\) than resilient teachers \((M=43.53, SD=4.93)\).

**4.9 Conclusion**

In this chapter, descriptive analyses on the data has been carried out. Variables of interest to the present study were selected for exploratory examination to provide an overview of the sample on the variables. In the teacher sample \((N=150)\), there were more female teachers \((65.3\%)\) than male teachers \((32.7\%)\). The average age of this sample was 37.9 years, whereas average teaching experience was 12.7 years. The mean number
of years in present school was 9.2 while mean number of approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities was 44.7. Percentage of qualified teachers was 94.7 of whom none was overseas-trained. 55.3% of teachers were on the main scale teacher grade and 44% were on middle management. Only .7% were on senior management level. Ten percent of the sample were resilient while 34% were at-risk. Resilient teachers were more experienced and had a much higher number of years in present school than their at-risk counterparts. Mean workload per week was higher among at-risk teachers than among resilient teachers. The main source of stress for at-risk teachers was workload/time constraints. As expected, at-risk teachers experienced stress symptoms more frequently than resilient teachers. The next chapter covers factor analyses conducted on the dataset.
Chapter 5: Factor Analysis

5.1. Introduction

The underlying structure of the variables in sections C, D, E and F of the questionnaire was determined using the principal components analysis (PCA) and factor analysis (please see sections 5.2; 5.3; 5.4 and 5.5 respectively). Considering the size of the dataset, it made sense to employ PCA and factor analysis as data reduction techniques. Both techniques have previously been used in stress, coping and resilience studies (e.g. Leontopoulou, 2006) to organise variables into manageable clusters of correlated variables (Pallant, 2005).

PCA was used for initial determination of the number of factors to extract in the factor analysis procedure. However, it is important to note that the ultimate practicability of solely using eigenvalues above 1 for consideration in factor extraction is debatable. This is primarily due to the significance of the role of theoretical interpretability in the final decision on the number of factors to use in different instances. Thus, while some literature such as Pallant (2005) recommend the use of the scree plots – derived from eigenvalues over 1 – in making decisions on factor extraction, it would not make sense if the results thereof were theoretically incoherent. Therefore, in the current study, ultimately, interpretability was also a key consideration in arriving at how many factors to extract. Another value of PCA was that it also generated data on how much variance each given set of extracted factors accounted for. Additionally, the PCA procedure also provided correlation matrices of relevant information on the extent to which original variables in different principal components were correlated and whether these correlations were positive or negative.

Similar to the rationale for the use of PCA, the main objective for conducting factor analysis was to, inter alia, cluster variables in different sections of the questionnaire “into homogeneous and distinct groups”
(Cohen et al 2007:566). These clusters of original variables helped identify unobserved underlying variables (factors).

The rotation method employed throughout the factor analysis was Varimax with Kaiser normalisation on the assumption that the factors were uncorrelated. Varimax orthogonal rotation was selected primarily because it selects each factor with few large loadings thereby making it simple to interpret (Abdi, 2003). The main reason why Varimax with Kaiser normalisation is easy to interpret is that it maximises variance by consolidating high loadings and minimising low loadings (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007).

KMO factorability decisions were based on Kaiser’s (1974) index of factorial simplicity below:

- .90s – Marvelous
- .80s – Meritorious
- .70s – Middling
- .60s – Mediocre
- .50s – Miserable
- > .50 – Unacceptable

The Barlett’s test of sphericity was employed to examine the hypothesis that the variables in given tests were uncorrelated. Histograms of the factor scores were used to determine respective distribution of respondents, spread of the data and where respective data was located across respective factor score variables. Due to factor score means being standardised to approximately 0 (DiStefano et al, 2009) negative scores, absent from the original variables constituting the factor scores, were generated and, therefore, evident in the histograms. All histogram means are 0 and standard deviation is 1 (\(M=0, SD=1\)) and, therefore, will not be reported.
Section C was aimed at finding out the teachers’ efficacy in specified aspects of their job. Factor analysis of the eight variables (appendix 25) of this section of the questionnaire was done. The Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin (KMO) value was .70 and, on the basis of Kaiser’s (1974) index of factorial simplicity, is middling. The Barlett’s Test of Sphericity showed an approximate chi-square of 190.38 and statistically significant to $p < .05$ which meant that the variables in this factor analysis were correlated and, therefore, factorable.

Principal components analysis (table 5.1) showed the three highly loading components explained 32.6%, 15.8% and 13.3% respectively.

Table 5.1: ‘Your perceptions’ - Total variance explained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
<th>Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>% of Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>32.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>15.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>13.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>10.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>8.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>7.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>6.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relevant components were put through Varimax rotation and the three factor solution was chosen on the basis of theoretical interpretability. Table 5.2 shows the rotated component matrix.
Table 5.2: ‘Your perceptions’- Rotated component matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 1: Teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence on pupil discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have enough experience to deal with almost any pupil discipline problem</td>
<td></td>
<td>.822</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I really try I get through to even the most difficult pupils</td>
<td></td>
<td>.767</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If student are not disciplined at home, they are still likely to accept discipline in school</td>
<td></td>
<td>.583</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 2: Teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can often significantly help to resolve conflict between colleagues</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel my views are valued by my senior colleagues</td>
<td></td>
<td>.745</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I have significant impact on the school improvement effort in my school</td>
<td></td>
<td>.572</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 3: Teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the grades of my students improve, it is usually because I used more effective approaches</td>
<td></td>
<td>.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are a very powerful influence on student achievement when all factors are considered</td>
<td></td>
<td>.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Rotation converged in 4 iterations*

As depicted in table 5.2, items which loaded on factor 1 were about teachers’ self-efficacy in the influence they had on pupil discipline; those on factor 2 were about teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues and factor 3 comprised items to do with teachers’ self-efficacy in self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment.

Considering that the study was conducted in urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage, the emergence of teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline as a factor was consistent with general tendency of these schools to be characterised by poor pupil behaviour (Flintham, 2006). Thus, it was logical to make teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil behaviour an important consideration for teachers working in these urban secondary schools.

Teachers’ scores across the teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline factor score (figure 5.1) ranged from approximately -2.6 to 2.3. An examination of the case summaries showed that teachers scoring approximately -2.6 on the factor score had an efficacy of 1 (very low) on all three original variables constituting teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline. On the other end, 2.3 on the factor score was
indicative of an average efficacy of 5 on the three original variables. Thus, a high score on the scale was indicative of high teacher self-efficacy in a given factor whereas a low score on the scale indicated low teacher self-efficacy in the relevant factor.

Figure 5.1: Histogram – Teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline

The teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues factor score (figure 5.2) approximately ranged between -2.5 and 2.5. When relevant case summaries were examined, it emerged that teachers with an approximate score of -2.5 on teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues had no influence (approximately 1) in all original variables making up this factor score. Inversely, those scoring 5 on all initial variables scored approximately 2.5 on the factor score. The teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues factor was comprised of questionnaire variables concerned with school improvement, impact on conflict resolution and colleagues’ regard for fellow teachers’ views. It makes sense that these
variables fell under the same factor as they all have to do with a sense of collegiality within the workplace.

Figure 5.2: Histogram – Teachers' self-efficacy in their influence on colleagues

![Histogram](image)

Figure 5.3 shows that respondents’ scores across *influence on pupil attainment* ranged from approximately -3.7 to 2.0. The case summaries revealed that -3.7 in the factor score equated to a very low score on original variables and 2.0 on the factor score meant a very high score on original variables. Therefore, a high score meant high influence and a low score equated to low influence on pupil attainment. The generation of *influence on pupil attainment* as a factor was consistent with evidence in the literature (e.g. Parker et al, 2006) of the importance of pupil attainment on teacher efficacy.
5.3 Section D: Sources of stress

This section consisted of two-part questions on common stress risks in the teaching job. The first part asked teachers to indicate, on a 1 (not an issue) to 5 (a serious issue) scale, the extent to which a given stress risk was an issue in the school. In the second part, respondents were asked to show the extent to which they perceived those aspects of their job as causing them stress from 1 (little stress) to 5 (high stress). Because the second part provided the same scores as those provided in the first, only part I was eventually subjected to factor analysis. The variables constituting this section are listed in appendix 26.

Like in other sections of the questionnaire identified for factor analysis, the procedure was begun by ascertaining factorability of all the fifty items making up this section. Six, seven, eight, nine, ten and eleven factor solutions were explored before the six-factor solution was eventually selected on the strength of its theoretical interpretability. The decision on
the final number of factors was also made on theoretical interpretability, hence the resultant six factor solution. KMO was .86 and the Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity approximate chi-square was 2225.55 and the sig. was <.05. The principal component analysis (table 5.3) showed the six components respectively explaining 33.1%, 8.1%, 7.5, 5.2, 4.6 and 4.0 of the variance.

Table 5.3: ‘Sources of stress ’- Total variance explained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
<th>Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>% of Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.25</td>
<td>33.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>8.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>7.488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>5.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 5.4 below is the component matrix of the six-factor solution indicating the extent to which the variables are present in the schools.
Table 5.4: ‘Sources of stress’ component matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 1: Workload/ Time constraints</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall workload</td>
<td>.727</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on schoolwork at home</td>
<td>.723</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large class sizes</td>
<td>.722</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time to solve problems with individual pupils</td>
<td>.694</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paperwork</td>
<td>.679</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working through breaks and lunch times</td>
<td>.602</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The inclusion of pupils with special educational needs</td>
<td>.571</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of non-contact time</td>
<td>.521</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 2: Organisational processes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hierarchical structure of my school</td>
<td>.761</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ineffective implementation of change in my school</td>
<td>.748</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor communications within the school</td>
<td>.688</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorly defined school policies and practices</td>
<td>.647</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of involvement in decision making</td>
<td>.578</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of clarity concerning my role</td>
<td>.561</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant changes in national educational policy</td>
<td>.511</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 3: Pupil behaviour</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil behavioural problems</td>
<td>.781</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with pupils</td>
<td>.727</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal abuse from pupils</td>
<td>.708</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical aggression from pupils</td>
<td>.694</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression between pupils</td>
<td>.596</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truancy and absenteeism of pupils</td>
<td>.547</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 4: Cover</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covering for absent colleagues</td>
<td>.825</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism of colleagues</td>
<td>.811</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The unpredictability of cover periods</td>
<td>.692</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 5: Intra/ inter departmental climate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra-staff conflict</td>
<td>.774</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The inability of my department to plan strategically</td>
<td>.704</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of social support from colleagues</td>
<td>.671</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict between my department and others</td>
<td>.667</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support for my subject teaching</td>
<td>.524</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 6: Parental support</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of parental support</td>
<td>.726</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low expectations from parents</td>
<td>.710</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending parents’ evenings</td>
<td>.592</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Items which loaded on factor 1 had to do with workload and time constraints. The emergence of this factor was consistent with findings from other similar work (e.g. NASUWT, 2005) which indicated workload
and the related time constraints to be among key sources of teacher stress in the UK.

On factor 2 were items to do with organisational processes. This was in keeping with what emerged from the interviews in which the teachers stated that contextual practices within their schools also contributed to the stress they experienced.

An inspection of the histogram (figure 5.4 below) revealed that most data was concentrated between approximately -1.0 and 1.0. The loadings of variables on given factors indicated the extent of their contribution to respective factors. Overall workload was the highest contributing variable to the workload/ time constraints factor while the hierarchical structure of my school made the most contribution to the organisational processes factor. Insofar as pupil behaviour was concerned, the pupil behavioural problems variable made the most single contribution. Of the three variables which loaded on the cover factor, covering for absent colleagues was the biggest contributing variable. On the other hand, intra-staff conflict was the single biggest contributing variable to the intra/ inter departmental climate variable. On the parental support factor, lack of parental support made the single biggest contribution. Given the wealth of research evidence (e.g. Forlin, 2001; MacDonald, 2003) identifying workload and time constraints as some of the key sources of stress among teachers, the emergence of workload/ time constraints as a factor was expected.
Figure 5.5 below shows respondents’ scores across *organisational processes* with a minimum of about -2.7 and a maximum of about 3.0. Relevant case summaries of both the factor score and the original variables were analysed. A factor score of -2.7 was consistent with very low stress levels attributed to all original variables while, on the other hand, 3.0 meant very high stress levels emanating from the original variables. Variables loading on this factor, i.e. hierarchy-related and processes-related, have been identified in the literature (e.g. Kyriacou, 2001) to be among key teacher stressors.
Findings from previous research (e.g. MacBeath and Galton, 2004) have also linked poor pupil behaviour to teachers’ experience of stress. As shown in figure 5.6 below, teachers’ scores across the *pupil behaviour* factor score ranged from approximately -3.0 to 2.2. An analysis of the case summaries indicated that, on the factor score an approximate score of -3.0 indicated a very low score on all variables comprising this factor. Logically, 2.2 on the *pupil behaviour* factor score very high stress levels attributed to original variables.
Scores across cover (see figure 5.7) ranged from a minimum of -3.0 to a maximum of approximately 2.0. An analysis of the relevant case summaries revealed that a teacher who scored -3.0 on the cover factor score also experienced very low stress from all original variables. Considering the fact that cover adds to overall workload, a major stressor discussed earlier, it was expected that covering for absent colleagues would be a factor in teacher stress.
Figure 5.8 below shows scores across the *intra/inter departmental climate* factor had an approximate minimum of -3 and a maximum of 3. Invariably, a teacher with a score of -3 experienced very low stress and 3, on the other end, signified very high stress resulting from every original variable constituting the *intra/inter departmental climate* factor. This factor generally covered variables to do with the general school atmosphere and practices within school settings which formed an integral part of school ethos and allied teacher satisfaction with their respective schools (Parker, Hannah and Topping, 2006).
Scores across *parental support* (figure 5.9) ranged between -4 and 3. An examination of the relevant case summary indicated that a teacher with a -4 score on the *parental support* factor attributed very low stress to all constituent variables. On the other hand, a teacher with a factor score of 3 experienced very high stress from all original variables. A significant number of studies (e.g. Lambert and McCarthy, 2006) have recognised parental support as a principal concern in teachers’ work.
Section E comprised nine variables (appendix 27) which asked the teachers to indicate the extent to which they experienced the following symptoms from 1 (rarely) to 5 (frequently). Two, three, four, five and six factor solutions were examined. The initial factor analysis yielded a six-factor solution in which factors 4, 5 and 6 had a single variable loading highly on each. These variables were eliminated in the factor solutions which followed. The outcome of the factor analysis performed on data from section E is the subject of this subsection. KMO was .82 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity approximate chi-square was 570.01 and the sig. value was <.05.
Table 5.5: ‘How you have been feeling’- Total variance explained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
<th>Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total                  % of Variance</td>
<td>Cumulative %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.12                   68.63</td>
<td>68.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.62                    10.29</td>
<td>78.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After examining respective solutions for two, three, four, five and six factors using varimax rotation, the two-factor solution (table 5.6) was preferred as it made the most theoretical sense.

Table 5.6: ‘How you have been feeling’ rotated component matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 1: Experience of emotional symptoms</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel stressed for no obvious reason             .860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel unduly tired                               .763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel anxious for no obvious reason               .748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel upset for no obvious reason                 .715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 2: Experience of mental symptoms</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that life is too much effort                .892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel uneasy and restless                         .834</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The items loading on factor 1 had to do with experience of emotional symptoms while those on factor 2 were concerned with experience of mental symptoms of stress among the teachers. It is important to note that there is no consensus in the literature (e.g. NHS, 2015; HSE 2015 and 2011 and Travers and Cooper, 2012) on categorisation of symptoms of stress. Notwithstanding, factor analysis results depicted in table 5.6 above closely resonate with HSE (2015 and 2011) categorisations of stress symptoms into emotional and mental. These symptom types tend to manifest in people experiencing stress (Ibid 2015 and 2011). The item loading strongest on the experience of emotional symptoms factor was I feel stressed for no obvious reason while under the experience of mental symptoms factor the strongest-loading item was I feel that life is too much effort.
Teachers’ scores across the *experience of mental symptoms* factor (figure 5.10) were between an approximate minimum of -2 and a maximum of 2.5. A -2 score indicated that teachers rarely experienced the mental symptoms while a 2.5 score meant an individual teacher had a frequent experience of the mental symptoms. This suggests the varied nature of symptoms experienced by individual teachers.

Scores across *experience of emotional symptoms* (figure 5.11) ranged from a minimum of approximately -1.7 and a maximum of 2.7. The relevant case summary was analysed and it indicated that an individual with a -1.7 score rarely experienced the emotional symptoms. Inversely, an individual scoring approximately 2.7 would be reporting frequently experiencing the emotional symptoms.
5.5 Section F: How you have coped with pressure

5.5.1: Subsection overview

In part I of section F, respondents were asked about the coping strategies they had employed in the past two years from 1 (rarely) to 5 (frequently) and, in part II, to indicate how effective they found those strategies from 1 (not effective) to 5 (very effective) (appendix 28). Data from parts I and II of this questionnaire segment was subjected to the same factor analysis process as utilised in the preceding section. Listed below are the items which made up the section.
5.5.2 Part I: How frequent coping strategies have been used in the past two years

Analysis of two, three and four factor solutions was done prior to choosing the two-factor solution which made the best theoretical sense. The KMO was .79 while the Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity approximate chi-square was 699.05 with a sig. value of <.05. Below, table 5.7 shows results of the principal component analysis and factor analysis.

Table 5.7: Total Variance Explained - How frequent coping strategies have been used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
<th>Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total % of Variance</td>
<td>Cumulative %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>31.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>12.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

From table 5.7 above, component 1 explained 31.28% while component 2 explained 12.89% variance. Table 5.8 below depicts the result of a two-factor solution performed on items in the relevant section.

Table 5.8: Rotated component matrix – How frequent coping strategies have been used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 1: Direct-action coping strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep things in perspective</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause and think objectively about the situation</td>
<td>.776</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deal with the source of the problem so that it does not happen again</td>
<td>.738</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t let the problem go until I have satisfactorily dealt with it</td>
<td>.712</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek help from others in aspects of the problem I can’t deal with</td>
<td>.645</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set priorities and consider a range of plans in dealing with the problem</td>
<td>.517</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 2: Palliative coping strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek social support to help me cope emotionally</td>
<td>.809</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try not to worry or think about it</td>
<td>.627</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express my feelings and frustration to others</td>
<td>.599</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sure people are aware I am doing my best</td>
<td>.540</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Items which did not load at all were not reported. The result of the two-factor solution reflected the two types coping identified in previous studies (e.g. Fortes-Ferreira et al, 2006) – direct-action and palliative coping strategies. Fortes-Ferreira et al (2006) found that palliative coping linked to experiences of high stress.

Analysis of the relevant histogram (figure 5.12) indicated that individual scores across the *direct-action coping strategies* factor had an approximate minimum of -2.7 and a maximum of 2. The histogram also indicated no clear pattern on teachers' use of direct-action coping strategies as a preferred way of responding to stress. The case summary was scrutinised and it showed that a minimum score on the *direct-action coping strategies* factor was consistent with a minimum score on each of the variables constituting the factor as was a maximum score on the factor consistent with a maximum score on each original variable. A low score indicated rare use of the *direct-action coping strategies* while a high score was indicative of frequent use of the *direct-action coping strategies*.

Figure 5.12: Histogram – How frequent direct-action coping strategies have been used
Responses across *palliative coping strategies* (see figure 5.13) started from approximately -2.0 to 2.7. When the relevant case summary was examined, it revealed that -2.0 on the *palliative coping strategies* factor meant a very low score on original variables while a 2.7 score on the factor corresponded with a very high score on the original variables. A low score indicated rare use of the *palliative coping strategies* while a high score was indicative of frequent use of these coping strategies.

*Figure 5.13: Histogram – How frequent palliative strategies have been used*

**5.5.3: Part II: Effectiveness of coping strategies**

Part II of section F asked respondents to indicate how effective they found given coping strategies. Factor analysis of this section revealed a KMO of .78. The Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity approximate chi-square was 524.87 and had a sig value of .00.

Two, three and four factor solutions were analysed before the two-factor solution was selected for its theoretical interpretability. An examination of
the principal component analysis (table 5.9) showed that the two components explained 36.0% and 14.8% of the variance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
<th>Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>% of Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>35.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>14.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After trying solutions for a different number of factors using the Varimax rotation, the two-factor solution (table 5.10 below) was chosen. Besides having two discernible factors, it also made it easier to interpret part II in light of part I of this section which also had two almost correspondingly-constituted factors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 1: Effectiveness of direct action coping strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t let the problem go until I have satisfactorily dealt with it</td>
<td>.744</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deal with the source of the problem so that it does not happen again</td>
<td>.743</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set priorities and consider a range of plans in dealing with the problem</td>
<td>.719</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause and think objectively about the situation</td>
<td>.711</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep things in perspective</td>
<td>.698</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take immediate action according to my understanding</td>
<td>.601</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek help from others in aspects of the problem I can’t deal with</td>
<td>.517</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 2: Effectiveness of palliative coping strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try not to worry or think about it</td>
<td>.735</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek social support to help me cope emotionally</td>
<td>.716</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sure people are aware I am doing my best</td>
<td>.710</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to reassure myself everything will work right</td>
<td>.693</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express my feelings and frustration to others</td>
<td>.594</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to note that, in spite of slight differences in factor loadings, the two coping strategies which emerged in part I also occurred in this
part. Thus, the theoretical basis and interpretation for this part is the same as that expounded in part I of this questionnaire section.

As shown in figure 5.14 below, respondents’ scores across the *effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies* factor ranged from approximately -3.0 to about 2.4. As expected, an analysis of the case summary showed that a respondent with a -3.0 score on the factor also scored very lowly on all variables making up this factor. On the other hand, an individual scoring approximately 2.4 on the *effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies* factor would be expected to report very high effectiveness across all constituent variables. A low score in factor *effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies* meant low effectiveness of *effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies* original variables while a high score showed high *effectiveness of direct action coping strategies* original variables.

Figure 5.14: Histogram – Effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies
Scores across *effectiveness of palliative coping strategies* (figure 5.15) ranged from approximately -2.6 to approximately 2.6. The relevant case summaries were analysed and it emerged that a scorer of -2.6 typically considered all coping strategies variables making up this factor very low in effectiveness while those with a 2.6 score on the factor had a maximum score on each of the original variables. A low score in *effectiveness of palliative coping strategies* meant low effectiveness of *effectiveness of palliative coping strategies* while a high score showed high *effectiveness of palliative coping strategies*.

![Histogram - Effectiveness of Palliative Coping Strategies](image)

**Figure 5.15: Histogram – Effectiveness of palliative coping strategies**

5.6 Resilient/At-risk teacher scores across factors

Figure 5.16 below depicts scores of resilient and at-risk teachers in the past two years on factors generated from factor analysis. Mean self-efficacy scores for resilient teachers were higher on all factors than those
of at-risk teachers. For both sets of teachers, the highest respective score was on influence on pupil attainment.

Figure 5.16: Resilient/At-risk teacher scores across factors

As expected, resilient teachers’ means on all sources of stress factors were lower than those of at-risk teachers, with at-risk teachers having the highest mean on the workload/time constraints factor \((M=3.82, SD=0.65)\) compared to that of resilient teachers \((M=2.07, SD=0.95)\). Unsurprisingly, resilient teachers’ means were low on both stress symptoms factors compared to those scored by at-risk teachers. Means for experience of stress symptoms were higher for at-risk teachers, particularly on the experience of emotional symptoms factor \((M=3.62, SD=0.97)\). Resilient teachers’ direct-action coping strategies frequency mean \((M=3.60, SD=1.06)\) was higher than that of at-risk teachers \((M=3.48, SD=0.49)\). In contrast, the mean for palliative coping strategies frequency was higher for at-risk teachers \((M=3.08, SD=0.79)\) was higher than that for resilient teachers \((M=2.62, SD=1.18)\). On effectiveness of
coping strategies, resilient teachers’ mean on direct-action coping strategies ($M=3.89, SD=.99$) was higher than that of at-risk teachers ($M=3.25, SD=.75$). On effectiveness of palliative coping strategies, at-risk teachers’ mean ($M=2.98, SD=.87$) was higher than resilient teachers’ mean ($M=2.84, SD=1.36$).

### 5.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss results of factor analyses conducted on variables from sections C, D, E and F of the survey questionnaire. In addition, PCA and factor analysis techniques were also used as part of data reduction to make the number of variables more manageable. Varimax with Kaiser normalisation was utilised on the assumption that the generated factors were uncorrelated. This particular rotation method was selected because it maximises variance by consolidating high loading while it minimises low loadings (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). PCA and factor analyses were useful in grouping relevant variables into homogeneous and unique factors which, in turn, were useful in generating factor scores for use in regression analysis in chapter 6.

The factor analyses were performed by the relevant sections in which they were classified within questionnaire. In section C (your perceptions), three factors emerged:

- teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline
- teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues
- teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment

These three factors were expected as they made theoretical sense. Section D (sources of stress) yielded six factors. This was in keeping with the many variables constituting this section. The factors were:

- workload/ time constraints
- organisational processes
- pupil behaviour; cover
- intra/ inter departmental climate and parental support
In section $E$ (how you have been feeling) two factors emerged:

- *Experience of mental symptoms*
- *Experience of emotional symptoms.*

As stated earlier, this was a theoretically logical outcome. Two factors emerged from section $F$ (how you have coped with pressure):

- *direct action coping strategies*
- *palliative coping strategies*

Again, this theoretically logical outcome was expected. The factors generated from the analyses in this chapter are treated as variables and used in regression analysis in the next chapter.
Chapter 6 : Regression Analysis

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, results of regression analysis on variables impacting on: *teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline* (section 6.2); *teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues* (section 6.3); *teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment* (section 6.4); *effectiveness of palliative coping strategies* (section 6.5); *effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies* (section 6.6) and *stress level* are presented. The decision to focus on these variables was influenced by the research questions of this thesis. Section 6.8 highlights key points.

One of the key foci of this research was teacher resilience. It has been observed in section 2.7 that, owing to the intricacy of the resilience construct, positions on how to measure the extent of this phenomenon among individuals are still divergent. Even so, there is general consensus on the key determinants of resilience, namely the presence of risk and protective factors and positive adaptive outcomes in individuals (Oswald et al, 2003).

As noted earlier, sections A (About you) and B (Your workload) of the questionnaire were primarily concerned with teachers’ biographical data, current teaching responsibilities and workload which helped provide basic individual background information. It was hoped that data drawn from this section would help determine the extent to which individual biographical variables impacted on stress and resilience factors. Section C (*your perceptions*) focused on teachers’ self-efficacy in key aspects of their job because self-efficacy tends to positively correlate with resilience (Hamill, 2003). Section D, which dealt with sources of stress, was meant to find out the presence and extent of stress risk in the schools. Section E (*How you have been feeling?*), sought to generate data on how frequently the teachers experienced specified stress symptoms. In addition, the 0 (not stressed) to 10 (extremely stressed) stress scale helped establish the overall stress these teachers experienced in their respective work.
contexts. The coping strategies in section (F) of the questionnaire gave an indication of the teachers’ adaptive behaviours and outcomes of these behaviours. It is worth noting that previous research (e.g. Johnson et al, 2010) has linked coping to resilience.

To examine the predictive relationship between the identified variables and regression analysis was utilised. In the process, these analyses models helped answer research questions for the present study as follows:

- teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline (RQ1;4)
- teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues (RQ1;4)
- teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment (RQ1;4)
- effectiveness of palliative coping strategies (RQ1;3)
- effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies (RQ1;3)
- stress level (RQ2)

The models in these analyses were constructed on the basis of stress and resilience theory and, as such, all variables included in these hypothesis-led models were of interest regardless of statistical significance or non-significance. As long as collinearity values were at acceptable levels, as was the case in these models, the explanatory variables were unlikely to adversely affect interpretation of the effects of other explanatory variables in the models. Regression diagnostics were also performed to check for suitability of each respective model.

### 6.1.1 Diagnostics

Regression diagnostics were performed on each model to establish consistency with underlying assumptions about multicollinearity, outliers, normality and linearity. To examine the models’ consistency with these assumptions probability-probability (P-P) plots and residual scatter plots were utilised. The purpose for analysing the p-p plots was to determine the models’ compliance with the normality assumption (Pallant, 2007), determining correctness of relevant models on the basis of linear distribution. To determine normality and detect the presence of outliers,
residual scatter plots for respective models were examined (Pallant, 2005).

Another assumption that was checked for was multicollinearity. The multicollinearity assumption stipulates that any set of explanatory variables in a model should not be highly correlated with each other to prevent inclusion of variables measuring the same thing in one model (Agresti and Finlay, 1997). The collinearity diagnostics were based on the models’ tolerance values which, according to Muijs (2004:181), measure “the amount of variance in the individual variable not explained by other predictor variables.” The next subsections detail regression analyses conducted on the data.

6.1.2 Model selection

The selection of models was significantly influenced by their appropriateness to the dataset and relevance to the focus of the present research. There are considerable challenges in selecting models from a range of alternatives as multiple tests significantly increase the probability of making type 1 errors which show significant relationships as existent in the population when this is not necessarily the case. In the present study, the presence of a large number of variables posed the risk of type 1 errors. In such cases, the stepwise selection strategy tends to be used in deciding the final model. This technique retains variables with a significant relationship with the response variable (Fox and Weisberg, 2011 and Weisberg, 1985). However, there are limitations with this method especially when there are a number of competing variables, as each one will be tested for entry into the model at the defined level of significance, which is usually .05 (singularly and in combination with other variables). Thus, if there are 20 contender variables, a typical stepwise procedure will explicitly test hundreds of combinations, which substantially increases the risk of unimportant variables showing significance. The problems with stepwise selection (and other automated selection techniques such as all-subsets selection) are well known as are the problems associated with
interpreting the regression coefficients and estimates of significance. This viewpoint is shared by Harrell (2001:43) who observes that:

Stepwise variable selection has been a very popular technique for many years, but if this procedure had just been proposed as a statistical method, it would most likely be rejected because it violates every principle of statistical estimation and hypothesis testing.

Furthermore, “P-values from subset selection software are totally without foundation, and large biases in regression coefficients are often caused by data-based model selection” (Miller, 1990 cited in Burnham and Anderson, 2002:43).

Due to the larger number of variables being considered in the models for the present study, type 1 errors were likely to be of concern. Most of these variables were likely to show relatively small associations with the response variables and the effects were likely to be subtle in the population. In these circumstances, it will be almost impossible to distinguish between real relationships and the many false-positives that are likely to be produced by repeated hypothesis testing. To counter this limitation, variables for the models were selected on theoretical logic and interpretability and then tested for significance. This prevented the practice of trawling through multiple significance tests to identify significant associations and then applying post-hoc rationalisations to ‘explain’ the results. Consistent with Agresti (2007), the variables chosen were of theoretical interest and were, therefore, included in the models even though they may not have reached significance. The models were tested using a confirmatory framework, which gave more justification for relating the results to the population, rather than just the sample. A detailed description of using a confirmatory modelling approach is provided in Burnham and Anderson (2002:47):

We cannot overstate the importance of the scientific issues, the careful formulation of multiple working hypotheses, and the building of a small set of models to clearly and uniquely represent these hypotheses.... We try
to emphasize a more confirmatory endeavour in the applied sciences, rather than exploratory work that has become so common and has often led to so little …

6.2 Which variables impact on teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline?

Regression analysis of the influence of experience, stress level and current teacher grade on the teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline was carried out. The explanatory variables were derived from the questionnaire used in the survey. The selection of experience as one of the explanatory variables in this model was based on the assumption that teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline was, inter alia, likely to depend on the amount of teaching experience each individual had. It would, therefore, make sense to surmise that teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline improved with experience. Likewise, stress level was also included in the model as teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline is likely to be linked to the stress they experience (Betoret, 2006 and Klassen, 2010). The expectation was that teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline would be adversely affected by high stress level. Current teacher grade was a further predictor variable considered for this analysis. The assumption here was that teachers on higher teacher grades would likely have more belief in their ability to deal with pupil disciplinary issues than those on lower teacher grades.

Collinearity statistics showed tolerance values of .92; .99 and .92 respectively which showed that the multicollinearity assumption was not violated. Analysis of the residuals scatterplot (figure 6.2) and the normal probability plot (figure 6.1) indicated that there was no violation of assumptions about outliers, normality, linearity, homoscedacity and independence of residuals.
Figure 6.1: Normal p-p plot of regression standardised residual – Teachers' self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline

![Normal p-p plot](image1)

Figure 6.2: Scatterplot - Teachers' self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline

![Scatterplot](image2)

Table 6.1: Summary of regression statistics – Teachers’ efficacy in influence on pupil discipline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-1.650</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>.387</td>
<td>4.629</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress level</td>
<td>-.122</td>
<td>-1.512</td>
<td>.133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current teacher grade</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>1.393</td>
<td>.166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R Square=.195
p<.001

Overall the model, which was also statistically significant, $F(3,125)=10.08, p<.001$, accounted for 19.5% of the variance in teachers’
self-efficacy in pupil behaviour. It emerged that, in the model, experience significantly and positively influenced teachers’ efficacy in their influence on pupil discipline. For every unit increase in experience, teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline increased by .39. This made sense as teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline would be expected to improve with experience and acquisition of more effective behaviour management strategies. This is in tandem with previous research (e.g. Ozdemir, 2007) which found that teaching experience had influence on teachers’ efficacy in classroom management. Confirmatory to this, a study by Brown (2004) revealed that experienced teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline was higher than that of their inexperienced colleagues primarily due to their unique ability to forge mutually respectful relationships with students.

6.3 Which variables impact on teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues?

Regression analysis was carried out to establish whether current teacher grade and approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities influenced teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues. These two independent variables were derived from the questionnaire. Initially, experience, stress level and current teacher grade were considered for this model on the premise that they would have a similar impact on teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues as they had had on teachers’ self-efficacy in pupil behaviour in subsection 6.2. However, an examination of the diagnostics output indicated a violation of the preconditions about outliers, normality, linearity, homoscedacity and independence of residuals which indicated the data did not fit the model. Similar outcomes resulted when subsequent tests involving stress level and experience; stress level and current teacher grade and experience and current teacher grade were done. However, the use of current teacher grade and approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities as predictor variables in the model proved appropriate for the dataset. This model still made sense as the predictor variables would still
be reasonably expected to have an impact on teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues.

Collinearity statistics revealed a tolerance value of .85 for each independent variable, evidence that the multicollinearity assumption was not violated. An examination of the residuals scatterplot (figure 6.4) and the normal probability plot (figure 6.3) indicated that there was no violation of assumptions about outliers, normality, linearity, homoscedacity and independence of residuals.

Figure 6.3: Normal p-p plot of regression standardised residual - Teachers' efficacy in influencing colleagues

Figure 6.4: Scatterplot - Teachers' efficacy in influencing colleagues
Table 6.2: Summary of regression statistics – Teachers’ efficacy in influencing colleagues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Standardised coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities</td>
<td>-2.16 (t = .010, Sig. = .192)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current teacher grade</td>
<td>.117 (t = 1.31, Sig. = .192)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Square = .101</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p = .001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statistically significant model, $F=(2,133)=4.94, p=.001$, accounted for 10.1% (table 6.2) of the variance in teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues. For every unit increase in current teacher grade, teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues rose by .25. With a p value of .005, current teacher grade also made a statistically significant unique contribution to the prediction of teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues. This was an expected result as teacher grade tends to associate with responsibility and influence (Carlyle and Woods, 2002), with those high up the teacher grade having responsibility over comparatively larger cohorts of teachers. With the way the UK school hierarchies are structured around the top-down command structure (Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), 2011), the more senior a teacher is, the more opportunities to exert influence on colleagues they are likely to have and, in turn, the more self-efficacy in influencing colleagues they are likely to have (Elie and Jenny, 2011 and Friedman, 2003).

6.4 Which variables impact on teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment?

Another variable that was modelled was teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment. Experience, stress level and approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities, all derived from the questionnaire, were the independent variables used for this model. The reason for including experience in the model was the expectation that
teachers’ beliefs about their influence on academic attainment would improve as they accrued more teaching experience. In contrast, stress level was expected to have a negative impact on teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment. It was hypothesised that the teachers’ self-efficacy in their influence on pupil attainment would decrease if their stress levels rose. Meanwhile, the inclusion of approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities emanated from the hypothesis that teachers’ beliefs about their influence on pupil attainment would positively correspond with how much time they spent doing their work, with those devoting more work hours to their work likely to feel better equipped to influence pupil attainment. Therefore, it was believed that more approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities would likely lead to an increase in teachers’ efficacy in their influence on pupil attainment.

Respective tolerance values of .99; .94 and .94 were shown in the relevant collinearity statistics for experience, stress level and approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities. This was evidence for the non-violation of multicollinearity assumption in this particular model. When the residuals scatterplot (figure 6.6) and the normal probability plot (figure 6.5) were scrutinised, it emerged that assumptions about outliers, normality, linearity, homoscedacity and independence of residuals were not violated.
Figure 6.5: Normal p-p plot of regression standardised residual - Teachers’ efficacy in pupil attainment

Figure 6.6: Scatterplot - Teachers' efficacy in pupil attainment

Table 6.3: Summary of regression statistics – Teachers’ efficacy in pupil attainment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-1.339</td>
<td>.183</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>-.018</td>
<td>-.210</td>
<td>.834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress level</td>
<td>-.256</td>
<td>-2.898</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate total time</td>
<td>.202</td>
<td>2.288</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per week spent on work-related activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As depicted in table 6.3 above, the model was not statistically significant, \( F(3,125)=3.73, p=.013 \). It explained 8.2 per cent of the variance in teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment. Stress level had
statistically significant (p<.005) unique contribution in predicting teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment. For every unit increase in stress level, teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment decreased by .26. With a p value of .004, stress level also made a statistically significant unique contribution to the prediction of teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment. Although this made sense, it was unexpected that, in light of research evidence (e.g. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2007) linking it to teacher efficacy in pupil attainment, experience did not have a statistically significant influence on teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment.

6.5 Which variables impact on effectiveness of palliative coping strategies?

Regression analysis of the influence of experience, stress level and approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities on the effectiveness of palliative coping strategies was conducted. Except for effectiveness of palliative coping strategies, a factor score derived from relevant factor analysis, all independent variables were taken from the questionnaire. As stated earlier, palliative coping strategies are those coping behaviours which aim to deal with the emotion, rather than the source, of stress. Experience was anticipated to have an influence on the teachers’ effectiveness of their palliative coping strategies. The expectation was that palliative coping effectiveness would decrease as experience increased since teachers were expected to deal with the sources of stress better and, therefore, shift from palliative to direct-action coping strategies. This shift in coping strategies would, in turn, impact on figures for palliative coping strategies. In addition, stress level was part of the model because it was expected to also influence the effectiveness of teachers’ palliative coping strategies. It was envisaged that an increase in stress level would have a negative impact on the effectiveness of palliative coping strategies. The third variable, approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities, was also a part of the model as it was likely to influence the effectiveness of palliative coping strategies in
that increased *approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities* would be expected to lead to increased *stress level* which would, in turn, decrease effectiveness of palliative coping strategies.

Collinearity statistics revealed respective tolerance values of .99; .94 and .94, evidence that the multicollinearity assumption was not violated. Inspection of the residuals scatterplot (figure 6.8) and the normal probability plot (figure 6.7) indicated that there was no violation of assumptions about outliers, normality, linearity, homoscedacity and independence of residuals.

Figure 6.7: Normal p-p plot of regression standardised residual - Effectiveness of palliative coping strategies
Table 6.4: Summary of regression statistics – Effectiveness of palliative coping strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-.897</td>
<td>.372</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.661</td>
<td>.510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress level</td>
<td>.275</td>
<td>3.106</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate total time</td>
<td>-.020</td>
<td>-.224</td>
<td>.823</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

per week spent on work-related activities

R Square = .078
p = .017

Table 6.4 above shows that the model explained 7.8% of the variance in effectiveness of palliative coping strategies. However, the model was not statistically significant, $F(3,125)=3.55, p=.017$. Further analysis showed that stress level was the only predictor variable with unique statistical significance ($p<.005$). Furthermore, every unit increase in stress level corresponded with a .28 increase in effectiveness of palliative coping strategies. This result was consistent with existing research evidence (e.g. Bingham Bailey and Smith, 2000) which suggests that palliative coping strategies do not help in reducing stress levels and, in the long-term, could have a catalytic effect on stress level.
6.6 Which variables impact on effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies?

Regression analysis was conducted on the impact of experience, stress level and approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities on the effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies. As previously stated, the explanatory variables were drawn from the questionnaire.

Similar to effectiveness of palliative coping strategies, experience was expected to impact on the teachers’ effectiveness of their direct-action coping strategies whereby the effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies would increase as experience increased. Furthermore, stress level was part of the model because it was expected to also influence the effectiveness of the teachers’ direct-action coping strategies. The expectation was that an increase in stress level would adversely impact on the effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies. Finally, approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities was also included in the model because it was likely to influence the effectiveness of direct-action strategies in that increased approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities would be expected to lead to increased stress levels which would, in turn, lead to a decrease in effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies.

From the collinearity statistics, there was evidence of tolerance values of .99, .94 and .94 respectively. Analysis of the residuals scatterplot (figure 6.10) and the normal probability plot (figure 6.9) indicated that there was no violation of assumptions about outliers, normality, linearity, homoscededacity and independence of residuals.
Figure 6.9: Normal p-p plot of regression standardised residual – Effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies

Figure 6.10: Scatterplot – Effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies
Table 6.5: Summary of regression statistics – Effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Standardised coefficients</th>
<th>Collinearity statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress level</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td>-2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Square = .106</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p = .005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.5 shows that the model was statistically significant, $F(3, 115) = 4.55, p = .005$, and accounted for 10.6% of the variance in effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies. For every unit increase in stress level, there was a decrease of .27 in effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies. This result indicating a negative correlation between stress level and effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies confirms what other researchers (e.g. Fortes-Ferreira et. al, 2006) have found in their investigations – that direct-action coping strategies negatively correlate with stress level and are, therefore, effective in reducing stress level. Additionally, the unique contribution of stress level to the model was statistically significant ($p < .005$).

6.7 Which variables impact on stress level?

Stress level was one of the key variables of the questionnaire used in this study. Regression analysis was executed to examine the influence of experience, approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities, teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline, teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues and teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment on the dependent variable. As indicated previously, experience and approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities were taken from the questionnaire whereas teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline, teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues and teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment were factor scores derived from factor analysis. The
hypothesis was that experience, approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities, teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline, teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues and teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment affected the amount of stress the teachers experienced. In this regard, teachers’ stress levels would be expected to diminish as the teachers gained more experience and their familiarity with, and mastery of, their job increased. On the other hand, an increase in approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities was supposed to correspond with an increase in stress levels. In addition, teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline, teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues and teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment were hypothetically supposed to help in lowering stress levels.

Analysis of the collinearity statistics showed respective tolerance values of .83; .90; .80; .95 and .98. When the residuals scatterplot (figure 6.11) and the normal probability plot (figure 6.12) were examined, it emerged that there was no violation of assumptions about outliers, normality, linearity, homoscedasticity and independence of residuals.

Figure 6.11: Normal p-p plot standardised residual - Stress level
This model (table 6.6 above) was statistically significant, $F(5,123)=4.31, p=.001$, and explained 14.9% of the variance in stress level. For every unit increase in approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities, stress level would increase by .31. On the other hand, each unit increase in teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment meant a decrease of .25 in stress level. Both approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities and teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment also made statistically significant ($p<.005$) individual unique contributions to the model. The positive correlation between approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities
and stress level reinforces the identification in the literature (e.g. Jepson and Forrest, 2006) of long working hours as one of the principal sources of stress. Conversely, as found by Klassen and Ming (2010), teacher self-efficacy tends to have a moderating effect on stress level.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter has examined explanatory variables of, and predictive power on, the following individual teacher factors linked to resilience:

- teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline
- teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues
- teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment
- effectiveness of palliative coping strategies
- effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies
- Stress level

All dependent variables, except stress level, were factor scores derived from factor analysis that was carried out prior to the regression analysis. The decision on explanatory variables to include in the models was informed by relevant theory. The regression analyses helped answer research questions of the present study.

Key findings from the regression analysis were varied across models. Teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline was significantly and positively influenced by experience while current teacher grade made a statistically significant unique contribution to teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues. Stress level made a statistically significant unique contribution in predicting teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment. Conversely, stress level was a statistically significant contributor to effectiveness of palliative coping strategies. The predictor which significantly influenced effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies was stress level whereas approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities and teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on attainment made statistically significant contribution to stress level.
Chapter 7 : Pen-portraits and Case Studies

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present detailed analyses of two schools from the sample (School 1 and School 10) chosen to illustrate schools which, despite being in challenging urban contexts, appeared to embody characteristics of resilience amongst their teachers by virtue of their relatively low stress means. The chapter will present case studies of the two schools including pen-portraits of five in the case of School 1 and three in the case of School 10. The pen-portraits will present lived-through risk and resilience experiences of the teachers while the encompassing case studies and multi-layered analyses will use Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological framework to illustrate teacher risk and resilience in relation to person, process, context and time (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006; Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Bronfenbrenner and Evans, 2000).

This chapter comprises nine sections. After this introduction, section 7.2 will present an overview of School 1 based on descriptive analyses of survey data and background contextual data. After this will follow pen-portraits of five School 1 teachers in section 7.3. In section 7.4 there will be a single case study analysis of the five School 1 teachers. Section 7.5 will present an overview of School 10 from the descriptive analysis of the questionnaire survey and background contextual data. Following in section 7.6 will be the pen-portraits of three School 10 teachers. In section 7.7 a single case study analysis of the three school 10 teachers will ensue. Finally, in section 7.8 is a cross-case analysis of the two schools with the purpose to identify across-school themes related to the research questions.
7.2 School 1 Overview

7.2.1 Background

School 1 was an urban comprehensive 11-16 mixed secondary school with a ‘Specialist Science College’ designation and comprising 1144 children, 75 teachers and 84 support staff. Ten percent of the children attending School 1 came from “very disadvantaged areas and receive free school meals” (Ofsted, 2005). The same Ofsted report stated that 5% of the children enrolled at the school were on the special educational needs (SEN) register only 1% of which had SEN statements. The proportion of ethnic minority pupils in the school (6.1%) was lower than the national average (10.5%).

At the time of the research in 2007, School 1 was a designated School Facing Challenging Circumstances (SFCC). It had also just been designated Investors in People (IIP) status and recognised as a National Healthy School, for which one of the indicators was how well staff and pupils worked together and the extent to which healthy lifestyles were promoted within the school.

7.2.2 Pupil GCSE results over time

In 2007, when School 1 participated in the present study, the number of pupils achieving at least 5 A*-C (and equivalent) GCSE results (figure 7.1 below) was 66% (not including English and mathematics). This figure was above the Local Authority (LA) and the national averages for the same year.
However, the data for GCSE (and equivalent) including Maths and English for the same year (figure 7.2 below) give a much different picture where School 1 results (37%) were below national (46%) and LA (41%) averages.
In the preceding year, 2006, School 1, LA and national averages were 43%, 35% and 46% respectively placing School 1 5+ A*-C (and equivalent) including English and Maths GCSE results for the year above the LA average but below the national average.

7.2.3 School 1 teachers

Drawing on questionnaire survey responses, school 1 provided the most number of participants overall: nine interviewees and 26 questionnaire respondents (11 male and 15 female). The main subjects taught were English (9), Maths (5), Science (2), ICT (2), Geography (1), Music (1), MFL (1), PE (1), History (2) and Art and Design (1). There was one missing subject value. Table 7.1 below depicts selected descriptive statistics for the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7.1: Selected School 1 descriptive statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experience (years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools taught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years in present school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate total work hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress level in the past two years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in table 7.1 above, School 1 age mean was just below sample mean (M=37.87, SD=10.94). Teaching experience mean of the school was also lower than sample mean (M=12.67, SD=11.11) as was number of schools taught mean (M=2.51, SD=1.79) and approximate total work hours mean (M=44.65, SD=6.19). Number of years in present school mean was above sample mean (M=9.15, SD=9.38). The school’s teachers’ mean stress level (on a scale of 0 (not stressed) to 10 (extremely stressed)) in the past two years was lower than sample mean (M=6.05, SD=2.60).
Overall, out of 26 teachers in School 1, 23.08% (N=6) were identified as resilient and 3.85% (N=1) as at risk (figure 7.3 below).

Figure 7.3: School 1 resilient/at-risk teacher proportions

7.3 School 1 Pen-portraits

7.3.1 Background

Five School 1 teacher pen-portraits were derived from interviews conducted during the main data collection phase. This group of teachers was selected for the variety of age, experience, prior career, subject specialism, seniority and specific role. Such a varied mix of teachers was hoped to cover a cross-section of perspectives on roles, activities and interpersonal relations pertaining to risk and resilience.

Ivy, who was key to this researcher’s access into the school, was responsible for staff wellbeing and had over 20 years teaching experience. Gabrielle, a Maths teacher, had been teaching for seven years when she was interviewed for this research. Like Ivy, she did not have another career prior to teaching. Meanwhile, David was a union representative and was involved in the school’s GTP (Graduate Teacher Programme) training provision. His teaching experience dated back to 1973 when he started off as a junior school teacher. Zoe, a teacher of
English, was head of faculty. She had over ten years teaching experience and, like most participants from her school, she did not have a different career prior to teaching. The fifth teacher, Grace, mainly taught ICT and had four years post-qualifying teaching experience.

The following five subsections are detailed pen-portraits from Ivy’s, Gabrielle’s, David’s, Zoe’s and Grace’s interviews.

7.3.2 Pen-portrait 1: Ivy, Teacher in charge of on-the-job staff wellbeing

I went to university straight after high school to do my teaching degree (…). I did not have any career before teaching. To me, teaching was it, making a contribution to kids (…) educating, if I may call it that. I had to grow into the job (…) falling, dusting myself down, picking myself up (…). I just didn’t get to the quitting point. I always thought there were better days ahead (…) and I kept challenging myself.

The first two, three years or so (…) it was as if I never trained for the job. The workload I was used to as a student, (…) it was as if they didn’t prepare us to be exposed us to the full velocity of the job (…) its full wrath. That was at my first school post-training. Second year had the same feeling (…) because I had moved schools, (…). Things in this school were also done differently from my first school. No standardisation at all. So (…) back to square 1 (…). No bloody consistency (…). At least this school was more supportive. You could ask for help without the fear of being branded incompetent or lazy. (…) I can say my development, as a professional, (…) was much quicker than in my first school. My HOD really wanted me to do well. Everyone was supportive (…). This helped my development (…).

I only ever left the school because (…) after a couple of years (…) I felt I had stagnated. (…). I needed to move up the ladder (…). Opportunities were few and far between (…). So when the HOD post came up here I
went for it. My HOD at my second school was sort of gracious; (...) she helped me prepare for the interview (...) a few mocks here and there (...) practicing. So the vibe I got was I (...) I had my school’s blessing.

So I got the HOD job here and it made perfect sense for me to move on (...) the easiest decision I will probably make. I didn’t know anyone here prior (...) but I got a sense it was a good school with good people, (...) and (...) I was right. At first it was a steep learning curve with the added responsibilities and extended work hours etc (...). They were supportive (...) so the pressure was bearable (...) I coped well. Over the years (...) responsibilities have also been added. So I am a busy person. Experience helps me withstand stuff (...) so I am okay (...).

I have a profound involvement in stuff to do with (...) on-the-job staff well-being. It’s a role that got given me because, (...) it’s something I’m passionate about (...) and the school reckons I can do it well I guess. I do a lot of work on that front (...) both inside and outside. (...) I’ve done some survey work with Greg James on emotional health and I’ve also organised CPD (...) on alternative therapy. (...) it wasn’t done in the school (...), external it was. So now we focus on this school (...). No (...) external work is not interfering with my duties here (...). In fact, there are a lot of positives I get from such activities. I get to use (...) the info. (...) there is a lot I then use within the school, helping staff (...). It’s all for the good (...) so there is no conflict (...).

(...) I’m also in charge of CPD, performance management, Investors in People (...). By the way, we have IIP status (...). We do take care of our teachers (...). Without them there is no school. Of course, the kids are the most important members of this school (...). But healthy teachers make it possible for the kids to thrive (...). The teachers stand in front of them kids everyday (...) so their wellbeing is indeed crucial. Happy teachers, happy kids (...) positive outcomes for kids. That’s how it works, (...).
I’m also responsible for cover (…). Cover is a dirty word (…), but it’s bloody necessary. We try to balance it out so that our staff aren’t overburdened. When we can help it we try to cover internally, but within reason (…). Sometimes we do it externally (…), supply teachers (…) – although I do think kids are better off with someone they are familiar with. It’s about minimising the impact of staff absence on kids’ progress. (…) with supply staff continuity is difficult. (…) supply teachers are important (…) they do a marvellous job. But, to be fair to them (…), they’re barely given time to bed in, (…) so it can be sort of challenging. My goal is (…) to make sure the disruption to kids’ learning is minimum or, at best, non-existent. Alongside that (…), I’m responsible for the quality of learning and teaching. (…) that’s why I’m particular about continuity in kids’ learning (…) I loathe disruption to their learning. It’s their future (…).

It may not seem like it, (…) but these roles make me very aware of the need to try to develop positive well-being across the school (…) not just teachers (…) not just kids (…) everybody. (…), I believe happy teachers usually mean happy pupils who can go on (…) to learn and achieve. I also believe that the emotional health of staff can (…) contribute to the overall ethos and feeling of the organisation (…). Everyone gets to pull in the same direction (…). (…), I’m not saying it’s a bed of roses (…). No school is perfect, I agree (…), but there’s no denying we’re a good school.

In addition to our IIP status, we are designated as a National Healthy School (…). The designation includes the whole community. So that makes us a community school (…). What has contributed to all this recognition? It is simple (…), it is the fact that we’ve got pretty rigid personnel policies which, among other things (…), put equality high on the school-wide agenda. The aim of this drive is to improve the quality of experience everyone has in the school (…) an approach which means equity in all and for all (…). (…) in addition, we evaluate processes within the school to ensure staff have a voice in proceedings (…). We are also aware of union guidance on several things like PPA time (…), cover,
attendance and other such stuff (…) and workload, yes. We also support staff through difficulties by looking at time out in times of need and (…), we treat all staff equally. (…) Time-out means cover (…) means some disruption to kids’ learning (…) a vicious cycle it is. But there are times when it is an absolute necessity (…) colleagues understand, kids understand (…) we’re in it together, a community.

Insofar as stress in education is concerned, I think (…) stress factors are different for all staff and, (…) so it is difficult to generalise. So many, (…) very different sources of stress (…) pressure sources (…) when tension can bite a bit. However, (…) I would suggest that pupil behaviour, (…) cover and marking workload do cause huge stress to some people (…) to which (…) as well, (…) let’s not forget, issues outside school also impact on how people cope. So it’s not just the schools or, what’s happening in it. Baggage (…), people do have baggages which also affect how they respond to stuff at work. Also, (…) the exam season and end of terms also (…) always cause stress and, (…) therefore, during these periods, we always keep an eye on workload and pay others to mark at crunch times, (…) relieving pressure off colleagues. We give additional non-contact time or review PPA time as appropriate (…). In an effort to track the level and impact of stress in the school (…), middle managers are asked to log all absences with a supportive return-to-work interview which would highlight any issue staff want to declare in respect to the cause of their absence, (…) so that we may know how best to support them. (…) These are logged by the Deputy in charge of human resources. Oh (…), additionally, in the same spirit of helping teachers cope with the pressure of work (…) stress etc, the PE department offers staff exercise opportunities. (…) moreover, we have a thriving Body-Aware group that is well-attended. (…) staff are pretty busy,(…) they may not always find time to attend. To promote staff bonding and self-esteem, we also celebrate our successes a lot.

Concerning who is likely to be stressed, I am not sure if there is a definitive type of person that gets stressed, (…) or that there are particular
individual characteristics of stressed people (…) hard to figure out. But I guess it is more how we deal with it that is different. But, (…), I strongly believe people with a very positive outlook in general can deal with greater levels of stress than pessimistic people (…). It’s what I’ve seen (…) I speak to all sorts of different people and can recognise stress symptoms that range drastically. Personally, I get 'manic' and just smile at everything. Coping strategies are widely varied (…), some scream and shout (…), others just take days off through a myriad of causes while some get grumpy (…) huge differences.

7.3.3 Pen-portrait 2: Gabrielle, Teacher of Maths

I started off as a primary school teacher; (…) specialised in Maths at Key Stage (KS) 2 (…) did that for a few years (…) then decided it wasn’t for me and just moved into the secondary sector and never looked back. I found it a lot easier. (…), definitely. KS2 is the foundation (…) so I know what their needs are before you can build on what they are expected to do at secondary. Because a lot of the Maths you teach at KS2 is repeated at KS3 (…) so the kids that are struggling (…) there is stuff from KS2 that I can use to help them. So, for me, it was easy transition from KS2 at primary to secondary KS3.

Staff relationships dynamics, (…) that’s really important (…) I think when you are in a job that’s so important that you get on with everybody (…) and that’s what I liked about this school. The fact that all the way through (…), the head, all the way down, (…), I find that everybody is working together towards the future of the school (…), whereas at my old school there was a lot of BITCHINESS between the head teacher and the deputy head. (…) Like there was an issue where my head teacher said she wouldn’t give me a good reference, (…) based on the observation she had seen. Yet I had had the best results in the school (…) I had the best SATs results the school had ever had and the best level 5 results the school had ever had. And yet (…) on my observation sheet she said I am not giving you a good reference. So the deputy head had to give me the reference
for my threshold because the head wouldn’t give me a reference. I moved here. I moved job (…), it did affect me. I was really upset because I thought (…) I work hard (…) it’s not being appreciated (…) because it’s not a job where you get bonuses if your class does well (…) you just do it because you care for the kids. You want them to do well and basically I just thought (…), I am working really hard and you are not appreciating what I am doing so I am going.

And then Ivy spoke to my partner who works here and said (…), “There’s a Maths job coming up (…), she can apply for it if she’s not happy. (…) Obviously, the school does everything by the book (…) you apply (…) you go through an interview and everything (…). They don’t just say here is the job. And now I feel I am happy. I actually feel like this is the first school where I am appreciated (…), and this is my fifth job. I have worked in three primary schools (…) of all different sizes and in different locations (…) and then I have worked in my old secondary school and then here (…) that’s five.

(…) secondary school is different from primary school (…); different from where I started off. (…) it’s very cliquey in a primary school because of the number of staff for one. If your face doesn’t fit it’s very obvious, (…), and because English was my weakness in primary school, then obviously the head teacher didn’t want me to stay in the school. (…), because my first job was permanent, my mentor got sick and they couldn’t find another teacher. (…) And then they asked me to go and work in other schools to develop my confidence (…) to work with some other teacher (…) and then when I went back he didn’t actually know how much NQT time I had left. So the union said (…), “Pack your bags. You are not going back.” So the LEA had to put me on like a therapeutical placement to finish my NQT. And then after that I really struggled to get a permanent job because they were looking at (…) well, “We won’t employ you. What’s your work history about?” It just happened that I really had a bad time (…). The second job was temporary and then my third job was temporary and then the fourth job was within a secondary school (…) that was temporary but then was
made permanent. Because they did give me the opportunity to change from primary to secondary (…) so I was grateful for that and I said I don’t blame them for making it temporary (…) because if I was no good then they wouldn’t have stuck with me. But then, even though I don’t like my old school, I do appreciate that they gave me the opportunity to develop.

(…), early on, at that primary school I experienced stress (…) a lot. My coping? (…) Not very well (…) when I was off sick, obviously, I was bored (…) eating a lot of food (…) put on a lot of weight and became overweight (…) very down (…) crying a lot of time. I am just thankful to people for the way they helped me like (…) my union which helped me (…) and the LEA which helped me as well through that really tricky part of my starting out (…) and my parents as well (…) because they really helped. Because I was still at home, (…) I was still a baby to them still even at 22 (…). And they were like (…) speaking to my union telling them, “This is really what she wants to do. You must help her (…). You can’t allow her to fail.” Though they supported me (…) at the same time I was very upset at home. I missed out on buying a house (…). So that affected me financially as well. (…), it was just a nightmare. But it was just worth fighting for because I knew this was what I wanted to do (…) but it was very stressful in the beginning. I haven’t, at any stage, (…) considered leaving the profession (…). I am a fighter. If somebody tells me I am a failure, I will prove them wrong (…); I always fight (…).

Things at the moment are cushy. Because I have been teaching for seven years now (…) so I’m in a position now (…) I’m enjoying my job. But I am also getting bored (…), but I am planning to get married and to have children (…) so that might work in my favour. But at the same time I want to be developing professionally. So I’m seeking what I can be doing. Like there is a second-in-department job that came up (…) but I didn’t go for it which I regret now because I wanted to do head of year. But the number of jobs doing head of year is decreasing (…) because they are giving non-teachers to do it. (…), but I still want to go that route even though there is a shortage of it (…). I still want to give it a go. (…), and then (…) maybe
(...) if a second-in-department comes again (...). Or I will decide to move school (...) WHICH I don't really want to do to be honest. Because, having been to that many schools, I just want to stay where I am. I've got a good relationship with kids (...). I enjoy working here. The results are really good which makes a good thing. (...), but I am seeking (...); but hopefully I'll stay here. The head of pastoral (...); she is gonna give me and my partner (...), a job to do next year in September. But we don't get paid to do that (...) it's still all part of the job. So, basically, it's supporting year 11 (...) which is pretty much my year group (...) and each of us will have a job to do within that (...) which I wouldn't like to do but I've got to think about the kids first. So we have spoken about this (...) but I'm not quite sure what it is yet. But I'm just looking forward to it because I want something to make my day different. (...) It's nice I am being spoken to here.

(...) I'm not in teaching for money (...) because it doesn't make you happy (...) I know it can help. At the moment it would be really nice to have a quality of life (...). I am planning to get married (...) I can't afford to go shopping. I am on 32 but my partner is on 22 (...) so between us we are on about 50 grand. But with our mortgage and everything else we just can't afford everything. So (...) basically, money isn't a factor (...). I would rather earn it for doing a dinner duty than doing a lot of paperwork. I would rather earn it that way than spend a lot of time at home worrying about paperwork. I know, being a head of year there would be paperwork (...) but it's something I can do within an hour. (...).

Colleagues' attitudes towards my subject aren't an issue (...). Well, mine is a core subject so it's highly regarded (...) so I haven't any issue. It comes with its own pressures (...). But when I do my best in the classroom (...) I know it's them that need to go and revise and it's up to them to go and sort it out. But there is a lot of pressure on results because of emphasis on five GCSEs including Maths and English.
On-the-job relationships to me (…), it’s essential. If you don’t have the backing of your department, then you feel very lonely. If you don’t have the backing of the parents, then kids can cause problems in the classroom. (…), so you need the support of your colleagues. That’s very important. You need to be backed by the SMT because if you want to impress in school you need to be well thought of. (…) So just basically (…) just try to get on with everyone.

I have had difficulty recently (…) a very confrontational mother on the phone giving me an earful and I had to put the phone down in a polite way. I dealt with it quite well people told me at the time. And parents came for a meeting because, apparently (…), they thought I had been bullying their son, which isn’t true. And (…), I didn’t deal with it very well because they said something (…), it really hurt me what they were saying. And I snapped back and said, “I think I’m getting tired of this now.” (…) I said, “At the end of the day, if pupils don’t want me to teach them that’s fine.”

The training that we get doesn’t prepare you for an aggressive parent. How do you deal with the situation? (…) Because I wasn’t ready (…). I never had to deal with a parent that’s being aggressive saying, “You are bullying my son. You are doing this; you are doing that.” I'm not used to that kind of confrontation that you get on the street (…); that’s how it felt. It was awful. It really upsets me (…). It upsets me because, at the end of the day, I do the best for every kid I teach and when the parents don’t recognise that’s what I am doing, they listen to their child rather than the teacher (…) and that frustrates me because children have this thing of twisting things. And I feel sorry for any children that I will have (…) because I will back the teacher 100%. I will not take their view on board at all. Because if they show disrespect to the teacher, then whatever decision the teacher makes (…) then the parents should stand by that. Because, at the end of the day, if you don’t have that respect, then it’s not gonna work, is it? I’m glad I got the backing of my department (…) it’s quite strong here. Because I said, “He’s not coming back into the classroom until he knows what’s going on, what’s expected,” (…) and I
said I’m not gonna treat him different from anybody else. He’s got to know. He’s not going to ruin the ethic in that class.” It’s year 11. It’s GCSE year. You’ve got three weeks before they left. You just ruin the environment that’s there if you came in and started being awful, “My mum and dad, blah blah blah,” (…) do you know this kind of thing? And it just would have ruined it in there. So I’m glad I got the backing of the department (…) we are quite strong here.

It affected my relationship with the kid, to be honest (…) really negative. Because I felt like I’m self-analysing. Like (…) you feel like you’re watching yourself, like analysing. Have I done that fairly? What have I done wrong? Am I treating them unfairly? And (…) all the time I’m questioning myself like that because of this parent. I felt, that’s really wrong. Why am I questioning myself? Because of this parent, because of the situation I’ve been in, (…) it’s wrong.

The child is the only one out of 500 children I have taught in the school that’s had a problem. So it’s he that’s got a problem and not me. So obviously, for me to resolve it I’ll ignore him. Don’t get me wrong, but this student really annoyed me. To get over it (…) I just got on (…). I just put a face on it. Like I said, it’s like a stage (…) so you just put a face on it. But it still hurts inside (…) but you’ve just got to put a face on. Being a teacher is very much like being on stage. If your face shows you crack, and they will crack you further and further. So you can’t let them see. But my relationship with kids is like (…) the other week I was upset my grandmother was put in a home. And with some classes I teach I could share that with them whereas with other kids I couldn’t because I found that my personal life doesn’t mean anything to them. Some kids are okay when you share things, others not.

In this school as well, (…) I think I have been annoyed by some members of staff in my department at times. I don’t think I handled them well because I just kind of fire up. I have not dealt with it in the best way. But usually they annoy me. Especially at the school Maths club (…) and it’s
optional after-school (...). You don’t have to go. (...), and I said, “Well, I’m not going to Maths club because I do my dinner duty every day.” I said, “I need some time to myself because I do my dinner duties.” I said, “I need some time to myself and my classes know they can come to see me.” They said, “That’s your choice.” (...) But that’s their choice and I said, “Yeah, that’s my choice because school is over. I am not going to Maths club.” And I was made to feel guilty because I wasn’t doing something that I don’t get paid for (...) I do my dinner duty everyday (...) which is really more than my fair share anyway. I chose not to go, but I made sure that if my kids wanna see me that I teach (...) I will be there for them anytime of the week.

Having gone through what I went through (...) I have learnt that you’ve got to have self-belief (...) and if you really want something you’ve got to fight for it and not let anyone put you down. A lot of people just pull you down (...) like the final placement I was training in (...) my head teacher said, “You’ll never make a good teacher. You’ll be just okay. You’ll get by.” (...) I just want to go up to him with my observations and say, “Oh, look at that!” (...), a lot of pay-back really. People just put you down (...) and I just shove it in their faces and say, “You know what? I proved you wrong.” You see, I’ve got to prove people wrong. (...) So I have LEARNED that you (...) gotta fight for what you want really as well. Because I have learnt this recently as well. If I come and say, “Should I have that job?” People don’t believe in you and, because of that, I do not have the confidence to go for it. I didn’t want to do this, but you want someone to say, “You should apply for that job, (...), I think you are ready for it.” I mean, I need people who are like that. It would be really nice if somebody felt, “Well, you should have gone for it.” There aren’t that many chances anymore. I’ve got to be patient.

Everybody is treated the same. With children as well, firm but fair. Well, (...) they know that with me they learn a lot. I mean, they respect what I do (...), even if they don’t like it at the time (...) because there isn’t messing around, they learn a lot with me. So everyone is treated the
same. As soon as you get something wrong, we are dealing with it. The proper way of dealing with it isn’t verbally. (...) I have my book right there with me, and (...), so I can write in it, say who is talking and isn’t working. If a kid’s name appears in the book for a number of times I then say, “Right, the next time you speak, you are gonna be on a warning.” I put a line underneath their name, then I formally warn them (...) but everybody is being treated the same. It’s being fair, but being firm as well. (...)

Children (...) they respond well (...) because everybody is being monitored. And that’s something I learned very early on because the first job that I got as an NQT there was a girl in there (...) who had lots of psychological problems (...). Dad would hit her mom at home. So school was a way for the child to get away from it all. And she used to kick other kids underneath the table and everything like that (...). So at the end of the lesson I would give her a smiley face based on what she had achieved during that day. And this girl’s behaviour was so much better (...) because of how I handled her (...) according to her home situation. Her behaviour was impeccable (...) and even her mum came to see me before she left and, at the time, (...) bearing in mind a lot was going on. The day that I was leaving, again (...), her mum came in with a present for me. (...) she came and said, “Thank you for understanding my child, getting to know her, spending your time and, whatever you have done really, you have done something nice (...).” I said, “Yeah, we must carry on fighting.” It’s kind of a sign (...) that I was doing something right. Stuff like that, I really appreciate. Even if they just buy a card and say we appreciate you. It’s things like that (...), really (...) it’s because of them kids (...) because I’m making a difference in their lives.

If I had a bad day (...) somebody really will have wound me up because I work really hard. All these things being said, that I’m meant to do this thing by the end of the day (...) because (...) I am just thinking, “Why am I meant to do this by the end of the day? If I’m on fulltime duty (...); I’ve got a full timetable (...) I’m on break duty, when exactly am I meant to get it
done?” (…) And then they are mad at you because you haven’t got it done. Like for this week (…) for instance, I’ve had to plan a year 6 lesson today, which I don’t mind doing. But all frees are took off me.

But I got an idea when I was teaching in another classroom on cover (…) so I multi-tasked. But on Tuesday, I did that for free, because the teacher I had covered for previously was in. There was a new teacher starting in September around the school, so I said, “Look, I’ll take you around the school,” because she will be teaching Maths and Science. And I said, “I’ll take you around. I’ll show you around.” So my free I gave it up to show somebody else around, WHICH I DON’T MIND DOING (…), but it’s not noticed (…). So it doesn’t count as you have done something in free time for the school which should count as cover. Things like that annoy me. So, like today (…) I have lost two, (…) no I have lost three and I have lost my year 11 time (…) so I have given up three frees and now I have given up period 5 to do this for Ivy. (…), so that’s three hours today that I’ve given up. I mean (…) usually I’m at primary school this lesson (…) but because it’s coming to the end of term, I know (…) but it’s still time I’m giving up. I will do (…) because other people will go, “Oh, I’ll help you out”. If people start taking the mick (…) I said to Jo this morning (…), “I’m doing this for you today, but I have not had any frees (…) I’ve not had a free this week.” She said, “Ah, leave it with me.” So I’m hoping now (…) that Thursday, Friday I’ll have time to myself just planning. You get asked for stuff and it eats into your free time. I don’t mind doing it as long as people appreciate what I am doing. That’s a good thing.

So (…), another thing is that when you’re starting at a new school it is more stressful because that’s when you are trying to learn everybody’s name. (…) You’ve got to know the kids (…) you’ve got to learn the routines in the school. The kids know the rules better than you do, so you’ve got to be on top of the game because if you don’t, the kids will walk all over you. So at the start in a new school (…), I think, is more stressful. You’ve got to get your head around the new scheme of work, the new resources, new members of staff (…) you’ve got to learn everybody’s
name (...) get used to the building (...) especially in a secondary school, you can get lost (...) you’ve got to learn everything (...) quickly.

The sort of people I go to for help when I’m stressed are (...) Mike, he works here. I go to Ivy. I go to Michelle Jones (...) I go to Delaney in SMT (...) I go to Jo sometimes, who is my boss in Maths department. But, (...) I didn’t go to SMT because (...) I know really (...) how well I’m regarded in the school. I was asked recently when I did not look well by someone in SMT. She said, “Well, are you okay?” I said, “No. I’m just feeling low today.” She said, “Why?” I said, “Well, I’ve missed an opportunity in this department. I have missed another opportunity. So I’m just missing all the opportunities.” She said, “You’re well regarded in this school, don’t be stupid (...). If an opportunity comes, go for it. Don’t think you’re not well qualified.” I said, “Thanks for that.” (...) Because sometimes you just need to hear it, that you are well appreciated because in a school you can do this, you can do that. It’s not a 9 to 5 job where you say, “Right, I’m giving you all the time.” You’re just expected (...) you are free to go but, sometimes, people expect you to do more than (...) you know what I’m trying to say. They shouldn’t make you feel you have to do it because you don’t have to. It’s optional, (...). So it’s easy when you can have people you can talk to for help really. I go to certain people because (...), well (...) Ivy used to teach Maths, so she knows Math. Michelle is in charge of pastoral. So I get on with Michelle (...), so I wanna go to her for help. Mike is (...) the overall in Maths and ICT and he is my boss (...) and I go to him because I know he respects what I do and, if I go to him, he wouldn’t want to lose a Maths teacher because it’s really hard to get a Maths teacher. (...) So they don’t want their Maths staff to be unhappy. (...) Because if they are, they will leave and then they will struggle to get somebody in to replace the teacher they have lost. (...)

But staff development also needs to improve (...). I’m feeling like some people in the department are getting more developed than others. Like some of my colleagues (...) all of them are on some courses and they have been here for one year only. I’ve been here for two years and I want
to develop. (…) I’ve been on one in my two years here, whereby I went to a local university to do the training for training other teachers. And then I’ve gone on this little managers' thing (…) I think it’s changed its name to something else.

But (…) stress can be really a bad thing. But me personally, I don’t get it (…), but I know new teachers in the school, and I’ve seen them really upset because their boss hasn’t got time for them. So to one member of staff they can really say, “Yeah, I can help ya,” (…) and then another member of staff from the same department goes and they get told to go away (…) and that person ends up in tears being really upset. And then other colleagues within the department are helping them, not the head of department.

The sort of advice I would give to a stressed teacher, well (…) just talk about it (…). Something may have upset them and how they feel. (…) that’s the problem for NQTs (…) they are that worried about doing things wrong than working on. They don’t want to get something wrong because they don’t want to fail their NQT year. If they don’t get it right they feel like a failure (…) because everything is falling apart around them. They are not getting supported. They need a lot of support. Their boss is too busy to deal with it. And that is an issue within one department in the school. I think that people get treated unfairly sometimes. (…) because you’ve got time for some members of staff but not for all of us. (…) people are getting upset and then they go to colleagues in science, which is really good. But (…) we all are surprised. But because we care for each other, we help each other out; especially an NQT (…), you just have so much to think about. (…). Because they’re so scared about every little bit and doing the right thing, and they are worrying about what the next stage is, what to do. Because they’re not experienced and all they need is the guidance from the head of department and he didn’t have the time. And that is why this member of staff was in tears (…) because they are not favourites.
If I could change anything in this job I would have guaranteed frees (…) not for people to waste time, but for people to do planning and preparing for their lessons and for getting jobs done. So that’s something I find actually would help me. If I get all my frees I could do all the jobs that I do on top of my normal job, which I do; things like planning lessons for primary, phoning primary schools and anything else I’m asked to do (…) WHICH I DON’T MIND doing. But if I had my free time I could do it better than saying, “Well, we need you to cover this lesson today.” I DON’T MIND DOING COVERS (…), but at the moment every day you get the cover and it’s just ridiculous.

People off for too long need something doing (…). So even the teacher needs to be aware of the real reasons for why they are off (…) so that some people don’t get their own way when they say they are not coming. And then it’s us that get the pressure put on (…) because we are the ones that have to do the cover for them (…) because I always come. I have never had a day off (…) and then you see people off sick for five to six months (…); because you are entitled six months full pay if you are off sick; and then coming and play the game again. You see, all those people aren’t generally ill because (…) if they are generally ill, they wouldn’t come in. (…) I’ve been ill when I was an NQT, but I was trying to do something about it (…) I was trying to get back in to my job. But I couldn’t do it differently, because it would have counted as a proper placement, (…). So it’s not a way I could actually go about it. But the school could then afford to get someone to do supply while I was off. So (…), I think that’s an issue that generally needs dealing with because staff get bothered by it. We’ve had a couple of people leave this year because they’re sick of doing covers. I think people need to be aware of the reasons why you’re off instead of little chats in the staffroom about what’s wrong with you. It should just be said that, well (…), this person is off for a long-term sick and you can kind of understand why they’re off. But when you get something that comes all the time, you just think they’re playing a game being off. And I’m in all the time and I’m getting stung to death. When they come back in (…) they are in here to play the game (…) so you have to do
cover before they get the supply in again. I know they’re playing a game (…) and people get stung for it because of their selfishness. So that really annoys a lot of people in the school (…) in particular people that are in all the time. They are doing more than their fair share because of people off sick on their bums and doing nothing. If it’s for real, that’s no problem, but if they are up to playing games, and some people ARE, then it’s not fair. That’s all.

7.3.4 Pen-portrait 3: David, Union representative

I am a GTP teacher trainer (…) working with a local university. But I started teaching 1973 in a junior school and got out after two years because I realised it wasn’t my thing (…); partly because I kept falling over (…) the kids (…). I then moved into my current school in 1975 and has been here ever since

Over the years I made quite a few good friends in the job (…), but I have always tended to try and separate the two because (…) otherwise you end up talking about the job; about a little brat from year 7 and how they made your lesson a complete mess. So I do try and keep it separate that way (…) although, over the years, I have found that my social life has declined phenomenally. Most of my friends have nothing to do with teaching. At one time I used to be out on a weekend (…). I used to belong to a pub fly casting club. But over the last few years I have just let everything slide because of the way this job has changed.

Many changes have taken place (…); a lot of them I have agreed with on the baseline (…) because the job didn’t change. But what I have found out (…) some of the reasons it’s caused so much stress in the profession is that this government do not have an idea what it means to be in the classroom. They don’t know what it’s like facing kids day after day (…); it’s a very draining experience. Also they come up with a new idea and do not allow us time to embed the first idea before they drop something else on us. So you try and juggle so many different balls at the same time (…)
and then the first idea seems to fade into the background and it's ignored. There is no emphasis on it any more (... it’s the latest thing (... it’s like having new fashions (... everyone has got to have the latest style of trainers (... and the government is acting the same way with education.

I also hate the idea of targets (... the league tables (...). I don’t think that does anything for the kids (...). It’s only a competition between schools and if something is league-driven, then it doesn’t show the true value that our kids get. This is not a factory (...). This results in pressure. The pressure comes down from the top. Also time (...); being asked to complete tasks within an unreasonable time. Marking takes time (...)

English has unique pressures. A lot of the changes’ basics are quite good but they aren’t followed through. At the moment we are redoing the syllabus for KS3 (...). I’m agreeing with redoing it (...) but the fact that we are not given time to do it is adding pressure on staff.

(...) I was actually off with stress last year for the first time in my career. I just reached a time where, phew (...), I couldn’t handle it. It wasn’t anything different (...); just a build-up. It was just something that built up slowly and I just came to a head and I hadn’t recognised the signs and that was it. I walked out of here and went to the doctor’s and they signed me off for a fortnight immediately. It was a build-up really (...), cumulative. The most stressful aspects (... results (...), getting things done (... not having enough time. I can work at home, but that has a lot of impact on the social side; and also unreasonable requests from management. Let’s say, (...) what I consider to be unreasonable (...), dropping things on people without notice. Good example (...), I have had a lot of complaints about this because I am the union rep (...), we have a calendar (...) and everything is supposed to be agreed on the calendar, before the year starts, that certain things will happen at certain times. And they introduce something called work meeting (...); it was only put in for this half term. We were only told about it after half term. I think that is an unreasonable request with everything else that’s going on. They drop something in
suddenly like that (…) it’s because management are not in the classroom anymore. They are managers (…) not teachers. They certainly do try to get into classes and have regular lessons, but I think they are losing touch and I am afraid that this will continue and it may cause future problems for staff.

(…) I am not saying there is disharmony here (…), but to promote harmony, empathy would be a good thing (…), understanding and also them realising that there have been major changes in education over the past five years (…), no, ten years really (…). They hear a youngster swearing at a member of staff and they do not act immediately. It happens constantly. It’s very wearing, it’s debilitating for them. It doesn’t happen to me. I am 6 foot 4 and with my voice there can jump out thunder, otherwise I wouldn’t be here that long. So that depends (…) I think. If senior management just stepped back and thought about the pressures that are on young teachers with families (…). They seem to be expecting things to be done almost immediately. I’m in a lucky position (…) I’m fifty-seven and only have got a couple of years and (…), no I can’t be bothered. So I will just say yeah I am going to do that sometime and that’s it. Nothing bothers me the way younger teachers are bothered.

The other thing that bothers me is the way the younger teachers are coming in. They do not come here to educate (…), they have a tick list in mind (…): “Tick, I have done this, tick I have done that. Yes I have it (…) I have done the introduction. It’s a four-part lesson.” BUT they are not teaching (…) they are not educating. “I have covered the syllabus, bang bang bang.” If the kids don’t understand it, there isn’t backup for it. It’s so blinkered. Teaching children from the base frustrates. They can’t grasp simple things.

The symptoms of my experience of stress were: short-temperedness, irritability, lack of sleep (…) unable to sleep, broken sleep, returning to smoking – I had parked it for ten years. And now (…) I’m finding it harder now to give up again than I did last time. (…) Drinking too much. And, as I
said, I walked in here one day and, because of an oversight, a member of staff had forgotten to give me certain information (…), and I won’t say I lost it, but I just said that’s it (…) I’m going to the doctor’s. I walked into the office upstairs and said, “Get me covered because I am going to the doc’s.” Then I walked out of here (…) simple as that. I walked out of school and I didn’t care less. Management responded very well actually (…) very supportive (…) very helpful. I could take as much time as I needed. Even now, if I feel I’m getting that way they have no problem with me taking time off. Sometimes I can feel I am on the edge (…), I am getting tense.

When I was off I learned a few things (…), a few breathing exercises would help me to calm down. Reflexology (…), that’s a massage on your feet (…), and I found that works for me. Relaxing music (…) that helps me bring things down.

A bad day to me would be when you have had a series of classes deliberately out to mess out the rest of the class’s education (…), deliberately messing things up. We’ve got some youngsters like that (…). I work a lot with a lot of youngsters with educational problems (…), that’s sort of my area. And you always get one who decides they are not gonna be bothered (…). And when you try to work with one group, this one is messing about with his mates. So you leave these kids who are working on their own, which is frustrating. So you don’t spend enough time with those who need it so that you attend the idiots. (…) I seem to be a victim of my own experience (…). My expertise is special needs like dyslexia, not behavioural problems. But I seem to be getting more and more kids with behavioural problems (…), which is not my area of expertise. Mine is largely on the educational problems. (…) I’ve been known as a disciplinarian.

In my role as union representative, no one has actually come to me and said that they have a stress problem (…), but one of them (…), I think one or two are on the edge. But teachers, unfortunately, do tend to keep
things to themselves because their peers might think if they can’t cope they are not a good teacher. I think there are many teachers like that in the profession (...).

I don’t have a problem with sharing things (...), but I think some staff do have that problem. They can’t share. The younger ones are much better at it. The main problem is the 40 plus age group. (...) I’ve tried to help. When someone is being mentioned I have sat down with them, but not giving them advice, but simply saying, “Well, look, this is what I found useful. Try it.” The kind of advice I do give (...); getting away for a weekend, Friday night, forget work (...). Go away (...) have a weekend away (...). Try something different. Go out. Take your wife, girlfriend, husband for a night’s meal. Get a decent bottle of wine and share with somebody. Make up some exercises (...); I shouldn’t be saying that because I don’t have time. I am the worst person at taking my own advice. Staff of my generation won’t just take a day off. It has to be something serious. They feel they are letting their colleagues down.

I think it’s an extremely stressful job all round (...). You are dealing with people, young people whose hormones are raging (...), who don’t know what they are (...), where they are. You are also dealing with youngsters who grew up pushing the boundaries (...), but that’s part of growing up. But they also have to know where the boundary is. That’s also society’s problem because we give children so many rights. There are certain elements of the youngsters who think they have got the right to do exactly what they want (...). Parents give children material things but don’t give them company (...). They don’t sit down with them. Parents give in to children. They try it here, but here we tell them, “Sit down. Shut up,” and, strangely, they actually respect that. They like to know where the boundaries are, but they will push. I have no problem with it (...), but they like to know where the boundaries are. They need companionship. That is part of the job (...). But that adds to the pressures of teaching, the attitude of the pupils (...), particularly the younger staff (...), confrontation between young staff and pupils. Young staff are not adequately prepared. My
advice to young members of staff (…) is, “Don’t sit so so together because they don’t get on. Be selective in your hearing” etc (…). Common sense really, but it’s needed sometimes because the job can be overwhelming to young hands.

Stress will get worse. I think that more people will suffer from it (…) because of the pressures from the government (…), from senior management, from HODs and also from the teachers themselves. That will bring pressure on staff to get children up to C grade. A lot of the times we bring a lot of stress upon ourselves because we are too compliant. At times you have to say, “Hang on a minute, I can do that much and not more”. We just have to find a way of lowering the stress levels (…) the very sources of stress (…) to the root.

7.3.5 Pen-portrait 4: Zoe, Teacher of English

Well (…), I always wanted to be a teacher (…). But certainly, (…) the first three or four years, I found it very difficult; especially with workload. Because there was a considerable amount of work I used to do outside of school hours. I found that very difficult, before getting used to it, (…) coming out of university. I think that caused me some degree of stress. But (…) in the last four years, obviously, I have taken additional promotions and responsibilities (…), and I am head of faculty. Obviously, that comes with its own additional stresses. But I think my ability to cope with stress has improved (…). I have certainly learned to rationalise my workload a bit more and to learn how to prioritise things and realise that I need to set myself clear deadlines to meet personally as a classroom teacher and then also deadlines that I need to meet as a head of faculty.

(…) I think tackling workload is a problem because there was a problem with my work/life balance which caused me to suffer. I did work through the evenings. I would usually work at weekends as well, either the whole of one day or part of both days. And then, (…), it had an impact on my work/life balance. Well, that’s the sacrifice I suppose I am prepared to
make because I accepted that when I took on additional responsibilities. As a result, I don’t get to rest with my children during the weekends or during the holidays. Typically, I would spend a big part of my holiday time in school working with pupils (…), helping them with revision. I have accepted that workload when I took on additional responsibilities.

I think that (…) the most difficult aspect to balance is my commitment to my individual classes, my role as a classroom teacher and then my leadership and management responsibilities (…). Because I find I have to plan my lessons on the way to work on the train and then after work. Whereas, my supposedly free time in the school day is spent doing leadership and management tasks. (…) I think I am quite fortunate in that I do have a lot of time in the morning when I am travelling to work. I live quite a distance away from my place of work. I get to the train at 5am in the morning and then arrive by a quarter past six (…) and that gives me a full hour of working on the train. So I usually find if I can manage to get my lessons planned in the morning that makes it easier. But then (…) if I don’t quite finish planning in the morning, then there is still more to do at work. Then I think I’ve got time during the day to do that. And, inevitably, there is something that crops up that wasn’t planned for. That kind of has an impact on my primary role – teaching lessons, managing pupils’ learning etc. Therefore, I am not always able to do that as effectively as I would want to do. (…). Generally, I think I do cope with it. I might not necessarily do the job as well as I always wanted to, but I get done what needs to be done usually on time.

(…) Pupil behaviour has quite a big impact because I usually end up dealing with other people’s problems. If a member of my department has problems with a particular child or particular pupil poor behaviour (…), usually it gets passed on to me to deal with. Whereas, if I personally have an issue with pupil behaviour; (…), I don’t have anybody else to go to. So I sort it out myself. (…) It usually involves contact with parents either by letter or by telephone. Most parents are usually supportive of what you are trying to do. I’m not entirely sure how committed they are to dealing with
their children’s attitudes. I do think most of them do pay lip service to it and they all miss out.

Attitudes towards my main subject (…) is not really an issue because I teach English. So, obviously, that is a very high priority. (…) I do feel there’s a lack of understanding by other senior leaders about the nature of English (…), the demands of English. There’s quite a fundamental misconception. I think they fail to understand exactly how demanding national tests are and do not understand what pupils are required to do in order to reach level 5 or level 6 at KS3 (…). Because it seems that in Maths and Science pupils do achieve very highly and they assume that those levels are exactly the same and so ask questions why they are not doing as well in English as they are in Maths. It is very difficult to explain to them why pupils are not doing as well because they are not really investing their time in understanding the discreteness of the subject. It causes me great concern and it does cause me stress because, ultimately (…), I feel I am held accountable for the performance of pupils who might not be capable of meeting those targets. And, (…), the questions are being asked, “So why haven’t they met their targets?” And,(…), we try to explain to them why they haven’t achieved their targets and so on. Whereas, I might argue that the target for that particular child was unreasonably high (…). They don’t really get it. All they want are results at the end of the day (…), not the process you go through in order to achieve those results. (…), I try to explain it and I give them examples and (…) I give them the evidence that I have gathered and, if they are not satisfied, then there is nothing more I can do.

Generally, on-the-job relationships don’t cause me too much stress. However, there’s one or two members of my department who have been throwing their weight around (…) and that caused me stress in terms of (…) how I am going to deal with that. But, generally, the department is quite supportive of each other. They are not going to cause me (…) too many problems.
Usually, relationships with parents don’t cause me too much stress. It concerns me, however (…), when you get a letter of complaint from parents; complaining about an aspect of their child’s education. (…) In a sense they are only accepting the word of the child. And then they write a letter of complaint making lots of these accusations which don’t really stand up to scrutiny. (…) And they are not prepared to listen when you attempt to explain it. Well, all they are doing is taking their child’s side all the time. You do get a feeling that, sometimes (…), what they are really looking for is some sort of compensation or some kind of redress. So that causes concern when I contact parents. I have to be really careful about exactly what I say and how I say it. You fear that it might come back at some point in the future, and I might be taken totally out of context because they haven’t really understood or they don’t believe me etcetera (…). And I quite understand why a parent might want to defend their child. But, at the end of the day, we see the children more than they do and have a better understanding of what exactly they are like in school. The parents tend to think that the schools are there to service them rather than their child (…).

(…) I think Ofsted causes stress (…) to everybody (…), teachers and pupils. (…). I think that, (…), probably the drive to raise standards in schools does cause stress. Because senior members of staff focus on raising achievement and attainment, (…). They forget that the people they are gonna make the victims to that are the people they should be supporting, i.e. the teachers that they constantly pressurise in different tasks. You sometimes wonder whether all these tasks are actually contributing to raising standards or whether they are contributing to the impression of raising standards. They make you do things that are not gonna make a difference in my classroom (…), that’s going to look good to somebody who comes in and inspect you.

I do find it very difficult to get technical support sometimes (…), in particular with ICT (…). And if something breaks down – most of it is not working - it’s very difficult to get hold of somebody to sort it out. So there
have to be contingent measures (…). We all are very well experienced teachers. So you either test it before you actually start, at break time or time before school. So you usually plan some sort of contingency (…). That increases your planning time.

We do have one teaching assistant (special needs) in the faculty. (…) Unfortunately, she isn’t very good. She is less of assistance than she does cause problems, not least because she is not trained in professional conduct and, as a manager (…), that causes me stress because I have to deal with that. That causes the teachers that she is supposed to be supporting stress because they can’t rely on her (…).

Generally, the school processes are clear (…) and the policies are clear, which is positive. But it is the actual way those processes are used inconsistently which is problematic. There isn’t enough consistency in applying the processes and that causes problems particularly when or if you thought you’ve been doing something correctly, because that’s the way you’ve done it before. Someone turns around and says (…), “Well, you haven’t done it properly, so we can’t do anything to help you until you do it properly,” (…) and that causes stress because it’s the sort of situation involving different applications and completing necessary paperwork.

As far as resources are concerned (…), I don’t think we have an issue with that. Same applies to opportunities for personal and professional development (…). I don’t have an issue with that. I do feel people sometimes feel there aren’t enough opportunities because they have a wrong view of things. That clouds their perception of what the whole faculty is doing (…). Somebody may come to me and say, “Well I want to do this,” (…). Unfortunately, it’s not in the best interest of the faculty. But, generally, I think that is it. Resources and personal development opportunities are good.
My stress (…), I rated myself between 5 and 6 out of 10; 5 ½, somewhere there (…). I think, probably, it is the combination of (…), having to deal with day-to-day problems that crop up and behaviour management issues and the amount of paperwork. For me, it's okay (…). I can just about cope with it right now. My general handling of pressure? (…) Very effective. I think that I should be more proactive in dealing with issues which crop up. My choice of coping strategies and their effectiveness, (…), is influenced by the desire not to cause other people stress. So if I think that, by keeping something to myself or sorting something out myself, it would be better for others than to cause them stress, then I do that. That's probably the option out.

I think stress affects teachers to a great extent. I agree that (…), generally, people experience constant pressure. (…) we had two members of the faculty off for a long term absence this year because of stress (…) and have had members of the faculty that have gone for counselling for anxiety. (…) These are not issues that have necessarily been caused by working at school (…), but they have been exacerbated by it.

When it comes to members of staff who do not come for work due to stress-related illnesses (…), I think senior management are inconsistent in their approach to it (…), and I think they are unsympathetic, unfortunately (…). And I think they are more insistent in having teachers standing in front of their classroom than they are necessarily interested in the wellbeing of the members of staff. I think there has been very minimal effort and very superficial effort to try and deal with stress in teachers. (…), the only mention of stress we had this year was when we had to complete the stress survey questionnaire. I think (…) it is a step in the right direction. I would say if they would take on board the comments made in the survey (…) and the comments collected from the interviews (…), I would feel happy and, in that sense (…), they would be doing something about reducing workload. I feel disappointed, however; (…) two things (…) – that the school needs to get itself outside agencies to find out
something it should find out itself. So that’s my view. I am not opposed to completing questionnaires and being interviewed basically (...). I feel if the school don’t know how to ask the questions, then they can look for someone that can (...) ask the questions. But I think that the more people outside of the school are involved in our affairs (...), it gets confusing. We should be able to do it ourselves for the sake of integrity.

To make my job less stressful (...) I think there needs to be more administrative support for the staff; (...) a meaningful reduction in paperwork and administrative tasks would help. I think that if senior leaders need to have more open discussions about the tasks they are assigning to people (...). And I think what really helps is to make it very clear to parents and pupils that teaching staff and support staff are very professional (...) and the bottom line is the school would support every single member of staff in whatever situation arises and not at the expense of public relations (...), because I do have a feeling that parents and pupils get away with it sometimes.

I want to think that some teachers experience more stress than others because of their commitment to professionalism and (...), initially, because they vary in their outlook. Teachers themselves can reduce the amount of stress they experience. (...), I think teachers need to be smarter in what they do in terms of managing their time. They need to learn to say no when asked to do something they find unreasonable. (...), but I also think the teachers need to (...), certainly some of the teachers in my department, need to realise that (...), ostensibly (...), we are there to educate pupils and also learn to manage their workload and identify when they need to have forward planning in terms of their own workload (...) as well as their teaching and identify potential pitfalls in advance. (...)

The other thing I would say is worth mentioning is that the school should work to increase non-contact time for staff (...) because, at the moment (...), we do have a minimum of non-contact time when I am not involved in classes. If the school is really committed to reducing stress and workload
pressures, then it should be found seeking to appoint more members of staff (...) and that would reduce the burden of teaching.

7.3.6 Pen-portrait 5: Grace, Teacher of ICT

My teaching career started (...) 1st September 2003. (...) I had some time off in the last teaching year to have a baby (...) in February and came back towards the end of the last teaching year. I teach ICT and also Maths. In the past, I’ve taught Careers. ICT is my main subject. I teach ICT right through KS3 and KS4 (...).

(...), we have five periods in a day and I have four non-contact periods in a week. That's (...) five hours in a day, (...), four hours non-contact periods (...). So I teach twenty-one hours. I find myself giving up lots of non-contact periods to take other people’s duties. We don’t really have enough time after school to get all the work done. So (...) it does encroach in my teaching and planning time. A lot of time is spent with my KS4 pupils.

There are certain times of the year when work takes over. (...), I put extra pressure on my husband (...). I am very lucky (...) I’ve got a very supportive husband (...) and I’ve got understanding children (...). I’ve got a husband who doesn’t mind ironing (...). He is quite happy to do the cooking. However, (...) there are times of the year when I can sit back and usually (...) relax a little bit more with my family. (...). Usually it works, (...). However, we are coming to the end of school year next Friday and will be free for six weeks.

(... the most difficult part I find is to come back to work after maternity leave. This year everything is fine because I don’t have to take time off (...). Coming back after maternity leave was awful and horrendous. I was not given anytime whatsoever to settle back into work (...). I’ve been off for a few months having the baby. I would come in, basically, hit the ground running (...); come in on Monday morning (...) to teach period one
That was pretty awful. However, I could have coped if they had given me one timetable and let me stick to it. I had three timetables in the first two weeks. As soon as I was given one timetable, I had no chance to get used to it, bearing in mind what my KS3 kids are like. The person who had taught KS3 previously could have told me what they were up to and what they were doing. And they didn't have any written work because it was all stored up on a computer. So I had nothing to look at. So I had to go into the lessons and find out from the children where they were up to so that I could deliver the lessons. As soon as I got myself sorted, I knew where I was up to and I was given a fresh timetable! It was a little bit more than unsettling. After a third timetable in two weeks, I flipped my mind. It's just not fair. We've been given a timetable. We should just stick to it, because there is a lot of work involved in planning. You scheme for work, plan out your lessons and get to know the kids and, from there, you're expected to be able to keep them kids and carry on teaching them; put together another timetable and another timetable and another timetable within a very short period. It wasn't fair and that's why in the last school year I was off for three to four weeks with stress. Because, eventually, I've found myself not sleeping at night and going over things in my head. Just suffering the usual symptoms basically, and in the end, I went to the doctor's and explained what happened and he gave me a sick note and then told me not to come back until I've spoken to the head.

During the time when I was off with stress did I get any kind of support? No, none whatsoever. When I came back, nothing! Nobody cares. There was a problem with me coming back to work after maternity leave. No one knows what the problem is. No one has done anything to settle it. Perhaps I should have taken the initiative. I'm going to see Mrs Peters to speak to her about the problems and what happened. Part of the problem is on me. Part of it was management's fault, with me coming back to work after maternity leave that should have been sorted and then I wouldn't have been off work with stress.
I started afresh (...) in September (...) and since September everything has been fine. Right now that period of time is over and done with (...) and I'm fine now. I'm not stressed. I've not had any sickness apart from a couple of weeks before Easter when I came down with flu. When you come down with flu, there is no great deal you can do about it (...). However, I do think that nothing is in place for people coming back from maternity leave.

The other main stressful aspect of my job, (...) teaching a new subject. (...) actually not so much teaching a new subject (...); a new course where you have to learn a new programme. (...) Because ICT is evolving all time (...), it's not constant (...). It's not like Maths where everything is (...) how to add up and sort (...), how to subtract (...). The methods don't change, but ICT changes all the time. New programmes are brought up. (...) you have to keep yourself up-to-date. We have recently started a new subject (...). We have to learn a new programme (...). We haven't had any training on it. (...) that's why I bought a text book (...), taught myself how to use this new programme. I made some mistakes, unfortunately, (...) I made some mistakes with the kids as well. To start off, I was following someone else's instructions (...) and then I was doing something until I realised the flaws in those instructions. So I went out and bought myself a text book where it tells you how to do it properly (...) and I created my own worksheets (...) and that's fine. However, some training originally would have helped. It's like somebody giving you a set of numbers and asks you to work them out altogether.

I've asked about training in the past (...). In ICT we don't go on (...) any courses. No money seems to be spent as far as courses or anything is concerned. Our budget is so constrained (...) we can barely afford anything. But teachers also have to deal with the resources that we've got (...), or the lack of resources. To teach well in ICT (...); old computers crash every two minutes (...). We have also got to deal with red tape from
above, filling in forms and the stress of teaching something new without having any training.

This year (…), I am not sure about last year (…) I can’t remember, but this year none of our KS3 pupils have been able to print out because of budget constraints. We have had no paper or ink to print. If we delay those kids to print, the KS4 printer will not be able to print out the documents that they need. In order to offer support, we got to provide for all the working folders for coursework for the moderator. We did cope actually (…) because I’ve explained to my pupils why they have not done the work that they should have done and they have accepted it. So they know it is not me (…). It’s not our fault. It is a problem with the resources we have. We haven’t got computers that we need to do our job (…). We haven’t got facilities. When you’ve got someone from Ofsted in your lesson (…) and at the beginning of the lesson a technician comes up and says, “Can you log off your terminal please?” (…) just as you’ve got your PowerPoint set up (…), imagine how that feels, (…) and the job has to be done.

My pupil behaviour management (…) efficiently (…) it works. The kind of behaviour that sticks out to me as something that could be stretching my patience to the limit (…); I have to deal with the fighting in the classroom; (…) pull them apart and send them to different rooms. Sometimes I involve parents (…) when the problem exacerbates (…). It’s not something that happens every day. It happened once or twice in my teaching career, so it’s not something that’s particularly worrying. If they, in any way, damage the equipment (…) pulling out a plug from a socket I would say it is damaging computer equipment and take them off the network. (…) You give them written work to do. (…) I would give them the most boring written work that I possibly can imagine. Pupils will still be learning ICT (…). They are getting something out of it. They are learning ICT but they are not enjoying what they are doing. (…) So what? (…) they have been taken off and they have been given written work for damaging computer equipment. That’s standard departmental procedure.
Parents are supportive. I think we do have a lot of support from parents. If we have kids that are knocking and messing about (...), more often parents are quite happy to come in and discuss. It helps so much because if kids start knocking and messing causing problems (...), we get parents in and parents have a word with kids. But once (...) you’ve given them a few detentions (...), you know you’ve gone through the normal process, and if they are still causing problems, then get in the parents.

My stress rating in the questionnaire was between 2 and 3 (...) out of 10; (...) fairly low. I don’t often feel stressed (...). My personality (...); well, before teaching I used to work in banking. In banking I would see customers and, afterwards, had to explain to them why I couldn’t give them overdraft facilities (...), loans and things like that. Sometimes people didn’t always react to the news well (...). So you would have to deal with difficult people as well as nice, easy people. So I had to learn to deal with difficult situations then (...). So perhaps that has come over into my teaching – so (...) not to get so upset by bad behaviour (...). I can stay calm and relaxed and deal with that. That is why I was so upset when I came back from maternity leave (...). I had to deal with all that basically (...), because usually bad behaviour doesn’t stress me out that much. (...). It’s when I’ve been messed about a lot that stresses me out.

My advice to new teachers is sit back and prioritise. We have to think what’s important to the school, what’s most important as far as the pupils are concerned. (...) Definitely KS3 kids are important (…), but KS4 kids are going to be leaving shortly with exam results (...). So they’ve got to be more important than KS3 kids. So KS4 kids are going to get a lot more of attention than KS3 kids. (...). It sounds very callous (...) but the KS3 kids eventually will be KS4 kids and they will now demand all your attention. The course that we are doing is very time-sensitive (...). They do four GCSEs in the time they take to do two (...). So we’ve got an awful lot of work to do in a short period (...) and also we’ve got to cover the time. Like
there are lots of children not working to the best of their abilities and so
(…), sometimes you’ve got to go back and do some pieces of work again.

(…) officially to help somebody who is experiencing problems (…)? No,
but I do talk with colleagues and discuss different situations and tell them
how to do things differently. So (…), as a friend and colleague, I chat with
my colleagues. But (…) basically you just need to stay calm (…) because,
of course, you cannot jump until you get better. It’s really vastly important
to stay calm. If you are calm in dealing with the situation (…), then you
can deal with the situation (…). Think about what you are doing. If you let
yourself get frustrated (…); if you let yourself stress too much about the
situation (…), then it could quite get out of hand and you find you have
reacted in a way that – perhaps you may have done something or you
have said something you do not know (…). So, yes, stay calm.

General staff relations (…), very good within our department. I don’t know
about in the school generally (…). I don’t have time to go to the staffroom.
(…), lack of time mainly and, with information, why would I want to go? I
can have my dinner just as easily here. (…) I don’t really know anyone to
talk to. I just sit down and have my cup of tea and walk back again. I do
tend to, (…), I know by law actually you’re supposed to take a break.
However (…), I suppose it’s a choice, isn’t it? It’s your own personal
choice. If you’ve got the time, you know you’ve got the dinner available, so
you eat dinner while you’re working (…) lest you might think you’ve got
time yet you haven’t got it.

(…) I do work at home. I watch what I am doing at home. Sometimes I
have to take folders home and there is a problem actually in getting all the
folders in the car, with your own kids as well (…), and the last thing you
would want is tomato ketchup on somebody’s coursework. (…) You have
to be careful. My kids are very good actually. When I am working at home,
they know I’m working. They stay away because they know they’re going
to get chastised. I have to organise myself so that when I’m working at
home, the kids are doing something and they will be sorted out. (…), I
don't do early mornings. If I've got childcare at home and I've got support at home – and the majority of the school year (…) of that support at home – and then I could stay behind. (…). But between May and July I haven't got support at home (…), so I've got to take my work. (…) I haven't got a choice (…). I have to pick the baby at the childminder's. If I had a choice I would work at school and then leave my work here and go home. I don't know whether men are affected the same way. (…) I suppose it depends on the stage that you are in life (…), whether you've got a family (…). That's what will make a difference (…), and I think single male teachers and single female teachers feel similar (…). But when you've got a family possibly I would imagine in most cases the children tend to be the department of the woman. It sounds to be sexist, (…) well it depends.

I don't know really how stress affects teachers in this school in general. I don't spend very much time at all in the staffroom. (…). As to why some teachers experience more stress than others (…), basically I think it's the case of people having different levels of the amount of stress they can cope with (…). And it will depend on your experiences in life and what you have been exposed to in the past. If you have come from school to college (…), to university, to teaching (…) then you have not really been exposed to much of life in general. So (…) you might not be able to cope with stress quite well. It's in their experience I think. (…) teachers who have been teaching for 20 years cope better with stress (…) that comes with teaching than someone who has been teaching for five years (…). I just think it's (…) life experience.

7.4 School 1 Case Analysis

7.4.1 Person characteristics

Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) distinguish three types of person characteristics – force, resource and demand characteristics – as the most influential in their proximal processes (i.e. interaction between the individual and their environment). This subsection considers School 1
teachers’ force, resource and demand characteristics as emergent from the interviews.

**Force characteristics**

Force characteristics refer to those active behavioural dispositions initiating and sustaining or interfering with, retarding or preventing proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). These characteristics have to do with individual differences in aspects like temperament, motivation and persistence (Tudge et al, 2009). Key force characteristics revealed by School 1 interviewees were self-efficacy, persistence, teachers’ personal attitudes towards their job and temperament.

Self-efficacy and persistence were key to the teachers’ (e.g. Gabrielle’s) experiences of stress and how they coped with these experiences. For example, Gabrielle reflected, “*Having gone through what I went through (...) I have learnt that you’ve got to have self-belief (...) and if you really want something you’ve got to fight for it and not let anyone put you down*”. Perhaps, more importantly, the extract from Gabrielle’s pen-portrait reveals her belief in the significance of self-belief in coping with adversity and the impact of interpersonal relations and interactions on an individual. Additionally, it highlights the importance of prior exposure to risk in the development of resilience. Her experiences in a previous school had an influence on her present interaction with and response to stressors within her work environment and those she perceived as ‘putting her down’.

Conversely, temperament appeared to be an internal risk factor having a negative impact on some interviewees’ proximal processes. Its impact on these teachers were experiences of being “*annoyed*” (Gabrielle), “*stressed*” (Zoe) and “*on the edge*” and “*tense*” (David) when they got upset. This affected their ability to cope. For example, David found working with classes “*deliberately out to mess out the rest of the class’s*
education” “frustrating” as “you don’t spend enough time with those who need it so that you attend the idiots”.

It also emerged that some of the teachers’ personal attitudes towards their job negatively impacted on their experiences of stress, their coping behaviours and effectiveness. These attitudes were particularly common in respect to the national curriculum, assessment and change, and how these were implemented within the school, pupil behaviour management and cover. In this regard, David (union representative and teacher of English) hated “the idea of targets and league tables” for their perceived lack of value to pupils’ progress and the he felt pressure they caused teachers.

As well as uncovering frustrations with government education policy with respect to curriculum and assessment change, David’s observation also revealed his attitude towards aspects of the way his school implemented those changes. This phenomenon was common across the interviewees from School 1. This gap between national expectations – in terms of pupil outcomes or examination results – and teachers’ perceptions of what was realistic was a major source of frustration for most teachers.

Another interesting way in which the teachers justified their arguments was the link they made between their attitudes and students’ interests. It was common across the interviewees that the ‘kids’ interests’ argument was a way in which they justified their claims regarding what they considered to be wrong about their job and, therefore, a source of pressure. This implied they considered some national initiatives to be of little value to pupils and hence not in their interests. It is also possible this may have been a deflection. It was not because of the teachers’ shortcomings that they sometimes found it difficult to cope with the demands of their job. Rather, David believed, it was because “pressure comes down from the top”. This, the teachers felt, was indicative of inefficiency of implementation of change and government initiatives in the school.
Resource characteristics

Resource characteristics are individual “liabilities and assets that influence the capacity of the organism to engage effectively in proximal processes” whereby liabilities “limit or disrupt” and assets enhance or aid the individual’s capacity to function effectively (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006:812). These include past experiences, skills, intelligence and material resources (Tudge et al, 2009).

Most School 1 teachers believed experience, particularly professional, was key to their experience of, and coping with, work-related stress as well as their involvement within their work microsystem. In the interviews, most teachers linked professional experience with perceived competence, reporting that their confidence in their teaching roles grew as they accrued more professional experience. It was common among most teachers for them to feel considerably less able to prioritise and cope with stress and workload at the beginning of their teaching careers than they did later on. For example, Zoe (teacher of English) – in spite of having always wanted to be a teacher – found “workload in her “first three or four years (...) very difficult” and did a lot of schoolwork at home “before getting used to it”. In addition, Grace felt that the amount of stress an individual could cope with “will depend on your experiences in life and what you have been exposed to in the past”

Demand characteristics

Demand characteristics are described as those qualities of an individual which “invite or discourage reactions from the social environment that can disrupt or foster” adaptive processes (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006:796). According to Tudge et al (2009), the characteristics “stimulate” expectations about the individual and may play a key role in initial interactions the individual has with their environment.
The main demand characteristic of School 1 teachers was their professional role, which came with immediate expectations from pupils, colleagues and senior management. The central aspect of School 1 ethos was that “the kids are the most important members of this school” and, because of that, demands were placed on the teachers since they were the ones who “stand in front of them kids everyday” (Ivy).

Interviewees referred to pupil expectations mostly with regard to their need for support towards attaining positive examination outcomes. This may have had to do with perceived senior management’s emphasis on pupil outcomes. Zoe remarked, “KS4 kids are going to get a lot more attention than KS3 kids” because they “are going to be leaving shortly with exam results (...) so they’ve got to be more important than KS3 kids”. Justifying this approach, she explained, “It sounds very callous (...) but the KS3 kids eventually will be KS4 kids and they will now demand all your attention.” This expectation based on the individual’s professional role also came with related immediate demands from senior management in relation to targets and accountability for these targets. This was linked to the school’s targets culture which David felt “results in pressure”.

Colleagues’ expectations, meanwhile, seemed to concern their being part of the school. As members of a team, there was, for example, an immediate attendance demand which made some of them “feel they are letting their colleagues down” if they “take a day off” unless it was “something serious” (David). On the other hand, team membership expectations were such that teachers were expected to contribute towards cover for absent colleagues. In this respect, there appeared to be tension between expectation to attend and expectation to cover where there seemed to be resentment towards those who took days off. “(...) you just think they’re playing a game being off,” Gabrielle remarked, “I’m in all the time and I’m getting stung to death”. Therefore, “We’ve had a couple of people leave this year because they’re sick of doing covers,” she claimed, because “They are doing more than their fair share because of people off sick on their bums and doing nothing.”
Linked to professional role were experience and seniority. There was evidence to indicate that reasons for career stress varied with teachers’ experience and seniority. While, as stated in the previous section, early career stress was attributed to inexperience, workload and lack of ability to prioritise, later career stress was linked to additional responsibilities which tended to also increase with experience and seniority. Thus, experience could either be a resource or a demand characteristic, depending on the impact it had on an individual.

Additionally, there were expectations emanating from the government as embodied in national curriculum and incessant change demands as noted by David. Resultantly, most teachers in this school reported experiencing much stress due to workload/ time constraints linked to these government pressures.

**7.4.2 Proximal processes**

Proximal processes, according to Bronfenbrenner and Ceci (1994), are mechanisms of individual-environment interaction. They account for the realisation of positive developmental (or adaptive in the current work) outcomes especially individual perception and response, control over one’s behaviour, coping effectiveness, establishing and maintaining positive interpersonal relations and “modifying and constructing one’s own physical, social, and symbolic environment” (p.569). As such, propound Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006: 804), “the effects of proximal processes are more powerful than those of the environmental contexts in which they occur”. School 1 teachers’ proximal processes primarily centred on their professional roles and responsibilities as teacher, adult figure, colleague and team member and subordinate. These roles and responsibilities meant frequent interactions with pupils, parents, colleagues and senior management.
**Interactions with pupils**

The “most important members of this school” (Ivy) the teachers probably spent most of their time interacting with were the pupils. This interaction was complex as it involved individual and group interrelations and sometimes extended to parental involvement. The key aspects of this interaction usually concerned pupil learning and behaviour. Zoe described it as “my primary role (...) teaching lessons, managing pupils’ learning”. This teacher-pupil interaction came with its challenges, mostly resultant from expectations on teachers regarding pupil academic progress and behaviour. Illustrating the intricacy of facilitating pupils’ learning and managing their behaviour, David remarked,

“(…) you always get one who decides they are not gonna be bothered (...) and when you try to work with one group, this one is messing about with his mates. So you leave these kids who are working on their own, which is frustrating”

Besides general classroom disruption, confrontation was another pupil behaviour issue negatively affecting teachers’ proximal processes:

“But that adds to the pressures of teaching, the attitude of the pupils (...) particularly the younger staff (...) confrontation between young staff and pupils.” (David)

Teacher-pupil interaction extended beyond term-time for some teachers, particularly those teaching KS4. Zoe explained, “Typically I would spend a big part of my holiday time in school working with pupils there (..), helping them with revision. I have accepted that workload when I took on additional responsibilities”. Therefore, these holiday classes had a direct impact on the amount of time she had available to interact her family.

**Interactions with parents**

Most interaction the teachers’ had with parents had to do with pupil behaviour. This was “either by letter (...) by telephone” (Zoe) or in person in “a meeting” (Gabrielle). Although “most parents are usually supportive
of what you are trying to do” (Zoe), some were said no to appreciate “I do the best for every kid I teach” (Gabrielle). Because parents tended to be contacted when there was something wrong, some of these interactions caused teachers stress as “parents give in to children” (David) and “listen to their child rather than the teacher” (Gabrielle). Grace, however, acknowledged having a positive relationship with some parents: “I think we do have a lot of support from parents (...) more often parents are quite happy to come in and discuss (...). It helps so much (...)

Interactions with colleagues

On the other hand, interactions with colleagues usually occurred in a department context. These transactions were mostly supportive in nature, which was confirmed by Grace who remarked, “General staff relations um (...) very good, very good within our department”. Teachers interacted with members of their department to seek or offer support regarding an aspect of their job or to help cope with stress. For example, Grace stated, “I do talk with colleagues and discuss different situations and tell them how to do things differently (...) as a friend and colleague”. As union representative, David “sat down with them (stressed colleagues) (...) giving them advice (...) saying, “Well, look, this is what I found useful. Try it.” However, negative relationships within a department were reported to result stress in others: “there are one or two members of my department who have been throwing their weight around (...) and that caused me stress in terms of how I am going to deal with that” (Zoe). Similar negative interactions between colleagues were said to be adversely impacting on newly qualified teachers in one department because they were “treated unfairly sometimes. (...) because you’ve got time for some members of staff but not for all” (Gabrielle).

Interactions with senior management

Another dimension to on-the-job interactions was direct contact with senior leadership. The nature of this contact involved, among other things,
issues to do with cover, targets and oversight on external contact – particularly when there was a problem where parental involvement was necessary. As far as its support was concerned, characterisation of senior management by the teachers was divergent. Some felt management had been supportive of them in times of need while others felt otherwise. For example, David reported that “management responded very well” and helped him cope with a period when he was close to breakdown due to severe work-related stress. Grace, however, recalled a contrasting experience upon her return from maternity leave when she was not given time to settle back into work. This lack of support led to her experiencing symptoms of stress and taking sick leave during which time she also reported not receiving any support from senior management.

An analysis of the interviews also suggested that teachers’ perceptions of their experiences of support by senior management were inconsistent. Further evidence to support this came from Zoe who felt that teachers absent from work due to stress-related illnesses did not receive adequate support and were pressurised to attend work because “they are more insistent in having teachers standing in front of their classroom than they are necessarily interested in the wellbeing of the members of staff”. This representation contrasted with Ivy’s portrayal of senior management as caring. Whether or not the difference in roles (Ivy was part of management) could be used to explain differences in perspectives about the support given to the teachers with regard to job-related stress could not be ascertained. David, for instance, was satisfied with the support he got when he was off sick. Management’s support during times of stress, such as what David experienced, was thus an important protective factor in that it helped towards recovery.

The perceived inconsistency in management support was reported across other aspects of the job. A case in point is David who did not feel management were being sufficiently supportive when it came to introducing and implementing change. This depiction of management as indifferent to the impact aspects of their processes on teachers, especially
change and targets, recurred across most interviews. Conversely, management’s support during times of stress, such as David experienced, was an important protective factor in that it helped towards recovery. Getting management support in some aspects and not in others had varied influence on the teachers. An exploration of the interview data revealed that not getting support resulted in negative feelings of loneliness, frustration, apathy and stress.

7.4.3 Context

Context refers to “immediate and more remote” environments in which individuals are situated (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006:795). These nested structures comprise the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1993).

Microsystems

Bronfenbrenner (1994:1645) describes a microsystem as “a pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social, and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit, engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment.” Thus, this is a context where proximal processes occur. It has been explained in the literature review that, according to Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 1995) bioecological framework, individuals generally spend time in more than one microsystem. School 1 teachers’ primary microsystems were work, home and social contexts.

Due to the focus of this study, however, the teachers talked more about key influences on their workplace than they did about their home or social contexts. Still, it is important to put the microsystems discussion in perspective, bearing in mind the aspects of the teachers’ lives to which the present study had limited access, particularly those aspects considered personal, private or sensitive. Explaining key teachers’
sources of stress, Ivy noted that it was not only work that impacted on teachers’ ability to cope with stress, but also factors external to the school.

While home and social microsystems obviously varied by teacher, even within the shared work microsystem experiences differed across sub-contexts (i.e. departments and year groups). Drawing on her own experience, Ivy acknowledged that the department can be a powerful influence on a teacher’s on-the-job experiences and their capacity to cope with these experiences. She observed that the effects of pressure could be minimised by departmental support. In concurrence, Gabrielle remarked that the supportiveness of her department helped her cope with adversity. She represented relationships at work as predominantly defined by relationships within the department. After time spent with students, particularly in the classroom, the teachers spent a significant amount of time within the context of their departments engaging in activities and interactions to do with their department. Their departmental experiences conceivably shaped the teachers’ appraisal of their outlook of the teaching job. Thus the department sub-context was an important part of the school microsystem. Depending on the quality of support within it, the department played a role in presenting the individual teacher with either protective factors or risk factors. In this regard, there was no consensus among the teachers as some considered their department supportive while others did not. In contrast, although significant, the classroom sub-context did not seem to concern the teachers as much as the department did. A supportive department would buffer the teachers from sources of stress they encountered in the classroom, particularly pupil behaviour problems. Whereas, an unsupportive department would probably weaken the teachers’ chances of recovery. Thus, supportive departmental experiences were central to enhancing teachers’ resilience in that these experiences helped them positively adapt to risks such as pupil behaviour. Conversely, unsupportive experiences within their department exposed teachers to vulnerability to risks within the work context.
The union’s position in the teachers’ bioecological systems was not fixed. Due to the presence of the union representative (David) in the school, the union was part of the microsystem. In this regard, its role was to identify teachers’ concerns regarding their job and trying to address them within the school. For instance, David stated that teachers raised “a lot of complaints about (…) dropping things on people without notice” to him in his capacity as a representative of the union. This suggests the union’s role, as part of the microsystem, was forming part of the teachers’ work supportive network to which they turned to help them cope.

Mesosystem

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979:25) description of a mesosystem as “a system of Microsystems” helps place primary focus not only on the existence of these microsystems, but – more importantly, on how the microsystems work together, how they interact with the teacher and the impact of these interactions.

Because the interviews focused more on the teacher within their workplace context, access into the teachers’ other microsystems was limited. Regarding links between work and home and social contexts, teachers’ descriptions were, thus, mostly limited to how their school’s work culture and values impacted on patterns of behaviour and organisation in their home and social contexts. Grace and David bemoaned the impact too much work was making on their home and social lives as it usually led to doing schoolwork at home. This demonstrates how patterns in one microsystem sometimes overlapped into other microsystems and affected the individual’s involvement in them and interaction with family members and friends.

Perhaps the most salient link between the teachers’ microsystems was their workload management. Many teachers reported doing schoolwork at home which, consequently, impacted on their involvement in their social microsystems. David, for instance, stated that the most stressful
aspects of his job were results, targets and “not having enough time” which, in turn, “has a lot of impact on the social side”. This shows how what was done, or not done, in the workplace – at least in respect of workload – had an impact on what the teacher was able or unable to do in the social and, more often home, microsystems. The level of involvement in one microsystem, impacted on the nature and extent of involvement in the others. As explained by Grace, doing schoolwork at home had a disruptive influence on relations and interactions at home. Activities of her job influenced how she managed her interaction with, and what ended up being done by, her children. In spite of her children not being physically present in the workplace, activities of this microsystem still influenced their interactions with their mother. During certain times, bringing work home could have a disruptive influence.

With regard to how patterns of behaviour and organisation in other microsystems may influence the behaviour or involvement of the individual in the work microsystem, the some of the best evidence can be drawn from Gabrielle’s historical experiences in previous schools when she experienced high stress and managed to recover, in part, due the support she received from her union, LEA (Local Education Authority) and parents. Stress in work also negatively affected her functioning at home. The union, LEA and home microsystems’ support converged to help her through this challenging episode. She left her first work microsystem to join a different work microsystem. In her interview, she also explained how the ‘cliquey’ culture in a previous primary school contributed towards her decision to switch to secondary school teaching whose culture she found ‘cushy’. This suggests that part of the culture and values of the union, LEA and home microsystems included being supportive of teachers facing difficulties like Gabrielle. However, what triggered the enactment of these cultures and values did not originate in her but, rather, from Gabrielle’s school microsystem. This illustrates the intricacy of the interrelatedness of microsystems to which an individual belongs. The links between these microsystems were, in such instances, facilitated by the individual’s involvement in all of them.
Gabrielle’s difficult early career experiences exemplify the significant connection between the workplace, the home and social microsystems. To augment this, further evidence can be noted in Grace’s husband helping out with ironing and Gabrielle’s father offering support and advice and, on one occasion, direct intervention in contacting Gabrielle’s union, to help his daughter cope. These examples also show that the interrelations between microsystems can result in a buffer of the individual from adverse effects of pressure they may experience.

**Exosystem**

As noted previously, the individual is not only affected by contexts in which they are actively involved. There are other contexts in which the individual is not an active participant “but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person” referred to as exosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:25). These exosystems are:

“the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person lives” (Bronfenbrenner, 1993:24).

School 1 teachers’ exosystem mainly consisted of the government, Ofsted, the Local Authority (LA), the union and pupils’ homes.

Government-led change was reported to be having a negative impact on the teachers. For example, David felt stress was increasing “because of the pressures from the government” which, in his opinion, was introducing ineffectual change for the reason “that this government do not have an idea of what it means to be in the classroom”. Teachers felt the nature, scale and rate of change was a major source of stress for them as it was disruptive and tended to lead to more work. Reflecting on the
demands change placed on the teachers, Grace observed, “New programmes are brought up (...) you have to keep yourself up-to-date”.

The major impact of Ofsted the teachers reported experiencing were inspections. “I think Ofsted causes stress (...) to everybody (...) teachers and pupils,” Zoe asserted, as it made “senior members of staff focus on raising achievement and attainment” at the expense of the teachers’ welfare. As a result, Gabrielle postulated, “(...) there is a lot of pressure on results because of emphasis on five GCSEs including Maths and English”. In the process, Zoe believed, this meant that senior management “forget that the people they are gonna make the victims to that are the people they should be supporting”. This contrasted with Ivy’s claim that “We have standards (...), but we take care of our own (...) our teachers”. Although the regulatory authorities did not encompass these teachers, these examples infer that decisions and processes occurring inside them influenced processes within the school which, in turn, impacted, mostly negatively, on the operation of proximal processes.

In addition to being part of the teachers’ microsystems, the union was also part of the exosystem. At exosystem level, the union provided “guidance on PPA time, cover, attendance (...) workload and other such stuff (...)” (Ivy). Although the aim would have been to moderate the negative effects of work on the teachers, interview data of the rest of the teachers in this school suggested workload was still an issue in this school.

Pupils’ homes (mainly comprising pupils and their parents) were an important part of the teachers’ exosystem. David’s observation that, “Parents give in to children (...)” at home and, consequently, the children “try it here” in school is an example of the perceived indirect influence patterns in pupils’ homes on pupils’ behaviour in school. Some teachers (e.g. Gabrielle) felt some parents were a negative influence on pupil behaviour in school – one of the key sources of teacher stress.
Macrosystem

The macrosystem, explains Bronfenbrenner (1979:26), has to do with “the consistency observed within a given culture or subculture in the form and content of its constituent micro-, meso-, and exosystems, as well as any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies”. Particularly, this refers to “belief systems, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, life-styles, opportunity structures, hazards, and life course options that are embedded in each of these broader systems” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:40). In relation to School 1, key driving factors in consistencies across teachers’ subsystems were national standards, the national curriculum, change and, to an extent, union lobbying.

School 1’s push to meet national standards was linked with its emphasis on pupil attainment, especially in national tests, and its subsequent position in the league tables. Thus, in order to consistently achieve this, students were set minimum attainment targets against which their achievement and the teachers’ professional effectiveness were judged. There was a feeling among the teachers that these targets tended to be too high for the students to meet, which was a source of tension between the teachers and senior management because, then, management would hold the teachers accountable for students’ failure to meet their minimum targets. This was reflected in Zoe’s opinion that senior management “fail to understand exactly how demanding national tests are and do not understand what pupils are required to do” in order to meet their targets. This was consistent with David’s “hate” towards “the idea of targets (…) [and] league tables” which he did not think “does anything for the kids”. As exemplified in Zoe’s and David’s remarks, School 1 values regarding standards, particularly pupil academic attainment, resulted in a culture of setting targets for pupils for which the teachers were accountable and over which senior management had oversight. The differences in roles regarding targets made it almost inevitable that there would be tension between management – which was responsible for monitoring and evaluation – and the teachers, who were responsible for implementation.
Pressure of targets and results added to the teachers’ workload and, as a consequence, affected their involvement in the home and social microsystems. Although all pupils had targets, there appeared to be greater stress to achieve on those in year 11. In relation to this, Zoe stated, “As a result, I don’t get to rest with my children during the weekends or during the holidays” as she spent “a big part of my holiday time in school (…) with pupils (…) helping them with revision”. It is noteworthy that the effect of the standards push within the school was not confined to the teachers. Rather, at least in Zoe’s example, it influenced where national-test-taking students spent their school holiday and the amount of time the teachers’ own children or family members ended up with them. This is confirmation that what happens in one microsystem can have an impact on what happens in other microsystems where, as is usually the case, an individual has direct involvement in more than one microsystem.

Internally, another consequence of School 1’s emphasis on student academic results and targets was that, due to shortness of time, classes which were not sitting national test ended up not being prioritised and, resultanty, not getting as much time as their peers sitting national exams. In her justification of this practice, Grace (cited earlier) reasoned that KS4 had a more urgent need for support due to targets and national exams pressure on them. This demonstrates the intricacy of subcultures, where practices in one subculture can have significant consequences in another within the same microsystem. While this suggests KS4 students were being prioritised at the expense of KS3 students, it was not clear to what extent KS3 students were affected by not getting as much attention from their teachers as their counterparts in KS4. For example, with available data, it was difficult to establish whether KS3 students were meeting their KS3 targets while not being prioritised and if this influenced their long-term ability to meet their targets when they got to KS4, or KS4 students who Zoe (quoted earlier) said were not meeting their targets were failing to do so as a consequence of not getting sufficient attention from their teachers when they were in KS3.
Another aspect that reflected school values consistent with the National Curriculum were generally favourable attitudes towards core subjects. With these positive attitudes came the added pressure of target expectations and scrutiny. Gabrielle, for instance, said, “Colleagues’ attitudes towards my subject aren’t an issue (...) mine is a core subject so it’s highly regarded (...).” She, however, acknowledged that, being a core subject, “(...) it comes with its own pressures (...) on results because of emphasis on five GCSEs including Maths and English”. Gabrielle’s observation regarding pressure associated with teaching core subjects within School 1 resonates with Zoe’s (see earlier quote). However, it was unclear whether there were differences in pressure between teachers teaching KS4 core subjects and those teaching non-core subjects at the same level. Still, Zoe felt that, even among core subject teachers, there was comparatively more pressure in teaching English than in teaching Maths or Science due to what she considered the relative difficulty of teaching English, hence difficulties students had meeting their targets in English compared to Maths or Science.

A further key constant within the School 1 microsystem was change. To this end, David believed that the constancy of change had a negative impact on continuity and ended up not having the intended improvement outcome. The change David alluded to above originated externally, but it still influenced the functioning of proximal processes within the school microsystem. David’s quote earlier implies that change initiated by the government had a disruptive influence on the school as the teachers felt that, besides being unnecessary, it left them frustrated by not being given sufficient time to get used to any occurrence of change before a new one was introduced. However, what was unclear was how the local implementation strategies and processes of the change influenced its impact on the teachers and the school microsystem in general.

At macro level, the influence of union national lobbying on the school was implicitly made reference to by Ivy, “(...) we are also aware of union
guidance on several things like PPA time (...), cover, attendance and other such stuff (...) workload (...)." This is an example of the union’s positioning – in relation to the teachers – in more than one subsystem, first in the work microsystem (through the presence of the union representative in the school) and, second, in the macrosystem (through its lobbying influence on consistencies nationally). However, the effectiveness of union influence regarding PPA, cover, attendance and workload on the school appears moderate as evidenced in teachers’ concerns regarding these aspects of their work.

7.4.4 Time

Time is a particularly important dimension of the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998). Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006: 820) propose that time accounts for “stability, consistency, and predictability … for the effective operation of the system in question”. Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) describe time as made up of microtime, mesotime and macrotime.

Microtime

Microtime refers to “continuity versus discontinuity in ongoing episodes of proximal process” (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006:796). Tudge et al (2009: 2001) describe this as “what is occurring during the course of some specific activity or interaction”. Key microtime activities in this school were teaching, PPA, contact with parents, contact with colleagues and contact with senior management.

Salient occurrences during teaching identified by the teachers were:

- “teaching in another classroom on cover (…)” (Gabrielle)
- “classes (…) deliberately messing things up” and “confrontation between young staff and pupils” (David)
- “managing pupils’ learning” and “helping them (pupils) with revision” (Zoe)
“go into the lessons and find out from the children where they were up to” and “get to know the kids” (Grace)

During PPA, the following happened:

- “You get asked for stuff and it eats into your free time” (Gabrielle)
- “plan my lessons on the way to work on the train and then after work” (Zoe)
- “plan some sort of contingency (…). That increases your planning time” (Zoe)
- “scheme for work, plan out your lessons” (Grace)
- “put together another timetable and another timetable and another timetable within a very short period of time” (Grace)

Teachers’ references of contact with parents included the following occurrences:

- “parents came for a meeting because (…) they thought I had been bullying their son, which isn’t true. (…) and I snapped back (…)” (Gabrielle)
- “a letter of complaint from parents; complaining about an aspect of their child’s education (…) making lots of these accusations (…) only accepting the word of the child (…) not prepared to listen when you attempt to explain it” (Zoe)
- “(…) we get parents and parents have a word with kids (…) we do have a lot of support from parents” (Grace)

Teachers described activities relating to contact with colleagues as involving the following:

- “support staff through difficulties (…) supportive return-to-work interview which would highlight any issue staff want to declare in respect to the cause of their absence” (Ivy)
- disagreements regarding requests to do additional duties, so “I just kind of fire up” (Gabrielle)
- “colleagues within the department are helping (…) we help each other out” (Gabrielle)
- “member of staff was in tears (...) because they are not favourites” (Gabrielle)
- severe emotional reaction because “a member of staff had forgotten to give me certain information” (David)
- “talk with colleagues and discuss different situations and tell them how to do things differently” (Grace)

Finally, activities relating to contact with senior management were described as follows:
- “expecting things to be done almost immediately” (David)
- “lack of understanding (...) about (...) the demands (...) ask questions why they are not doing as well in English as they are in Maths” (Zoe)
- “unsympathetic (towards) staff who do not come for work due to stress-related illnesses (...) insistent in having teachers standing in front of their classroom than they are necessarily interested in the wellbeing of the members of staff” (Zoe)

**Mesotime**

Mesotime has to do with “the periodicity of these (microtime) episodes across broader time intervals, such as days and weeks” (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006:796). This considers the extent consistency with which microtime episodes and activities occur over longer periods of time (Tudge et al, 2009). The importance of mesotime is based on the assumption that occurrence person-environment “interaction … on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time” makes bidirectional impact on the individual and their environment (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006:797). Interview data suggested that identified microtime episodes and activities happened with varying degrees of consistency over different periods in the school.

Cover and managing pupils’ learning occurred regularly and were common across all teachers. Thus, in accordance with Bronfenbrenner
and Morris’ (2006) proposition, these elements were likely to have a more significant impact on the teachers. The impact of cover on the teachers was more workload/time constraints, which resulted in pressure and stress among teachers. This also negatively affected teachers’ ability to manage pupils’ learning as “I might not necessarily do the job as well as I always wanted to it done (...)” (Zoe). Inversely, the impact of teachers’ participation in cover and managing pupils’ learning on their environment seemed positive. According to Ivy, organising cover internally was positive with pupils because “(...) kids are better off with someone they are familiar with (...) disruption to kids’ learning is minimum”.

It is noteworthy that most interviewees considered cover a major issue in their work. It was part of the culture in School 1 to organise cover for absent teachers so that no class would be left without a teacher. Common practice within the school at that time was still to organise cover internally whereby teachers were asked to give up some of their non-contact time to perform cover duties for colleagues who were unable to come to work, primarily due to illness. Being asked to cover tended to have an adverse effect on the teachers as that led to them having less planning and preparation time. Even Ivy conceded cover was one of the key sources of teacher stress in within the school. It was, therefore, common that the teachers would end up doing some of their planning and preparation at home which, again impacted on their involvement in the home and social microsystems as noted by, for instance, David who postulated that the most stressful aspects of his job were cover, results, targets and not having enough time. To the students, however, having someone to cover for absent teachers ensured, at least notionally, that there was no disruption to their learning. Thus, it would appear, attempting to serve interests of the students – also members of the same microsystem as the teachers – had a somewhat negative impact on the teachers and their involvement in this and other microsystems they were part of.
Helping pupils with revision, on the other hand, seemed to particularly affect KS4 teachers as they had national-exam-sitting classes which, as Zoe highlighted, had stringent targets. What added the pressure was that she felt she was “held accountable for the performance of pupils who might not be capable of meeting those targets”. It, therefore, appears there was a link between this pressure of results and Zoe’s, for example, coming back into school during her holiday time to help pupils with revision. This, obviously, meant less time in her home context. The benefit of this to the work environment seems difficult to ascertain since Zoe suggested pupils still did not meet set exam targets.

General pupil misbehaviour, as reported by David, seemed a frequent occurrence across most teachers. As to the impact of this, Ivy conceded “pupil behaviour (issues) (...) cause huge stress to some people”. On the other hand, confrontation between pupils and staff, which David claimed affected “young staff”, was difficult to ascertain how frequent it occurred and how widespread across young teachers in the school it was. Thus, it was difficult to determine its bidirectional effect on teachers and pupils.

Finding out from pupils where they were with their learning and “get to know the kids” was an episode by teachers when they had a new class. Frequent changes of class as those experienced by Grace on her return from maternity led to a repetition of these ‘beginner’ episodes. Combined with new timetables and new schemes on every new-class occasion, frequent class changes caused the teacher stress. The obvious impact on the pupils would be “disruption to their learning (...) (lack of) continuity in kids’ learning” (Ivy).

All identified PPA episodes happened with much frequency over extended periods during teachers' lives in the school. Additional requests, to cover mostly, meant further workload/ time constraints for the teachers. This resulted in PPA undertaken outside designated PPA time such as planning on the train (Zoe) or at home. The unpredictability of workplace events, especially requests for cover, resulted in the need
for further planning. While this increased experiences of stress by the teachers, the impact on their environment was the negative impact on the quality of work done.

As indicated above, contact with parents usually occurred in the context of something going wrong during teacher-pupil interaction and failure to reach a resolution internally within the school. Therefore, it was unsurprising that such contact was sometimes characterised by tension. Whereas, it was not a daily occurrence – owing to most pupil behaviour problems being resolved within the school, there appeared to be enough episodes of parental confrontation to cause teachers stress over the course of teachers’ lives in the school. As a result, as evidenced by Zoe’s and Gabrielle’s remarks, there appeared to be lack of teacher confidence in the quality of interpersonal relations with parents. Thus, some teachers approached their contact with parents with a mixture of self-doubt and restraint. It is, however, important to note that Grace reported enjoying a dissimilarly supportive relationship with most parents, which she found helpful in managing pupil behaviour.

Naturally, episodes of contact with colleagues were consistent throughout the course of the teachers’ work in the school. Above, it has been noted that most teacher-teacher contact occurred within the department sub-context and was usually supportive. Because teachers offered support to and sought it from colleagues, these contact moments were helpful in moderating the effects of difficult work aspects on colleagues and themselves and enhanced a sense of agency and collegiality among teachers. Negative reactions, however, resulted from requests to perform additional responsibilities compounding their workload/time constraints. These requests were consistent over the course of the teachers’ work time in School 1 and common across most teachers. Predictably, this was a source of tension between colleagues. In contrast, severe emotional reactions to a colleague such as experienced by David seemed infrequent overtime in the school context.
Instances of teacher-senior management interaction were characterised as top-down “being asked to complete tasks within an unreasonable time” (David). Most episodes of interaction between teachers and senior management evolved around what most teachers considered “unreasonably high” standards and targets. Such perception of management led to added pressure and stress on teachers and feelings of resentment. It was, however difficult to find out the extent of impact this interaction had on the managers — although one member of senior management interviewed (Ivy) represented a mostly positive outlook of the relationship between teachers and senior management. A similar conflicting perspective between most teachers and senior management was evident on the extent of support teachers got in relation to experiences of stress. Whereas Ivy stated senior management was constantly supportive of teachers experiencing stress, most teachers felt senior management’s insistence on pupils’ learning not being disrupted — which Ivy confirmed — pressurised teachers to attend even when unwell. To most teachers, this made them feel senior management was uncaring.

**Macrotime**

Macrotime, also referred to as chronosystem,

> “focuses on the changing expectations and events in the larger society, both within and across generations, as they affect and are affected by, processes and outcomes of human development over the life course” (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006:796).

These “processes are likely to vary according to the specific historical events that are occurring” (Tudge et al, 2009:2001).

There were instances where teachers referred to changes happening in the wider society affecting them within their job. The main ones are listed below:
“That’s also society’s problem because we give children so many rights. Parents give children material things but don’t give them company (...). That is part of the job (...) but that adds to the pressures of teaching, the attitude of the pupils (...).” (David)

“it’s like having new fashions (...) everyone has got to have the latest style of trainers (...) and the government is acting the same way with education (...) This is not a factory (...) this results in pressure.” (David)

“ICT is evolving all time (...) it’s not constant (...) New programmes are brought up (...) you have to keep yourself up-to-date.” (Grace)

“I missed out on buying a house before the credit crunch and everything like that. So that affected me financially as well. (...) it was just a nightmare.”

Problems in society of parents not giving children guidance on “boundaries” were attributed to pupil behavioural problems in school and, therefore, exposed teachers to further risk of stress. Added to this, government-initiated changes to education frustrated teachers as they felt they were not being given sufficient time to adjust. Perhaps the subject most affected by constant advances in the wider technology industry was ICT because the curriculum changed more frequently over time to mirror these changes. The implication on ICT teacher was the demand to constantly update their skills. Finally, Gabrielle’s remark illustrates how one can be affected when significant events in an individual’s career coincide with significant events in the wider society like the economic downturn. However, because of the sensitivity of the subject to Gabrielle and the focus of the present research, there was limited scope to probe her on the nature and scope of the impact of the combination of career difficulties and the global economic downturn on her.
7.5 School 10 Overview

7.5.1 School 10 background

School 10 was secondary school situated in a socially and economically deprived area and had just over 1100 pupils. At the time of the study, School 10’s most recent full Ofsted inspection, conducted in 2004, concluded the school, characterised by improving standards and generally good pupil achievement, was “good and effective”. In that inspection, Ofsted was also impressed by the pupils’ attitudes and behaviour and the “very harmonious relationships between all ethnic groups” within the school. While leadership and management by senior management was adjudged to be good, there were “some weaknesses in middle management”. It was unclear, however, in what way judgments on senior managements differed from those of middle management.

The number of school 10’s pupils entitled to free school meals was above the national average (Ofsted, 2004). The percentage of children from ethnic minority backgrounds who spoke English as an additional language was also higher than the national average. Teachers in this school attributed this to a constant flow of immigrants from countries where English was not the main language into the catchment area of the school. The proportion of children with special education needs was generally reflective of the national average and, according to one of the teachers, this brought about an added workload to try and meet the needs of these children. For example, Tatar and Horenczyk (2003) found that teaching non-English speaking pupils in English-speaking setting resulted in ‘diversity-related’ burnout.

7.5.2 Pupil GCSE results over time

At the time of the study, School 10’s number of pupils achieving at least 5 A*-C (and equivalent) (not including English and Maths) GCSE results
(figure 7.4 below) was 51%. This figure was below the LA (56%) and the national average (61%) for the same year.

**Figure 7.4: School 10 5+ A*-C (and equivalent) GCSE results over time**

Despite being lower than the national average and LA, School 10 GCSE results had been improving since 2005 and were at their highest since 2001. School 10 5+ A*-C (and equivalent), including English and Maths from 2006 to 2009, GCSE results are shown in figure 7.5 below.
In 2007, the proportion of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C (and equivalent) including English and Maths GCSE results in School 10 was 43% which was above the LA average (42%) but below the national average (46%) compared to 2006 when School 10, the LA and national averages were 35%, 37% and 46% respectively.

### 7.5.3 School 10 participants

Altogether, 18 teachers (10 female and eight male) from School 10 participated in this study. This was the third highest number of participants from a single school in the research sample. Of the 18, three also participated in the interviews. The main subjects the teachers were drawn from were Geography (2), English as Additional Language (1), MFL (3), Art and Design (2), English (1), Music (1), Maths (1), Food Technology (1), Religious Education (1), ICT (1), Science (1), SEN (1) and PE (1). There was one missing value in the main subject field.

Selected descriptive statistics for School 10 (table 7.2 below) showed school age mean was higher than sample age mean ($M=37.87$, $SD=10.94$). School 10 teaching experience mean was above that of the
sample \((M=12.67, SD=11.11)\). Number of schools taught mean for the school was higher than sample mean \((M=2.51, SD=1.79)\). Number of years in present school mean for the school was above sample mean \((M=9.15, SD=9.38)\). Approximate total work hours mean for the school was below sample mean \((M=44.65, SD=6.19)\). School 10 mean stress level for the past two years was lower than sample mean \((M=6.05, SD=2.60)\).

<table>
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<th></th>
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<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<td>31</td>
<td>12.58</td>
<td>9.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>38.5</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>42.17</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress level in the past two years</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, 22.22\% \((N = 4)\) of School 10 teachers in this sample were resilient and double that, 11.11\% \((N = 2)\), were at risk (figure 7.6 below).

Figure 7.6: School 10 resilient/at-risk teacher proportions
7.6 School 10 Pen-portraits

7.6.1 Background

Three School 10 teacher pen-portraits were drawn from interviews conducted during the main data collection phase from across three different departments. Enoch was a Work-Related Learning teacher with a Geology background while Josephine primarily focused on supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Rumbi, on the other hand, taught English. Besides the differences in main teaching responsibilities, the three teachers’ professional experiences were varied. Enoch’s teaching experience began in 1976, three years after which he changed careers to become a Geologist for five years before coming back to teaching. Josephine started teaching around the same time as Enoch except that she never took a break from teaching unlike Enoch. Instead, she further enhanced her teaching by undertaking SEN training. In contrast, Rumbi was relatively new to teaching as, at the time of the interview, she had only had one and a half years post-qualifying teaching experience.

Subsections 7.6.2, 7.6.3 and 7.6.4 are detailed pen-portraits from Enoch’s, Josephine’s and Rumbi’s interviews.

7.6.2 Pen-portrait 1: Enoch, Teacher of Work-Related Learning

I started teaching in 1976 (...) in the sixth form college, teaching just Geology A level, in those days, A Level Geology. After three years, I took a five-year break from teaching and worked as a professional geologist in the oil industry and then came back to teaching on this site here in 1984/85 as head of geology and then I became head of year. I was head of different year groups (...) we change year groups each year (...), including head of sixth form.
And then in 1990, the LA reorganised its education structure and I was deployed back on this site as head of lower school – year 7, 8 and 9 (…) – but I wanted to move from the pastoral side and I moved into Work-Related Learning and Careers (…) which is where I am now head (…); working with the Connexions team (…); running careers programmes throughout the school (…) as per advice of the government in terms of careers education (…). It means getting people in from colleges or training providers to give information to youngsters in year 10 and 11. We also do extra work in things like application forms, CVs, learning styles (…) to help the youngsters make the right choice for when at 16 (…).

(…) Work-Related Learning is a statutory element of KS4. There’s nine parts to it. (…) my main role is to make sure that we’ve got a working Work-Related Learning curriculum. That’s at least what the Government expects it to be. (…) So I devised a work-related learning programme for year 10 and 11 (…) and I work closely with the enterprise coordinator who is new in post from September and is developing the statutory enterprise at KS4 as well.

(…), yes, I am also available to parents at parents’ evenings or if they want to come in to discuss careers matters. (…) I am involved with parents as a teacher, obviously, at parents’ evenings (…). Next week we’ve got a target-setting day for the whole school and I will be involved with parents in a slightly different way with some year 8 children. So I do deal with parents when necessary. MOST of the time (…) most of the kids at this stage don’t want their parents with them when they are doing Careers. The older ones, particularly, think it’s not very grown up to have their parents around. But to the Connexions interview, which a lot of the year 10 and 11 pupils have, parents are invited because it’s more than just Careers. It’s all sorts of issues (…) with them leaving school or moving up (…) AND at the moment I am working to develop advice, information and guidance for the younger children in preparation for the new diplomas coming in (…). Because the careers advice now needs to go down, I think, to the lower school and to year 8. They need to start
thinking what they want to do, because by September in year 9 (…); November in year 9, they have to make their choices; which gives them very little time (…). So for the next few years (…) we gonna have to really explain what diplomas are and how it affects them (…) because many of them won’t be studying at this site for their diploma. So they have to go to the other site.

So there is a whole range of new issues the parents and their children need to know about. So I’m hoping to work with the pastoral team in the summer and one or two other people to relook at the (…) personal, social health education programme, careers programme, work-related learning and enterprise programme and how we look at it in terms of the 14 to 19 agenda and decide on what we need to do to help pupils and parents understand (…) not to make a choice for them but to help them understand what that choice means.

(…), if I had a magic wand, if I could go back to teaching A Level and GCSE Geology (…); I don’t like teaching other subjects (…) I really like Geology (…). That’s what I enjoy to do (…). That’s what I came into teaching to do (…). It’s science (…). It’s a hobby (…). It’s fun. It’s an academic qualification for kids. And (…), as a Science teacher, (…) to me (…) Geology brings all the sciences together. (…).

The things that most people say is, (…), far too much change and over too short a time period. (…). It’s changes and initiatives usually coming from government level (…) to be brought in for you to finish in two to three years (…) – three-year projects and programmes. If you are doing anything in a school, particularly if you are teaching a subject (…), if you start a new curriculum or a subject, it takes a minimum of three years to get (…) to feel comfortable with it. The first year is quite new. The second year is when you make the changes and experiment with it (…) and the third year, you start to become comfortable. So, with a new course, it takes five or six years. (…). Change moves more rapidly than that (…); similar to administrative systems as well (…) it takes two or three years
from when something comes in, to get it settled (...). And then, BANG, another change comes in.

So the repetitive change (...); it’s something I haven’t enjoyed (...). It’s all very much top-down. People up there, somewhere, think they know better than teachers. It gives the impression they don’t trust teachers to get on and teach. So I think a lot of the time (...), money is being wasted on initiatives and programmes that just don’t work; (...) that never work nationally. So you’ve got that. And a lot of changes are brought in on top of what’s already there. The old systems aren’t cleared away. And maybe that’s partly due to schools not clearing away old systems. But when you are getting hit by change after change, you tend to (...) bring it in and put it in place without getting rid of the old things. So there has been a build-up of old practice, new practice (...); good and bad practice.

We’ve workload (...) issues as well. So too much change too quickly (...), ill-advised, poor change. Things are dropped that don’t work. We have things they have dropped (...) and they can stop referring to them publicly. They can take the money away. But once you’ve started something in school, it then takes a while for it to go. A classic example is all the money they’ve spent teaching us all how to do a three-part lesson. In every subject it was like (...) this is what you have to do (...) three; (...) starter, main bit and a plenary. (...) Advisors were brought in and they were paid for millions of pounds worth of material and guidance in advance. (...) It doesn’t really work. There is no proof it works any better. And it wasn’t much different to what teachers were doing anyway. You never hear of three-part lessons anymore. It’s all disappeared and gone. (...) I think it was insulting and a waste of time. So, it’s rate of change (...), amount of change (...), not having time to get new things embedded in and worked out properly.

I’m looking to retire in four years (...). I’m just old and cynical now. It’s all a waste of time. Everything I’ve said has been brought in was happening thirty years ago. Things have just been brought in in a slightly different.
For example, the three-part lesson (...); that’s how I was taught to teach thirty years ago. I’m sure that’s how all teachers are taught to teach. So to reveal it as some new way is just mad. So I’m just very, very cynical about the whole thing that’s going on outside the classroom. (...) I’m not too worried about anything either because I don’t feel I have to keep coping with all the new initiatives and things for career development. I just want to sort of serve out my last three or four years and retire sanely (...). But for younger staff it would be (...); it’s different because they need to take on board all these new initiatives because that’s what they have been asked about in their interviews (...). I really don’t care about anything besides going into the classroom and teaching the kids. A lot of stuff that comes out, particularly from government level isn’t actually having a positive impact in the classroom really. It has a neutral impact (...); most of it (...); or some has a negative impact. There’s not much of the millions and billions that have been spent that has had a positive impact on us teachers.

I tell people I have a good career (...). When I tell them I am a teacher, I work at a secondary school, they go (...), “How do you do that, it’s horrible?” I still say it’s better than working at a place I used to work. Because I think it’s very enjoyable job in the classroom (...) when you are not interfered with too much. It’s really enjoyable. That’s why most people do it. It’s the outside of the classroom. So I’ve got a lot of Science (...), Geology in particular. But I love teaching kids (...) so I’ve been paid to do something I really enjoy. (...) To get to the higher pay levels for professional promotion, I’ve had to do other things (...); the administrative side of things such as head of year (...); head of careers (...). It’s a very rewarding job to do if you are not interfered with too much. I think, at the moment, there’s too much interference, but it’s a rewarding job.

I spend approximately 41 hours working (...), including teaching. Well, I think it’s down a lot from what it was three, four years ago. So, that’s, that’s okay. (...) If you take 25 hours in a week, (...), and then you’ve got
the extra time with meetings (...). I reckon it’s that, for me (...) it’s two hours a night for marking (...) just to keep up with the marking. (...)

So I don’t think the hours are that excessive. I think most people paid less than in our industry would be working the same or more. (...) Every weekend (...) I’ve got to do some work. I don’t work every night. I didn’t do anything last night (...). I was out for dinner. But that means I’ve got twice as much work to do tonight. So if you take just mathematically the number of classes I teach (...); one homework a week - let’s say six or five classes – (...) thirty kids (...); if I spend two minutes on a piece of work, THAT’S an hour (...) just that. That’s only two minutes to mark and (...) and then when you add writing down of the results (...). Often (...) they have to be recorded and passed on to somebody else and, and so on. But the hours are much less than I used to do. I refuse to do much more because I really don’t care (...). They aren’t gonna sack me. So (...) I don’t do as much. I do very little preparation at home. I used to do a lot of lesson preparation as opposed to marking. And now I do the marking (...) and I have tried to work more in school rather than taking it home. So I just do my work at home a little bit (...), but I don’t do (...) – I used to (...). When you’re a young teacher you spend virtually all your time preparing (...). I do very little of that now. (...).

The trickiest aspect of my job (...); some children are particularly awkward to deal with, (...) I think it’s coming back to any new initiatives that are coming (...); trying to get them to work in a school (...) in a seamless way and then to get rid of (...) the old stuff that it’s replacing (...) trying to introduce people, other staff into the new initiatives or the new material. So, it is too easy to just say, “Right we are going to do this and then you stick it on top of everything else.” For example, I am running some training tonight. It’s the first training in online progress files. We don’t do them here in this school at the moment. We really ought to have been doing them now for a number of years. Now it’s just the beginning of a process which is gonna be very difficult to get in because people want to be carrying on with their old system and using paper and physical files rather than
moving over to this. (...) I suppose getting staff on side with new initiatives when they are fed up (…) ; they're tired. They've got more than enough work to do in their own lessons and classes and whatever other role they have and to bring something else new in (…) and get the staff (…) not to be enthusiastic, but to (…) to give it a chance (…) ; it's difficult. (…) That's the most difficult thing (…) getting new initiatives in and getting them embedded properly.

To deal with those tricky aspects of my job (…), I do it by being as good as, or better than, anyone else at it and I don't ask staff to do anything that I wouldn't do myself. (…) Three years ago, I introduced something in Careers and when I introduced it (…) ; and I still do training every year for staff on more aspects of it. And I look at them as tutors and think what's their workload (…) ; what's reasonable to ask them to do and what's not reasonable? So I use my experience to sort of think to myself, how can I (…) how could I manage to do this if something else was in the way? Can I do this piece of work? If the answer is no, then I won't ask anybody else. So I always try (…) looking at it from the perspective of the staff I'm asking to do things. I put myself in their position and think right, if I'm asking them to do this, what am I going to ask them not to do anymore? So (…) it's about living by example, and if a member of staff says, “I can't do this with my kids. I can't deliver this,” then I will go into that classroom and deliver it for them. I will say to them, “I'll do it”.

I can see pupil behaviour being a source of stress, but I do not find it one personally. This school particularly (…); I don't think it's too many teachers in this school who would be stressed by pupil behaviour. We all work very hard to keep it a nice, calm atmosphere in the place. (…).

I think there's a general social decline in politeness. (…) Certainly, I think the biggest stress that staff find with pupil behaviour is answering back and questioning. You ask the pupil to do something quite reasonably, and the immediate answer is, “Why?” It's not something that needs an explanation. You ask them, “Please leave the room, we are on fire,” and
they ask why (...) that kind of response (...). An increasing number of
kids, use that questioning, (...), in a confrontational way. (...) I think staff
find that annoying and stressful. And getting drawn into an explanation to
children why an adult in charge of them (...); we are explaining why we
are asking them to do something. But, really, it should be so obvious that
we are asking them because it’s part of what they are supposed to do. To
some extent it does affect classes, to start with, until I’ve beaten them into
submission, and then (...). I don’t mean physically, obviously. I mean until
when we have come to an arrangement very quickly. But they don’t
question what I am asking when it’s straightforward instruction such as
when I ask kids to pick up the books. I didn’t have it with my own
daughter, so I won’t have it with other kids either. But there is this
generally questioning. I don’t mean questioning to find out. It’s a
questioning (...) for the sake of it almost (...). I mean, it’s an extension of
children’s rights. You see, I tell all my kids they only have got three rights
in my classroom (...) to breathe, learn and to be safe. They have no other
rights in my classroom. It’s tongue-in-cheek obviously, but I actually
believe they don’t need more than that. I look after the rest of it. But kids
come in and say, “I’ve got rights. You can’t do that. You can’t say that,”
and they have no clue what they are talking about (...) and usually they’re
wrong. It’s all about this confrontation and deflection away from work. So I
think that kind of behaviour certainly happens in all schools.

We’re lucky we don’t have a lot of bad, riotous behaviour; violence, abuse
or anything like that (...); physical or verbal abuse. That has to do with the
school and the teachers and the staff here. We’ve got a very mixed
community of kids (...); a really comprehensive school in terms of ability,
depression. We serve one of the most deprived areas. We also serve one
of the most affluent areas and (...) and you wouldn’t necessarily know
from behaviour which kids come from where. We work very hard as a staff
(...) all of us, not just teachers. We look after the kids as well. We are
polite to them. We are not threatened by them. It’s not an aggressive feel
to the place. Kids walk around and smile and say, “Hello.” And if they saw
you in the corridor they politely ask (...) I mean if somebody said, “Do you
need any help? Do you know where you are going?” If you look lost, then they would help. I don’t think it’s to do with the area.

Pupils’ and colleagues’ attitudes towards my main subject (…); Science in the national curriculum has pretty much destroyed the fun of Science. So (…) I find I’m not teaching the Science I want to teach in a way I’d like to teach it. We’re having to teach a body of knowledge (…); we are to test the kids to see if they know that body of knowledge, which is a secular argument. We are not teaching a scientific way of looking at life and the world, and then seeing it and understand it so that they can communicate it (…). That’s what Science is to me. It’s not like (…), “Do you know who lives on the planet? Do you know the contents of a cell?” That is a little bit of information built into something better. The national curriculum (…); the testing, the reporting of the tests has destroyed that. So it’s Science most kids don’t enjoy (…) they don’t like it. It’s just another subject to do. And, increasingly, kids won’t go on to study it post-16. You can see at universities Science departments closing down, not getting enough students because, I think, we are not turning on a lot of kids. Those who are already switched on to Science from an early age will go through and become scientists. But many won’t. So their attitude is, it’s just another subject that they have to do. If you gave them the option not to do it, they wouldn’t. (…)

Recently I have had to accept that that’s what they are. And trying to battle against it is very, very difficult (…) because everything is stacked against you. I can’t abandon the national curriculum (…) because they have to (…) not that they have to get the results (…) it’s a function of (…) if you don’t get the results, you get hit with the Ofsted stick. So the pressure now is not to educate kids in Science (…). It’s probably the same in many other subjects (…). The pressure is to get them the target grade that they can come with. That is not education to me. That’s training (…). That’s training the kids to jump a hoop. So it has affected me. I have given in to that. So (…) that’s what we have to do. So I’m less likely to go into some areas of the Science the kids might enjoy because I’m always
conscious that a substantial percentage won’t get their target (…) and other subjects across the whole school; all the key stages (…) then there will be the Ofsted stick. So it’s not the assessment of kids, it’s the reporting and publication and reporting to Ofsted that forces teachers to teach to a curriculum and structure not actually to educate them.

I think all Science teachers feel the same in terms of Science education. We don’t have the time (…) because we have this curriculum to force into the kids. I don’t know what other colleagues think about Science. It’s just a subject that’s in the curriculum and all kids have to do it. If they hated it in school (…); you see now we’re getting teachers who came through the national curriculum (…) – some teachers hate science probably because of what we have done to them 20, 50 years ago.

On-the-job relations; (…) it’s a very friendly (…) staffroom here (…). We all get on well and we make very little difference between the teaching and non-teaching staff as well. So we all (…) get on pretty well. If we have a party at the end of the year or end of term, we get a lot of people (…). We’ll have the cleaners, caretakers, technicians, support staff, teachers; people from the dining room as well. It’s not (…) a staffroom full of tensions. People help each other professionally and personal as well.

Parents (…) it’s just a wide; (…) it’s a comprehensive mix of parents just like the school. (…) There’s a lot of very supportive parents. There’re also some extremely awkward, self-indulgent parents. (…) Generally, parents are very supportive – at least face-to-face. What they say afterwards is slightly different. When I was head of year and head of lower school that was one of my jobs not to alienate awkward parents, but to try to get them to see that (…) this is an institution of 1200 kids, 100 staff and kids have to fit in to some extent. And what the parents might allow their children at home was perhaps not acceptable here. So we always try and mediate, (…) but there’s layers of it. If a tutor couldn’t deal with a parent, they go to the head of year and then to the head of lower school, and then to the pastoral deputy and, eventually, the head teacher for support. So there’s
always that support network where you can either ask, “What should I do with this incident or what’s your advice?” (...) Or you got to a point, which I don’t think I’ve ever come to in my career, where I couldn’t make some progress. There is always somebody to pass it on to who is more experienced or just a different personality perhaps. They have the choice to take the kids away if they like. (…)

As head of year, I’ve had disciplinary issues (...); I’ve had some awkward interviews with parents. Usually (...) a parent comes in (...) blazing and upset. So it’s usually sitting here for 20 minutes while they burn my ear and let them just run out of energy. And then we sit and talk reasonably (...); and then I try and get the parent to see what their son or daughter is like from the other side (...) not as their son or daughter of one or two at home, but one of 1200 and that if 1200 behaved the way their one does, we may have mayhem and anarchy. What they may be allowed at home; (...), it might be just answering back in an aggressive manner (...). I remember a parent saying, “I taught my daughter to be streetwise,” and I said, “No, that’s aggression. That’s not streetwise. It’s not acceptable. Twelve hundred kids behaving like that, it’ll be difficult.” (...) Can’t do it. You can’t have 30 kids in a class constantly shouting and arguing back simply because they didn’t want to do something. That’s (...) part of (...) the negotiation; of being in a mainstream school.

In front of me, usually, parents come to a point where they know they aren’t gonna go any further. (...) I think, there’s only really three outcomes; (...) one is they storm out, that’s rarely happened to me. They just leave as upset as when they came in (...). Most of the time they calm down (...); they’ve had their say, somebody has listened to them and somebody hasn’t been critical back (...); just explaining the situation from the other side. So most of them go away happy, at least. What happens at home and what they say at home, I don’t know. They go away fairly calm. At least they’ll say, “I sort of understand. That’s okay.” The third one is you come to a situation where you can’t agree and that’s when you pass it on
and say, “Would you like to speak to the deputy head or head teacher because this is now something I can’t deal with.”

The most effective (…) approach to dealing with parents is (…) sit and listen, for as long as possible till they have no other things to say. (…) What the pupil has done, whatever the reasons, never criticise the pupil. The behaviour (…); you can talk about the behaviour as not being acceptable. But if you criticise the child, then you are automatically criticising the parent.

My stress level (…) towards the lower level (…); I might say it’s still low (…). I (…) put too much down to reports. The only thing that stresses me is to get reports done (…); not the reports as such. It’s the system we have in the school which is a new one and it’s not working very well. In fact (…) we’ve had three systems and they don’t work very well. And we try to get reports done to strict deadlines and very high professional quality. But if I had (…) filled that stress scale three years ago, that number could have been way up the other end. What has changed is (…) I am retiring in four years (…) I don’t give a toss anymore (…). I mean sort of. (…) I mean I care about the children, and I come in and I do a professional job (…) and I am interested. I’m not (…) giving up. (…) I’m not just coming in and go home and do nothing. But, at the end of the day, whatever we do to the kids doesn’t really matter. If we give them a safe learning environment, they’ll achieve. Ninety-eight percent (…) most will achieve what they put into their studies. And sometimes, I think, they’d be better off without me. So I’ve just come to this thing now (…); I don’t have to do anything now to further my career. The biggest single thing (…); the realisation a year ago (…) that now I am happy with where I am. I’m not looking for career enhancement or anything. I don’t have to go to extra meetings or training or this because I don’t want it. There’s no point to it. (…) If something comes up (…); a new piece of Science equipment that would be useful, (…) or some new software, then I’ll go and do the training. But I don’t feel I need to go to the various committee meetings that we have in school to learn about this. I don’t have to be seen to go to
these meetings as part of your (...) career development. So when people say, “Do you want to do this?” I say, “Why? Not really.” “Do you want to learn to be middle manager?” “Not really. Why?” So (...), particularly, once you reached a point, certainly to me, where I am is where I am staying (...). There’s only four years (...); I think four and half years before I’m due to retire and I’m happy with where I am. So it’s not just accepting where I am, I’m happy. I’ve got a great class of kids. I’d like to be teaching better Science but it’s not that bad. And I’ve got more relaxed about the teaching of Science material. There are no professional development (...) career progression pressures on me.

Teaching is (...) highly stressful. To improve the situation (...) all teachers need more guaranteed preparation time. (...) The thing that really gets to teachers is that you plan to do something when you aren’t teaching and then you have to do cover for somebody who’s ill because they are not in. So what you plan to do has to go because you have to go to another classroom. Going to another classroom for another teacher is quite stressful itself. If I would say something to Government, I would say, “Right, teachers don’t do cover. Get rid of that.” (...) Fewer initiatives coming in would help and, if they’re brought in, brought in more sensibly over a longer time. Things aren’t gonna stay as they are, but there’s lots of little things (...) at Government level. I think they really need to listen to what teachers are saying. It’s become (...) education has become too political. So governments do things for the newsworthiness of it, “We gonna do this (...); allow McDonalds to offer diplomas!” Well, actually, that’s what the new diploma system is about. Kids at fourteen may be doing a diploma but not necessarily in a school. But they’ve made a big splash about this (...). The Government like to do things and they set themselves targets. They don’t meet them, but they then forget them (...). The school doesn’t meet them; they send Ofsted there.

There’s a whole lot of things that are annoying and upsetting teachers. I think your research will find out that pay levels, although they are an issue, are not the major one for teachers. They come to about half way
down (...). But (...) I think giving teachers more control over their assessment and (...) less reliance on targets; setting targets for kids (...). Kids are now coming with bar codes, really, with a target. (...) That’s what’s on a production line (...) and that’s stressful (...); making teaching and education a production line. In they come with their targets (...), get them their targets at the other end. Not every kid will make their target. We can get them through targets, but at what cost in terms of their education? So it’s education against training. I think guaranteeing more planning and preparation time, not doing cover, fewer initiatives brought in more slowly, giving it more time (...). If I could have two hours preparation for every hour’s teaching, those kids would do much better. Ease up on the national curriculum and the constraints of the national curriculum (...).

There’s a new Science curriculum coming (...); it isn’t really that much different to the old one. It’s not easing up (...) because of the pressure of kids having to pass their exam and getting their grades. (...), school behaviour (...) in some areas (...); children’s behaviour (...); there are social issues that come into school as well. (...) So, depending on different schools, different schools will depend on where they are (...) and some schools are struggling because of the nature of the social area they are serving. It’s a social issue, but I don’t see how you can get round that. But it’s often schools in difficult areas are in difficult times. Staff don’t stay long enough or there are staff who really don’t care and just come in and out and don’t develop the kind of classroom relationships and feeling (...) and ethos within the school and help it become a sane learning place (...) a happy place. (...) Not that I have the answers (...); if I knew the answers, I’d be education secretary really, wouldn’t I? I’d be writing books and earning much (...) or lecturing you lot (...). I really don’t know. But I think teachers think that there’s not enough time and I feel newer teachers feel their home life affected. They do so much work at home and I think giving teachers more time (...) somehow, more preparation time (...); perhaps less pressure on what they ask us to teach (...) it’s probably one thing I would look at.
7.6.3 Pen-portrait 2: Josephine, SEN coordinator and union representative

(...), I started my teaching career in the 1970s and went on to train as an SEN (special educational needs) teacher in the early 80s. (...), I’ve been in my present school, my sixth since qualifying as a teacher, for 14 years. At present (...), I am SEN coordinator and (...), union representative.

Initially (...), the key reason for my between-schools transfers was mostly attributable to the re-organisation of the education system at the time. For example, one of the schools I was in was closing down and (...), therefore, I had to move. On another occasion (...), there was redundancy which meant there wasn’t any room for me in the school (...), that was when I had to train as a Special Needs teacher. After training in special educational needs I got a job (...), which I was quite happy with in a special school and (...), again, it closed down and I ended up in this mainstream school as a SEN Coordinator where I have remained ever since. I have managed to stay in this school because of one thing (...), being established in the setting. Once you are in a school you get to know the system and pupils and that makes your work a lot easier.

As SEN coordinator (...), I am responsible for pupils with special educational needs in the school. The biggest thing in this role is that I deal with a large number of pupils. However (...), it is not so much about managing the pupils as it is about associated meetings and paperwork that goes along with it (...).

I’m usually in school from 7.30 in the morning (...), to about (...), four o’clock in the evening. (...), I will then do a bit of work at home. Occasionally, I’m also in the school until evening doing some work because (...), apart from my main job (...), there’s always more (...), jobs for me to do.
I’m of the opinion that special needs children are much better off in the mainstream than in special schools. It’s especially good for the pupils because they get an opportunity to relate with their peers. As far as special needs teachers are concerned (…), I think there could be a problem for them in the mainstream when it comes to dealing with children with EBD (emotional and behavioural difficulties) (…) although (…), on the whole, (…) mainstream is better.

Over the years, (…) parents have become much more ready to accept changes in the way SEN schooling is handled. In general (…), there has been a lot of questioning of the roles of the LA from the society at large. In my role as SENCO, (…) I’ve found relationships with parents to be quite difficult at times as they expect their children to do well.

I’ve got no complaints about my colleagues’ attitudes towards my role. I’m lucky they appreciate the role of the SENCO (…), and that’s one thing that has made my job a lot easier. Within the school, (…) most teachers are understanding. This is primarily because they, themselves, can get quite stressed (…) and so that can lead them to not want to deal with difficult pupils. Inevitably, they count on my intervention.

I find paperwork, (…) alongside the targets-based culture, (…) very stressful. Targets, in particular, compromise the cooperation one should be getting from colleagues; (…) this results-oriented approach, (…) as well as targets associated with performance management, (…) adds considerable pressure on teachers (…). I don’t think this targets culture is producing much benefit because the kids aren’t equipped for the outside world but just drilled for exams.

To me, pupil behaviour isn’t one of the problems (…). I think it can be to some (…), but I’ve been doing the job for quite a long time now and so I’m used to dealing with pupils. Another contributory factor to my not being negatively affected by pupil behaviour is that (…), because of the nature of my job (…), I tend to work with smaller groups than most of the
teachers. Thus (...), I would not put down pupil behaviour as one of my main problem areas.

I am not quite sure how I can describe my stress situation (...); probably fatigue that leads to anxiety would best describe it (...). I think my personality has to do with how I respond to stressors due to, as I stated before (...), my tendency to be bothered by certain things. Consequently (...), my stress has been gradually increasing over the years (...). I started getting stressed about seven or eight years ago. Up until then (...), I was left to get on with the job that I so loved. But then the school management began to intervene a lot more (...) and I started getting mixed messages about what to do and how it should be done and so on. Some of it had been beneficial (...) but most was not. Before then (...), my stress levels used to be stable throughout the year (...) at times it would be even less (...), but I don’t think that’s true anymore. I can’t describe my handling of stress as very good because I get very stressed by things (...) and (...) to cope (...), I simply switch off in the evening and do very little work. I find this approach to coping effective. I’m better off during the holidays because, once the school holidays are upon us (...), I just switch off from work completely.

As union rep, I’ve had very few colleagues come to me for advice on dealing with work stress. My advice to them is very much dependent on the specific situation (...). If it’s serious (...), I pass it on to the union who can deal with it (...) hopefully. To make it less stressful (...), I believe teaching should be more supportive than it is now. At present, (...) most of the teachers feel that there is no support in the job (...). The school thinks stress is a medical problem and so you can go to the doctor and get whatever help you get there. Teachers are quite reluctant to raise an issue with this approach for fear of being labelled as somebody bad (...). I’ve talked to teachers who say talking about their stress situation can be misunderstood as a weakness. People are very much afraid of that and (...) so they’ll complain and moan about all sorts of things in private. What we’re trying to do as a union is (...) reducing the workload. The
government has identified 24 tasks that teachers are not supposed to do (...). The problem is (...) we did all that, but teachers are still stressed and there hasn’t been much change.

At the moment, I can describe people’s experience in the school as quite tough (...), quite bureaucratic and very top-down (...). It’s top-down from the management to the teachers (...); top-down from the teachers to the pupils (...). It’s about pouring down skills to the pupils rather than letting them find out for themselves. I (...) personally (...) don’t agree that the school’s Investors-in-People status makes any positive impact (...). It’s jumping through the curriculum to get there. Other than that, I enjoy working with pupils and colleagues (...), but if anything could change in teaching (...) I would change the curriculum to make it more creative. Currently the government is pouring down things to schools and it’s harder for schools to opt out.

I think the differences in stress experiences among individuals have to do with personal character (...), personality and so on. It also depends on the timetable of the subjects that one teaches and one’s particular position within the hierarchy. Experiences can be very (...) different. I think that personality qualities are less important. The thing that needs changing is the way the education system is organised at the moment to a stage where one can work without getting stressed.

7.6.4 Pen-portrait 3: Rumbi, Teacher of English

I trained as an English teacher at the University of Manchester. Altogether (...), I’ve been teaching for one year and half years (...). Prior to teaching, I was in the retail sector. (...) Teaching and retail (...) are different (...). There’s a lot more work in teaching. In retail it was nice being with people of my age and being able to talk to people all the time (...). Because with teaching you sometimes feel isolated. I think retail is more dynamic and I find it more exciting (...). But I wouldn’t say that (...) I enjoy teaching more. In retail I could think if I go out a night before (...), I can get drunk,
I can fall sick (…). It’s not really important (…). I wasn’t really bothered about having a day off sick (…). It wasn’t that important. I never had a day off from teaching because I would feel I would let so many people down (…), but I also feel sometimes that maybe I’ve got a bit too much responsibility on my shoulders (…). Sometimes I feel like it’s a lot of pressure to be under. There’s more work, obviously, to being a teacher. (…) Short hours but more work to take home (…), and it becomes a much bigger part of your life (…). Working in retail is just a job (…). It’s just a career. Teaching becomes a way of life (…) – a part of your life.

I think when I first started teaching I was working a lot all the time (…) because I was developing schemes and marking (…). I feel a lot more confident now, in my second year (…), that I’m doing the right thing and I’m not doing things wrong. But I also feel now that people have started to expect me to go up the career ladder (…) and start developing as a teacher (…). I feel that’s going on behind the scenes (…) I also feel that it’s a bit more like backbiting (…); that people talk behind your back including a well-known member of staff. At the beginning of the year I was asking people, “Can I have some help with this, can I have help with that?” (…) not a lot of help but I am happy to go to people and say, “I’m struggling with this”. But now I feel a bit more (…); I have to be careful what I say to certain people (…) and I don’t really feel like there’s a lot of support from my department. My department is positioned in another area of school away from me such that it’s a good few minutes’ walk away (…). Sometimes I feel out of my department like I’m not really involved. It can be (…) sometimes (…), because I think people should mind their own business. Apart from that (…) sometimes when I feel like I’ve got too much work (…), I wish I could go to my head of department and say, “I think I’m really struggling.” (…) but I don’t think I will ever do that.

To cope, (…) I try to be organised (…) – sometimes writing a list of things; (…) trying to prioritise what needs doing. Last week it got to the point where I said, “That’s enough.” (…) I didn’t take any work home with me. I came home and watched television and felt much better. There was
Ofsted inspection last week (...). Obviously, the pressure increased (...). I was just crying a lot of the time and getting upset about things (...). I do cry a lot and that did help me get through (...). And people think I’m stupid (...). But I don’t do that in school. In my second year (...) I recovered a little more about my life rather than school being everything (...). It’s just a case of not feeling guilty every time if I’m not doing something (...). Because I was making myself feel like I should be working all the time because that was my job.

(...) I finished my induction in July last year. (...) I did get sufficient help during my induction year (...). We had a really nice tutor and there were about seven or eight NQTs in that year (...), so there was a good group. We don’t have that anymore (...), so I don’t feel like I have anybody to discuss my problems with (...). I don’t need departmental discussions on an individual basis. We have a meeting once every couple of months (...), but that’s for the whole department and I feel sometimes (...) that I couldn’t really tell him that I was having a problem because he wants me to go back (...). Sometimes I feel like he would think it was irrelevant. If you ask him to discipline a pupil sometimes he shouts at them (...). I don’t think that is very supportive. The second in the department is better than the head of department.

I’m full time (...) so I’m there from eight o’clock to three (...) – so about six hours a day (...). So that boils down to about thirty hours a week (...). Work at home (...) all the time (...). I could do my work in school, but because I live closer to school I would rather take my work home and work on it. On average it’s probably an hour a day at least (...). So that’s Monday to Friday and maybe a couple of hours over the weekend. It really depends on whether there’s coursework or exams that need marking. I teach year seven, eight, nine, ten and eleven (...). I do internal examinations and not external. I’m most comfortable with (...) probably year seven, eight and nine (...). Perhaps if I’m to pick one I would say year seven because I don’t think they expect too much of you and you can have quite a lot of fun with year seven in the things you do.
Discipline in the classroom is very good with me (...). We have a set routine which I don’t have with other classes that I wish I had (...) that would work out very well. I have mixed-ability for all classes and that can be quite difficult trying to make sure that you’re doing the right work to suit everybody.

The most difficult thing still (...) is work-life balance in my job (...) I still feel sometimes that there is too much to think about and too much to do. I don’t think anything (...) will make teaching different (...). It’s just the nature of the job. Less report-writing will take pressure off people (...) and less English coursework that needs to be done (...). I think that will take pressure off English teachers. Some subjects just get away with completely not having to do any coursework (...). I think that does make a difference. I think that will make work-life balance a lot easier. The most stressful aspect in all the work I do as a teacher (...) is marking books or marking coursework (...). I don’t like assessments and setting targets for children. I don’t enjoy doing that because I have to do six assessments per child per year group (...) and I find that quite difficult.

Pupil behaviour doesn’t cause (...) that much stress (...) because the children are quite good. They respond if you tell them off. If there are any problems (...), I’ve got two teachers from next door who are brilliant and help with behavioural problems (...) and one of them is the year head so she will speak to them if need be. The most common behavioural problem (...) talking and shouting (...) it’s low-level behaviour rather than anything serious.

Other people’s attitudes (...) like my colleagues, pupils and the management towards my main subject (...); it’s good (...). Everybody in school knows that it’s really important so it’s treated with quite a lot of respect. The department is held in high regard because it’s quite good for the school. (...) I think English and Maths are criticised more than any other subjects though (...) but that doesn’t really have any extra pressure
because we can only do our best. It wouldn’t matter to me if all my children fail (…); but I know that I’ve done my best job and they’ve tried their hardest (…). So it wouldn’t matter to me (…). It’s really what children are getting out of it and not what the results are.

If something would go terribly wrong in English (…), I think that would be lack of resources. At the moment we have sufficient resources (…); the head of department is quite good. She said, “If you want any new book just let the department know and we’ll order them.” (…) You can be more creative if that’s available.

On-the-job relations (…), I wouldn’t necessarily call them friendly. There’s no one I have a problem with in the school (…). I don’t have any negative relationships (…). I get on very well with the teaching assistant. That makes my job easier. Others also relate with me quite well I think. I do get in contact directly with parents (…); only at the very end of the line (…). I would rather deal with the problem in school rather than involve parents. All parents I have dealt with have been very supportive (…). They’re very respectful even during parents’ evening. I think because when children go home they talk about me and don’t complain, the parents are more likely to listen to what I tell them and they know I wouldn’t say bad things about their child without real reasons.

Covering for absent colleagues (…); before Christmas it was becoming an issue because I felt like I was being used too regularly (…). I think I was being used a couple of times in a week. My friend is a union representative in school and he said it was very average and I wasn’t being overused (…); and I haven’t been used since then (…). It’s really painful and it can be quite stressful and I don’t like it. It’s just the pressure in your planning time and the realisation that you’ve got another planning to do. At times you’re told you should be in such and such a room (…); that annoys me (…) because I have my own plans.
My stress level (…); it’s not high at the moment (…). But if I had this conversation last week, it would have been sky high. My stress level changes every day (…). Last week it was a hectic week (…). I went for training at the airport which is quite far away and then we had an inspection on Tuesday and Friday. The week in general was very stressful (…). I think I was tired and wasn’t feeling very well. I think I made myself sick (…); worrying about the inspection. It’s not like that all the time. I can still say my stress level over the past week or so is 7 and 8, if not 9 and 10; last week (…) on the scale. Last week I did fall ill (…), but I’ve never been off because of stress (…). It tends to be a headache and sometimes stomach-ache, but I have never been properly ill.

When stressed I still try my best in lessons, to do what I can. Sometimes I do activities with children more involvement than me (…), but otherwise I could just continue as normal and do my best even if I don’t feel really well. It’s not the teaching (…) or the time in the classroom, but the marking of coursework and report-writing (…). Actually, it’s assessing pupils all the time that’s stressful. I think I exert a lot of pressure on myself (…). Sometimes I have expectations that are too high on myself (…). It’s probably not anybody else, but what I’m doing to myself that’s making me stressed. I lose my temper easily and get stressed (…), and I don’t think that helps me. Being organised certainly helps, but I don’t know what my priority is (…). Apart from that, I don’t think how you can function as a teacher because you need a certain amount of pressure to get things done. Externally (…), I think I’m alright (…) but internally I’m probably under more stress (…) which I don’t show people because I don’t like them to think I can’t cope.

Stress makes some teachers have days off from teaching though. Less assessment and marking would help (…). Having to assess a pupil twice can be time-consuming. We get a 15-minute break and 45 minutes lunch (…), which I think isn’t enough. Pupils need time away from us and it’s noisy during this time (…). Pupils come to me and talk to me when I need time by myself.
Technical support isn’t an issue (...). If you need anything, they’ll help you (...). If you have other problems, they’ll come down and help you (...). So that’s all good. Support for special needs is good as well (...) and I have teaching assistants. Some children are not getting the support they need probably because we have a lot of children with SEN and those with English as second language (...). I feel it could be improved maybe because I’ve five different classes with mixed abilities (...). I feel I’ve got a lot to cope with especially with low ability children.

Processes are good (...). Our school is quite a good one. If I want to speak to the head teacher, I could just knock on his door (...). If he’s there he could talk to me (...). It’s not like there is a pecking order. There’s no professional development really though (...); because there are people who have been in the profession for longer so they just take up the jobs. But I don’t look elsewhere for opportunities (...) because I love the school (...). I wouldn’t want to leave. I’d rather stick around the school because (...) the behaviour of the pupils and the general atmosphere (...). I’m quite happy to be in work. My school is a nicer place to be than other schools in the area.

Some teachers experience more stress than others (...). It depends on what their responsibilities are and how much pressure you put on yourself. If you get things done in time (...) you won’t get stressed (...). But I can’t imagine teachers that aren’t stressed from time to time (...). It depends on what your coping mechanism is and also how much teaching and priority is there in your life. However, I think communication could be better within the department (...) and that does stress out sometimes. But, overall, that’s a good department and good school (...) and it’s a nice place to be.
7.7 School 10 Case Analysis

7.7.1 Teachers' person characteristics

There was no typical individual teacher profile in School 10. Individual attributes of teachers – especially biographical – were varied. In School 10 certain individual qualities tended to have a major influence, not only on the teachers’ personal lives, but also on their professional lives and perceptions, hence attitudes towards their job. These individual qualities were important in the teachers’ proximal processes, and the impact of these processes on the individual, their work microsystem and those within their microsystem(s). Main person characteristics (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006) of School 10 teachers were force, resource and demand.

Force characteristics

As explained in section 7.4.1, force characteristics relate to active behavioural dispositions which positively or negatively influence an individual’s proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006) accounting for individual differences (Tudge et al, 2009). School 10 teachers’ main force characteristics were self-efficacy, personal attitudes towards their job, personality and persistence.

An individual’s self-efficacy beliefs about their job are an important indicator of their behavioural choices regarding their goals, priorities and actual performance within the context of their job (Choi et al, 2003). School 10 teachers showed self-efficacy beliefs in a range of aspects of their teaching roles. How they expressed these beliefs was varied depending on subject of discussion. Rumbi characterised her self-efficacy beliefs as improving with experience: “I feel a lot more confident now in my second year (...) that I’m doing the right thing and I’m not doing things wrong”. In addition, success outcomes – that is “doing the right thing” – acted as positive reinforcement for her contribution within
the school which then led to the increase in self-efficacy. The relationship between self-efficacy and experience was corroborated by Josephine who remarked, "I've been doing the job for quite a long time now and so I'm used to dealing with pupils". The phrase she used – "used to dealing with pupils" – denotes experience-related familiarity with this element of her role. The link between familiarity and experience is confirmed by Cassidy and Eachus (2002) who, in their study examining the link between computer self-efficacy, gender and experience with computers, found that as experience and familiarity increased, computer self-efficacy also increased. It is, however, important to bear in mind interview data hints that the link between experience and familiarity with self-efficacy may not be generalisable to all aspects of an individual’s job. Other factors, as noted by Rumbi, such as individual appraisal of the situation at hand and the prevailing external protective factors such as colleague support might also be at play. Referring to the value of colleague support, Rumbi noted, "I've got two teachers from next door who are brilliant and help with behavioural problems (…), and one of them is the year head, so she’ll speak to them if need be". Thus, it appears, it was not only experience and familiarity which influence self-efficacy beliefs. Instead, it was a combination of factors – such as other individuals within the same microsystem and the support available – acting in concert which have an impact.

Personal attitudes towards one’s job were also important force characteristics. Previous research (e.g. Susanty et al, 2013) has found individual attitudes towards one’s job to positively relate with job satisfaction and performance. Additionally, findings from Rosa (2013) suggested that individual attitudes towards their job thinking affects their emotion and behaviour within their work context. Possibly a most revealing statement about how attitude towards one’s likely had a bearing on the teachers’ effort within their work microsystem was made by Enoch who asserted, “I refuse to do much more because I really don’t care (…). They’re not gonna sack me (…) because I’m looking to retire in four years (…)”. Enoch’s attitude towards his job, it would seem,
deteriorated the nearer he drew to his retirement. This is not to
genralise the link between imminence of retirement and a negative
attitude towards one’s own job. However, Enoch’s example suggests he
was no longer working, or affected by his work, as much as he used to at
earlier stages of his career. It is worth noting that Enoch attributed, at
least in part, the lowering of his stress level to the attitude he adopted
towards his retirement since he was no longer seeking further career
enhancement or promotion nor did he believe sanctions existed to deter
his waning attitude. Resultantly, he reported low stress. It would be
difficult, however, to extrapolate Enoch’s low stress as an indicator of his
resilience primarily because he attributed his declining stress level to his
diminished professional ambition due to his imminent retirement.

Rumbi’s personal beliefs about her role also indicated her approach
towards her job had influenced how she coped with the demands of her
job. Whereas, senior management “criticised” her subject area (English)
“more than any other subjects”, to her “that doesn’t really have any extra
pressure” and “it wouldn’t matter to me if all my children fail” because “it’s
really what children are getting out of it and not what the results are” as
long as “I know that I’ve done my best job and they have tried their
hardest”. This revealed that Rumbi believed in a notional limit of what she
could do within her job and the extent of her influence on pupil exam
results. This thinking implied student and teacher effort mattered more
than did eventual outcomes. The limitation of this attitude might be that
individuals’ ‘best’ would be difficult to monitor or measure, especially for
senior management to whom the teacher was accountable, more so in a
work environment where pupil outcomes were a proxy indicator of a
teachers’ and pupils’ input. Results tend to be considered a reflection of
whether teachers and pupils are doing their ‘best’. As a result, it would be
difficult for Rumbi to convince senior management that, in the event of
poor student exam results, what they 'got out of' the teacher’s lessons is
more important. It is unclear, though, how Rumbi’s belief regarding pupil
outcomes impacted on her relationship with senior management and
colleagues; how she coped with the demands of her job and the effectiveness of these coping strategies.

A further force characteristic identified in School 10 interviews as central to the teachers’ experiences of, and impact on, their work microsystem was personality. Personality can be defined as individual characteristics that “endure over time and that account for consistent patterns of responses to everyday situations” particularly focusing on individual behaviours, reasons behind those behaviours and how those behaviours manifest (Furnham, 2005:161). Personality is commonly conceived as existing in five dimensions: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and intellect or openness (McKenna, 2012). These affect patterns of individuals' thinking, feeling and behaving in their interaction with various environmental situations (i.e. proximal processes) (American Psychological Association, 2015; Ellis et al., 2009 and Patrick and Léon-Carrión, 2001).

In the interviews, personality emerged as pivotal in how School 10 teachers approached their work microsystem, interactions within it, their involvement in it and the outcomes thereof. As an illustration Josephine (SENCO), attributed her coping response pattern to her personality, “I think my personality has to do with how I respond to stressors,” she revealed, “I started getting stressed about seven or eight years ago” when “the school management began to intervene a lot more (…) I started getting mixed messages about what to do and how it should be done and so on”. Josephine made an important link between her personality, reduced control over her job due increased management intervention and her subsequent experience of stress, particularly fatigue-related anxiety. The sequence in which Josephine narrated her experience infers an interaction between her personality and a stimulus or trigger in her work microsystem. In this case management’s increased interference with her work and ‘mixed messages’ led to the worsening of her experience of stress. This implies a combination of factors, as opposed to a single factor, resulted in the particular stress outcome to
Josephine. It would, however, be worth exploring if a different personality, other triggering elements remaining constant, would yield a different stress outcome to Josephine’s. Although not exactly the same as Josephine’s set of circumstances, Enoch provided further hints on how personality can be considered an important factor in the outcome of the interaction between an individual and their work microsystem.

A colleague’s personality was also an important consideration for other teachers when they needed support from others. In addition to experience, the other perceived benefit of turning to the network of support within the school microsystem was access to different personalities from one’s own with the hope to, possibly, yield a different outcome. So it is not only one’s personality an individual is limited to when it comes to coping with certain aspects of their job such as pupil behaviour management, but others’ within an individual’s network as well.

Finally, persistence also formed part of the key force characteristics of these teachers. A good example of persistence was Josephine who went through significant ecological transitions partly triggered by reorganisation in education, namely two school closures, being made redundant and retraining as a Special Needs teacher. Such episodes are considered significant life events and tend to be unsettling and stressful (Armstrong et al, 2011; Hobson et al, 1998 and Holmes and Rahe, 1967), yet Josephine did not quit teaching. Rather, she came up with a possible solution to the risk she encountered.

**Resource characteristics**

To recap, resource characteristics are those attributes responsible for an individual’s ability or inability to participate effectively in proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998 & 2006) and may include past experiences, skills, intelligence and material resources (Tudge et al, 2009). Pen-portrait interviewees from School 10 suggested the teachers’
main resource characteristic was professional experience. It was an important attribute in how the teachers responded to, and influenced, “patterns of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:22) they experienced and participated in. Although, as individuals, their professional experiences were varied, they found experience to be a key influence on their attitudes and aspects of involvement within the school microsystem.

One of the aspects identified by the teachers as significantly dependent on individual professional experience was workload management which they felt was likely to improve with experience. This was consistent with findings from previous studies (e.g. Aftab and Khatoon, 2015) which indicated that an individual’s workload management was likely to improve as professional experience increased. Enoch, for instance, recalled how his work pattern improved from his early years to now when he was managing workload better: “I used to do a lot of lesson preparation as opposed to marking. And now I do the marking (...) and I have tried to work more in school rather than taking it home.” This suggests that professional experience was important to an individual’s ability to organise their workload efficiently and confidently, prioritising what was important. It would also imply that during the early stages of their career, a teacher was likely to be starting to develop and gather teaching resources they would like to use in their lessons which, according to the teachers, can be considerably time-consuming. Considering that at this stage a teacher would still be unfamiliar with their work microsystem and the processes therein, time constraints were likely to be a major issue for them. Consistent with this observation was Rumbi’s reflection on her own early career experience, “I think when I first started teaching I was working a lot all the time (...) because I was developing schemes and marking all the time. I feel a lot more confident now in my second year.” Other than developing resources, planning and getting used to a new work context, it appears another related factor influencing the early career stages was self-efficacy in performing their role which, as inferred
by Rumbi, was also likely to improve with individual professional experience (Cascio et al, 2014).

The benefits of professional experience were not only confined to the individual. Rather, interview evidence also indicates that the work microsystem also benefited from the individual’s developing confidence, enabling them to participate in the activities of their environment. This included supporting others who might have been in need of help. To this end, Enoch stated that he drew on his professional experience to determine his approach to supporting a colleague who might need his help, “If a member of staff says, “I can’t do this with my kids. I can’t deliver this,” then I will go into that classroom and deliver it for them. I will say to them, “I’ll do it””. Perhaps more importantly, Enoch noted that support within the school was bidirectional as a network existed within the school for all members of staff to take advantage of: “I don’t think I have ever come to in my career, where I couldn’t make some progress. There’s always somebody to pass it on to who is more experienced or just a different personality perhaps”. So it was not only the individual teacher using their experience to support others, but they also sought to draw on others’ experience to cope with work-related events they might have found difficult to cope with on their own. Professional experience is a key factor likelihood of an individual helping others in an aspect of their job they may be struggling with (McBer, 2001). This hints at the complementarity of individual professional experiences within the work microsystem. Thus, as the interview extracts above signify, the existence and effective function of a network within their work setting were fundamental to how the individuals influenced, and were influenced by, their work microsystem.

**Demand characteristics**

As explained in section 7.4.1, demand characteristics are individual attributes which trigger or inhibit reactions from an environment responsible for adaptive processes (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006).
These characteristics place immediate expectations or demands on an individual from their environment (Tudge et al, 2009).

The teachers’ professional role was a major demand characteristic for School 10 pen-portrait interviewees. Attached to professional role was the teacher’s position as an adult looking after children’s educational needs and expected to respond to their and parents’, colleagues’, senior management’s and government’s expectations. This placed immediate demands on the teachers.

The immediate expectation School 10 pupils and parents were reported to have on the teachers was to be tolerant of negative pupil home attitudes in school. Enoch remarked, “I remember a parent saying, “I taught my daughter to be streetwise, and I said, “No. That’s aggression. That’s not streetwise. It’s not acceptable (…).” He felt that “(…) what the parents might allow their children at home was perhaps not acceptable here” because “1200 kids behaving like that (…) will be difficult” for the teachers. Added to this were expectations for teachers to enable pupils do better than they were capable of which made “relationships with parents to be quite difficult at times as they expect their children to do well” (Josephine).

Colleagues’ and senior managements’ expectations to do with the teacher’s professional role related to their position as members of the school teaching team by which virtue they were automatically expected to participate in team activities. This participation included ensuring pupils reached “their benchmarks, [and] their targets” which made the job feel like “a production line (…) and that’s stressful” (Enoch); “covering for absent colleagues” (Rumbi) and being compliant to “quite tough (…) bureaucratic and very top-down” (Josephine) processes. This approach resulted in reluctance “to raise an issue” because of “fear of being labelled as somebody bad” (Josephine). Thus, most of the time, these demand characteristics negatively impacted on the teachers’ stress and resilience.
Government expectations were primarily enshrined in the national curriculum and change demands:

“(…) national curriculum (…) doesn’t allow you to do too much because there’s the pressure to get the content across. And it’s SATs results now (…) that are the things you are measured on (…) But when you are getting hit by change after change (…) there has been a build-up of old practice, new practice (…) good and bad practice (…)” (Enoch).

These generally had a negative impact on teachers due to the resultant lack of continuity, target pressures and workload/ time constraints.

7.7.2 Proximal processes

To recap, proximal processes are a powerful influence on positive developmental outcomes concerned with individual-environment interaction mechanisms (Bronfenbrenner and Ceci, 1994). Patterns of interaction within their school generally depended on the teachers’ roles. For example, Josephine (SENCO) interacted with “a large number of pupils with special educational needs” which, to her, was “the biggest thing in this role” – especially “associated meetings and paperwork” and “relationships with parents” – which she found “to be quite difficult at times as they expect their children to do well”.

While it was difficult to determine extent, the teachers felt that responsibilities one had within their work played a part on their stress levels. Rumbi, for example, believed that some teachers experienced more stress than others primarily because “it depends on what their responsibilities are and how much pressure you put on yourself”. What came through in this perspective was that the experience of stress is complex and has no straightforward causal influence. Responsibilities determine, to a large extent, who an individual has the most interaction with and the patterns of those interactions. In addition, responsibilities also have a bearing on intensity and patterns of work one is involved in.
within their work microsystem and, consequently, the level of stress they experience (Lambert and McCarthy, 2006).

Natural to the teaching job, School 10 teachers’ proximal processes were underlined by interactions between teachers and pupils, parents, colleagues and senior management.

**Interactions with pupils**

Underlining the importance of pupils to the teachers’ job, Enoch remarked, “*I love teaching kids (*) I really don’t care about anything besides going into the classroom and teaching the kids*”. Thus, the teaching activity was the main contact point between teachers and children and formed the teachers’ primary responsibility.

Teachers’ roles and responsibilities within the school also had a bearing on the nature of teacher-pupil interactions. For example, Josephine’s role as SENCO contributed to her work pattern and interactions with pupils:

> “*The biggest thing in this role is that I deal with a large number of pupils. However (*) it is not so much about managing the pupils as it is about associated meetings and paperwork that goes along with it (*) that’s the thing.*”
> (Josephine)

Similarly, Enoch’s Work-Related Learning role meant he had relatively more opportunities of interacting with pupils for purposes of providing “*advice, information and guidance*”.

Interview data suggested the structure of the school’s hierarchy played a key role in teacher-pupil interaction patterns. Josephine conceived it as:

> “(*) quite tough (*) quite bureaucratic and very top-down (*) top-down from the teachers to the pupils (*) it is about pouring down skills to the pupils rather than letting them find out for themselves”
Owing to this structure, it appears, complex bidirectional teacher-pupil interactions characterised these teaching encounters. At a basic level these interactions were about teachers taking up their role of facilitating pupils’ learning ("pouring down skills") and pupils participating in this learning according to set rules and expectations represented as “acceptable” behaviours (Enoch). In this scenario teachers were figures of authority and pupils subjects to this authority. So, teachers were custodians of these rules while pupils were expected to comply. Thus, to teachers, deviant behaviour undermined their authority and was a threat to learning. To this end, Enoch commented,

"a lot of kids (...) an increasing number of kids, use that questioning (...) in a confrontational way. I (...) I think staff find that annoying and stressful. I tell all my kids they only have got three rights in my classroom (...) to breather, learn and to be safe. (...) they don’t need more than that. I look after the rest of it."

This was “the biggest stress” (Enoch) for teachers in the school. At a more complex level, poor pupil behaviour such as questioning the authority of the teacher (if unresolved internally) necessitated the involvement of parents – another authority figure – which sometimes led to “awkward” (Enoch), if convoluted, encounters.

It was not only expectations regarding pupil conduct which influenced teacher-pupil interactions. Teachers’ professional role had, attached to it, expectations impacting on their encounters with pupils and sometimes these expectations added pressure on the teachers to perform. This was illustrated in the following remark:

"I never had a day off from teaching because I would feel I would let so many people down (...) When stressed I still try my best in lessons to do what I can. Sometimes I do activities with more children involvement than me (...) but otherwise I could just continue as normal and do my best even if I don’t feel really well" (Rumbi)
This indicates that, although interactions with pupils were continuous, teachers’ experiences of stress sometimes negatively impacted on their quality and pattern. That said, it was difficult to ascertain from the data to what extent this affected pupils’ learning.

**Interactions with parents**

Linked to interactions with pupils, interactions with parents were also key in the teachers’ proximal processes. They occurred during parents’ evenings and during face-to-face meetings to discuss pupil behaviour concerns and pupil learning needs.

Parents’ evening interactions were generally to discuss pupils’ progress and provide other related information such as “careers matters (…) target-setting” (Enoch). With very little chance of conflict in such scenarios, it was obvious that teachers did not report negative experiences resulting from these encounters. For instance, Rumbi commented, “All parents I have dealt with have been very supportive (…) they’re very respectful even during parents’ evening”.

Concerning pupil behaviour, parental involvement often signified a teacher-pupil impasse could not be settled using the school structures. For example, Rumbi said, “I do get in contact directly with parents um (…) only at the very end of the line (…) I would rather deal with the problem in school rather than involve parents”. So, these interactions occurred in the context of somewhat clashing authority figures in the pupil’s life. Thus, there was relatively more tension in these meetings. The main contention between parents and teachers in such contexts concerned what was “acceptable” (Enoch) behaviour within the school. This is evidenced in the quote below:

“(…) I’ve had disciplinary issues (…) I’ve had some awkward interviews with parents (…) a parent comes in (…) blazing and upset (…) what the parents might allow their children at home (…) not acceptable here” (Enoch).
In these circumstances, the teacher’s role was “negotiating (...) listening (...) defusing the situation” while the parents argued and put their perspective across. According to Enoch, the availability of the option to defer the matter to senior management mediation was an important buffer against feeling of frustration and despondency for the teacher.

Meetings with parents to discuss pupils’ learning needs were mainly conducted by Josephine. She observed, “In my role as SENCO (special educational needs coordinator) I’ve found relationships with parents to be quite difficult at times as they expect their children to do well”. The source of tension here was the discrepancy between high parental expectations and actual pupil achievement. This lack of agreement likely caused frustration to both the parent and the teacher.

In contrast, Rumbi reported enjoying generally positive interactions with pupils:

“All parents I have dealt with have been very supportive (...) they’re very respectful even during parents’ evening. I think because when children go home they talk about me and don’t complain, the parents are more likely to listen to what I tell them and they know I wouldn’t say bad things about their child without real reasons”.

While highlighting the importance of teacher-pupil interactions to teacher-parent interactions, this quote also reinforces reciprocity in the bidirectional interactions between the teacher and the parent. Confirming this, Enoch said, “(...) somebody has listened to them and somebody has not been critical back (...) just explaining the situation from the other side. So most of them go away happy, at least”.

**Interactions with colleagues**

Interactions with colleagues were also an important part of teachers’ proximal processes. The nature and purpose of some of these interactions mainly depended on the teachers’ roles. For example, Enoch
Head of Work-Related Learning and Careers – frequently worked with “the Connexions team” to assist pupils with career development. Josephine, as SENCO, supported colleagues with managing the needs of SEN pupils about which Rumbi commented, “Support for special needs is good (…)”.

“I’ve got no complaints about my colleagues’ attitudes towards my role. I’m lucky they appreciate the role of the SENCO (…) and that’s one thing that has made my job a lot easier. (…) they, themselves, can get quite stressed (…) and so that can lead them to not want to deal with difficult pupils. Inevitably, they count on my intervention.” (Josephine)

Furthermore, Josephine’s other role as union representative added a further dimension to the support she gave colleagues across the school. These were supportive bidirectional interactions which helped teachers cope with demands of their job.

In contrast, interactions with colleagues at department level seemed somewhat unsatisfactory – in particular concerning work pressures. Concerning these, Rumbi remarked, “I think communication could be better within the department (…) and that does stress out sometimes (…) I don’t really feel like there’s a lot of support from my department”.

In concurrence, Josephine added, “People are very much afraid of that and (…) so they will complain and mourn about all sorts of things in private”. The impact of this on the teachers were negative feelings like fear (Josephine), loneliness and being stressed (Rumbi).

**Interactions with senior management**

The role of senior management within the school was, among other things, to ensure standards within the school were consistent with organisational goals. This focus defined the kinds of interactions teachers tended to have with senior management. Additionally, the “bureaucratic and very top-down (…) from the management to the teachers” (Josephine) hierarchical structure of the school, cited above, was
noteworthy. As a result, Josephine added, “I can describe people’s experience in the school as quite tough”. The main senior management-related source of stress were performance management targets, which Josephine felt “compromise the cooperation one should be getting from colleagues”. In addition, senior management interference with her work and inconsistent directives was an issue:

“(...) school management began to intervene a lot more (...) and I started getting mixed messages about what to do and how it should be done and so on (...) I started getting stressed” (Josephine)

Thus, it appears, there was a sense of diminished locus of control over her job – a contributory factor in the rise of stress levels she experienced.

Enoch, however, made a contrasting representation of the impact of interactions with senior management on teachers:

“(…) there’s layers of it. If a tutor could not deal with a parent, they go to the Head of Year and then to the Head of Lower School, and then to the Pastoral Deputy and eventually the head teacher to support. So there’s always that support network”.

Positioning senior management in this network suggests interactions with senior management – particularly to do with deference of complex disciplinary issues to them – were also supportive.

7.7.3 Context

Microsystems

As indicated in section 7.4.3, individuals tend to have direct involvement in multiple microsystems. Earlier in this chapter, it has been noted that there are microsystems teachers share with colleagues and others which they do not. The obvious microsystem School 10 teachers shared was their work context. However, it is important to note that, although they shared the school context, subsystems within this microsystem were varied. For example, they belonged to different departments – which will
have accounted for some of the differences in their experiences albeit in the same school.

School 10 teachers’ Microsystems were work, home and social contexts. Within their work context, the teachers interacted with senior management, colleagues, pupils and parents. In addition, the union also had its representative, Josephine, within the school microsystem. Therefore, Josephine had an additional strand to her interpersonal relations with colleagues and her responsibilities within the school of “trying to do as a union (…) reducing the workload”. It is important to note that, in spite of the probability, Josephine did not explain the impact of being a union representative on her teaching activities, her interpersonal relations with colleagues and senior management or on her workload. Insofar as her colleagues’ worries were concerned, however, Josephine reported she played a significant role. As union representative, she had encountered some colleagues coming for advice to do with stress and coping. Among other things, Josephine was a link between the school and the union, performing some of the responsibilities herself and referring the more complex issues to the union. Considering that the union role was voluntary, Josephine did not indicate whether, in her case, relinquishing union duties would be one of the steps she would consider taking to minimise the effects of time constraints and workload on her. It would be worthwhile to draw insights into what motivates a busy teacher to take on additional voluntary responsibilities. It is also noteworthy that the presence of a union representative within the school is an illustration of the fluidity of elements of the bioecological subsystems whereby no fixity should be assumed. In this instance, the union was a part of both the exosystem and the microsystem of the teachers.

Mesosystem

The interviews provided insights into how teachers’ involvement in one microsystem influenced their involvement in another. This was especially so where their work overlapped from school to home and, subsequently,
affected their home life. Examples used in the earlier discussion illustrate the influence of work life on home life the teachers felt existed. In this regard, Josephine felt that the teaching job seemed to be constantly building up to an extent that “there’s always more (...) other jobs for me to do” which led her to come into work “from 7.30 in the morning (...) to about (...) four o’clock in the evening” and, occasionally, “until evening doing some work”. Yet, she still had to do more schoolwork at home. In confirmation of this, Rumbi concluded that teaching was, therefore, “a way of life” whereby there was a constant overlap between schoolwork and home life. These examples indicate an important link between microsystems, more so how – as noted by Larrivee (2012), work life intertwines with home life. These teachers’ perspectives suggest that, to a great extent, their activities in the home context were driven by the demands placed on them by their work microsystem. It is also important to note that there was very little mention of the teachers’ involvement in social contexts, although Rumbi’s conclusion that “teaching becomes a way of life (...) a part of your life” hints at work affecting more than just the home microsystem.

While examples quoted above suggest that work activities interfered with teachers’ activities in other microsystems, particularly their home, the excerpts also show the importance of the home microsystem in mitigating adverse effects of stress at work. For example, Rumbi’s decision to use watching television and relaxing at home as a palliative strategy to cope with stress from work helped her feel better. This is consistent with Dunham (2005) who noted that switching off was a helpful in moderating the effects of work stress. It would be worthwhile to investigate in greater depth how using one microsystem to cope with stress experienced in a different microsystem affects an individual’s proximal processes in both microsystems. For instance, exploring if work can have a similar effect with stress originating from the home and social microsystems would be of interest. In this school, working at home helped meet demands of the school microsystem. For instance, activities like lesson planning and preparation and marking were not only done in the school. They also
carried on at home as time spent in the school microsystem was inadequate for the teachers to complete these tasks. This had ramifications, mostly negative, for the teachers’ involvement in the home and social microsystems.

In her interview, Rumbi portrayed teaching as a job that was neither straightforward nor confined only to the school, but one which had a more significant impact on one’s life due to “short hours, but more work to take home (...)” which made her feel that “it becomes a much bigger part of your life”. This is an example of how the teacher’s involvement in one microsystem impacted on her involvement in another microsystem (Hartney, 2008), although it was unclear to what extent. Enoch stated that newer teachers “feel their home life affected” as a result of “not enough time” to complete their work in school. Enoch’s observation implies experience may be a factor – whereby new teachers are thought to be more affected by workload – in individual differences in the impact of work on a teacher’s home life. However, taken in the context of Rumbi’s statement (Rumbi was an early career teacher), cited earlier, Enoch’s observation might be a consequence of some teachers underreporting the extent of impact their work had on them. This is in agreement with other studies (e.g. Schonfield and Farrell, 2009) which indicated that incidences of work stress tend to be underreported. Additionally, Josephine inferred a possibility of underreporting of the adverse impact of the job on teachers within the school emanating from their fear of being “labelled as somebody bad”. In confirmation, Rumbi added, “Externally (...), I think I’m alright (...) but internally I’m probably under more stress (...) which I don’t show people because I don’t like them to think I can’t cope”. Josephine’s and Rumbi’s attribution of teachers’ reluctance to report their experience of work stress to fear and lack of support within the school further complicated the outlook of stress among teachers within School 10. It is, however, hard to determine the extent of this underreporting.
Exosystem

School 10 teachers’ exosystem comprised the government, Ofsted, the LA, the union and pupils’ homes. Although teachers were mostly not actively involved in them, these contexts affected the teachers and the operation of proximal processes.

Concerning the government, most teachers felt most of the change it was introducing had more negative effects than positive on the operation of proximal processes. Principally, it led to a “the targets-based culture (…) (which is) very stressful (…)” (Josephine). Furthermore, this change did not give teachers sufficient time to adapt and made very little positive impact as it was “far too much (…) and over too short a time period (…) repetitive (…) ill-advised, poor change” (Enoch).

It has been highlighted earlier that subsystems are neither fixed nor static (Salkind, 2008) principally due to the changes in patterns of involvement of the individual. In the context of education, Ofsted forms a unique part of the teacher’s ecology. While it is generally absent from the school microsystem, its role means that Ofsted inspectors periodically come into the school microsystem to carry out inspections and, therefore – at least during their visits – become active participants in the school’s activities and proximal processes. Thus, during those inspection episodes, Ofsted is actively involved in the teachers’ microsystem albeit transiently. When interviews for this study were conducted, School 10 had just undergone an Ofsted inspection. The impact of this inspection on Rumbi was so significant because “obviously the pressure increased (…). I was just crying a lot of the time and getting upset about things”. She did not, however, reveal why precisely the inspection upset her except that it induced an increase in the pressure she experienced. However, Enoch provided another interesting clue on teachers’ perceptions of Ofsted inspections within the school when he represented them as, besides being a regulatory body, “the (…) stick (…) you get hit with (…) if you
don’t get the results” which added “pressure now (...) not to educate kids” but “to get them the target grade”.

Very little reference was made to the LA in terms of its position as part of the teachers’ exosystem except that “there has been a lot of questioning of the roles of the Local Authority from the society at large” with regard to SEN (Josephine).

The union was a unique part of the exosystem as it, through its union representative in the school, was also part of the microsystem. However, there was very little evidence in terms of the impact it was making on teachers in the school at exosystem level. For example, although Josephine reported that the union was campaigning for the reduction of workload to help reduce teacher stress, interview data suggested there was workload was still a major issue in the school.

Another key exosystemic influence on teachers’ proximal process was pupils’ homes – mainly represented by parents and the pupils. Primarily, teachers thought that the key influence pupils’ homes had was on pupil behaviour and attitudes in school. Though most parents were said to be supportive, unsupportive parents were a source of frustration for the teachers.

**Macrosystem**

School 10 was influenced by consistencies within the education culture and subculture which were underpinned by national context factors such as the prevailing education system ideology and structure (Bronfenbrenner, 1979 and 1994). These consistencies were national standards, the National Curriculum, Change and union lobbying.

National standards were, according to all interviewees, driven by the targets culture. The focal point of these targets were pupil academic targets and results, which teachers felt tended to be difficult for most
pupils to attain. Thus, these targets and results became teachers’ key accountabilities from which most pressure emanated (Enoch, Josephine and Rumbi). At macrosystem level, these were monitored through periodical Ofsted inspections.

Closely linked to national standards was the National Curriculum. The influence of national standards on the National Curriculum was evident in how content of the curriculum had become exam-oriented instead of being process-oriented, thereby becoming less creative and enjoyable for pupils (Josephine and Enoch). Regarding this, Enoch remarked, “I can’t abandon the National Curriculum (...) because they have to (...) get the results (...) if you don’t get the results, you get hit with the Ofsted stick”. Additionally, the National Curriculum distinction between core and non-core subjects meant generally more pressure on achievement in core subjects. Thus, observed Rumbi, “(...) English and Maths are criticised more than any other subjects (...)

Another cultural aspect of the education system identified by School 10 teachers was constant change in national policies and the national curriculum characterised by Enoch as persistent introduction of new initiatives which were then abandoned prematurely: “(...) far too much change over too short a time period. (...) usually coming from government level (...) for you to finish in two to three years (...”). This change was mostly considered disruptive as it hindered continuity and added to the workload.

Finally, the union’s broader activities at macrosystem level were constructed as mainly lobbying schools and government on teachers’ concerns regarding their work context and conditions (Josephine and Rumbi). Specific issues mentioned in the interviews regarding teachers’ concerns raised with the union were cover and workload. The general impression from the interviews was that the union’s involvement at macrosystem level made very little impact insofar as improving the levels of cover and workload within the school was concerned.
7.7.4 Time

In section 7.4.4, it has been noted that time is a significant dimension of the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998) in the effective functioning – particularly stability, consistency and predictability – of an individual’s bioecological system. Constituent elements of School 10 teachers’ time – microtime, mesotime and macrotime – are examined below.

Microtime

It has been noted in section 7.4.4 that microtime concerns specific events occurring during proximal processes. The notable microtime episodes evident in School 10 interview data were to do with pupil confrontational behaviour; parental confrontation; senior management intervention in a teacher’s work; adverse effect of an Ofsted inspection and cover. These episodes are respectively outlined below:

- “kids come in and say, “I’ve got rights. You can’t do that. You can’t say that (…). (…) It’s all about this confrontation and deflection away from work” (Enoch)

- “I remember a parent saying, “I taught my daughter to be streetwise,” and I said, “No. That’s aggression. That’s not streetwise. It’s not acceptable. Twelve hundred kids behaving like that it will be difficult.” (…) Can’t do it. You can’t have thirty kids in a class constantly shouting and arguing back simply because they didn’t want to do something. That’s part (…) part of (…) of the negotiation of being in a mainstream school.” (Enoch)

- “management began to intervene a lot more (…) and I started getting mixed messages about what to do and how it should be done and so on” (Josephine)

- “Last week it got to the point where I said, “That’s enough,” (…) I didn’t take any work home with me. I came home and watched television and felt much better. There was OFSTED inspection last
week (…) obviously the pressure increased (…) I was just crying a lot of the time and getting upset about things” (Rumbi)

- “Covering for absent colleagues (…) before Christmas it was becoming an issue because I felt like I was being used too regularly (…) I think I was being used a couple of times in a week.” (Rumbi)

Mesotime

The periodicity (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006) and consistency (Tudge et al, 2009) with which microtime episodes and activities identified above occurred varied over extended periods of time.

According to Enoch, pupil confrontational behaviour was frequent across teachers over broader intervals during the course of teachers’ interactions with pupils. Therefore, it was likely to negatively affect teachers in the long term. Considering this behaviour was noted as “deflection away from work” (Enoch), it was likely this would impede pupils’ chances of meeting their academic targets – another source of considerable stress among the teachers. Josephine, for example, remarked, “I find (…) the targets-based culture (…) very stressful”.

Although most parents were “very supportive” (Rumbi) in the “comprehensive mix of parents” (Enoch), episodes of parental confrontation were still significant occurrences in a school context. However, its effects on the teachers would have been mediated by the availability of the school’s referral structure which enabled teachers to defer the more complex issues to senior management.

The interview with Josephine suggested senior management intervention in her role as SENCO, combined with inconsistent directives, was more frequent at the time than it was previously. Because this intervention was occurring “a lot more (…) and I started getting mixed messages about what to do and how it should be done (…)” over extended periods“(…)
my stress has been gradually increasing over the years” (Josephine). It was not immediately clear, however, whether this intervention was common across all teachers in the school or she was affected due to her role as the main SEN teacher in the school.

Josephine also reported an episode of significant negative emotional reaction to a recent Ofsted inspection. She, however, did not indicate whether this was her reaction in previous Ofsted inspection over her career. Importantly though, she conceded, “I do cry a lot (...) but I don’t do that in school”. On the evidence of this, it would infer the Ofsted inspection – although it will have triggered the reaction – might possibly not have been the single contributory factor to her negative emotional reaction. Her statement regarding crying that “(...) a lot of people do (...) but I don’t do that in school (...)” implies frequent crying episodes across some of her colleagues – which suggests teacher stress.

Macrotime

Changing expectations and events in the larger society occurring over the career course of teachers in this school were:

- structural reorganisation of education “Constant change (6th most stressful)
- changes in technology
- social issues coming into school/ “Society’s diminishing respect for teachers (8th highest stressor/ in the top ten”
- growing emphasis on targets and results

These historical and current changes had varying ramifications to teachers and schools they served (previous and current).

Enoch and Josephine mentioned how structural changes in education influenced their careers at different points. For Enoch, it was the LA-induced change: “(...) the LA reorganised its education structure and I was deployed back on this site as head of lower school, year 7, 8 and 9 (...)”. Unlike Enoch’s movement, which was within the same school,
Josephine’s two moves were between schools because those settings had “closed down”. Retraining “as a Special Needs teacher” consequent to a redundancy in one of her previous schools indicates the extent of impact this significant life event had on her. It is also a positive adaptive outcome to a potentially stressful episode: “(…) there wasn’t any room for me in the school (…) that was when I had to train as a Special Needs teacher”. Subsequent closures of some special needs schools during the Labour government inclusion drive also affected Josephine, who was teaching in one of them at the time. The implication for her was teaching SEN pupils, some of whom will also have been forced to move, in a mainstream school.

Technological advances in the wider world appeared to be gradually beginning to influence some of the processes in the school. Enoch remarked:

“I am running some training (…) in online progress files. (…) Now it’s just the beginning of a process which is gonna be very difficult (…) because people want to be carrying on with their old system (…) using (…) physical files”

The resultant need to retrain will likely have negatively impacted on teachers’ workload/ time constraints – a major source of teacher stress.

Regarding the impact of social context factors on a school, Enoch observed,

“(…) there are social issues that come into school as well. (…) some schools (…) are struggling because of the nature of the social area that they are serving. It’s a social issue. But I don’t see how you can get round that.”

In the context of his remarks on home environment influencing pupil behaviour in school, there is an inference that the main impact social issues were likely to have had on the school was negative pupil behaviour and attitudes. The consequence was “Staff don’t stay long enough or there are staff who really, really, really don’t care”. Earlier, Enoch remarked, “I really don’t care (…) they are not gonna sack me
(...)”. In light of this, it is probable that Enoch’s own indifference could also have been linked to “social issues that come into school”, not just his imminent retirement as he claimed.

The constantly influence of the constantly increasing emphasis on league tables and results was said to be negatively affecting pupils. Josephine’s observation was that “(...) this targets culture is producing much benefit because the kids are not equipped for the outside world but just drilled for exams” (Josephine). Besides pupils, there was also evidence that the targets culture was also adding to teachers’ workload and, consequently, causing them stress. Rumbi remarked,

“I don’t like assessments and setting targets for children (...) I don’t enjoy doing that because I have to do six assessments per child per year group and I find that quite difficult”

Another implication of the government’s emphasis on targets was an increasingly assessment-oriented curriculum. In respect of this, Enoch stated, “(...) the national curriculum has pretty much destroyed the fun of science (...) we are to test the kids”. Josephine concurred, “(...) if anything could change in teaching (...) I would change the curriculum to make it more creative. Currently the government is pouring down things to schools and it is harder for schools to opt out.” There is a probability that these attitudes may have had an impact on their motivation to teach the curriculum they did not hold positive opinions on.
7.8 Cross-case analysis

This subsection draws on key insights from School 1 and School 10. The purpose is to highlight common themes across these schools regarding person characteristics of teachers in these schools, stress risks they reported, coping strategies these teachers employed and how effective they were and protective factors which enhanced these teachers’ resilience. The categories to structure this section were derived from research questions of the present study.

7.8.1 Teachers’ person characteristics (RQ1)

Person characteristics influence how individuals interact with, and respond to, their environment – for instance, how they relate to others, the way they handle difficult and stressful situations and their handling of ethical and moral issues (Azer, 2005). Teachers of the two schools revealed a wide range of person characteristics which, in keeping with the underpinning bioecological theoretical framework, are categorised into force, resource and demand characteristics.

Force characteristics

It has been explained in sections 7.4.1 and 7.7.1 that force characteristics refer to active behavioural dispositions responsible for initiating and sustaining or interfering with, retarding or preventing proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). Main force characteristics common across School 1 and 10 were self-efficacy, persistence, personal attitudes towards one’s job, personality and temperament and commitment to the job.

Self-efficacy

Teachers’ self-efficacy has to do with teachers’ beliefs in their ability to perform aspects of their job which enable them to meet set educational
goals (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2010). An examination of teachers’ self-efficacy survey data (appendix 23) showed the highest proportion, 79%, of the sample scoring 4 and 5 was in the item ‘Teachers are a very powerful influence on student achievement when all factors are considered’. In School 1, the item on which the highest proportion of teachers scored 4 and 5, 81%, was ‘When the grades of my students improve, it is usually because I used more effective approaches’. Whereas, in School 10 89%, it was on the item ‘Teachers are a very powerful influence on student achievement when all factors are considered’ and ‘When I really try I get through to even the most difficult pupils’. The item with the least proportions scoring 4 and 5, ‘If students are not disciplined at home, they are still likely to accept discipline in school’, was common across the sample (27%), School 1 (12%) and School 10 (28%). Mean self-efficacy for School 1 (\(M=1.80, SD=1.06\)) and School 10 (\(M=2.17, SD=1.14\)) on this item was lower than the sample mean (\(M=2.78, SD=1.37\)). School 1 overall teachers’ self-efficacy (\(M=3.38, SD=1.13\)) was just lower than both sample mean (\(M=3.48, SD=.65\)) and School 10 mean (\(M=3.47, SD=1.06\)). Still, teacher self-efficacy overall for the two schools were similar to that of the sample which was neither high nor low.

Consistent with survey data (appendix 23), interview data from the two schools suggested that teachers’ self-efficacy in pupil behaviour management, especially if pupils were not disciplined at home, was low. In respect of this, Gabrielle remarked, “If you don’t have the backing of the parents, then kids can cause problems in the classroom.” Similarly, Enoch commented,

“I remember a parent saying, “I taught my daughter to be streetwise,” and I said, “No. That’s aggression. That’s not streetwise. It’s not acceptable. 1200 kids behaving like that, it’ll be difficult.” (…)”.

These two examples illustrate the teachers’ belief that children’s behaviour in school projected their discipline in their home environment. In this regard, it appears that, at exosystem level, the pupils’ home contexts were a powerful influence on teachers’ ability to manage pupil behaviour
in school. Therefore, it made sense that the teachers constantly worked in partnership with parents, which showed the importance of the link between pupils’ home contexts and the school. The teachers reported that, generally, the parents were supportive (e.g. School 1: Zoe: “Most parents are usually supportive of what you are trying to do”; Grace: “Parents are supportive. I think we do have a lot of support from parents.”; School 10: Rumi: “All parents I’ve dealt with have been very supportive”; Enoch: “… there’s a lot of very supportive parents”). This is in keeping with the literature (e.g. Beltman et al, 2011) which links teacher resilience with support available.

**Personal attitudes towards job**

Teachers' personal attitudes towards their job were an important influence on school proximal processes. Attitudes of teachers in the two schools towards their job were expressed towards different aspects of it. Across the schools, common job aspects towards which negative attitudes were expressed were the national curriculum, assessment, change constancy and implementation, pupil behaviour management and cover.

**Personality and temperament**

Personality refers to those individual characteristics that “endure over time and that account for consistent patterns of responses to everyday situations” particularly focusing on individual behaviours, reasons behind those behaviours and how those behaviours manifest (Furnham, 2005:161). The dominant personality model, the big five factor theory (McKenna, 2012; Rolland, 2002 and McRae and John 1992), proposes there are five dimensions of personality:

- Extraversion (e.g. sociability, talkativeness, assertiveness, emotional expressiveness)
- Agreeableness (e.g. not critical/ sceptical, kindness, empathy, trusting)
Conscientiousness (e.g. thorough, task-orientation, respect for standards and procedures, able to delay gratification)

Neuroticism (e.g. anxious, tense, fear, worrying)

Openness (e.g. acceptance of change, eagerness to seek and live new experiences, curious, wide interests)

Interview data from the two schools indicated mixed results on personality. Indicative of extraversion, most teachers reported a tendency to support or seek help from each other – especially at department level – on aspects of the job in which difficulty was experienced. On agreeableness, interview data suggested varied patterns. Most teachers generally expressed a degree of empathy with colleagues – extending support when they could. However, this did not seem to extend to colleagues who were absent from work – perhaps due to cover implications on those who were present. In addition, most teachers showed scepticism and lack of trust regarding the effectiveness of change in education. Conscientiousness appeared a key characteristic in most teachers in these schools as they reported a tendency to sacrifice some of their home time doing work-related tasks such as PPA. There were hints of neuroticism among most teachers in both schools. In this regard, teachers reported a range of experiences including feeling anxious, tense and fear. Concerning openness, most teachers generally appeared to be unreceptive of change in education as they were sceptical of its usefulness and the effectiveness of it implementation.

Related to personality, temperament is concerned with reactivity and self-regulation tendencies in response to challenges from others or the environment (Rothbart, 2012). Temperament was another part of some teachers’ force characteristics. Some of the teachers’ temperamental reactions to their environment and colleagues evident in the interviews were being annoyed, withdrawal from work activities and crying, snapping, abrupt withdrawal from the workplace and apathetic feeling towards aspects of their work.
Commitment to the job

One of the most common definitions of commitment is Mowday et al (1979:27) description of the term as the extent of an individual’s “identification with and involvement in an organization”. Allen and Meyer (1990) identify three types of commitment, namely affective, continuance and normative. Affective commitment has to do with an individual’s emotional attachment to their context while continuance commitment is about an individual’s considerations in the decision to stay within a job context, principally costs and risks of leaving and available alternatives (Furnham, 2005; Arnold et al, 2010). In contrast, normative commitment refers to an employee’s sense of loyalty and obligation towards their job or organisation (Allen and Meyer, 1990).

Results from these schools indicate two types of commitment among the teachers: affective and normative. Most teachers used affective words to describe their job or their school despite existent risk within the teaching job (explored in section 7.8.2). For instance, explaining why he stayed in teaching for most of his career, Enoch said, “It’s really enjoyable. That’s why most people do it (...) I love teaching kids (...) so I have been paid to do something I really enjoy”. Despite reporting experiencing significant stress, Rumbi agreed with Enoch:

“But I don’t look elsewhere for opportunities (...) no (...) because I love the school (...) I wouldn’t want to leave (...) because (...) the behaviour of the pupils and the general atmosphere (...)

In addition, Gabrielle – another teacher who experienced severe stress at some stage in her career but still persisted in teaching remarked, “(...) I’m in a position now (...) I’m enjoying my job (...) I just want to stay where I am. I have got a good relationship with kids (...) I enjoy working here (...)

These examples infer that affective commitment to school and/or the job played a major role in teachers’ persistence within the job.
There was also evidence of normative commitment within the data. For example, Rumbi remarked,

“When stressed I still try my best in lessons to do what I can. Sometimes I do activities with more children involvement than me (...) but otherwise I could just continue as normal and do my best even if I don’t feel really well. (...) I think I exert a lot of pressure on myself (...). Sometimes I have expectations that are too high on myself (...). It’s probably not anybody else but what I’m doing to myself that’s making me stressed.”

In keeping with the above example, there was consensus among the teachers that there is high pressure in the teaching job. Yet they carried on trying their best in performing their roles. Some of the teachers felt their commitment to the job led to high expectations of themselves which, in turn, resulted in stress. In agreement with Rumbi above, School 1 English teacher, Zoe observed, “I want to think that some teachers experience more stress than others because of their commitment to professionalism (...).” As well as the positive impact of commitment to the job on teacher persistence in their job, it is interesting that the teachers felt that it was also a key source of stress. To this end, David, School 1 English teacher and union representative commented,

“A lot of the times we bring a lot of stress upon ourselves because we are too compliant. At times you have to say hang on a minute. I can do that much and not more. We just have to find a way of lowering the stress levels (...) the very sources of stress (...) to the root.

Rumbi gave hints into one of the possible reasons behind teachers' display of commitment,

“I never had a day off from teaching because I would feel I would let so many people down (...) but I also feel sometimes that maybe I’ve got a bit too much responsibility on my shoulders um (...) sometimes I feel like it’s a lot of pressure to be under.”
This hints at a link between commitment to the job and consideration for colleagues and, sometimes, resultant stress. The two, however, should not be taken as mutually exclusive as they are likely to work in concert.

Linked to teachers’ commitment to their job was their persistence within it, which – as above examples show – was essential. A traditional definition of persistence offered by Feather (1962) describes it as an individual’s continuous effort in the face of difficult circumstances (Feather, 1962). On this definition, it can be inferred that staying on in teaching against a backdrop of identified challenges and not contemplating quitting implies persistence.

Despite consensus among participants that they faced significant challenges during the course of their job, none, except Enoch who was due to retire, expressed their intention to leave the profession. A good example is Gabrielle who – despite significant early career setbacks (including significant work-related stress) – never considered quitting the profession. David also experienced severe stress leading to him consulting his doctor and taking days off. An example from School 10 was Josephine, who – on top of serious ecological transitions due to very significant work-related life events at different points in her career – had been experiencing much stress for about eight years at the time of the interview and yet she left neither the profession nor the school. Like these teachers, all participants demonstrated a propensity to persist within the job.

Although the teachers’ persistence characteristic was individual, a combination of factors, rather than individual elements alone, were attributable to the development of this persistence among the present study’s participants. In a review of persistence research, Reason (2009) conceptualised persistence as a consequence of either individual characteristics and prior experiences alone or a combination of individual characteristics and prior experiences, organisational context and peer environment. This implies that individual characteristics are the principal
factor. However, in contrast with Reason (2009), results from School 1 and School 10 suggested there were additional external factors central to an individual’s persistence are their home environment and other support networks such as their community. Moreover, results from this study indicate that it was more likely to be a combination of factors, rather than a single factor, which resulted in teachers persisting within their job. How and which factors interacted mostly depended on the individual, their role, prevailing circumstances and proximal processes. It is also important to note that it did not have to be all factors working in concert to lead to persistence. Rather, as proffered by Reason (2009), persistence could be an outcome of an interaction of any of the identified factors. In Gabrielle’s example, involvement of the LA during her early career difficulties also contributed to her eventual persistence with her teaching career.

**Resource characteristics**

In sections 7.4.1 and 7.7.1, resource characteristics have been described as individual liabilities and assets that influencing their “capacity to engage effectively in proximal processes” where liabilities “limit or disrupt” and assets enhance or aid the individual’s capacity to function effectively (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006:812).

The main resource characteristic of teachers in the two schools was experience. Experience constitutes both objective properties of a context or contexts and “the way in which these properties are perceived by the persons” in the context(s) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:22). As far as the present study is concerned, objective aspects of the teachers’ professional experience would encompass their specific roles and responsibilities, the subjects they taught and the number of years they had been teaching for. Conversely, how the teachers perceived these properties of their environments, past or present, would be their subjective perceptions about the properties’ implications to them and to their context.
As expected, professional experiences of the teachers were diverse as far as their roles and responsibilities, subjects and years in teaching were concerned. In addition, there were similarities and differences in how the teachers perceived these properties in the context of the environment(s) in which they were experienced.

Based on the interviews, professional experience was important as it equipped the teachers with necessary skills and attitudes. Perhaps Ivy encapsulated the centrality of professional experience to persistence when she remarked, “Experience helps me withstand stuff (…) so I am okay, you know. So here I am (…) still going.” Furthermore, being experienced in the job helped teachers improve their performance in key aspects of their job. Take pupil behaviour for example; Josephine commented, “To me pupil behaviour is not one of the problems (…). I think it can be to some (…), but I’ve been doing the job for quite a long time now and so I am used to dealing with pupils.” Professional experience did not only provide the benefit of familiarity to the teachers, it sometimes became a source of defiance, especially where one’s competence had been questioned. This was especially so with Gabrielle who asserted, 

“Our gone through what I went through (…) I have learnt that you’ve got to have self-belief (…) and if you really want something you’ve got to fight for it and not let anyone put you down. (…) You see, I’ve got to prove people wrong.”

Other than illustrating the importance of professional experience in persistence, the above examples demonstrate the link between professional experience and self-efficacy in aspects of their job. Self-efficacy meant the teachers believed in their ability to perform their roles and cope with the demands of their job and, as such, this became one of the key reasons for them to persist with teaching. The interlink between professional experience and self-efficacy is discernible in the remark made by Zoe, School 1’s English teacher,
But certainly, (...) in the first three or four years, I found it very difficult, especially with workload because there was a considerable amount of work I used to do outside of school hours. I found that very difficult, before getting used to it, (...) coming out of university. I think that caused me some degree of stress."

Similar to other teachers’ perceptions, Zoe’s example demonstrated how self-efficacy in her job improved over time as she became more experienced. This, however, contrasts with findings by Wolf et al (2010) which suggested teachers’ self-efficacy declined as years of teaching increased. Yet in another study, Whittington et al (2006) found that years of teaching did not make a significant difference in teachers’ self-efficacy. This lack of consensus in the literature perhaps indicates how inconclusive the role of professional experience in teachers’ self-efficacy is. Thus, particularly in the context of the present study, it would be helpful to consider the influence of professional experience on teachers’ self-efficacy in relation to other factors rather than in isolation. In addition, professional experience needs not only take account of years of teaching. Rather, as demonstrated by the individual teachers’ stories, individual professional experiences during those accumulating years of teaching are also important – an indication of the complexity of experience as a factor in teachers’ self-efficacy.

**Demand characteristics**

In sections 7.4.1 and 7.7.1, demand characteristics were defined as individual qualities which “invite or discourage reactions from the social environment that can disrupt or foster” adaptive processes (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006:796). The primary demand characteristic of School 1 and School 10 teachers was their professional role.

Perhaps an apt summation of notions of the teacher’s professional role among participants in this study was made by Gabrielle.
“To make it in teaching you’ve got to be charismatic. You’ve got to be a drama teacher (…). Being a teacher is very much like being on stage. (…) To get over it (…) I just got on (…) I just put a face on it. (…) it’s like a stage (…) so you just put a face on it. But it still hurts inside (…) but you’ve just got to put a face on.”

This need to ‘perform' the role appeared to be influenced by the teachers’ environmental expectations – hence demands – of them. In the two schools, notions of the teacher’s professional role – influenced by colleague, pupil, parent, senior management and government expectations – placed certain demands on teachers. In particular, these demands were linked to the teachers’ position as colleague, adult figure, mentor and subordinate. Thus, the teachers’ performance of their role such as primary responsibilities and accountabilities (e.g. regarding pupils’ targets; behaviour management and participation in cover) was somewhat in accordance with expectations placed on the teachers by members of the systems within their ecology.

7.8.2 Stress risks and their effects on the teachers (RQ2)

Interviewees’ appraisal of certain aspects of their job as stressful was largely subjective and widely varied. The subjectivity and distinctiveness of these appraisals was a by-product of the teachers’ individualities as shaped by their personalities; professional, academic and personal histories and their current roles and responsibilities. It was clear in the individual narratives given by these teachers that, in certain cases, their views about the stressfulness of certain stress risks were divergent. For example, not all interviewees considered “backbiting” (Rumbi) a major issue.

As much as there were differences in perspectives, there was also consensus among the interviewees on the stressfulness of certain risks. These similarities probably emanated from the fact that, although individually distinct, the teachers were surrounded by similar – and, in
some cases, the same – nested contexts exerting common pressures on them. The fact that the settings these teachers worked in were urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage meant that the teachers working in them were likely to have similar challenges to those discussed in the literature review. Added to that, at national level, they shared a common education history, policy and practice and were affected by the same national institutions and structures like Ofsted.

The common stress risks brought up by the interviewees in School 1 and School 10 had to do with the following factors:

- Workload/ Time constraints
- Cover
- Organisational processes
- Pupil behaviour
- Parental support
- Intra/ inter departmental climate

Although some differences existed on the magnitude these risks were considered stressful at individual level, the interviewees generally agreed these elements of their job were an issue to them.

Both schools served areas of socio-economic disadvantage. The above national average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals in the schools further reinforced the fact that, indeed, the schools’ enrolment outlook was influenced by where they were geographically situated. It is not so much about the socio-economic status of where children were from as it is about how that status was an indicator of the likely working atmosphere in schools serving certain areas. There is empirical evidence pointing to the existence of a positive correlation between pupil socio-economic disadvantage and poor motivation, poor behaviour and underachievement (Lupton, 2004 and Muijs et al, 2004). These factors are also elements of occupational stress risks for teachers working in such contexts. There is evidence in the existing body of research that the contextual characteristics of schools in areas of extreme socio-economic
disadvantage are associated with unique stress risks, probably as a consequence of societal problems in communities pupils come from spilling into the school (Howard and Johnson, 2004). In their work on the subject of resilience in three similar schools geographically located in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, Howard and Johnson (2004) found that, among the stress risks existing in schools in disadvantaged areas, the main ones were pupil aggression and disorder and abusive behaviour from parents. Evidence from this study’s interviews and survey also confirmed that the disadvantaged socio-economic context from which the school draws its pupils is consistent with pupil-related stress risks (e.g. lack of motivation and general pupil misbehaviour) for teachers in these schools, although teachers in school 10 felt that not all these problems were issues in their school.

**Person stress risks**

Of the three person characteristics, stress risks were mainly evident in force and demand characteristics.

**Force**

Major force characteristic stress risks in School 1 and School 10 were:

- Low self-efficacy in managing behaviour of pupils who did not accept discipline at home
- Personal attitudes towards one’s job
- Personality and temperament
- Commitment to the job

Self-efficacy in managing behaviour of pupils who did not accept discipline at home – which was low in both schools – was a stress risk to the teachers. This was corroborated by interview results indicating most teachers’ felt pupil behaviour parents tolerated at home was a major influence on pupils’ behaviour in school. Thus, teachers considered parental backing important to their interactions with pupils. David,
Gabrielle and Enoch – for example – felt frustrated at negative pupil behaviour spilling into the school. Self-doubt (e.g. Gabrielle), feeling debilitated and worn out (David) and apathy (Enoch) were some of the key effects of such pupil behaviour on the teachers.

Teachers’ personal attitudes towards key aspects of their job – the national curriculum, assessment, change constancy and implementation, pupil behaviour management and cover – were a major risk factor. Thus, it made sense that these were also some of the key sources of stress among the teachers. Resultant dominant teachers’ feelings connected to these attitudes were frustration, indifference and despondency.

Personality and temperament represented some of the main stress risks for the teachers. Personality factors with stress risk elements were agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness. The major agreeableness stress risk was scepticism regarding change and its implementation and lack of trust towards government and senior management. Teachers’ conscientiousness was evident – for example, in the amount of time they spent doing schoolwork at home, particularly PPA – and had negative implications for their workload/time constraints. Neuroticism signs like feeling anxious, tense and fear also exposed teachers to the risk of stress. Concerning openness, the salient stress risk was the teachers’ general attitude towards change which indicated they were unreceptive of it. Finally, temperament also appeared a contributory factor to some of teachers’ negative reactions and adaptability to proximal processes.

The type of commitment to the job representing most teachers’ descriptions of their job was normative as it appeared they carried on with proximal processes of their job generally out of obligation – even though they were not in agreements with some key aspects of the job. This kind of commitment was, therefore, a risk factor and, obviously, was a source of stress.
Demand

The demand characteristic – teachers' professional role – was a stress risk for most teachers especially in relation to expectations linked to their position in their work context as colleague, adult figure, mentor and subordinate. From colleagues there were, therefore, implied expectations on them to participate in organisational activities and be supportive of colleagues. These expectations resulted in demands on the teachers, particularly the pressure to attend (so as not to let others down e.g. need for others to cover). Expectations from pupils were mainly support with learning while some parents were represented as pressurising teacher to be tolerant of their children’s behaviour even when teachers deemed it inappropriate. In addition, pressure from senior management primarily concerned targets (especially pupil academic results) and change implementation. Finally, linked to pressure from senior management, pressure from the government centred on the national curriculum.

Proximal processes stress risks

Results also indicated that all key proximal processes identified were a stress risks with some adverse effects of the teachers.

Interactions with pupils

Stress risks emanating from teachers’ interactions with pupils were mostly to do with pupil behaviour problems. These included confrontation, lesson disruptions and general questioning attitudes. The impact pupil behaviour problems on teachers included self-doubt, frustration, stress and – in some instances – straining of teachers’ relationships with parents and the pupils’ themselves.

Although opinion on the stressfulness of pupil behaviour was divided, consensus was that it was still an important factor in the teachers’ execution of their duties. Except for Josephine (SENCO) who tended “to
work with smaller groups than most of the teachers”, there was consensus among the interviewees from both schools that pupil behaviour was a major stress risk.

Teachers who were stressed by pupil behaviour issues principally highlighted disruptive behaviour during lessons and general pupil aggression as key concerns which tended to affect their effectiveness in their job. Poor pupil behaviour included purposeful lesson disruption (David), fighting (Grace), lack of respect for authority (Enoch) and general shouting (Rumbi).

Managing poor pupil behaviour contributed to teachers’ workload and time constraints. Some pupil behavioural issues resulted in “awkward interviews with parents” (Enoch). Generally, the impact of poor pupil behaviour on teachers was that “you don’t spend enough time with those who need it so that you attend the idiots” (David). This added more pressure on teachers in terms of what they eventually were able to do during work hours and how much more they would need to do outside work hours in order for them to meet their work targets. This was emotionally and physically draining hence the most likely result would be more teacher stress.

**Interactions with parents**

Insofar as interactions with parents were concerned, teachers’ stress risks were linked to their interactions with pupils. Principally, the risks emanated from contrasting views between teachers and parents on acceptable pupil behaviour in school. The general impression among most teachers was that parents tended to sympathise more with their children than with teachers where teacher-pupil conflict could not be resolved internally within the school. Similar to interactions with pupils, this sometimes negatively affected teachers’ relationships with parents and pupils. It also seemed to have a negative impact on teachers’ trust in
parents and, consequently, their self-efficacy in managing the behaviour of pupils who did not accept behaviour at home.

**Interactions with colleagues**

Some elements of interactions with colleagues presenting stress risks to some teachers were to do with implicit expectations linked to their role and position as colleagues. For example, Gabrielle claimed some teachers were unhappy at colleagues whom they felt were abusing sick leave days which, consequently, led to those who did not take days off to do more cover hence more workload/time constraints. Thus, while colleagues taking days off put cover pressure on colleagues, this expression of annoyance with colleagues taking days off put pressure on others to attend work even when unwell for fear of letting colleagues down (e.g. David and Rumbi).

**Interactions with senior management**

Stress risks associated with the depicted (e.g. by David and Josephine) top-down interactions teachers had with senior management were general perceptions of senior management as out of touch (e.g. David), unsupportive (e.g. Grace) and lacking empathy (e.g. Rumbi). For example, Zoe felt that senior management prioritised raising standards and “*forget the people they are gonna make the victims (...) the people they should be supporting (...) the teachers that they constantly pressurise in different tasks*”. Linked to this, most teachers believed that senior management did not take their perspectives into considerations when making decisions affecting proximal processes within the school microsystem. This likely caused disaffection among the teachers as they will have felt their sense of agency and collegiality undermined.
Context stress risks

Microsystem

Owing to the focus of the present study, the primary microsystem was work. Key stress risks characterising this microsystem were general workload/time constraints, cover, intra/inter departmental climate and organisational processes.

Workload/time constraints

With regard to workload/time constraints, the amount of marking and coursework assessment depended on the subject and class size. English teachers, in particular, expressed concern with the marking and coursework workload due to the relative complexity of assessing their subject. For example, Zoe highlighted the differences in marking conventions between English and Maths as underpinning the workload discrepancies between the two subjects. That coursework took longer to mark than, say, Maths, implied a greater marking workload for the teachers of subjects like English. On the basis of this argument, stress related to coursework marking and assessment would be expected to affect teachers differently.

However, other general workload issues still concerned the teachers. For example, almost all teachers cited lack of PPA time as both an indicator and a source of workload strains in their job. The most common infringement on their PPA time was a direct result of covering for absent colleagues which added to their pre-existing workload.

Closely related to workload was the issue of targets. The interviewees generally felt that the government’s emphasis on targets, results and league tables exerted stress-inducing demands on them. They felt it shifted their focus from their actual teaching to just preparing their pupils for exams and assessments in order to meet set targets.
Cover

Closely linked to and, in certain instances an element of, workload was cover. Most teachers in these schools also felt cover was a major issue and had a negative impact on their overall workload and time constraints. For instance, in School 1, Gabrielle claimed, the intensity of cover had resulted in some teachers to “leave this year because they’re sick of doing covers”. Because most of the cover tended to be carried out during affected teachers’ designated PPA time, this increased the amount of time spent of PPA outside designated PPA time and, generally, the amount of time spent doing schoolwork at home. Cover was, therefore, a major contributory factor to stress. For example, Rumbi reported feeling “overused” as cover was “(...) really painful and it can be quite stressful and I don’t like it”.

Intra/inter departmental climate

Also key to teacher stress was intra/inter departmental climate. As Ivy observed, “(...) pressure isn’t that much of a problem (...) when you know your department has got your back (...). Therefore, lack of departmental support affected teachers’ sense of team membership. In respect of this, Gabrielle remarked, “(...) I have been annoyed by some members of staff in my department at times. If you don’t have the backing of your department, then you feel very lonely.” In addition, Rumbi stated,

“(...) I don’t really feel like there’s a lot of support from my department (...). Sometimes when I feel like I’ve got too much work (...) I wish I could go to my head of department and say, “I think I’m really struggling,” (...) but I don’t think I will ever do that.”

In a context of some teacher remarks of satisfactory intra/inter departmental climate, these quotes indicate that it – especially intra departmental climate – was a significant stress risk for most teachers in these schools.
It was also noteworthy that the stress risk of intra/inter departmental climate was not limited to general members of department, but could also affect middle management. A case in point is Zoe (head of faculty) who commented, “(...) there are one or two members of my department who have been throwing their weight around (...) and that caused me stress (...)”. An inference from this could be that intra/inter departmental climate was influenced by both management and teachers.

Organisational processes

Constant change was an issue to teachers in both schools. Change is, by nature, normally disruptive. Despite the good intentions, it tends to have both positive and negative effects to the environment in which it is introduced (Goodson et al, 2006). While it was a macrosystemic phenomenon, its implementation within the schools contributed to the teachers’ experience of stress. To minimise the negative and optimise the positive effects, change needs to be well-managed and well-timed “reinforcing new behaviors, attitudes, and organizational practices” (Kreitner et al, 2010:9). It should, ideally, take into consideration the pre-existing nested contexts and interactions between these contexts. Broader implications to these contexts need to also to be taken cognisance of. On the other hand, the recipients of this change need to be ready for it (Priestley et al, 2011). From the stories told by the interviewees, this did not seem to be the case. The broad view was that this change was happening too quickly in too short a time without giving the teachers time to be adequately grounded in the changes. This left the teachers frustrated, at times confused, and demoralised.

Mesosystem

The major mesosystem was the link between the home and work microsystems. The common link between home and work microsystems across teachers in the two schools was workload/time constraints. Due
to excessive workload, most teachers experienced time constraints which
resulted in teachers constantly doing schoolwork at home. This further
compromised these teachers’ personal lives. This also meant that their
recovery time was infringed on and, as such, they may not have properly
rested for the next day’s challenges. A sustained recurrence of this
pattern could eventually lead to the teachers’ negative adaptive
outcomes of their job-related transactions.

**Exosystem**

Of the main elements of the teachers’ exosystem, the ones which
presented stress risks to the teachers were principally the government,
Ofsted and pupils homes. Key stress risks from the government were
change and “targets-based culture” (Josephine). Ofsted-related stress
risks were inspections and emphasis on standards. Finally, teachers felt
that pupils’ homes were a key influence on pupil behaviour in school and
that lack of support from the home exosystem was likely to lead to pupil
behaviour problems in school.

**Macrosystem**

These schools’ macrosystem – principally national standards, the
National Curriculum and change – posed a significant stress risk for the
teachers.

National standards stress risk mainly emanated from the targets culture.
Particularly, emphasis on results put pressure on teachers to ensure
pupils attained stringent set targets. Combined with Ofsted monitoring of
these targets, this culture added pressure on teachers as it usually led to
teachers working longer helping pupils in activities such as revisions.

Linked to national standards the exam-oriented National Curriculum was,
according to some teachers, less creative and, therefore, was no
enjoyable for pupils. A curriculum which pupils did not enjoy was likely to
negatively affect pupil motivation in lessons, which often tends to lead to pupil behaviour problems and, eventually, inability of pupils to meet their targets. Because teachers were accountable for pupils’ targets, pupils’ failure to meet these targets was an added pressure on the teachers and, therefore, a major stress risk.

Constant change was another macrosystemic stress risk teachers in these schools were exposed to. This change tended to relate to national policies and the national curriculum. Because this change occurred regularly, teachers felt its disruptive influence to school proximal processes was a major stress risk because it tended to have a negative impact on their workload and patterns of working.

**Time stress risks**

Ongoing episodes of proximal processes (microtime), the regularity with which these episodes occurred (mesotime) and “changing expectations and events in the larger society” (macrotime) (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006:796) were an important influence on the stress risks teachers in these schools were exposed.

**Microtime**

In the two schools, key ongoing episodes of proximal processes exposing teachers to stress risk were:

- Supporting pupils with their targets
- Teaching other classes on cover
- Monitoring/ intervention by senior management
- Disruptions to PPA (e.g. due to senior management requests or cover)
- Confrontational behaviour from pupils
- Pupil class disruptions
- Parental confrontation during meetings
Mesotime

The regularity of identified microtime episodes and interaction over the course teachers’ work in the schools meant constant exposure to the stress risk, hence the extent to which resultant stress affected them. As a result of the targets culture, at microsystem level, there was monitoring and intervention by senior management. Therefore, there arose the pressure on teachers to constantly support pupils’ learning and set regular assessment tasks to monitor the progress pupils were making against these targets. Grace, for example, reported having to come into school to support pupils with revision during her holiday time and at weekends. According to the teachers (e.g. Grace and Rumbi) such working patterns increased teachers’ workload.

Teaching other classes on cover and general disruptions to teachers’ PPA time was frequent in these schools. The constancy of this had a cumulative effect of reduced planning, preparation and assessment during designated PPA time. The result of this tended to be more time spent on schoolwork at home and, in turn, less involvement of teachers in their social and home activities. Coupled with this was less time to rest, which lend to them feeling fatigued.

There was also an indication that pupil behaviour problems were an issue in both schools. Serious misbehaviour such as confrontation towards teachers by staff was reported in both schools. Such behaviour, in concert with constant low-level class disruptions, exposed teachers to great risk of stress. This was because, in addition to the incidence of such behaviour, the need to spend additional time addressing the behaviour and, on occasions, calling meetings with parents tended to lead to teacher stress. Resultant meetings with parents were not always cordial. Some parents tended to be confrontational towards teachers during meetings to discuss their children’s behaviour, which sometimes undermined teacher-parents and teacher-pupil relationships.
Macrot ime

Changing expectations and events in the larger society presenting stress risks to teachers in these schools were:

- Public accountability of schools
- Wider technological advances
- Increase in adolescent behaviour and emotional problems

Because these changing expectations were in the larger society, they were relevant to all schools in the sample. Therefore, these are discussed in detail in section 8.4.4.

Symptoms of stress experienced by the teachers

These stress risks had a substantial impact on the teachers’ general wellbeing. Teachers reported experiencing a range of emotional and mental symptoms of stress as a consequence of risks within their work. According to HSE (2015), emotional symptoms of stress are manifest in an individual when they experience:

- negative or depressive feeling
- disappointment with self
- increased emotional reactions
- loneliness, withdrawn
- loss of motivation (e.g. unexplained feeling of tiredness)
- commitment and confidence
- mood swings other than behavioural

On the other hand, HSE (2015) describes mental symptoms as encompassing:

- Confusion or indecision
- Lack of concentration
- Poor memory

Teachers in School 1 and 10 reported experiencing a plethora of emotional symptoms of stress. For example, Gabrielle expressed these emotional symptoms as follows:
“I don’t think I handled them well because I just kind of fire up. I have not dealt with it the best way. But usually they annoy me. (…) they thought I had been bullying their son, which isn’t true. And (…) I didn’t deal with it very well because they said something (…), it really hurt me what they were saying. (…) I’m getting tired of this now (…) feeling low.”

Similarly, Zoe described her emotional symptoms in the following way: “I was so upset when I came back from maternity leave (…) I had to deal with all that”. Rumbi also had intense symptoms: “I was just crying a lot of the time and getting upset about things (…)”. Previous studies on teacher stress (e.g. Cefai and Cavioni, 2014) have found emotional symptoms of stress to negatively affect self-confidence, competence and resilience. This is consistent with how teachers in these schools were affected. In respect of this, Gabrielle stated,

“It affected my relationship with the kid, to be honest (…) really negative. Because I felt like I’m self-analysing. (…) you feel like you’re watching myself, (…). Have I done that fairly? What have I done wrong? Am I treating them unfairly and (…) all the time I’m questioning myself like that because of this parent. I felt, that’s really wrong. Why am I questioning myself?”

This experience of self-doubt – a mental symptom – is indicative of a link between emotional and mental symptoms of stress. In keeping, these teachers reported further manifestations of mental stress symptoms as a result of their work. David commented: “Sometimes I can feel I am on the edge (…)”. In addition, Rumbi said:

“I never had a day off from teaching because I would feel I would let so many people down. (…) but I also feel sometimes that maybe I’ve got a bit too much responsibility on my shoulders (…) sometimes I feel like it’s a lot of pressure to be under.”

Previous research (e.g. Maslach and Leiter, 2005) has found mental symptoms of stress to not only affect their work life, but also their home
life. This is consistent with interview data of these schools (e.g. Gabrielle, Rumbi and David) which indicated an overlap of mental symptoms of work stress into teachers’ home and social lives.

7.8.3 Teachers’ coping strategies and their effectiveness (RQ3)

According to Lazarus (2006:10), “Coping is concerned with our efforts to manage adaptational demands and the emotions they generate”. Mechanic (1967), cited in section 2.6.2, suggests that the coping process involves an interaction of individual and environmental factors. Thus, proposes Lazarus (2006:21) – in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of coping strategies – the coping process should be examined in the context of the individual and the environment in which they are. From a bioecological perspective, this entails analysing teachers’ coping strategies in light of their person characteristics and the context.

Teachers utilised a mixture of direct-action and palliative coping strategies. In chapter 2, direct-action coping strategies have been described as approaches to coping aimed at dealing with the source of stress while palliative coping strategies focus on eliminating or mitigating the effects or symptoms of stress. Teachers’ adoption of these strategies was consistent with some of their force and resource characteristics. In addition, there also appeared to be influences of proximal processes, context and time on adopted coping strategies.

**Direct-action coping strategies**

Teachers in these schools used the following direct-action coping strategies:

- Being organised (e.g. prioritising, setting clear individual deadlines)
- Being forthright to colleagues about tasks one will and will not do
- Seek help from in aspects of job one has difficulty with
- Improve or adapt own skills and knowledge
Most teachers utilised being organised as a coping strategy for handling workload/ time constraints issues within the school microsystem. This was a way of dealing the targets-based culture influencing. Being organised helped teachers to identify tasks which needed prioritising. This coping strategy thus helped teachers improve their ability to handle the demands of their job:

“(…) my ability to cope with stress has improved (…). I have learned to rationalise my workload a bit more and (…) how to prioritise things (…) that I need to set myself clear deadlines to meet personally as classroom teacher and (…) as a head of faculty” (Zoe).

Because workload and time constraints were an issue in these schools, it was not surprising that this was one of the preferred coping strategies. What stood out in how this strategy was deployed within the school microsystems was that prioritising was not only utilised in relation to tasks, but also in relation to classes whereby those sitting national exams were accorded priority over other classes. The latter reflects the effect of the exams-oriented curriculum on the teachers. Setting deadlines and “(…) writing a list of things (…) trying to prioritise (…)” (Rumbi) was suggestive of teachers’ conscientiousness dimension of their personality. It is, however, noteworthy that the effectiveness of this coping strategy also hinged other contextual factors – particularly within the work microsystem. For example, high-pressure episodes such as Ofsted inspections potentially gave rise to the number of activities needing prioritising thereby overwhelming teachers:

“Last week it got to the point where I said, “That’s enough,” (…) I didn’t take any work home with me. I came home and watched television and felt much better. There was OFSTED inspection last week (…) obviously the pressure increased (…)” (Rumbi).

This is an example of the interaction between person, process, context and time in the choice and effectiveness of coping strategy.
On why teachers experienced much stress, David made the following observation: “A lot of the times we bring a lot of stress upon ourselves because we are too compliant. At times you have to say hang on a minute. I can do that much and not more”. In keeping, some teachers (e.g. Gabrielle and David) adopted being forthright with colleagues and senior management on how much they were able to do as one of their coping strategies. Such assertiveness was consistent with extraversion personality dimension (McRae and John, 1992). As much as this may have worked in stopping work from increasing (at least with regard to declined tasks), the effectiveness of this strategy was likely to be undermined by effects this had on certain proximal process – particularly interactions, hence relationships, with colleagues and senior management and how this eventually affected the teacher: “I was made to feel guilty because I wasn’t doing something that I don’t get paid for (…) I do my dinner duty everyday (…) which is really more than my fair share anyway.” (Gabrielle).

Another direct-action coping strategy the teachers widely used was seeking support from those within their school microsystem, usually fellow members of department in the workplace. Additionally, some teachers indicated that, at home, they sought support from family members. In this regard, the accessibility of these buffers hinged on how strong and how positive existing and past interactions between the individual and the microsystem were. The more positive past and present interactions were, the more like they were to lead to positive adaptive outcome. Individual person characteristics were also an important factor in the eventual adaptive outcome. So, there was no solitary element in the teacher’s nested contexts that can be singled out as the only factor – it is a combination of transactions between the nested contexts acting in concert to influence an outcome.

As stated in section 2.4.3, coping effectiveness is, among other factors, dependent on an individual’s personal attributes (person characteristics) (Lazarus, 1999). Thus, when faced with a stressor, if the individual’s
appraisal of the threat against their internal coping resources is that it is beyond what they can cope with, then the likely outcome will be stress. In such circumstances, some teachers sought to adapt their internal resources by improving or adapting their skills. For instance, Enoch remarked, “To deal with those tricky aspects of my job (...) I do it by being as good as or as or better than anyone else at it”. More significantly, Josephine coped with redundancy earlier in her career by retraining as an SEN teacher. Moreover, Grace made the following remark concerning her coping with the threat of constant technology-driven curriculum changes:

“(…) ICT changes all the time (...) recently started a new subject (...) we haven’t had any training. (...) I bought a text book (...) taught myself how to use this new programme. (...) and I created my own worksheets (...) and that’s fine”

This willingness to adapt to macrotime-related phenomena and keep trying after getting it wrong at first is indicative of the openness and conscientiousness personality dimensions. Involving pupils and colleagues in the process of adapting is an example of evidence of positive functioning of proximal processes.

**Palliative coping strategies**

Lazarus (2006) argues that, because coping is an important feature of the emotion process, emotion-focused strategies are therefore integral to effective coping. Thus, palliative coping strategies and direct-action coping strategies should be considered part of the same coping process rather than independent competing techniques. In School 1 and 10, the main palliative coping strategies teachers utilised were:

- Breaking from work
- Expression of negative emotion
- Control/ suppress negative emotion
- Rationalise
- Seek expert intervention (e.g. medical help; counselling)
With workload being a major feature of the teachers’ work context, it made sense that most teachers resorted to breaking from work when they experienced workload-related symptoms such as feelings of being overwhelmed or fatigue. This included taking days off on sick leave; listening to music; massage (e.g. David); switching off (e.g. Josephine); watching television (e.g. Rumbi); doing very little work (e.g. Enoch). Most teachers found this coping strategy effective as they usually felt better afterwards. It is noteworthy that, while workload-related stress mainly originated from the school microsystem, this coping was tended to take place away from the school. This link between school and other microsystems suggests the importance of the mesosystem as a context for coping. Furthermore, examples of how this coping strategy was employed indicates that, as well as people, access to objects or resources like television or radio formed an important part of proximal processes in microsystems other than school in coping with the demands of work.

Expression of negative emotion was another feature of teachers’ ways of dealing with stress. Some teachers let others know it was not their fault (e.g. Grace) or cried (e.g. Rumbi) in an attempt to release negative effects of stress: “I do cry a lot and that did help me get through (…)” (Rumbi). This hints at a display of the neuroticism personality dimension.

In contrast, there were instances when teachers coped by controlling or suppressing negative emotion. Examples were: pretend nothing is wrong (e.g. Rumbi); staying calm (e.g. Enoch); keep problem to self (e.g. Gabrielle) and avoidance of colleagues with whom they had tension (e.g. Grace). In relation to this, Zoe commented, “My choice of coping strategies and their effectiveness (…) is influenced by the desire not to cause other people stress. So if I think that by keeping something to myself or sorting something out myself, it would be better for others than to be cause them stress (…) that’s probably the option out”.

Zoe’s remarks imply part of the rationale for employing this strategy was to keep proximal processes involving colleagues positive thereby
maintaining healthy interpersonal relations with colleague – an important factor in positive adaptive outcomes.

Some teachers also employed rationalising to help them look at a stress risk in a different way and mitigate related negative effects. To this end, Zoe stated, “All they want are results (...) not the process (...) I try to explain it and (...) I give them the evidence that I have gathered and, if they are not satisfied, then there is nothing more I can do” (Zoe).

Complementing this, Rumbi remarked, “It wouldn’t matter to me if all my children fail (...) but I know that I’ve done my best job and they have tried their hardest (...) so it wouldn’t matter to me (...) it’s really what children are getting out of it and not what the results are”.

Rationalising as a coping strategy helps individuals put a stress risk in perspective and moderate feelings of guilt or responsibility over a negative issue.

In some instances, some teachers sought expert intervention such as receiving medical help or counselling to help them cope with effects of stress. For example, David recounted, “I went to the doctor’s and explained what happened and he gave me a sick note and then told me not to come back until I’ve spoken to the head”. Additionally, it was reported that: “(...) we had two members of the faculty off for a long term absence this year because of stress (...) and have had members of the faculty that have gone for counselling for anxiety” (Zoe). Seeking expert intervention to cope seemed to be influenced by senior management’s attitudes about stress and the lack of support with stress within the school microsystem: “(...) the school thinks stress is a medical problem and so you can go to the doctor and get whatever help you get there” (Josephine). On the evidence (e.g. David), this seemed an effective strategy to cope with stress.
7.8.4 Teachers' protective factors (RQ4)

In section 2.7.2, protective factors have been defined as elements and processes, both internal and external to the individual, which buffer the individual from the negative effects of risk factors (Kumpfer, 2002; Jacelon, 1997; Nettles and Pleck, 1996). These protective factors are generally subdivided into two broad categories: internal and external protective factors where internal factors are person characteristics and external factors refer to environmental characteristics (Oswald et al, 2003). This section considers School 1 and 10 teachers' internal and external protective factors. Person characteristics are examined for internal protective factors while external protective factors will be drawn from process, context and time.

Person protective factors

The two schools’ teachers’ person protective factors constituted force and resource characteristics.

Force

In sections 7.4.1 and 7.7.1 force characteristics have been defined as behavioural dispositions that have to do with individual differences in aspects like temperament, motivation and persistence (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006; Tudge et al, 2009). Protective force characteristics of the two schools’ teachers were personality, commitment and persistence.

The personality dimension which helped teachers in these schools to withstand or recover from adverse effects of the demands of their job was extraversion. Gabrielle, for instance, sought support from colleagues across the school:

“(…) the sort of people I go to for help when I’m stressed are

(…) Mike, he works here. I go to Ivy. I go to Michelle Jones
(…) I go to Delaney in SMT (…) I go to Jo sometimes, who is my boss in Maths department.”

This extraversion dimension of Gabrielle’s personality also helped her to draw support from a network including her union, the LEA and her parents to help her positively recover from her early career difficulties. Furthermore, Rumbi remarked:

“If there are any problems (…) I’ve got two teachers from next door who are brilliant and help with behavioural problems (…) and one of them is the year head so she will speak to them if need be.”

This is consistent with previous research (e.g. Fayombo, 2010) which has found extraversion the significantly positively correlate with resilience.

Commitment, in particular affective, was another major influence in moderating the adverse effects of, or aiding recovery from, risks identified by the teachers. Affective words used by the teachers such as “love” (e.g. Josephine); “like” (e.g. Gabrielle) and “enjoy” (e.g. Enoch) in relation to their job and schools were indicative of the driving force behind their continued stay in the job.

Also important were teachers’ persistence in the face of adversity. It was noteworthy that, while the teachers characterised their job as generally stressful, none of them – except David (School 1) and Enoch (School 10) who were about to retire – expressed their intention to leave the job as a result. They found ways – some direct-action and others palliative – to persist within their job. While not all decisions to stay in the profession can be generalised as resilience – although some literature (e.g. Luthar et al, 2000; Ungar, 2004,2005,2008; Boyden and Mann, 2005) conceptualise resilience as, among other things, staying on in spite of challenges – how these teachers coped and the effectiveness of this coping give an indicator of their (at least some of them) resilience. Gabrielle used the “fight” metaphor in her representation of persistence. While some teachers showed resilience and others at-risk characteristics, one common feature across most teachers in these two schools was their
persistent focus on the “the most important members of the school” (Ivy), that is “the kids” (all teachers). Interview data suggested most teachers in these schools were driven by how best they could serve the needs of the students they taught. This, they reported, kept them in teaching. Ironically, this focus on how best to serve the pupils was also a source of some of the divergence between the teachers and senior management and parents which, at times, resulted in stress.

Resource

Resource characteristics have been described as liabilities and assets – such as past experiences, skills, intelligence and material resources – influencing an individual’s ability to participate effectively in proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006; Tudge et al, 2009).

The resource characteristic moderating the effects of stress risks on teachers in School 1 and School 10 was professional experience. There was general consensus among the teachers (e.g. Grace) that professional experience played a significant role in their capacity to cope with the demands and recover from the negative effects of their job. The main assets the teachers acquired directly related to professional experience were familiarity with, and mastery of, their job which resulted in improved efficiency and effectiveness and higher self-efficacy in main aspects of their job. However, what seemed to disrupt this familiarity was the constant rate of change which meant that they had to relearn or re-familiarise with certain aspects of the same job.

Proximal processes protective factors

Protective factors within the teacher-environment interaction mechanisms in the schools were evident in teacher interactions with parents, colleagues and senior management.
Interactions with parents

Consensus among the teachers was that parents were an important influence on what went on in school, particularly regarding pupil behaviour and pupil attitudes to learning. In this regard, relationships with parents – hence their support – were linked to the relationships teachers had with pupils. Thus, positive relationships with parents were considered equal in importance to positive relationships with pupils. To this end, Gabrielle remarked, “*If you don’t have the backing of the parents, then kids can cause problems in the classroom*”. Similarly, Rumbi observed, “(…) *when children go home (…) talk about me and don’t complain, the parents are more likely to listen*”. Considering the direct impact parents could have on teachers’ work, it can also be argued that parents were as much a part of the teachers’ work microsystem as they were a part of the exosystem – another example of the non-fixity of elements of bioecological systems. Teachers in both schools acknowledged some parents were supportive and, therefore, were a helpful element in teachers’ ability to cope with pupil-related demands:

> “*Parents are supportive. I think we do have a lot of support from parents. If we have kids that are knocking and messing about (…) more often parents are quite happy to come in and discuss. It helps so much (…)*” (Grace).

Regarding School 10 parents, Enoch noted, “*Parents (…) it’s just a wide (…) it’s a comprehensive mix of parents just like the school. Um (…), there’s a lot of very supportive parents*” – a view shared by Rumbi.

Interactions with colleagues

Most teachers in the schools expressed satisfaction with supportive interactions between colleagues – usually occurring at department level:

> “*(…) generally, the department is quite supportive of each other*” (Zoe).

The supportive nature of departments was linked to positive relations between colleagues (Enoch and Zoe). These positive relations were essential in the building a supportive network to buffer individuals from
adverse effects of stress risks resulting from some proximal processes: “(...) there’s always that support network where you can either ask, “What should I do with this incident or what’s your advice?”” (Enoch). This evidences the importance, in addition to individuals, of a network – how well those individuals work together as a unit – in helping colleagues to resist or quickly recover from adverse effects of stress risks within the work microsystem.

In addition to access to colleagues or, indeed, a network of colleagues, supportive collegiality was also important for access to resources – an important component to the positive functioning of proximal processes. Highlighting the importance resources in the teaching job, “It is a problem with the resources we have (...) that we need to do our job (...) I went out and bought myself a text book where it tells you how to do it properly” (Grace). Thus, in addition to support related to pupil behaviour, supportive work relations were also key to access to resources:

“At the moment we have sufficient resources um (...), the head of department is quite good. She said, “If you want any new book just let the department know and we’ll order them,” (...) you can be more creative if that’s available.” (Rumbi) Besides, having a colleague as a union representative had an additional dimension to the kind of support individuals had access to: “As union rep, I’ve had very few colleagues come to me for advice on dealing with work stress.” This further reinforces the importance of proximal processes involving colleagues in moderating the effects of stress risks within the work microsystem.

**Interactions with senior management**

Although also mentioned in light of stress risks within the work environment, proximal processes involving senior management were noted some interactions with senior management were important protective factors. For instance, it was an essential element in teachers’ recovery from significant episodes in their lives:
“(…) the Deputy in charge of human resources (…) log all absences with a supportive return-to-work interview (…) highlight any issue staff want to declare in respect to the cause of their absence (…) so that we may know how best to support them” (Ivy).

As an example of how this aspect of proximal processes functioned in help with recovery, David remarked:

“Management responded very well actually (…) very supportive (…) very helpful. I could take as much time as I needed. Even now, if I feel I’m getting that way they have no problem with me taking time off” (David).

Additionally, senior management also formed part of the supportive network of support for help with moderating the risk of pupil behaviour management: “you come to a situation where you can’t agree and that’s when you pass it on and say, “Would you like to speak to the Deputy Head or Head Teacher because this is now something I can’t deal with”’’ (Enoch). Therefore, accessibility of senior management was a significant protective factor a range of key aspects of the effective functioning of the proximal processes.

**Context protective factors**

The development of an individual “is a function of forces emanating from multiple settings and from relations among these settings” (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006:817). The two schools’ teachers’ context protective factors were their:

- microsystems
- mesosystem
- exosystem

**Microsystem**

As explained earlier (e.g. section 7.8.4), external protective factors are those contextual or environmental – mostly microsystemic – features or
processes which moderate the negative effects of stress risks on an individual (Oswald et al., 2003). In the two schools, the main external protective factors for teachers working in them were accessible networks of supportive colleagues which encouraged positive proximal processes. As much as extraversion – or the capacity to seek help (discussed above) – was an important internal protective factor, the availability of colleagues or a network of colleagues to seek this help from was also essential. In addition, for some teachers, access to supportive – or “understanding” (Grace) – family members also played an important role in moderating the negative effects of stress risks. Thus, resilience was not only a function of person characteristics but, rather, a result of a combination of internal and external protective characteristics where, as hypothesised earlier in table 2.3, individual qualities were complemented by contextual supportive features and processes available. Finally, access to resources – discussed above – was also important to the teachers as it was key to the performance of their jobs.

**Mesosytem**

Relations between Microsystems were as important to teachers’ positive adaptive outcomes as the individual Microsystems themselves. Of principal importance was the relationship between work and home Microsystems. As much as having supportive colleagues was an essential protective factor within the work Microsystems, supportive contexts outside work – especially the home Microsystems – were an important element in the overlap or link between work and home Microsystems as schoolwork tended to extend into the home thereby impinging on an individual’s home life (e.g. Grace). Additionally, the important function of the school-home mesosystem was evident in how the home was used to recover from stress emanating from the school microsystem (e.g. Rumbi). In addition, Rumbi’s use of the television in the home environment as a means through which to recover from stress experienced in the school context provides an important insight into the role of objects or resources, and access to them, in the protection or
recovery from stress. Thus, as well as people, resources or access to them provided an essential link between work and home microsystems.

**Exosystem**

Of the identified contexts not containing the teachers but with linkages to their work microsystem, the pupils’ home and the union were vital protective factors. As an extension of or fallout from school proximal processes involving pupils, pupils’ interactions within their home were important protective factors for the teachers:

“All parents I have dealt with have been very supportive (...) they’re very respectful (...). I think because when children go home they talk about me and don’t complain, the parents are more likely to listen (...)” (Rumbi).

At exosystem level, the union’s role – among other things – was conceived as that of moderating the negative effects of the work microsystem. The union’s lobbying of schools and government, noted above, was important in mitigating the adverse effects of work proximal processes on the teachers – for example, concerning workload (Josephine) and PPA time, cover and attendance (Ivy). Furthermore, the union’s presence in the exosystem provided access to teachers where some concerns could not be resolved at school representative level (Josephine). It is important, however, to note that the effectiveness of the union in moderating the effects of stress risks teachers faced appeared mild.

**Time protective factors**

The dimension of time was also a principal component of these schools’ teachers’ protective factors, specifically microtime and mesotime.
**Microtime**

The main protective ongoing episodes in these schools were:

- Organising/ scheduling tasks
- Conversations with colleagues
- Meetings with supportive parents
- Professional development

**Mesotime**

Organising/ scheduling tasks was imperative to the management of excessive workload. Thus, it was a frequently undertaken task over the course of the teachers’ work in both schools as they grappled with targets and deadlines. Due to persistent time constraints, these microtime episodes daily occurrences both at microsystem and mesosystem level. Up to a point, consistent organising and scheduling of work activities helped moderate the negative effects of pressure emanating from workload and targets.

Another principal episode were conversations with colleagues regarding difficult aspects of the job. The frequency with which such conversations occurred depended on how regular episodes in which teachers encountered difficulty in aspects of their jobs – particularly pupil behaviour issues. As already noted above, these interactions were key factors in teachers’ ability to moderate the negative effects of aspects of their job.

Meetings with supportive parents provided a protective linkage between the school and the pupil’s home. Because most teachers tended to contact parents “at the very end of the line” (Rumbi), these meetings tended to occur at relatively longer intervals than the previous two microtime episodes. Notwithstanding, meetings with supportive parents tended to yield positive results (Grace) and, therefore, tended to have a moderating effect of pupil-related stress risks.
Professional development assisted teachers cope with the constant change in education. It helped teachers update their skills, which was important in their job effectiveness and self-efficacy. On occasions when it did not occur, some teachers – e.g. those in ICT – took responsibility over their own professional development as it was important in their teaching. Although intermittent, professional development occurrences somewhat helped moderate the negative effects of change on teachers.
Chapter 8: Discussion

8.1 Overview

This study identified teachers’ primary person characteristics – force, resource and demand. Their major force characteristics were self-efficacy; persistence; personal attitudes towards one’s job; personality and temperament and commitment to the job. Second, teachers’ principal resource characteristic was experience. Finally, the major demand characteristic of these teachers was their professional role. Results also indicated that these teachers were exposed to a plethora of bioecological stress risks – person, proximal processes, context and time. There were risks associated with force and demand person characteristics. Key proximal processes risks were linked to interactions with pupils, parents, colleagues and senior management. In addition, context risks existed in the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. There were time risks across the microtime, mesotime and macrotime. To cope, teachers in this sample utilised a combination of direct-action and palliative coping strategies. Finally, findings indicated that this sample’s protective factors were in their person characteristics (i.e. resource and force characteristics); proximal processes; context and time.

This chapter builds on the forgoing analyses of quantitative and qualitative data “to draw out new insights beyond the information gained from the separate quantitative and qualitative results” (Fetters et al, 2013:2143). Similarities and differences in perspectives drawn from quantitative and qualitative data are examined for convergence and divergence across the datasets (Creswell, 2014) in relation to the research questions utilising integrative interpretation. Ungar and Liebernberg (2005) postulate that augmenting statistical analyses with qualitative analyses assists in grounding generated theory in participants’ experiences.

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 1995) bioecological systems theory will be used to add interpretative power to, and assist in, understanding the integrative
analysis in this chapter. Section 8.2 considers research question (RQ) 1: What person characteristics do teachers in urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage have? RQ2, focusing on stress risks reported by these teachers and how these risks affect them is addressed in section 8.3. Section 8.4 addresses RQ3: What coping strategies do these teachers employ and how effective are they? Section 8.5 answers RQ 4: What protective factors enhance the resilience of these urban secondary school teachers? Section 8.6 concludes by highlighting main points of this chapter. The next sections, organised by research question (RQ), discuss findings from quantitative and qualitative data presented in chapters 4 to 7.

8.2 RQ 1: What person characteristics do teachers in urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage have?

Person characteristics – alongside the context and the nature of developmental outcomes being considered – form an integral part of the major influences on the “form, power, content and direction of the proximal processes effecting development” (Bronfenbrenner, 1995:621; Azer, 2005). This section considers the major person characteristics (i.e. force, resource and demand) of this sample of teachers.

8.2.1 Force characteristics

Main force characteristics were self-efficacy, persistence, personal attitudes towards one’s job, personality and temperament and commitment to the job.

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy forms part of an individual’s personality and is related to locus of control (McKenna, 2012). According to Bandura (2004), self-efficacy is a consequence of positive feedback on consistent successful
performance of a task. Judge et al (2007) proffer that self-efficacy is positively influenced by an individual’s intelligence, conscientiousness and emotional stability. In light of this, it is hoped that self-efficacy findings from the current study provide anecdotal evidence of the teachers’ competence in relevant aspects of their job.

**Self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline**

Out of the three self-efficacy factors (examined in chapter 5), the factor on which the teachers had the lowest mean score on was *teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline* ($M=3.32$, $SD=.86$). Of the variables constituting this factor, teachers reported low self-efficacy in the variable: *If students are not disciplined at home, they are still likely to accept discipline in school* ($M=2.49$, $SD=1.29$). Teachers generally felt that parents were a key influence on pupil behaviour in school. While they reported that parents were generally supportive, they considered unsupportive parents a negative influence on the behaviour of pupils in school. Gabrielle observed, “*If you don’t have the backing of the parents, then kids can cause problems in the classroom.*” Likewise, Enoch noted that negative behaviour of pupils at home was likely to have a negative impact on their behaviour in school. Therefore, it makes sense that teachers’ self-efficacy in their influence on pupil discipline where pupils did not accept discipline at home was low. This confirms a study by Sylva et al (2014) which found that pupil home environment was an important influence on their behaviour in school. What this finding implies is that self-efficacy not only depends on individual factors nor on the immediacy of the teachers’ microsystem, but also on pupils’ homes (which are the teachers’ exosystems). This is also in tandem with Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) proposition that there are subsystems (exosystems) in which the individual is not actively involved but still have a significant impact on the individual and their immediate environment.

Most teachers’ perspectives about their influence on pupil discipline suggested pupil behaviour was an issue for them. While there was
consensus among the teachers that serious disciplinary incidents were rare, low-level pupil misbehaviour occurred frequent enough to cause some of them concern. Of the teachers’ self-efficacy factors, the lowest constituent variable mean score was on the factor teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline (M=3.32, SD=.86). The teachers mostly attributed poor pupil behaviour to parenting and felt parental support, though generally positive, could be better. It appears the teachers did not believe their personal attributes, in the absence of a positive pupil home environment, were adequate to cope with pupil discipline demands. This indicates perceived importance of pupils’ home contexts (the teachers’ exosystems) to the teachers’ ability to meet their pupil behaviour management expectations. Consistent with this, a longitudinal survey over one school academic year by Sheldon and Epstein (2002) found that schools with high parental involvement reported lower pupil disciplinary incidents than those where opportunities for parental involvement were low.

**Self-efficacy in influence on colleagues**

In accordance with factor analysis results, self-efficacy in influence on colleagues had to do with teachers’ efficacy beliefs in the significance of their contribution towards resolving conflict between colleagues, how much they thought colleagues valued their beliefs and the significance of their perceived impact on the school improvement effort in their school. Interview results indicated that, as a force characteristic, self-efficacy in influence on colleagues impacted on their participation in proximal processes involving offering support to colleagues. Most teachers suggested that they tended to offer colleagues support in aspects of their job – an indication of a belief in their contribution to the school microsystem. Because it involved teacher-colleague interaction, self-efficacy in influence on colleagues will likely have been linked to individual personality (discussed below), especially the extraversion dimension.
Self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment

Findings from the survey indicate that teachers in this sample had high self-efficacy in the factor teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment (M=3.90, SD=.40). Results also indicate that pupil motivation and attainment in these schools were generally lower than teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment. Grace observed, “(…) there are lots of children not working to the best of their abilities (…)”. Concerning pupil motivation David stated,

“I work a lot with a lot of youngsters with educational problems. (…) and when you try to work with one group, this one is messing about with his mates. So you leave these kids who are working on their own, which is frustrating.”

Similarly, Enoch commented,

“(…) an increasing number of kids use that questioning in a confrontational way. I think staff find that annoying and stressful. (…) It’s all about this confrontation and deflection away from work.”

The result denoting an inconsistency between teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment and actual pupil achievement and motivation was surprising and contrasted with findings from previous studies (e.g. Mojavezi and Tamiz, 2012) which indicated teacher self-efficacy positively influenced pupil motivation and attainment. The rather divergent finding regarding pupil achievement may, in part, be due to what teachers perceived as unattainable targets set for pupils by school senior management which, according to the teachers, resulted in experiences of pressure and stress. Meanwhile, it is somewhat difficult to explain why teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment can be high while pupil motivation is represented as negative. This might be because, in spite of the challenge, teachers still felt they had sufficient coping assets to handle reported low pupil motivation. For example, Grace appeared confident when she said, “(…) there are lots of children not working to the best of their abilities and so (…) sometimes you’ve got to go back and do some pieces of work again”. The persistence in trying to find ways of
tackling possible low motivation portrayed in this statement is indicative of high self-efficacy in an individual’s belief in her ability to solve the problem eventually. Consistent with this, teachers reported high self-efficacy in the variable: When I really try I get through to even the most difficult pupils ($M=3.55$, $SD=1.05$). Such persistence in search for a way to cope with a potentially complex problem, suggest Wood and Atkins (2000), can be an indicator of high self-efficacy in tackling the challenge. Furthermore, Bandura (1997) and Williams (1992) propound that people with high self-efficacy are likely to be able to summon sufficient courage to tackle challenges which are likely to induce stress.

*Teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment* had a statistically significant unique contribution (p<.005) in predicting their *stress level*. It is also interesting that *teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment* was negatively related *stress level*. Conversely, *stress level* also had statistically significant unique contribution in predicting teachers’ *self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment* (p<.005). This finding is consistent with Bandura’s (1997 and 1999) proposition that self-efficacy has a moderating effect on stress level as it strengthens coping actions, fosters control and alleviates negative emotions.

An unanticipated finding was that *experience* did not have a statistically significant influence on teachers’ *self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment* (p>.005) and that the two were negatively related. It had been hypothesised that teachers’ *self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment* would increase as *experience* increased. This finding differed with results from previous studies (e.g. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2007) which indicated that experience had a significant impact on teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment. It is difficult to explain this result, but it might be because pupil attainment targets were set for all pupils and pressure to meet these targets was exerted on all teachers regardless of experience. Thus, as part of the macrosystemic culture, teachers may have come to accept that pupil attainment was their responsibility and their effort would make an impact on pupil attainment.
Personal attitudes towards their job

One of the assumptions of this study was that teachers’ attitudes, described in the literature (e.g. McKenna, 2012 and Xu, 2012) as subjective perceptions on important issues considered true by an individual, were an important predictor of teachers’ workplace behaviour (e.g. Xu, 2012 and Furnham, 2005). The existing body of literature (e.g. Kuzborska, 2011) indicates individual attitudes form a fundamental part in the teacher’s experience of and participation in the activities, roles and interpersonal relations within the context of their job. Xu (2012:1397) postulates that teachers’ attitudes are “linked to their values, to their views of the world, and to their understanding of their place within it”.

One of the findings of this study was that teachers’ attitudes towards their job were a key force characteristic as it played a role in initiating and sustaining or interfering with, retarding or preventing proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). This was exemplified by some English teachers’ attitudes regarding pupils’ academic targets in their subject. It was interesting that they attributed pupils’ inability to meet their academic targets to subject difficulty level and lack of appreciation of subject complexity by senior management when setting these targets in the first place. Thus, to them, doing their best was more important than pupils meeting their academic targets, an attitude which likely interfered with their approach to supporting students. Besides, they acknowledged that this attitude was a potential source of tension between them and senior management. The main problem of using “doing my best” as a proxy measure of teacher effectiveness would be the inconsistencies across individual ‘best’ which would make it difficult for senior management to monitor and evaluate pupil progress and determining teacher accountability in pupils’ academic results. This suggests low teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment (another force characteristic) may have played a part in these teachers’ adoption of rationalisation as a defence mechanism against the unpleasant experience of being held
accountable for pupils’ inability to meet set targets and criticism that may come their way. Rationalisation tends to be adopted as an attempt to accommodate unwelcome outcomes (Jost and Hunyady, 2002). In the context of findings of this study, it was, however, unclear what impact rationalisation had on the teachers’ performance of their roles in relation to pupil attainment, considering that the bioecological framework conceptualises roles as expectations a context or contexts place(s) on an individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As evidenced in the interview data, pupil attainment targets formed one of the central expectations placed on the teachers by work contexts.

**Personality and temperament**

Teachers in this sample exhibited diverse personalities and temperament. Furnham (2005:161) defines personality as individual characteristics that “endure over time and that account for consistent patterns of responses to everyday situations” particularly focusing on individual behaviours, reasons behind those behaviours and how those behaviours manifest. The dominant personality model, the big five factor theory, proffers five dimensions constituting personality, namely extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and intellect or openness (McKenna, 2012).

The most common extraversion attribute teachers in the present study exhibited was sociability, especially towards colleagues with whom they had positive relationships. This played a role in the teachers’ coping, which will be examined in greater detail later. As stated earlier, most teachers reported that they generally got along with some of their colleagues to whom they sometimes turned for support regarding aspects of their job they could not deal with. The frequency of use of the direct-action coping strategy *Seek help from others in aspects of the problem I can’t deal with* (*M*=3.68, *SD*=1.13) was high. The teachers also considered the effectiveness of this coping strategy high (*M*=3.59, *SD*=1.08). Thus it makes sense that stress emanating from *lack of social*
support from colleagues ($M=1.68$, $SD=1.08$) was low. This also was the least stressful variable. Existing body of research (e.g. Straud et al, 2015 and Amirkhan et al, 1995) indicates extraversion is associated with help-seeking as a choice of direct-action coping strategy.

However, these findings cannot be extrapolated to all teachers for two main reasons. First, there is uncertainty rooted in how selective teachers seemed to be in who they sought help from. It has been noted earlier that teachers tended to seek help from those with whom they enjoyed positive interpersonal relationships. Rumbi professed that she had “to be careful what I say to certain people” as she felt that there was insufficient trust and support from her department, a view shared by Josephine who remarked, “(...) most of the teachers feel that there is no support in the job (...)”. These examples imply extraversion was a factor in coping and that resilience also depends on the quality of interpersonal relationships and accessibility of support from colleagues within the school microsystem. In School 1, noted earlier, Gabrielle reported that newly-qualified teachers in one department sought help from colleagues in another department due to their head of department being unavailable to support them. This, perhaps, provides a further possible reason why individuals were selective when in who they sought help from and could experience stress if that help could not be found regardless of their extraversion. This interplay between extraversion and support is consistent with a study by Bowling et al (2005) which found a positive correlation between extraversion and giving and receiving support.

Another hint from the results indicating a possible link between extraversion and support were the variations in what some teachers sought support for. Interviews suggested teachers were more guarded when it came to seeking support to cope with stress compared to how open they were in seeking support with other aspects of their job. According to Josephine, her colleagues tended to show low extraversion when it came to disclosing their experience of work stress for fear of “being labelled as somebody bad” as experiencing stress could be
“misunderstood as a weakness”. Results from a study by Swickert et al (2002) indicated that perceived availability of support positively correlated with extraversion, thus offering a possible explanation why teachers who felt there was little support for coping with work-related stress showed low extraversion.

Teachers’ conscientiousness was shown mainly through being organised and prioritising as they tried to cope with work demands. Rumbi, for instance, stated, “To cope, I try to be organised; sometimes writing a list of things; trying to prioritise what needs doing.” The data showed that this sample’s teachers’ frequency in using the following direct-action coping strategies was high: Pause and think objectively about the situation ($M=3.62, SD=1.05$) and Set priorities and consider a range of plans in dealing with the problem ($M=3.53, SD=1.15$). They considered both coping strategies highly effective ($M=3.55, SD=1.07$) and ($M=3.60, SD=1.12$) respectively. These findings indicate preference and effectiveness of direct-action coping among the teachers. In relation to this, previous studies (e.g. Campbell-Sills et al, 2006) have found task-oriented coping to be positively related to resilience.

The frequency of use of the other two conscientiousness-related direct-action coping strategies was middling: Don’t let the problem go until I have satisfactorily dealt with it ($M=3.25, SD=1.12$); Deal with the source of the problem so that it does not happen again ($M=3.12, SD=1.19$). Effectiveness scores on these coping strategies were also middling ($M=3.17, SD=1.20$) and ($M=3.20, SD=1.19$) respectively. These two sets of teacher conscientiousness data imply that frequency and effectiveness of thoroughness, one of the elements of conscientiousness, in coping with problems was not as high as being organised among the participants. Possibly, this was due to workload/time constraints. For instance, Zoe reported that she did not always manage to “do the job as well as I always wanted to it done” as a consequence of workload/time constraints. As highlighted earlier, quantitative data confirmed workload/time constraints caused teachers the most stress. Therefore, the identification of workload/time constraints...
time constraints as a possible explanation for why thoroughness seemed to be middling among these teachers makes sense. Taking into consideration high and middling scores on being organised and thoroughness respectively, it can be inferred that these mixed findings suggest that conscientiousness was a middling personality dimension among teachers in this sample. However, the slight difference in the means between the two pairs of the above conscientiousness-linked direct-action coping strategies perhaps hint on caution with which these findings need to be treated.

Emotional stability, defined in the literature (e.g. McKenna, 2012) as the capacity to remain calm even under stressful circumstances, is a personality dimension on which some of these teachers seemed low or middling. Some of the words suggesting low emotional stability used by the teachers to describe their reaction to pressure at certain points of their job were “upset” (e.g. Grace), “on the edge and anxiety” (e.g. Zoe), “tense” (e.g. David), “crying” (e.g. Rumbi) and “don’t care” (Enoch). Additionally, some teachers had taken days off with stress while others had been on treatment for anxiety and other stress-related illnesses. Teachers’ scores on frequency ($M=3.29$, $SD=1.23$) and effectiveness ($M=3.20$, $SD=1.16$) of the coping strategy keep my feelings under control were middling. While these results are inconclusive with regard to level, they seem to indicate that emotional stability among these teachers was not high. In the past, emotional stability has been found to negatively relate to emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation while it positively relates to a sense of personal accomplishment (Ghorpade et al, 2007). Due to the inconclusiveness of the findings on teachers’ emotional stability, it is difficult to draw conclusions on their emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and sense of accomplishment.

Temperament, which is also linked to personality, is described by Rothbart (2012) as reactivity and self-regulation behaviours in response to challenges from others or the environment. As expected, this sample showed a range of temperaments. Examples of common teachers’
temperamental reactions to their work environment and colleagues were: being annoyed; withdrawal from work activities; crying; snapping; abrupt withdrawal from the workplace and apathetic feeling towards aspects of their work. Negative temperamental reactions like these are considered both contributory factors to (Strelau, 1995) and consequences of (Compas et al, 2004) individual experiences of stress.

**Commitment to the job**

Findings from this study suggested that the type of commitment which was attributed to teachers’ experience of stress was normative as the teachers seemingly tried to be consistent in their performance of their roles, in part, because they did not want to let their colleagues down. Thus, as much as it is considered a positive person characteristic (an internal protective factor), commitment can be a stress risk – especially when it is normative.

Teachers in this sample showed commitment to the job and to their school in varying ways. Conceivably, one of the most striking viewpoints on commitment to the job was expressed by Zoe who commented, “I want to think that some teachers experience more stress than others because of their commitment to professionalism (...”). Consistent with this view, Rumbi remarked, “When stressed I still try my best in lessons to do what I can. I (...) just continue as normal and do my best even if I don’t feel really well.” Although unsurprising, this association of stress with commitment was slightly different from expectations at the beginning of this research when commitment was assumed to be a protective factor. This can however be explained by differentiating between types of commitment, where normative commitment (expressed by Rumbi) may lead to stress because it is steeped in obligation to rather than love for the job. As noted in section 7.8, affective rather than normative commitment is a protective factor. Jepson and Forrest (2006) – in their study investigating the role of striving for achievement and occupational commitment on teacher stress – found a strong negative relationship between occupational commitment
and teachers’ experience of stress hence their inference that occupational commitment had a moderating effect on teachers’ experience of stress.

To explain this unexpected result, perhaps it would be helpful to go back to the theoretical conceptualisation of job commitment. Results of this study did not give as much an indication of the extent of the teachers’ identification with their school as they did about the teachers’ involvement within their school microsystems. Central to this involvement was how they performed their roles and their attitudes towards those roles. For example, as cited previously, Rumbi suggested that, even if she felt unwell, she still tried to make her best contribution to her work. David gave an insight into possible reasons why teachers make certain sacrifices in fulfilment of expectations of their roles, “Staff of my generation won’t just take a day off. It has to be something serious. They feel they’re letting their colleagues down.” This is consistent with Bronfenbrenner’s (1979:86) proposition on roles as contexts of human development where he proffers that “the concept of role involves an integration of the elements of activity and relation in terms of societal expectations”. Thus, it makes sense that, as David suggests, a partial explanation of teachers’ continued performance of their roles even in adversity were the expectations attached to their professional roles and their membership to their school microsystem. Gabrielle hinted on how much pressure role expectations could place on colleagues when she expressed frustration at colleague absence and its impact on others’ cover workload. To her, it appeared colleague sickness absence was suggestive of lack of commitment. Therefore, in consideration of commitment as involvement in one’s role, these results seem to suggest that teachers considered consistent performance of their roles important to fulfilling work context expectations. With the associated pressure role expectations placed on teachers, it is plausible that commitment would be considered an explanation for why some teachers were stressed more than others – a result which, as explained earlier, is slightly different from Jepson and Forrest’s (2006) postulation that commitment is a personal quality with a moderating effect on teachers’ experience of stress. It is
also noteworthy that, in spite of the acknowledged risks within their job, none of the teachers indicated an intention to quit. While not claiming causality, evidence suggesting teachers’ persistence within teaching was linked to their affective commitment to the job has been highlighted – which is consistent with the literature (e.g. Bullough and Hall-Kenyon, 2012).

8.2.2 Resource characteristics

Interview data suggested teachers’ main resource characteristic – that is individual liabilities and assets in effective engagement in proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006:812) – was their professional experience. To this end, teachers suggested that professional experience, especially in teaching, was one of the main determinants of their effectiveness in handling key proximal processes of their job. However, integrative analysis of quantitative and qualitative data signalled the influence of experience in effective functioning of proximal processes involving the teachers might not have been that straightforward as the kind of experience needed to be relevant to the specific proximal processes to be have a significant impact. Additionally, there had to be other factors acting in concert (e.g. support from colleagues, senior management and parents).

Professional backgrounds of the teachers were diverse; 10% (N=15) were career switchers prior to becoming teachers and for the remaining 90% (N=135) teaching was their first career choice. When the subject of prior career was followed up in the interviews, some interviewees stated that they did not feel their previous experience in a different field prepared them for the demands of teaching. For instance, Rumbi – who had prior retail experience – noted that due to differences in job design, her retail experience did not prepare her for teaching. Thus, like other teachers in the sample, Rumbi still found her early teaching years particularly demanding and stressful due to lack of previous teaching experience.
As noted earlier, the teachers – regardless of prior career status – reported experiencing significant stress early into their teaching careers because they were still adapting to their roles and work settings. The amount of stress individuals experienced and how effectively and quickly they recovered early on in their teaching careers was profoundly influenced by the level of support they got both professionally and socially. There were teachers who were in schools with supportive structures to help enhance newly-qualified teachers’ positive adaptive outcomes in new work contexts and there were those who did not have much support. To this end, there were two archetypical cases of teachers with contrasting initiations into the profession. Gabrielle had a particularly difficult and stressful newly-qualified-teacher (NQT) experience which was compounded by lack of supportive relationships within her workplace. This was severe enough to disrupt Gabrielle’s NQT year as she eventually had to take time off work on account of the severity of stress. Lacking support and appreciation at work, she had to draw on the emotional support she received from her parents and union to help her recover and, eventually, start her NQT year afresh. This is an example that, in cases of severe stress and the absence of accessible direct-action options, palliative coping strategies can have a therapeutic influence. In contrast to Gabrielle’s turbulent early career experience, Rumbi had a relatively positive NQT experience. Teaching in a supportive environment, Rumbi found having significantly supportive and empathetic colleagues an important part of her protective factors. Being made head of ICT department in her first year – leading to an increased workload – would, she noted, have been overwhelming had she not had colleagues willing to support her and shoulder some of her responsibilities such as marking. These two contrasting examples illustrate that, although stressful experiences emanating from lack of familiarity with the job were common among newly-qualified teachers, supportive colleagues likely made a difference in these teachers’ adaptive outcomes. This outcome corroborates findings from previous studies (e.g. Hoy and Spero, 2005) which indicated a positive relationship between level of support and self-efficacy among early-career teachers’. This, of course, should not
discount the complex role of individual differences in the effective functioning of proximal processes.

As explained in chapter 6, the initial hypothesis was that teaching experience influenced the amount of stress the teachers experienced. Results from the relevant regression analysis showed that this was not true and, therefore, this hypothesis was rejected. In addition, comparison in mean teaching experience between resilient ($M=15.87$, $SD=11.81$) and at-risk teachers ($M=13.59$, $SD=11.06$) revealed that the difference between the two groups was only 2.3 years. Interviews with the teachers gave possible reasons why teaching experience was unlikely to be a significant predictor of stress level, let alone have a moderating effect on stress. Perhaps a conspicuous finding in this respect was the divergence between teacher perspectives on the relationship between teaching experience and stress level. Some felt teaching experience was influential in the decrease of their stress levels while others reported experiencing more stress as their number of years in the profession increased. Reasons for an increase in stress levels as experience increased generally had to do with added responsibilities and the cumulative effect of constant change. Concerning the impact of added responsibilities Rumbi said, “(...) I also feel sometimes that maybe I’ve got a bit too much responsibility on my shoulders (...). Sometimes I feel like it’s a lot of pressure to be under.” On change, David (School 1 union representative) remarked,

“(...) over the last few years I’ve just let everything slide because of the way this job has changed. Many changes have taken place (...); a lot of them I have agreed with on the baseline (...) because the job didn’t change. But what I’ve found out (...) some of the reasons it’s caused so much stress in the profession is that this government don’t have an idea of what it means to be in the classroom.”

Additionally, Josephine reminisced,

“(...) my stress has been gradually increasing over the years (...). I started getting stressed about seven or eight years ago.
"Up until then (...), I was left to get on with the job that I so loved. But then the school management began to intervene a lot more (...)"

In contrast, interviewees such as Ivy and Zoe felt that their stress levels had decreased as their teaching experience increased. They attributed this decrease in stress levels to developing familiarity with job activities and processes within their school which, they suggested, increased their self-efficacy in key aspects of their job and helped decrease their stress levels.

It is important, however, to note that teachers who reported an increase in their stress levels as their experience increased did not infer direct causal relationship between stress level and experience. Rather, they suggested the increase in their stress levels as they became more experienced was more to do with the changes in aspects of their job they had to cope with over the years. It can be inferred that more teaching experience exposed these teachers to more changes which, in turn, was a source of their stress. For example, David felt the constancy and rapidity of change did not give them sufficient time to familiarise with the changes introduced by the government. Josephine, on the other hand, stated that the main aspect of change which caused her stress was the decrease in her autonomy, a feeling that her control over her own job was progressively weakening due to increased senior management interference.

While there seems to be consensus in most of the literature on the existence of a link between experience and stress level, there is considerable divergence on the nature of impact experience has on stress – which appears to resonate with differences in the nature of the relationship between experience and stress levels of teachers referred to above. There are studies which indicate that professional experience negatively relates with stress level. For example, Balakrishnamurthy and Shankar (2009) in their study exploring the effect demographic variables on stress level of police officers found that individuals with more experience reported lower stress levels than those with less experience.
In contrast, other studies seem to suggest that stress level increases as experience increases. A case in point is a study by Mykletun (2012) who found that seniority had a positive relationship with perceived stress – particularly change-related stress – despite senior teacher in this particular sample mostly working part-time. Furthermore, the moderating effect of seniority on overall stress in this study was minimal. Meanwhile, Sharma (2007) reported that an increase in experience and seniority among corresponded with and an increase in stress levels among army officers.

8.2.3 Demand characteristics

Finally, a major demand characteristic of teachers in this sample – encouraging or discouraging reactions from their work environment (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006) – was their professional role. As highlighted in the case studies, demands attached teachers’ professional role predominantly emanated from others’ – specifically pupils’, parents’, colleagues’ and senior management’s – notions of them as teacher, adult figure, mentor, colleague and subordinate.

The teacher’s professional role, as a socially constructed concept, brings with it expectations of what being a teacher entails (Roberts, 2000 and Helsby, 1995). According to Wilkins et al (2011), the rise in the accountability culture in education has led to increased performativity among teachers.

8.3 RQ 2: Which stress risks do these teachers report and how do these risks affect them?

In the literature review stress risks have been characterised as resulting from demands placed on individuals by their environment and from within the individual. These demands or expectations “facilitate or suppress the functioning of proximal processes” (Hirsto, 2001:32) which
Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) defined as the reciprocal interaction between the individual and their microsystem.

On risks which tend to lead to experiences of much stress, there was consistency between results from both the survey and the interview data. A range of stress-inducing factors were identified in both quantitative and qualitative data. From the survey data, on a scale of 1 (little stress) to 5 (high stress), with a mean of 4 (rounded to the nearest whole number), the following variables emerged as sources of most stress the teachers experienced: overall workload, paperwork, time spent on schoolwork at home, pupil behavioural problems and lack of time to solve problems with individual pupils. In addition to this list of variables from the questionnaire, the interviews also revealed that intra/inter departmental climate and the constancy of change in policy and practice was a major source of stress for the teachers. These sources of stress can be broadly re-categorised into: workload, change, pupil behaviour and intra/inter departmental climate. These broad categories are each treated in turn in the next sections structured in accordance with factor analysis and interview themes.

8.3.1 Person risks

It has been noted in section 8.3 that person characteristics are one of the major factors influencing the extent to which and how proximal processes influence development (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Consistent with the bidirectional nature of proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006) between the individual and their environment, person characteristics are influential – just like the environment is – in exposing the individual to risk. Regarding this, the present study found that the sample's major person risk factors were force and demand.
Force

Active individual dispositions can also interfere with, retard or prevent proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). In such circumstances they can be considered person (or internal) risk factors. This study found that major force characteristics of teachers in this sample were:

- Low self-efficacy in managing behaviour of pupils who did not accept discipline at home
- Personal attitudes towards one’s job
- Personality and temperament
- Commitment to the job

The emergence of low self-efficacy in managing the behaviour of pupils who did not accept discipline at home (section 7.8.2) as force characteristic risk made sense especially considering the perceived influence of pupils’ home contexts on pupils’ behaviour in school. Results also showed teachers recording the lowest mean self-efficacy in the variable: *If students are not disciplined at home, they are still likely to accept discipline in school* – which was also the variable with the lowest proportion of teachers scoring 4 and 5 on it (section 4.3, table 4.10). This points to the centrality of pupils’ home environment to their behaviour in school (Stewart, 2003). Additionally, the finding indicating that teaching experience had a significant positive correlation with the factor: *Teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline* (section 6.2, table 6.1) provided further insights into the nature and extent of risk associated with this force characteristic. Consistent with this, a study by (Gibbs and Powell, 2011) found that teachers’ pupil behaviour management and their self-efficacy in it improved as their teaching experience increased. This corroborated most teachers’ (e.g. David) association of ability to manage pupil behaviour with teaching experience. This result is consistent with findings from previous studies (Barker et al, 2009) indicating a link between low self-efficacy.
Demand

This sample’s key demand characteristic was their professional role as teachers which invited certain demands exposing them to risk. As noted in section 8.3.3 above, these demands were linked to pupils’, parents’, colleagues’ and senior management’s expectations of them as teacher, adult figure, mentor, colleague and subordinate.

Expectations from pupils, mostly demands for support tend to link to a strain on teachers’ time principally due to other competing demands (Dunne et al, 2007). Thus, it made sense that lack of time to solve problems with individual pupils was fifth most stressful out of fifty variables (section 4.4, table 4.11). Corroborating this, interviews results (e.g. David) showed that some of these problems had to do with pupil misbehaviour in class impinging on the teacher’s time to support other pupils. Closely linked to this were parents’ expectations on what constituted acceptable behaviour. It was particularly stressful for teachers in instances where these expectations were at variance with teachers’ own perspectives on the subject.

Colleague’s demands were mostly concerned with expectations for participation in the activities of their school as team members. Pressure to attend so as not to others down led to presenteeism that is attending work while ill due to expectations pressure (Baker-McClearn et al, 2010). There were also expectations that when others were absent those colleagues who were present would participate in cover, another aspect of the job teachers found contributing to their workload/ time pressures.

Finally, expectations from senior management were mostly to do with targets (particularly pupil academic results) and change implementation, both of which most interviewees attributed to their experience of stress. Thus teachers worked harder longer (e.g. holiday times) in response to these expectations. Previous studies (e.g. Jones, 2014) have found senior management expectations to increase pressure and the likelihood
of experiencing stress among workers. Furthermore, consequent to these expectations, teachers felt senior management was more concerned about targets than they were about their wellbeing.

8.3.2 Proximal processes risks

Elements of proximal processes were also found to be risk factors among teachers in this study. These were associated with teachers’ interactions with pupils, parents, colleagues and senior management.

Interactions with pupils

The main stress risk emanating from teachers’ interactions with pupils was pupil behaviour. Results showed that poor pupil behaviour was a consistent key stressor in both the interview and questionnaire datasets of the present study. An examination of descriptive statistics of variables constituting the pupil behaviour factor revealed that, on a 1 (little stress) to 5 (high stress) scale, pupil behavioural problems ($M=3.53$, $SD=1.27$) and verbal abuse from pupils ($M=3.06$, $SD=1.57$) were the most stressful within this factor on a 0 (little stress) to 5 (high stress) scale. Notably, out of 50 variables in the relevant questionnaire section, pupil behavioural problems and verbal abuse from pupils ranked fourth and ninth respectively. In confirmation, participants in the interviews concurred that negative pupil behaviour induced profound amounts of stress on them. This is confirmatory of a study by Johnson (2008) which found that poor pupil behaviour had a negative effect on teacher-pupil relationships and increased the chances of teachers experiencing work stress. In the present study, the range of pupil behaviours leading to teacher stress varied from unrelenting “low-level disruption” (Rumbi) in class to serious misdemeanours such as aggression between pupils and aggression directed towards staff members. This was the case in secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage particularly because, according to the teachers, their schools served disadvantaged communities, a key part of their exosystem, which traditionally tend to be
associated with severe social problems such as antisocial behaviour and crime (Martin et al, 2012). Thus, to these teachers, it was unsurprising that some of the negative behaviours in the immediate community would manifest in their pupils in school.

Most misbehaviour which concerned teachers in this sample occurred in the classroom. Considering that teachers tend to spend most of their in-school time in the classroom, it makes sense that what went on in these classrooms would have a profound effect on the teachers, including their stress levels. Factor analysis results are helpful in extending our understanding of specific variables contributing to the pupil behaviour stress factor. Factor analysis (chapter 5) indicated that the following variables – arranged in order of the strength of their loading – loaded strongly on the pupil behaviour factor:

- Pupil behavioural problems
- Relationships with pupils
- Verbal abuse from pupils
- Physical aggression from pupils
- Aggression between pupils
- Truancy and absenteeism of pupils

Complementing the factor analysis result, interview data (chapter 7) showed that the above risks impacted on the teachers’ experience of stress in a significant way. To this end, a study carried out in schools in the UK by Borg (2006) revealed that pupil indiscipline was one of the three main teacher stress sources. In the present investigation, the teachers’ disenchantment with pupil misbehaviour was mainly underpinned by the disruption it caused to their performance of their core duties, in particular lesson delivery. There was frustration among the teachers – for example, with the amount of time tackling misbehaviour took – most of the time during lessons. It was reported that lessons often had to be intermittently stopped while teachers tried to defuse occurrences of misbehaviour in their classes. The frequent nature of disruptive behaviour ended up having a negative impact on the teachers’ ability to meet targets for their lessons. Additionally, some teachers found
the experience of managing disruptive behaviour particularly stressful when parents were unsupportive.

Another interesting aspect of the pupil misbehaviour result was the teachers’ view that, although infrequent, serious negative behaviour not only affected them professionally, but – at times – also considerably affected them personally. On this note, Gilbert (2010) reports that aggressive behaviour of pupils on teachers in UK schools is increasing and negatively impacting on teachers. Some teachers felt undermined and, at times, threatened by aggressive behaviour directed at them. In addition, some teachers felt that some unsupportive parental involvement not only affected them professionally, but also personally. Teachers’ attitudes to low-level disruption were, however, somewhat different. While they still experienced stress resulting from this kind of misbehaviour due to its incessancy, they felt they still could manage it at a professional rather than personal level. Reflecting on an instance when a perceived unsupportive parent intervened in their child’s misbehaviour in class, Gabrielle said,

“(…) that frustrates me because children have this thing of twisting things. Because if they (pupils) show disrespect to the teacher, then whatever decision the teacher makes (…) then the parents should stand by that. It affected my relationship with the kid, to be honest (…). Because I felt like I’m self-analysing. Have I done that fairly? What have I done wrong?”

Besides impacting on the teachers’ ability to meet their targets, pupil behaviour problems also affected other pupils’ learning. Whenever a teacher had to stop their lesson to attend to the disruptive pupil, other pupils’ learning was also disrupted. Expressing his frustration at this, David remarked,

“(…) and when you try to work with one group, this one is messing about with his mates. So you leave these kids who are working on their own, which is frustrating. So you don’t spend
enough time with those who need it so that you attend the idiots."

This is indicative that some teachers were worried that their effectiveness in classroom management was being compromised as other pupils were also negatively affected. In education, effective student learning is a key teacher performance indicator (Akhlaq et al., 2010) and, therefore, it is to be expected that a disruption to this learning would negatively affect teachers’ ability to meet their classroom goals and, thus, cause them considerable stress. Earlier studies (e.g. Geving, 2007:638) into the link between student misbehaviour and teacher stress have concluded that lack of motivation in pupils often leads to teacher stress because “teachers tend to base their feelings of self-efficacy on how much their students learn and how academically successful their students are”

Considering the importance of self-efficacy in teachers’ emotional wellbeing and the impact it has in their ability to perform their duties, it was an expected result that this sample of teachers found pupil misbehaviour one of the major sources of their stress. It is also worth noting that results from relevant regression analysis aimed at finding out which variables had a major influence on teachers’ self-efficacy in pupil discipline showed that experience significantly and positively influenced teachers’ self-efficacy in their influence on pupil discipline. For every unit increase in experience, teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline increased by .387 (in a statistically significant model, $F(3, 125) = 10.08, p < .001$). This was also in keeping with findings from interview data. For example, Grace, observed, “(…) teachers who have been teaching for 20 years cope better with stress. (…) than someone who has been teaching for 5 years (…) perhaps wouldn’t cope quite as well.”

This is consistent with findings from previous research (e.g. Ozdemir, 2007 and Brown, 2004) which found experience to have a positive impact on teachers’ ability to manage pupil behaviour.
Interactions with parents

Almost all teacher-parent interactions were connected to teacher interactions with pupils. Thus the perceived parent’s role, from the teacher’s perspective, was supportive. The *parental support* factor consisted of the following variables: *lack of parental support; low expectations from parents* and *attending parents’ evenings*. An examination of the relevant descriptive statistics to establish stressfulness on a 1 (little stress) to 5 (high stress) scale showed these results: *lack of parental support* ($M=2.69$, $SD=1.26$); *low expectations from parents* ($M=2.62$, $SD=1.26$) and *attending parents’ evenings* ($M=2.07$, $SD=1.17$).

Descriptive statistics cited above indicate that, generally, parental support issues were a source of just below moderate stress with *attending parents’ evenings* among the ten least stress-inducing variables in the 50-variable list. It is not immediately clear why parental support was not a source of high stress. There might be at least two possible inferences from this finding. One is that parents in these schools were mostly supportive – a suggestion made by some interviewees (e.g. Rumbi). An alternative possible explanation is that lack of parental involvement in the schools might mean less pressure on the teachers. This perspective is shared by findings from certain studies (e.g. Mathison and Freeman, 2006) suggesting teachers consider parental involvement a stressor due to added expectations. Inversely, lack of parental involvement could mean teachers are unable to get support with pupils when they need it in which case this could contribute to the stress they experience. Thus, insofar as the present enquiry is concerned, why parental support was not a source of high stress remains inconclusive.

Interactions with colleagues

Risk aspects of interactions with colleagues were principally elements perceived to be exacerbating workload such as requests to carry out additional tasks. This risk was relatively infrequent among the teachers
as most of them reported enjoying supportive interactions with colleagues.

**Interactions with senior management**

Owing to perceived senior managements’ predominant focus on targets and results, the dominant view among the teachers was that their interactions with senior management were “top-down” and a source of much pressure. In addition, teachers felt that senior management was unsupportive as they were perceived to be more concerned about targets and results and, as such, “insistent in having teachers standing in front of their classroom than they are necessarily interested in the wellbeing of the members of staff” (Zoe). Osborn et al’s (2000) study on relationships between teachers and senior management found the top-down management approach to worsen the quality of relationship between teachers and senior management. Consistent with this, most teachers in the present research characterised their senior management as detached and lacking empathy.

**8.3.3 Context risks**

The environmental context (immediate and remote), alongside person characteristics, is an important determinant of how powerful proximal processes are on an individual’s developmental outcome (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006).

**Microsystem**

Disadvantaged contexts have been found to limit the influence of proximal processes to developmental dysfunction (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Thus, it was expected that these schools as teachers’ principal work contexts of development would have within them factors negatively affecting the positive functioning of proximal processes namely,
workload/ time constraints; cover; intra/ inter departmental climate; organisational processes and pupil behaviour problems.

**Workload/ Time constraints**

To determine how much stress job demands exerted on the teachers, descriptive statistics of the eight variables making up the *workload/ time constraints* factor were examined. As identified above, the following variables were the source of most stress: *overall workload* ($M=3.84$, $SD=1.23$); *paperwork* ($M=3.65$, $SD=1.32$), *time spent on schoolwork at home* ($M=3.55$, $SD=1.23$); *lack of time to solve problems with individual pupils* ($M=3.51$, $SD=1.24$) on a scale of 1 (little stress) to 5 (high stress). Out of fifty variables, these variables respectively ranked first to fifth most stressful for the teachers.

Like *lack of time to solve problems*, *overall workload stress* is a secondary experience resulting from the composite effect of workload elements of the job which increase or decrease in response to increases or decreases in constituent elements. It is, therefore, a global indicator of the levels of stress from individual workload aspects of the job. In the correlation analysis of the variables, *overall workload* correlated positively with stress level ($r=.23$).

The emergence of overall workload as one of the high stress-inducing work environmental risks is consistent with findings from previous studies. For example, a questionnaire survey involving 356 teachers with mean teaching experience of 19 years by van Dick and Wagner (2001) on stress and strain in teaching identified workload as one of the main job contextual factors which led to many physical stress symptoms like heart troubles, headaches, stomach aches and fatigue.

Teachers who participated in the interviews also highlighted the centrality of workload to the extent of job stress they went through. While, as pointed out by Ivy cited below, what stresses people differs from individual
to individual – an observation also made by stress researchers like Kyriacou (2001) – workload was still identified as one of the key determinants of extent to which teachers are stressed within the context of their job.

*Stress factors are different for all staff so it is difficult to generalise but I would suggest that pupil behaviour, cover and marking workload cause huge stress to some people.* – Ivy, School 1 teacher responsible for staff wellbeing.

As highlighted earlier, results from the survey indicated that *overall workload* was the principal source of stress which impacted on other aspects of the teachers’ job. This is augmented by the fact that an examination of relevant quantitative correlation output indicated a positive correlation between *stress level* and *workload*. In factor analyses, workload also emerged as a stress factor and loaded most highly on the following questionnaire variables:

- Overall workload
- Time spent on schoolwork at home
- Large class sizes
- Lack of time to solve problems with individual pupils
- Paperwork
- Working through breaks and lunch times
- The inclusion of pupils with special educational needs
- Lack of non-contact time

In addition, interviewees attributed their experience of stress to constant change in the teaching job and pupil behaviour. This confirmed results from similar research conducted elsewhere such as Howard and Johnson (2004) which revealed that, among the primary teacher burnout and stress risks in ‘hard-to-staff’ schools (Australian urban schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage equivalent) were persistent change in the teaching job, student misbehaviour and time and workload pressures.

From a bioecological framework perspective, workload issues cited by the teachers were linked to the microsystem, the exosystem and the
macrosystem. The primary microsystemic and macrosystemic concerns raised by the teachers were paperwork, assessment responsibilities (especially marking pupils’ work) and targets. The key drivers of these sources of stress were, macrosystemically, the national educational policies and demands and, microsystemically, the processes through which the policies and demands were enacted upon which local school-level demands on the teachers were added.

It emerged from the interviews that the same national educational agendas were interpreted differently in different schools and that respective managements played a key part in how the individuals would perform their roles and the extent to which this would stress them. To an extent, workload was also influenced by how schools implemented certain aspects of the national policies in their processes and expectations. This might have been a contributory factor in the differences in adaptive outcomes in teachers who changed schools at a certain stage in their careers, particularly on account of stress. For example, Gabrielle related how transferring from her previous school to the current one helped moderate her experience of work-related stress.

However, caution needs to be exercised in interpreting this outcome. There is need to bear in mind the complex nature of the transactions occurring between and within different systems of a teacher’s bioecological context and how these interactions, in turn, impact on the teacher’s adaptive outcomes. While evidence exists that school environments – as key components of the individual’s microsystem – play a central role in teachers’ experiences of stress, it is also conceivable that, in isolation, these environments are unlikely to lead to negative adaptive outcomes. Considering the conceptualisation of stress as a process as opposed to a discrete event, (e.g. Lazarus, 1999), the negative adaptive outcome leading to stress is also a function and a result of the bidirectional interaction between individual factors and other bioecological contexts. These complex interactions then lead to an appraisal by the individual whether the job demands can be tackled effectively using
coping assets or protective factors at their disposal. As explained in the literature review, these protective factors broadly exist in two types – internal and external – both of which are important to positive adaptive outcomes or resilience. Thus, person-environment fit (Lazarus, 1999) could be key to teacher resilient outcomes. In light of this, it might be important to ensure that teachers are adequately equipped to cope with the workload demands of their job to influence resilient outcomes.

It is, however, vital to also note variations between the survey and interview datasets on some workload-related stress sources. A case in point is where some interviewees identified relationships with colleagues, lack of support from colleagues (especially in their respective departments) and unsupportive parents as chief sources of workload stress in their roles. In the survey, low expectations from parents (which has a link to workload – especially to do with the extent of support pupils with such parents are likely to need) was linked to relatively moderate stress levels among the teachers ($M=2.62$, $SD=1.26$). This contrast in outcomes could be down to the differences between question types in the questionnaire and in the interview. While the parental expectation question in the questionnaire was closed and, therefore, limited to that one aspect of parental influence on teacher workload, the semi-structured questions in the interviews presented the teachers with scope to link parental involvement to several aspects of their job including workload.

*Lack of time to solve problems with individual pupils* was another variable with a high average stressfulness score ($M=3.51$, $SD=1.24$) on a 1 (little stress) to 5 (high stress). Confirming this, interview data and the literature (e.g. Smethem, 2007) suggests this element is a major influence on other stressors constituting the workload stress factor. Additionally, failure to solve problems with individual pupils is likely to impact on important aspects like pupil motivation, pupil confidence and self-esteem, teacher/pupil relationships and pupil behaviour (Salkovsky et al, 2015; Kokkinos, 2007).
Cover

Cover was another stress risk present in these schools. In the factor analysis, cover was comprised of the following variables: covering for absent colleagues; absenteeism of colleagues and the unpredictability of cover periods. An inspection of the descriptive statistics of the variables’ stressfulness on a scale of 1 (little stress) to 5 (high stress) showed these results: covering for absent colleagues ($M=2.65$, $SD=1.52$); absenteeism of colleagues ($M=2.92$, $SD=1.46$) and the unpredictability of cover periods ($M=2.73$, $SD=1.56$). As these results indicate, mean stress level scores on all variables were middling. In the interviews, most teachers reported cover to be frustrating due to its impact on their PPA time and overall workload. This was highlighted in Enoch’s remark below:

“(…) you plan to do something when you are not teaching and then you have to do cover for somebody who is ill because they are not in. So what you plan to do has to go because you have to go to another classroom. Going to another classroom for another teacher is quite stressful itself.”

Many teachers suggested that a cap on the amount of cover hours would be helpful as it would keep their involvement in it manageable. Related to this, previous studies (e.g. NASUWT, 2005) found that teachers considered cover a contributing factor to their workload-related stress. In the NASUWT (2005) investigation, 41% of the teachers felt there was need for further steps to be taken to minimise teacher involvement in cover as it negatively impacted on their workload and stress level.

Intra/ inter departmental climate

The variables constituting the intra/ inter departmental climate factor were intra-staff conflict; the inability of my department to plan strategically; lack of social support from colleagues; conflict between my department and others and lack of support for my subject teaching. Descriptive statistics of the variables were analysed for their stressfulness on a scale of 1 (little stress) to 5 (high stress) and the following results were observed: intra-
staff conflict \((M=1.89, SD=1.17)\); the inability of my department to plan strategically \((M=2.00, SD=1.32)\); lack of social support from colleagues \((M=1.68, SD=1.08)\); conflict between my department and others \((M=1.89, SD=1.24)\) and lack of support for my subject teaching \((M=2.40, SD=1.35)\). Out of the 50 variables making up the relevant questionnaire section, constituent variables of this factor had relatively low means among them. Overall lowest in stressfulness was attributed to lack of social support from colleagues. On their own, these results imply that the teachers attributed very little stress to intra/inter departmental climate. However, because intra/inter departmental climate is broad and encompasses almost everything done within a school, these descriptive statistics need to be put in perspective.

It is also important to note that, in relation to teachers’ experience of stress, intra/inter departmental climate has so far been briefly alluded to in the previous subsections. This is primarily because, on top of being a distinct influence on teacher stress, it is also linked to other principal stress risks. Thus the purpose of this subsection is to further expand on that earlier brief discussion by providing a detailed analysis of the link between intra/inter departmental climate and teacher stress.

Previous research (e.g. Wong, 2007) considers intra/inter departmental climate in education settings to be an important factor insofar as staff members’ experience of stress is concerned. In their empirical work for the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), Purcell et al (2004) characterise intra/inter departmental climate as a shared way of conducting the primary business of an organisation around acceptable behaviours, relationships, practices, attitudes and values both internally and externally. The schools in the present investigation had diverse intra/inter departmental climates. These largely depended on the teacher-teacher, teacher-pupil, management-teacher and school-parent dynamics. It is important to point out, though, that what affected these teachers most was the working climate within the schools. This is logical because teachers generally spend most of their working time in their schools and
they will likely experience significant stress in a school where the culture is unsupportive. Biglan (2008) notes that a positive school culture encompasses supportive relationships within the school, collegiality and a shared ethos.

Factor analysis results (chapter 5) showed the following variables loading strongly on the *intra/inter departmental climate* factor:

- Intra-staff conflict
- The inability of my department to plan strategically
- Lack of social support from colleagues
- Conflict between my department and others
- Lack of support for my subject teaching

Although these variables did not emerge as unique influences on high stress in the survey frequency table, interviewees, especially those in schools with high stress means, still considered them important determinants of their experience of job stress. In School 11, for instance, teachers avoided going to the staffroom during their breaks because they found the atmosphere generally negative and intimidating. Consequently, according to interviewees from this school, staff turnover and sickness absences were high.

In schools where teachers experienced high stress, interviewees attributed some of their stress to a lack of cohesion within their schools and between the schools and the community they served. Furthermore, departmental meetings were infrequent and, when they were held, they tended to be characterised by tension. Teachers in these schools also felt they received inadequate support from management. This, obviously, had an adverse impact on pupils’ attitudes, motivation and behaviour. In the end, as one teacher put it, the teachers felt powerless and would always begin their teaching days already ‘looking forward to three o’clock’ when their contact time ended.
Organisational processes

Organisational processes were among the stress risks faced by the teachers. Descriptive statistics of variables making up the organisational processes factor were examined to establish how much stress they caused the teachers. Of these variables, constant changes in national educational policy ($M=3.20$, $SD=1.43$) caused the teachers most stress. The overall stressfulness ranking of this variable was sixth out of 50 on a 1 (little stress) to 5 (high stress) scale.

The interviews broadly provided an explanation of the link between constant change and workload within the teaching job, ranging from changes in national government policies to, locally, resultant changes in procedures within individual schools. Change, especially that targeting the curriculum, was identified as resulting in additional workload such as the need to prepare new teaching resources and the need to attend further CPD courses related to the changes. Relevant research evidence points to change as a catalyst to significant increase in overall workload. Larsen (2010), for example, submits that most of the change being introduced in the English education system is exerting more pressure on teachers to meet targets, most of which are hard to attain particularly in schools in challenging contexts. In confirmation, studies done by Easthope and Easthope (2007) and Kelly and Berthelsen (1997) found that the rapidity and nature of change in education policy made an adverse effect on teachers’ work and, consequently, tended to lead to much teacher stress.

Other than the workload link to change and teachers’ experience of stress, competing explanations to this connection exist. For example, organisational behaviour theory holds that it is expected human behaviour to resist change for a variety of reasons and that, sometimes, this resistance could lead to stress (Kreitner et al, 2010 and Mosenkis, 2002). Goodson et al (2006), for instance, studied change-mediated behaviour among experienced teachers in an ethnographic study and found that these teachers felt that the introduction of change to their routinized work challenged their skills set and threatened the status quo. This finding is
consistent with the need for further CPD necessitated by certain changes. This means that the teachers’ sense of job mastery, hence sense of security, are constantly threatened as a result and this tends to lead to dissonance within the individuals – emotions which are linked to stress (Tewksbury and Higgins, 2006). In agreement, Kreitner et al. (2010) propound that resistance to change is fundamentally due to the requirement to not only acquire new skills and knowledge, but also to transform or change completely the processes, rituals, attitudes and beliefs the individuals will have espoused over a long time. It is a demand for an individual to abandon their comfort zone into the unknown which, among other things, is likely to breed a fear of failure (ibidem; Mosenkis, 2002). In respect of the interview data of the present study, teachers expressed their displeasure at the rate, and sometimes the timing, of the change whereby it was viewed as happening too quickly in too short a time without giving them an opportunity to be adequately adjusted to the changes. A case in point is Enoch’s observation below:

“(…) far too much change and over too short a time period. (…) it’s changes and initiatives usually coming from government level (…) to be brought in for you to finish in two to three years (…) ; so the repetitive change (…) ; it’s something I haven’t enjoyed (…) I haven’t liked.”

The consequence was that the teachers were left frustrated, at times confused, and demoralised. This, in turn, had a negative impact on their confidence and self-efficacy in their ability to perform their roles. As evidenced in chapter 7, this change-induced status quo shift tended to lead to demands for new skills set either in planning, management or delivery of the curriculum.

A further explanation for the link between change and the teachers’ experience of stress was the process of managing and implementing the change. Ineffective, or lack of, communication and lack of clarity concerning teachers’ roles during times of change left the teachers with a lack of sense of control over their job. Research evidence (e.g. Kreitner et al., 2010) indicates that ineffective management of change often yields
disgruntlement among participants and stakeholders and impedes on the achievement of both organisational and individual goals. This leaves partakers in change with a negative feeling of failure which may erode their trust in colleagues, the organisation and themselves. These negative emotions are established antecedents of stress. This probably helps corroborate evidence in interview data showing that the teachers in the sample felt stressed by both the process and outcome of change.

In view of this finding, it is important to consider that the teachers did not suggest that change was necessarily a bad thing for their workplace or their roles and their stress levels, but rather how it was managed and the regular intervals at which it was introduced were the source of their stress. However, what the evidence proposes is that, if managed well and jointly owned by staff members (Anderson, 2002), change-related stress would possibly be minimised.

**Pupil behaviour problems**

Out of fifty variables (section 4.4, table 4.11), *pupil behaviour problems* was fourth highest source of stress in these schools with 53% of the sample rating its stressfulness 4 and 5. In addition, interview results indicated suggested pupil behaviour problems negatively affected the positive functioning of proximal processes – particularly those involving teacher-pupil and teacher-parent interactions. This outcome was convergent with similar studies (e.g. Thrupp and Lupton, 2010) which concluded that schools serving disadvantaged areas were likely to be characterised by, inter alia, poor pupil behaviour. In a study by Hussain (2010), poor pupil behaviour emerged as one of the main causes of teacher stress. Furthermore, in accordance with the same author, pupil misbehaviour tends to be linked to poor teacher-pupil and teacher-parent relations – both contributory factors to teacher stress.
Mesosystem

It has been noted above that teachers belonged to more than one microsystem and their primary microsystems were work (school), home and social. Due to the focus of this research, data gathered was on work and – up to a point – home microsystems. The result showing doing schoolwork at home as one of the main ways linking teachers’ work and home microsystems suggested the presence of risk. In addition, out of 50 variables, time spent on schoolwork at home was third most stressful element of teachers’ work (section 4.4, table 4.11).

Doing schoolwork at home tends to be associated with teachers’ overall workload (Ingvarson et al, 2005) which, according to interviewees, cannot be finished during designated working hours. The following excerpt from an interview with Rumbi typifies how an extension of schoolwork into their homes impacts on teachers’ home and social lives, “There’s more work obviously to being a teacher (…) short hours but more work to take home (…) and it becomes a much bigger part of your life (…)”. Most teachers were in agreement about the stressful impact of doing schoolwork at home. Marking students’ work and lesson planning tended to constitute most of the work teachers reported carrying on at home. This is supported by the findings of similar studies (e.g. Travers and Cooper, 1997; Ballet and Kelchtermans, 2009) which indicated that teachers were had such a high workload that they resorted to doing most of their work outside normal working hours. There are, however, other teachers, although in the minority, who endeavoured to do most of their work in school so as to be able to ‘switch off’ when they got home. Enoch was one such teacher who rarely did schoolwork at home, “(…) I’ve tried to work more in school rather than taking it home. So I just do my work at home a little bit.” With respect to doing schoolwork at home being a key source of most teachers’ stress, Enoch’s approach exemplifies how teachers preferred to manage their work across school and home microsystems whereby the latter can ideally be a place for ‘switching off’. Perhaps this links with why most teachers interviewed agreed that the best way to tackle workload in
teaching was prioritising as opposed to ‘finishing’ it. Some of the onus was probably down to teachers to regulate and manage their own workload insofar as determining what needed to be done when was concerned. Concerning this, Zoe remarked, teachers need to “… learn to manage the workload and identify when they need to have forward planning in terms of their own workload (…) and identify potential pitfalls in advance”.

Related to this, Anna observed:

“You are constantly doing work that you then have to mark, and constantly doing things that need doing and updating. It’s always work in progress and never something that you can say right I am done, I have got nothing to do. There is always something to do …”[all emphasis mine].

It appears treating workload as a process would go some way in assuaging workload stress associated with doing schoolwork at home. However, the question of how a teacher may maintain a balance between their need for rest and their need to manage workload effectively is posed by Finlay (School 6 head of humanities) below,

“I have to do domestic stuff at home and then school stuff as well. It’s a juggling act. (…) It’s very hard sometimes to sort of switch off. That’s one of the biggest problems. That’s why the summer holiday is such a fabulous thing. It’s the one time in a year when you do or can completely switch off. But increasingly I think that’s not as easy as it was. There’s still pressure of exam results; there’s pressure of getting ready for the next school year.”

Another argument emerging from the qualitative data – as exemplified by David’s observation – is that prioritising workload is increasingly becoming difficult due to factors like senior management’s “unreasonable requests (…) on people without notice..”. For example, an increase in compulsory paperwork made teachers find it hard to determine what to prioritise. Paperwork in education is intended to make teaching more accountable for the procedures and practices in schools and accountability leads to more paperwork (Hepburn and Brown, 2001). Based on results from previous studies (e.g. Steinhardt et al, 2011 and Gavish and Friedman
2010), it was not surprising that paperwork emerged from the questionnaire survey as one of the top stress-inducing variables. Most teachers’ views in the present study’s interviews confirmed that paperwork was an issue as far as their experience of stress was concerned. To this end, School 2 teacher of English, Anna commented:

“I think the thing that gets me down for most of the time is paperwork, a lot of that needs doing. That, along with a few other things that happen along the day, come to my head. I think a lot of the time paperwork can be too much. It has increased all the time. It always seems to be more and more each year.”

Other interviewees’ responses generally suggested that most of this paperwork was administrative, that is paperwork to do with children’s records.

**Exosystem**

Results also indicated that the main elements of the teachers’ exosystem posing risk to them were the government, Ofsted and pupils homes. The government risk was reflected in the macrosystemic change (treated below) attributed to it. Related to risk associated with the government, Ofsted risks were inspections and emphasis on standards. It is noteworthy that this sample of teachers generally viewed Ofsted in negative light. Ofsted inspections have been associated with increases in teacher pressure (e.g. Gu and Day, 2007). In her work investigating “the emotional impact of inspection on the staff of a school in the two years between Ofsted inspections”, Perryman (2007:173) found that Ofsted inspections resulted in a range of significant adverse effects on teachers namely, stress, workload pressure, loss of power and control, fear, anger and disaffection. This is consistent to the effects reported by teachers in the present study’s sample. Thus, Enoch’s use of the “stick” metaphor to describe it indicates how – even though usually a remote context – Ofsted impacted on the functioning of proximal processes. Teachers’ perception of Ofsted visits – during which they integrated into the
microsystem – coincided with increases in pressure (e.g. Rumbi), contributed to the construction of Ofsted as a negative influence, hence a stress risk.

Some teachers also felt that some negative home environments – particularly due to some unsupportive parents – represented the risk of poor pupil behaviour and attitudes in school. While most teachers thought most parents were generally supportive – confirmed by moderate stressfulness of the variable lack of parental support (section 4.4, table 4.11) – instances where parental unsupportiveness manifested had a considerable negative impact on teachers. Teachers referring to these manifestations reported contrasting effects of such episodes on them (e.g. Gabrielle and Enoch). While Gabrielle indicated that her encounter with a confrontational parent negatively affected her self-efficacy in her classroom management approach and relationship with the pupil, Enoch presented a more confident persona after his encounter with confrontational parent. Research on novice and experienced teachers’ differential antecedents of self-efficacy beliefs by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2007:953) found that novice teachers’ “satisfaction with professional performance was only related to support from parents and the community”. It is, however, important to note that Gabrielle was an experienced teacher, though significantly less experienced than Enoch. Notwithstanding, caution should be exercised in inferring the significance of experience (a resource characteristic) in this these examples bearing in mind the PPCT model suggests a combination of, rather than singular, factors interacting in concert tend to be responsible for functioning of proximal processes and developmental outcomes (Bronfenbrenner, 1995 and Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). For example, force characteristics (e.g. temperament) could also have had an influence on the outcome.
Macrosystem

Findings showed that main macrosystem risks were national standards, the National Curriculum and change. That these had impact on teachers’ proximal processes was further evidence of the interconnectedness of nested contexts containing the teachers. The effects of the global culture of change and targets as espoused in the national standards and National curriculum are worth noting. Interview results indicated that change and the targets culture were the major stress risks from the government were. Moreover, constant changes in national educational policy was one of the top ten (sixth) most stressful job aspects out of 50 variable (section 4.4, table 4.11). There was an indication that most teachers in these schools were not receptive of the change, especially its constancy and the top-down, bureaucratic approach to its implementation by senior management. This outcome corroborated findings from previous research. For instance, a study by Day et al (2007:249) investigating, inter alia, the effects of national policy changes on teachers in England and Portugal found that some of the negative effects of this change on teachers were feelings of ambivalence and conflict resultant from “increased bureaucracy, qualities of school leadership, cultures of loneliness and the lack of understanding and ownership of the process of change”.

8.3.4 Time risks

Microtime

In this study, major ongoing episodes of proximal processes posing risk to the teachers concerned assisting pupils to meet their academic targets; pupil behaviour; PPA and cover.
Mesotime

Frequency with which microtime episodes occurred was important to the extent to which these episodes posed stress risk to the teachers. As indicated above, pupil behaviour was one of the major sources of teacher stress, so frequent episodes of misbehaviour will also have adversely affected some teachers. Assisting pupils to meet their academic targets, PPA and cover were contributory factors to overall time spent on work activities. Linked to this, regression analysis findings showed that approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities was significantly positively related to stress level (section 6.7). It is conceivable that the more frequent the above identified microtime activities became, the more time teachers were likely to spend on work-related activities. Likewise, the variable *I feel I don’t have work-life balance* was the second most frequent symptom of stress out of nine items (section 4.5, table 4.12). Consistent with this, time spent on work activities has been found to negatively impact on teachers’ work-life balance as well as on time to reflect on their work, develop new skills and interact with colleagues (Bubb and Earley, 2004).

Macrot ime

Changing expectations and events in the larger society presenting stress risks to teachers in these schools were:

- Public accountability of schools
- Wider technological advances
- Increase in adolescent behaviour and emotional problems

The introduction of school examination results rankings in the 1990s and, later, key stage score rankings, coincided with an increase in the demand for public accountability of schools for their pupils’ public examination results and key stage test scores (Goldstein and Leckie, 2008). Ever since, there has been pressure on schools to attain positive rankings (Galton and MacBeath, 2008 and Perryman et al, 2011). Influences of
this macrotime aspect of the wider education context were evident in the schools’ intense focus on targets and results and the consequent pressures on the teachers’ workload management.

Technology advances continue to be made globally. Naturally, some of these advances have led to constant in the ICT curriculum (Condie et al, 2007) and adoption of ICT technologies in aspects of teachers’ such as administrative tasks and access to resources (Cunningham et al., 2004). Influences of this phenomenon were evidenced in the need for retraining among ICT teachers and buying resources to self-teach new aspects of the ICT curriculum (e.g. Grace) and the need to train staff on new education administrative technologies (e.g. Enoch). With change having emerged as a major source of stress, changes in educational ICT originating from technological advances will have been a stress risk for teachers in the two schools.

Considerable increase in adolescent behaviour and emotional problems in the UK has been noted in a 25-year study period (Collishaw et al, 2004). Collishaw et al (2012:119) note that these increases in youth behavioural and emotional problems have coincided with “change in family demographics (and therefore) led to speculation of a causal link”. In relation to this, most teachers (e.g. David, Zoe and Enoch) implied that pupil behaviour problems in school were linked to parents’ attitudes about what was considered “acceptable” (Enoch) behaviour. In addition, Enoch believed negative trends in the wider society had an adverse effect morale in the school.

8.3.5 Symptoms of stress experienced by the teachers

An overall stress measure was derived from the survey where the sample mean ($M=6.00$, $SD=2.55$) for the past two years on a scale of 0 (not stressful) to 10 (extremely stressful) revealed by the survey represents a sharp disparity from a much higher stress level that had been expected in such schools. Previously, results from Cooper (1997) had suggested that
stress in teaching was extremely high, rising from 6.2 in 1985 to 8.3 in 1997 on a similar scale. It is, however, difficult to draw more direct scale-based comparisons to Cooper’s studies because these studies and the present study are more than 14 years apart. Even so, there is evidence from more recent research (e.g. Rothi et al, 2010) that stress levels are extreme in the teaching profession. Given that the settings of this research, urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage, are generally considered fraught with many stress-inducing elements (Kyriacou, 2011), it was therefore surprising that the stress levels among teachers in these schools were just above the midpoint 5 and not on the extreme high end as had been expected. A note of caution on the interpretation of the stress score is, however, due since stress level is relative to individual factors. Corroborating this finding, results from follow-up interviews indicated that most teachers attempted to cope by managing their person characteristics, proximal processes, context and time elements. Consistent with this result, prior studies (e.g. Schoon, 2006) have found that, in spite of adverse circumstances, certain at-risk individuals have not only managed to withstand the challenging nature of their situation, but also gone on to thrive – confounding the very elements which are expected to overwhelm them. As to the reasons why this sometimes turns out to be the case, two complementary explanations are often presented. One explanation is that those individuals who manage to withstand adversity do so because of coping assets within their personalities (Springer and Philips, 1995). Another allied theory is that challenging environments help ‘harden’ individuals against similar future pressure-inducing events (Newman, 2004), thus lending itself to the view that resilience is learned. That is, a person is not as stressed when they encounter a challenge for the second time as when they experienced it the first time given that they will likely have learned how to adapt positively. In this respect, evidence from interview data in the current study showed that the teachers developed resilience to specific demands of their teaching job with experience. Attributing her resilience to experience, Grace, School 1 teacher of ICT explained,
“I had to learn to deal with difficult situations then (...) so perhaps that has come over into my teaching. (...) it will depend on your experiences in life and what you have been exposed to in the past.”

Thus, the general consensus among most teachers was that their coping with work-related pressure improved later on in their careers compared to when they first started. To this end, Zoe, School 1 teacher of English and head of faculty, reflected, “(...) the first three or four years, I found it very difficult (...) I think my ability to cope with stress has improved.”

Two factors emerged when variables concerning how teachers had been feeling in the past two years were subjected to factor analysis: experience of mental symptoms and experience of emotional symptoms. In chapter 5, it has been noted that this aspect of the findings is consistent with stress symptom categorisation by HSE (2011 and 2015). Even though other literature (e.g. NHS, 2011 and Travers and Cooper, 2006) uses different categorisations of stress symptoms, there is still consistency in the types of symptoms.

Factor analysis revealed that experience of mental symptoms was made up of two variables: I feel that life is too much effort and I feel uneasy and restless. On a 1 (rarely) to 5 (frequently) the following results were shown: I feel that life is too much effort (M=2.31, SD=1.38) and I feel uneasy and restless (M=2.62, SD=1.34). It appears, based on these results, that this sample’s experiences of mental symptoms represented by the two variables constituting the factor were neither rare nor frequent which implies middling prevalence. In the interviews, the teachers reported experiencing additional mental symptoms of stress to those specified in quantitative data. Variables loading on the experience of emotional symptoms factor were: I feel stressed for no obvious reason; I feel unduly tired; I feel anxious for no obvious reason and I feel upset for no obvious reason. Relevant descriptive statistics of the variables, using a scale of 1 (rarely) to 5 (frequently) showed the following results: I feel stressed for no
obvious reason ($M=2.73$, $SD=1.41$); I feel unduly tired ($M=3.63$, $SD=1.41$); I feel anxious for no obvious reason ($M=2.56$, $SD=1.41$); I feel upset for no obvious reason ($M=2.40$, $SD=1.36$). The emergence of undue tiredness as the most frequent symptom was expected given that workload was a major source of stress among the teachers.

Complementing quantitative results, interview data added clarity to the understanding of patterns in which teachers experienced mental and emotional symptoms of stress. An examination of interview data showed nuanced and complex association of mental and emotional stress symptoms. Consistent with this, the NHS (2015) does not distinguish between mental and emotional symptoms. Interview data suggested that, rather than occurring separately, it emerged that teachers usually experienced these symptoms in tandem. For example, Rumbi reported experiencing mental and emotional symptoms in concert:

“I was just crying a lot of the time and getting upset about things (...) I do cry a lot and that did help me get through (...) and people think I'm stupid (...) a lot of people do (...) but I don't do that in school. The week in general was very stressful (...) I think I was tired and wasn't feeling very well. I think I made myself sick (...) worrying about the inspection. (...) I can still say my stress level over the past week or so is 7 and 8 if not 9 and 10 last week (...) on the scale. Last week I did fall ill (...), but I have never been off because of stress (...). It tends to be a headache and, sometimes, stomach-ache but I’ve never been properly ill.”

It is also noteworthy that, although mainly originating from work, these symptoms of work-related stress were not confined to the school microsystem, rather they affected the individual’s life in other microsystems – mainly home and social. Several reports (e.g. Ilies et al, 2010; Colligan and Higgins, 2006; Briner, 2000) have shown excessive workload to have an adverse impact on individual mental and emotional wellbeing. In relation to the present study, this interpretation may be
somewhat partial due to the limited information on the extent or prevalence of mental and emotional symptoms among the teachers considering the suggestion of underreporting of experiences of stress by some teachers. With this in mind, it is also important to note that even Rumbi who opened up about her experience of these symptoms pointed out that she did not always feel this way.

Surprisingly, however, regression analysis results suggested the impact of teaching experience per se on stress level was insignificant (see section 6.7). Notably, the survey item asked for teaching experience in general, rather than experience in dealing with a particular aspect of teaching or specific contexts. Perhaps this would have made a difference in the outcome. When regression analysis was conducted to determine which variable influenced stress level, the model was statistically significant, \( F(5, 123) = 4.31, p = .001 \). It revealed that, of the predictor variables in the model, approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities had a statistically significant influence on stress level. There was also evidence that for every unit increase in approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities, stress level increased by .31. This result was consistent with the literature (e.g. Jepson and Forrest, 2006) which suggests that an increase in work hours tends to correspond with an increase in stress level.

8.4 RQ 3: What coping strategies do these teachers employ and how effective are they?

An interesting related result from the survey was that it was not always the most effective coping strategies that were the most frequently used. For instance, Set priorities and consider a range of plans in dealing with the problem was second most effective (\( M=3.60, SD=1.12 \)) yet it was the seventh most frequently used coping strategy (\( M=3.53, SD=1.15 \)). Although there was no definitive explanation for this finding, a plausible line of argument is that, in certain instances, teachers probably used a coping strategy more for its convenience than for its effectiveness.
Teachers faced with problems that could not be immediately solved by direct-action coping strategies would, in the meantime, resort to palliative coping strategies. For example, pupil negative attitudes towards a non-core subject such as Modern and Foreign Languages (MFL) about which Cathy (School 6 teacher of MFL) commented,

“Another source of pressure has to do with children’s attitudes towards my subject. Making things relevant to them makes things difficult because they constantly argue that they will never go to Spain and so are usually reluctant to learn Spanish and difficult to motivate. (...) This would never happen in Maths or English department”

These attitudes would not be reversed overnight but rather would likely take long-term effort from respective MFL teachers as well as supportive processes within the school. To deal with the stress emanating from such attitudes, the teachers tended to resort to coping strategies which did not, of necessity, deal with the source of the stress. Instead, they would deal with the negative emotion using such strategies as Cathy’s ”looking forward to three o’clock” to minimise the adverse emotional impact of pupils’ attitudes towards her subject.

8.4.1 Direct-action coping strategies

As noted earlier, when they used direct-action coping, most teachers also turned to colleagues for help with aspects of the problem they could not solve. Interestingly, however, these teachers admitted that there were certain challenges they appraised to be beyond their or their colleagues coping capacities. In such cases, they would try to rationalise or, in some instances, try to change how they felt about these challenges.

A statistically significant regression analysis model, $F(3,115)=4.55, p=.005$, on what variables impact on effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies showed that stress level had a statistically significant impact on the factor. There was a negative correlation between stress level and effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies. For every unit increase in
stress level, there was a decrease of .27 in effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies. This finding corroborated findings from the interview data. For example, David reported that when his stress levels increased, his ability to directly cope with his job deteriorated: “Last year I was off with stress. I couldn’t handle it anymore”. Previous research (e.g. Fortes-Ferreira et. al, 2006) is in keeping with the finding that stress level negatively affects effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies.

8.4.2 Palliative Coping Strategies

Regression analysis to find out which variables impacted on effectiveness of palliative coping techniques yielded a model which was not statistically significant, $F(3, 125)=3.55, p=.017$. It was, however, noteworthy that stress level had unique statistical significance ($p < .005$) on effectiveness of palliative coping techniques where every unit increase in stress level meant a .275 increase in effectiveness of palliative coping techniques. This was in confirmation with other research findings (e.g. Bingham, Bailey and Smith, 2000) indicating that palliative coping strategies did not tend to help reduce stress levels. It is however also important to add a caveat against overgeneralisation in this regard. For instance, teachers who participated in the interviews (see also section 8.6.1) reported that they also used palliative coping strategies, particularly ‘switching off’ to complement direct-action strategies and found this approach effective. This was in keeping with Lazarus (2006) who contends that palliative coping strategies are integral to effective coping as they perform an important task of addressing emotions linked to stress.

8.5 RQ 4: What protective factors enhance the resilience of urban secondary school teachers?

As mentioned in the literature review, protective factors comprise individual elements, contextual elements and processes which moderate negative effects of adversity (Kumpfer, 2002; Nettles and Pleck, 1996; Jacelon, 1997 and Schoon, 2006). From a bioecological perspective,
these elements and processes can be divided into personal characteristics, proximal processes, context and time (Bronfenbrenner, 1988 and 2005; Bronfenbrenner and Evans, 2000 and Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). Results of this study revealed interesting insights on the teachers’ resilience-enhancing personal characteristics, proximal processes, contexts and time elements.

8.5.1 Person protective factors

Results showed that some of the teachers’ personal characteristics were important internal protective factors. Internal protective factors are an important aspect of coping assets connected to positive adaptive outcomes in individuals’ coping with demands placed on them by their environment (Morris, 2004). This part of the discussion considers key resource and force characteristics which acted as internal protective factors of this sample of teachers.

Resource characteristics

Resource characteristics relate to abilities, experiences, knowledge and skills which enable the individual to participate in proximal processes effectively (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998). These can also limit or disrupt an individual’s capacity to participate effectively in proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). Findings from this study indicated that teachers’ resource characteristics – mainly experience, subject mastery, self-efficacy and coping strategies – were important protective factors for the teachers.

Experience

Most interviewees expressed that experience was a key contributory factor in their development of resilience. In relation to this, Grace remarked,
“Teachers who have been teaching for 20 years cope better with stress – I think with stress that comes with teaching – than someone who has been teaching for five years (…) perhaps wouldn’t cope quite as well. I just think it’s experience (…) life experience.”

This observation is consistent with survey results which showed that resilient teachers (\(M=15.87, SD=11.81\)) were more experienced than at-risk teachers (\(M=13.59, SD=11.06\)). Related to this, resilient teachers’ number of years in present school was much higher (\(M=14.33, SD=9.99\)) than that of at-risk teachers (\(M=7.86, SD=8.46\)) (see figure 4.4 in section 4.8). Additionally, experience significantly (\(p<.005\)) influenced teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline. In addition, experience positively related with teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline. This result corroborates findings from Giallo and Little (2003) which indicated a positive impact of teaching experience on teachers’ self-efficacy in pupil behaviour management.

A possible reason why teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline is significantly and positively related with experience is that experience would likely have increased teachers’ familiarity with and confidence in managing pupil behaviour. Tied to this, prior exposure to risks associated with the teaching job was essential for the development of internal protective factors. Resonant with this result, existing literature (e.g. Lantieri and Malkmus, 2011) reveals that a there is a link between prior exposure to risk and the development of resilience qualities in individuals. In his extensive review of key literature on childhood resilience, Newman (2004) concluded that prior moderate exposure to risk was necessary for the development of internal protective factors. This, therefore, suggests that resilience qualities are can be nurtured. It is sensible to deduce that initial exposure will have been the familiarisation phase at which the individual would not have learned how to positively adapt to the risk. It is the stage which would likely have prepared the person for any future recurrence of a similar risk. This probably explains why many teachers in this sample reported that they found early stages of
their teaching careers particularly stressful due to initial lack of familiarity with demands of their roles, which gradually improved over the years as they became familiar to and more experienced in handling certain aspects of their job. This suggests that prior exposure has a mediating effect on adverse effects of recurring risks (Hildon et al, 2008) as it helps the generation of competence and self-efficacy protective factors in individuals.

However, there is need to highlight limitations of previous exposure in developing internal resilience qualities. Where an individual suffered severe stress during previous exposure, they may experience recurrent stress should a similar threat resurface. In such cases, individuals are likely to try and avoid repeat exposure to the threat. Insofar as teachers are concerned, they may transfer to new schools or seek to change their career in the hope for a new start. This was the case with Gabrielle who moved from her first school due to suffering severe job stress and did not want repeated exposure to a similar stressful environment. As well as the support she got from her parents and the union, her recovery was aided by transferring. She acknowledged she was happier and more confident in School 1 where she was interviewed.

A further complexity in determining the role of prior exposure to risk is the problematic nature of determining mildness. Mildness of exposure is likely to vary across individuals. What can be mild to one person can be severe to another, depending on how the person appraises the risk. This also depends on the quality of external protective factors such as the supportiveness of the microsystem in which the individual is located. Results suggest that microsystemic support has a mediating effect on severity of individual exposure to risk. Thus, when discussing the importance of internal protective factors, it is imperative to look at them in light of their interaction with external protective factors as well as the significance of individual subjectivity in appraising risk.
There were, however, some rather surprising results relating to the extent to which experience was a protective factor for these teachers. It emerged from regression analyses that, contrary to earlier hypotheses, experience did not have a significant relationship with effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies; effectiveness of palliative coping strategies; teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment and teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues. This part of the findings implies caution needs to be exercised when interpreting the extent to which experience functions as a protective factor as there tends to be a combination of person characteristics, proximal processes, context and time factors working in tandem to result in certain outcomes (Bronfenbrenner, 2006).

**Self-efficacy**

As noted earlier, teachers’ self-efficacy was also a major protective factor. Factor analysis of this element showed three factors: teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline; teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues and teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment. When these factors were modelled in regression analyses, the statistically significant models were those predicting teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline (already discussed in relation to experience in the previous subsection) and teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues. Drawing on regression analyses and interview results, it has already been stated that the teachers’ beliefs about their coping with pupil discipline were dependent on experience. On these grounds, it is also logical to infer that teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline is likely to be linked to experience.

A statistically significant regression analysis model on variables influencing teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues ($F=(2,133)=4.94$, $p=.001$) showed that current teacher grade had a statistically significant influence ($p=.005$) on teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on colleagues. This finding was convergent with interview data of some of the experienced teachers who reported that they consistently
offered guidance to inexperienced colleagues. For example, Josephine – an experienced teacher – stated that she offered colleagues guidance when they found it hard to cope with the demands of teaching.

As noted in chapter 6, alongside increased confidence, current teacher grade is likely to determine teachers’ opportunities to influence others. For example, a deputy head teacher is likely to have more opportunities and confidence to have an influence on colleagues than a newly qualified teacher. In confirmation of this perspective, a study by Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) indicated that school leaders’ influence on staff and students was strong compared to that of teachers. Additionally, the literature postulates that teachers with high self-efficacy are likely able to establish supportive interpersonal networks which enhance their resilience within their workplace (Caprara et al, 2006). Furthermore, as findings of a study by Harland et al (2005) revealed, positive influence on colleagues – especially a leader’s influence – will also likely enhance staff resilience and motivation.

**Coping strategies**

As noted in section 8.5, coping strategies results showed that teachers used direct-action coping strategies and palliative coping strategies to deal with the demands of their job. An examination of regression analysis results of the effectiveness of the two types of coping strategies showed that the effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies model was statistically significant (F(3,115)=4.55,p=.005). The test also showed that the unique contribution of stress level to the model was statistically significant (p<.005). Additionally, effectiveness of direct-action coping strategies negatively related with stress level. This result was consistent with findings by Fortes-Ferreira et al (2006) which revealed that stress level negatively affected effectiveness of individual direct-action coping strategies.
Since the biggest source of stress among these teachers was *overall workload* (*M*=3.84, *SD*=1.23), it was logical that the teachers reported high frequency in the use of *set priorities and consider a range of plans in dealing with the problem* (*M*=3.53, *SD*=1.15) to cope. For instance, Rumbi stated, “*To cope, I try to be organised (…) sometimes writing a list of things (…) trying to prioritise what needs doing*”. The reported effectiveness of this direct-action coping strategy was also high (*M*=3.60, *SD*=1.12).

The relationship between direct-action coping and resilience has been reported as important in the literature. Recently, Gloria and Steinhardt (2014) found adaptive coping – of which direct-action coping is a major part – to positively and significantly relate with resilience. This implies resilience rises or falls correspondingly with direct-action coping. A note of caution is due here, however, since this positive relationship between direct-action coping and resilience does not imply the former has a mutually exclusive impact on the latter. Some palliative coping strategies are also an important influence on resilience. Going back to Rumbi’s interview data, an important insight regarding positive adaptive outcomes emerges. In addition to direct-action coping strategies she used, Rumbi also found palliative coping strategies helpful towards resilient outcomes. She stated, “*Last week it got to the point where I said, “That’s enough,” (…) I didn’t take any work home with me. I came home and watched television and felt much better.*” Like Rumbi, teachers in School 1 and School 10 reported frequently and effectively using a range of ‘switching off’ (palliative) strategies to cope with work-related stress. Thus it is unsurprising that Gloria and Steinhardt (2014) also found that, as well as direct-action coping strategies, other resource characteristics had a significant impact on resilience. In light of this, it is therefore rather disappointing that the model testing which variables impacted on *effectiveness of palliative coping strategies* was not statistically significant (*F* (3, 125) = 3.55, *p* = .017).
Force characteristics

To recap, force characteristics are individual qualities driving the interaction between the individual and their environment (Hirsto, 2001 and Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998). These dispositions account for differences in adaptive outcomes across individuals (Tudge et al, 2009). For purposes of this study, the central adaptive outcome was stress level. So results of resilient (low-stress) and at-risk (high-stress) teachers were examined for key differences between the two groups. Of interest were the main disposition differences between resilient and at-risk teachers (see figure 8.1 below) drawn from means of variables constituting coping strategies factors generated in chapter 5.

Figure 8.1: Resilient/ At-risk teacher means across force characteristics

An examination of resilient and at-risk teachers’ data indicated that the main force characteristics on which the two groups of teachers showed differences from each other were self-efficacy and coping strategies. Stress symptoms data provided important indicators of between-groups differences in the impact of the interaction between the teachers and their environments.
Self-efficacy

Earlier in this chapter, it has been proposed that self-efficacy is an important indicator of teacher competence in aspects of their job. With this in mind, this subsection considers differences in self-efficacy levels between resilient and at-risk teachers.

As depicted in figure 8.1 above, resilient teachers showed higher self-efficacy than at-risk teachers in influence on pupil attainment ($M=4.09, SD=.69$), influence on colleagues ($M=3.60, SD=.94$) and influence on pupil discipline ($M=3.58, SD=.68$). This result confirms findings from a study Castro et al (2009) which showed that resilient teachers had high self-efficacy and that high self-efficacy enhanced individual resilience. It is also interesting that resilient teachers’ highest mean was on teachers’ self-efficacy in pupil attainment. In chapter 6, regression analyses of sample data revealed that teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment was negatively related to and a significant predictor of stress level ($p<.005$). This is logical because, as explained earlier, self-efficacy has a moderating effect on stress level (Zajacova, 2005; Bandura, 1982).

Coping strategies

Section 8.5 discussed coping strategies results for the sample. In this subsection, interest is on differences in coping behaviours and effectiveness between resilient and at-risk teachers. Koolhaas et al (2007) note that coping strategies are generally stable over time and consistent in different situations. In the present study, resilient teachers used direct-action coping strategies more frequently ($M=3.60, SD=1.06$) than at-risk teachers ($M=3.48, SD=.49$). Their effectiveness in direct-action coping ($M=3.89, SD=.99$) was also higher than that of at-risk teachers ($M=3.25, SD=.75$). Conversely, resilient teachers utilised palliative coping strategies less frequently ($M=2.62, SD=1.18$) than at-risk teachers ($M=3.08, SD=.79$). Results also indicated that resilient teachers’ effectiveness in
palliative coping ($M=2.84$, $SD=1.36$) was lower than that reported by at-risk teachers ($M=2.98$, $SD=.87$).

Results showing differences in coping strategies frequencies and effectiveness between resilient and at-risk teachers corroborate a study on women athletes by Yi et al (2005) which found that resilient athletes favoured direct-action coping in contrast with at-risk athletes who reported high utilisation of palliative coping strategies. This hints on the importance of direct-action coping to resilience. An example of how direct-action coping strategies potentially enhance resilience is a point made by Zoe,

“I think my ability to cope with stress has improved, yes. I have certainly learned to rationalise my workload a bit more and to learn how to prioritise things and realise that I need to set myself clear deadlines to meet personally as classroom teacher and then also deadlines that I need to meet as a head of faculty.”

In contrast, Josephine reflected,

“I can’t describe my handling of stress as very good because I get very stressed by things (...) and (...) to cope (...) I simply switch off in the evening and do very little work.”

8.5.2 Proximal processes protective factors

Proximal processes also played a part in protecting teachers from stress risks. Consistent with Bronfenbrenner and Morris’ (1998) proposition, this study’s results suggested that consistent reciprocal positive interactions between individuals and colleagues, management, pupils, parents and resources contributed towards enhancing resilience.

As noted earlier, Gu and Day (2007) characterise teaching as an emotional job where positive emotions such as happiness make a difference in individuals’ capacity to cope with or recover from the effects of the demands of their job. This representation of the teaching job underlines the imperativeness of a positive intra/inter departmental
climate in the fostering of positive adaptive outcomes. The term *intra/inter departmental climate* entails shared values, processes and relationships occurring within given work settings (Lok and Crawford, 2004). Processes are such that staff input is encouraged and valued. Therefore, work relationships with colleagues, pupils and parents are important. Cohesion among members of department is important (Oliver, 2010). In this study, teachers who were supported within their departments on aspects of their job they struggled with reported positive adaptive outcomes. In contrast, those in departments which neither held frequent meetings nor supported their members had teachers who reported feeling isolated. Those in supportive departments used terms like ‘hub’, ‘supportive’, ‘wealth of support from colleagues’ and ‘cushy’ to describe the external protective factors they were drawing on at work. In respect of this, Muller et al (2011) observe that when microsystemic conditions are ‘right’, individuals within these microsystems grow in confidence and self-efficacy and thrive.

Again, attention needs to be drawn to the interconnectedness of external and internal protective factors; that bidirectional interaction between the nested contexts and the individual in pivotal to adaptive outcomes. This creates the positive person-environment fit, an equilibrium conducive for positive adaptive outcomes (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007).

### 8.5.3 Context protective factors

A bioecological context is “the actual environments in which human beings” are situated (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006:794). These encompass the following interrelated systems: the microsystems, the mesosystems, the exosystem and the macrosystem (Tudge et al, 2009). In this study, findings indicated the teachers’ context protective factors were primarily their microsystems, mesosystems and exosystems. In contrast, the macrosystem was generally considered a risk factor instead of a protective factor.

Apart from the individual, the microsystems are the most significant influence on teacher resilience because these are the immediate
environments of the individual which they have constant contact with (Masten, 2014). Earlier, it has been explained that the microsystem includes the workplace, the home and friends and family. These are important in the building of resilience in individuals (Day et al., 2007). Results indicated that, within their home and work microsystems, the teachers’ protective factors were supportive interpersonal relationships mainly with colleagues and parents (workplace) and with family members (home). As far as protective factors are concerned – at mesosystem level – the link between work and home enabled some teachers to use their home microsystem to recover from the effects of stressors in the workplace, for example switching off or getting support from family members. Supportive parents in the community (exosystem) were also an essential protective factor especially helping with pupil in-school discipline. As argued previously, resilience building involves the interaction between individual and contextual factors (Brackenreed, 2010; Jepson and Forrest, 2006 and Boyd and Eckert, 2002). Thus, even teachers with personal resilience characteristics still needed resilience-promoting systems in order to experience positive adaptive outcomes within their job.

8.5.4 Time protective factors

Results showed that time played an important role in teacher stress and resilience. To recap, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) represent time as existing in three elements, namely microtime, mesotime, and macrot ime. Microtime refers to a specific activity or interaction while mesotime is the consistency with which activities and interactions happen in the individual’s environment (Tudge et al., 2009). Last, macrot ime relates to significant environmental events occurring in the broader society and transitions over the course of an individual’s life (Hirsto, 2001).

The importance of the time element to stress and resilience is illustrated in an observation made by Zoe,
“(…) it will depend on your experiences in life and what you have been exposed to in the past. If you have come from school to college (…) to university, to teaching (…) then you haven’t really been exposed to much of life in general. So (…) you might not be able to cope with stress quite well. It’s in their experience I think.”

Results of the present study provide further insights into protective factors in relation to the microtime, mesotime and macrotime of “experiences in life” Zoe mentioned.

**Microtime**

In relation to teachers’ microtime, some teachers reported the benefits of supportive processes during the course of certain activities and interactions they felt helped buffer them against the negative effects of aspects of their job. For example, Ivy reflected,

“At least this school was more supportive. You could ask for help without the fear of being branded incompetent or lazy. It was a good school. I can say my development as a professional (…) was much quicker than in my first school.”

Ivy’s observation shows how microtime activities and interactions can help develop resilience when support is present. In agreement, Enoch commented,

“So there’s always that support network where you can either ask, “What should I do with this incident or what’s your advice?” (…) Or you got to a point, which I don’t think I have ever come to in my career, where I couldn’t make some progress. There’s always somebody to pass it on to who is more experienced or just a different personality perhaps.”

Data were also examined to find out differences in types of support drawn from between resilient and at-risk teachers (see figure 8.2 below).
Findings indicated that resilient teachers sought palliative support less frequently than at-risk teachers. In contrast, resilient teachers used direct-action support more frequently than at-risk teachers. This is further confirmation of differences in coping preferences between resilient and at-risk teachers discussed earlier in this chapter. In relation to microtime support, results from both datasets imply that supported or supportive microtime (i.e. specific activities and interactions) – especially problem-focused (direct-action) support – is a key component of resilience enhancement. Similar results have emerged from previous studies (e.g. Schoon and Bartley, 2008 and Gutman et al, 2002) which found that supportive interactions and activities are important resilience-building microtime features.

**Mesotime**

In these schools, interactions and activities which happened with a degree of consistency over time in the teachers' microsystems were planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) and teaching. Figure 8.3 depicts resilient and at-risk teachers' mesotime.
Resilient teachers spent less time per week ($M=43.53$, $SD=4.93$) on work-related activities than at-risk teachers ($M=47.47$, $SD=7.61$). Likewise, they spent less time per week ($M=6.55$, $SD=4.34$) on planning, preparation and assessment outside designated PPA time than at-risk teachers ($M=10.86$, $SD=6.80$). Notably, resilient teachers did more ($M=6.55$, $SD=4.34$) planning, preparation and assessment activities during designated PPA time than at-risk teachers ($M=2.43$, $SD=1.27$). As anticipated, it seemed logical that resilient teachers’ stress related to time spent on schoolwork at home was low ($M=2.19$, $SD=1.42$) compared to that of at-risk teachers ($M=4.18$, $SD=1.93$) (see figure 8.4 below).
In the interviews, resilient teachers revealed that they tried to keep work-at-home time low. An example is Enoch who stated, “I have tried to work more in school rather than taking it home. So I just do my work at home a little bit”. In agreement, Grace remarked, “If I had a choice, I would work at school and then leave my work here and go home.” Earlier, it has been argued that work at home negatively impacted on teachers’ rest time – an important factor in recovery (Lundberg and Cooper, 2010). All interviewees agreed that doing schoolwork at home negatively impacted on their social life. For instance, David, who reported experiencing work-related depression, commented, “I can work at home, but that has a lot of impact on the social side.”

What these findings show is that how individuals manage their mesotime and patterns of activities can be useful indicators of vulnerability and resilience. It appears resilient teachers had more rest opportunities than at-risk teachers, which is why it made sense that resilient teachers experienced low ($M=2.07, SD=.95$) *workload/time constraints stress* in contrast with that experienced by at-risk teachers ($M=3.82, SD=.65$) which was high (see figure 8.5 below).

Figure 8.5: Workload/time constraints stress

The result showing resilient teachers having comparably lower time on work activities and higher levels of rest opportunities than at-risk teachers.
is not new. A longitudinal study by Dyrbye et al (2010) on factors associated with resilience to and recovery from burnout among medical students across five institutions discovered that, inter alia, resilient individuals had lighter workloads (i.e. were less likely to combine employment and study), had a higher quality of life and experienced less stress and fatigue than at-risk individuals. Considering this, it seems likely that maintaining a positive work-life balance would be a key mesotime protective factor. This is consistent with resilient and at-risk teachers’ scores on how frequently they had felt they did not have work-life balance over the past two years (see figure 8.6 below).

Unsurprisingly, resilient teachers’ experience of lack work-life balance was less frequent ($M=1.88$, $SD=1.26$) than at-risk teachers ($M=4.22$, $SD=1.08$).

**Macrotime**

Findings revealed that significant contextual events and key transitions occurring in education were mostly to do with government-initiated changes to processes and the national curriculum. As noted previously, change was one of the major macrotime sources of stress to teachers in
this study. Close examination of the results revealed that stress resulted in more from lack of implementation time than the content of the change itself. To this end, Enoch stated that most of his colleagues experienced stress emanating from “far too much change and over too short a time period.” He further surmised, “(...) it’s changes and initiatives usually coming from government level (...) to be brought in for you to finish in two to three years.” Against this backdrop, Grace presented a different approach to dealing with macrot ime events and transitions which most teachers agreed were stress risks. She stated that the ICT syllabus changed more frequently than other subjects to mirror persistent changes in information technology in the wider society. “ICT changes all the time,” she observed, 

“New programmes are brought up (...) you have to keep yourself up-to-date. We have recently started a new subject. (...) we have all (...) to learn a new programme (...). We haven’t had any training on it. (...) that’s why I bought a text book (...) taught myself how to use this new programme. I made some mistakes. Unfortunately, (...) I made some mistakes with the kids as well. To start off, I was following someone else’s instructions (...) and then was doing something until I realised the flaws in those instructions. So I went out and bought myself a text book where it tells you how to do it properly (...) and I created my own worksheets (...) and that’s fine.”

This example provides insights into Grace’s internal protective factors which moderated negative macrot ime effects related to her subject. There are indications of the moderating effects of high self-efficacy, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and intellect on macro changes and transitions. These have been discussed in greater detail in sections 8.4 and 8.5. It is noteworthy that a combination of seeking help from colleagues and, when this did not solve the problem, considering alternatives until the problem was satisfactorily solved was Grace’s preferred coping approach – at least in this instance. It was, therefore, interesting that resilient teachers used Set priorities and consider a range of plans in dealing with the problem less frequently
(\(M=3.25, \ SD=1.48\)) than at-risk teachers (\(M=3.70, \ SD=1.09\)) (see figure 8.7 below).

Figure 8.7: Frequency and effectiveness of considering alternatives

![Bar chart showing frequency and effectiveness of considering alternatives between at-risk and resilient teachers.]

This was despite resilient teachers being more effective (\(M=4.06, \ SD=1.12\)) in this coping strategy than at-risk teachers (\(M=3.46, \ SD=1.27\)). Perhaps this was because they managed their workload well and, therefore, did not frequently need to set priorities but when they did so, they were effective.

Another important protective factor in handling macrotime risks evident in Grace’s example is experience. She attributed her resilience to her career experience, some of it in banking, which she felt made her more resilient. As explained before, historical events form part of the macrotime. Therefore, as stated by Grace and in agreement with other teachers' remarks, past experiences can also be key protective factors. Figure 8.8 gives an overview of experience aspects of teachers' backgrounds.
Resilient teachers were more experienced and had spent significantly more time in the present school than at-risk teachers. In addition, resilient teachers were older ($M=40.08$, $SD=9.60$) than at-risk teachers ($M=39.02$, $SD=11.63$). Interestingly, though more experienced, resilient teachers’ number of schools taught was slightly lower ($M=2.73$, $SD=1.62$) than that of at-risk teachers ($M=3.06$, $SD=2.00$).

### 8.6 Conclusion

This conclusion broadly seeks to achieve two things; first, to situate this study’s implications within the framework of research precedent and, second, to explore what we learn from the findings in terms of teacher risk and resilience.

Certain aspects of the present study’s results corroborate findings from similar studies preceding it, particularly on stress risks in urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage, coping behaviours of teachers in such schools and teachers’ protective factors. Conversely, though teachers in this study generally agreed that teaching was a stressful job, none of those who participated in follow-up interviews felt it was extreme enough for them to contemplate leaving the profession. This alone, however, cannot necessarily be interpreted as indicative of the
stress levels in the teaching job. It might be that the teachers were passionate about their job despite adversity; considered it less risky to stay in teaching than quitting or they moved schools instead of leaving teaching altogether.

The interaction between a positive outlook to life and resolve to succeed also strengthened the teachers’ ability to withstand or recover from adverse circumstances. Even though these are not directly connected to any specific risk, some teachers attributed their ability to thrive in or recover from adversity to their commitment to the profession – which was, sometimes, also a source of stress. This, some of the teachers said, gave them a sense of accomplishment and, in the process, enhanced their self-efficacy. A good example is Gabrielle who stayed on in teaching in spite of extreme early-career challenges because she was “a fighter” and “wanted to prove people wrong”. When she eventually came through the adversity, she felt she “had proved people wrong” and, if similar challenges would repeat in future, she would still withstand them because she had had prior exposure and recovered successfully.

There would, arguably, be no point of conducting research on stress and resilience if we do not, in the end, address the fundamental question on whether resilience is an attribute developed in context – as opposed to being innate – and what implication this has to practice. There seems to be no consensus in the literature on the question of whether resilience is learned or inherent within individuals. One school of thought (e.g. Howard and Johnson, 1999) views resilience as a cumulative characteristic resulting from the reciprocal interaction between person characteristics and environmental factors. In contrast, others (e.g. Kaminsky et al, 2007) take an interventionist view of resilience which holds that the role of an individual’s environment in resilience is more important than the individual’s internal protective mechanisms.

Results from the current study, however, are consistent with the bioecological perspective as they suggest stress and resilience outcomes
are a function of person, proximal processes, context and time. Both survey and qualitative data showed that successful coping with, or recovery from, stress risks associated with the job was a result of a combination of person characteristics, proximal processes, context and time. As much as teachers attributed their resilience to their individual qualities, they also reported that the support they got from colleagues and family members played a significant role in their success in coping with and recovery from the risks their job exposed them to. Furthermore, processes in case study schools pointed to the fact that mediation at senior management level was also important in abating or exacerbating the negative effects of challenges teachers faced at work. This is in congruence with the literature which postulates that there is a direct negative correlation between support and stress level (Edwards et al, 1998) although how and to what extent this support is deployed remains debatable (Cooper et al, 2001). There was a suggestion from the teachers that when support is offered inappropriately, it could be construed as interference and thus, rather than moderating, it would exacerbate the experience of stress among the teachers. Even so, there is compelling evidence from the current study to infer that resilience is a result of a positive interaction between personal attributes and external factors.

Finally, comparison of resilient and at-risk teachers showed differences in a number of aspects. The mean number of years in present school for resilient teachers was much higher than that of at-risk teachers – indicating a possible link between length of time in a setting and resilience. Overall, resilient teachers spent less time on work-related activities than at-risk teachers – a possible explanation for why workload/time constraints stress was lower among resilient teachers than it was among at-risk teachers. In addition, at-risk teachers felt they did not have work/life balance more frequently than did resilient teachers. Finally, resilient teachers used direct-action coping more frequently and more effectively than at-risk teachers. This may suggest the importance of direct-action coping to resilient individuals.
9.1 Introduction

This thesis set out to investigate stress and resilience among teachers in urban schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage. Utilising Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; 1995) bioecological framework, this mixed-methods study examined teacher stress and resilience in relation to process, person characteristics, context and time. In this regard, the first research question had to do with investigating person characteristics of teachers in participating urban secondary schools. Second, the research was undertaken to examine stress risks reported by these teachers and how these risks affected them. The third research question had to do with coping strategies the teachers employed and how effective these coping strategies were. Last, the research aimed to scrutinise protective factors which enhanced the resilience of these teachers and how these risks affected the teachers.

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise key findings of this study by research question (section 9.2). In addition, the chapter aims to highlight this study’s contribution to knowledge (section 9.3). It also considers implications of results for practice and policy (section 9.4). Section 9.5 lays out parameters and limitations of the study. The final section, 9.6, puts forward recommendations for further research work.

9.2 Key findings

9.2.2 RQ1: What person characteristics do teachers in urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage have??

To understand the teachers’ qualities, three person characteristics were considered: force, resource and demand. These, according to Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006:795), have the most influence on
human development “through their capacity to affect the direction and power of proximal processes ...”. The bioecological model posits that person characteristics can either enhance (developmentally generative) or undermine (developmentally disruptive) an individual’s adaptive ability (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). In this study, the teachers showed force, resource and demand characteristics which were developmentally generative and, sometimes, developmentally disruptive.

**Force characteristic**

As noted above (section 8.6.1), force characteristics are those behavioural dispositions that can initiate and sustain proximal process (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). The key force characteristic of teachers in this study was personality – specifically extraversion and conscientiousness. Their influence on these teachers’ resilience was generally developmentally generative as they helped the teachers cope with the demands of their job. Extraversion is a personality characteristic concerned with help-seeking within one’s social context as a means of coping with demands on self (Straud et al., 2015). Conscientiousness, on the other hand, has to do with being organised, being thorough, being tidy, being persistent and being dutiful (McKenna, 2012; Arnold et al., 2010).

With regard to extraversion, most teachers in this research highly frequently used the direct-action coping strategy: Seek help from others in aspects of the problem I can’t deal with. This, however, should not be taken to imply that help-seeking made all teachers extraverts. For example, interview data showed that some teachers usually sought help only from colleagues they enjoyed positive interrelations with. Thus, while help-seeking is one of the common extraversion behaviours, introverts – though relatively more selective about who they seek help from – also exhibited this behaviour.

Most teachers’ conscientiousness was mainly evident through them coping by being persistent, being dutiful, prioritising and being organised.
Frequency in most teachers’ use of the following direct-action coping strategies was high: *Pause and think objectively about the situation* and *Set priorities and consider a range of plans in dealing with the problem.* They also reported these coping strategies to be highly effective.

Professional experiences of these teachers were widely varied. Of the participants, 90% (N=135) did not have a career prior to teaching. Regression analyses revealed that teaching experience positively and significantly related with the resource characteristic: *Teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline.* Teaching experience range was 1 to 36 years. On the results of relevant regression analysis, the initial hypothesis that teaching experience per se significantly influenced stress level was rejected. Nonetheless, some teachers expressed that prior exposure to adversity helped improve their resilience primarily due to developing familiarity with adversity.

**Resource characteristics**

As described in section 8.6.1, resource characteristics refer to those person characteristics that influence an individual’s ability to positively engage with and adapt to proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). In the present study, the teachers’ main resource characteristic was self-efficacy. They reported high self-efficacy in the factor: *Teachers’ self-efficacy in influence on pupil discipline.* The self-efficacy variable on which they scored highest was: *Teachers are a very powerful influence on student achievement when all factors are considered.* However, interview results indicated that pupil motivation and actual attainment were generally not as high as teachers’ *self-efficacy in influence on pupil attainment,* perhaps suggesting why most teachers appeared to assume accountability for positive pupil academic attainment to themselves.
Demand characteristics

Demand characteristics, as explained in section 7.4.1, mainly refer to individual qualities which “invite or discourage reactions from the social environment that can disrupt or foster processes of psychological growth” (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006:812). This can be age, gender or physical appearance (Tudge et al, 2009). In the context of the present study, interest was in processes of resilience development or positive adaptive outcomes.

The main demand characteristic of teachers who participated in this study was their professional role. Being teachers had, attached to the role, the professional identity which automatically invited or stimulated certain expectations from pupils, colleagues and parents. Principal demands were thus concerned with accountabilities for pupil behaviour, pupil attainment and cover. Generally, these had a degenerative (i.e. negative) impact on the teachers’ adaptive outcomes – hence resilience – as most teachers reported experiencing stress as a result of these demands.

9.2.1 RQ2: Which stress risks do these teachers report and how do these risks affect them?

(1) *Workload*/*time constraints* was the biggest stress risk for most teachers in this sample. Out of 50 questionnaire variables, the top five stress risks were overall workload; paperwork; time spent on schoolwork at home; pupil behavioural problems and lack of time to solve problems with individual pupils. Most teachers felt that excessive workload/time constraints led them to work extra hours, including at home, thereby impacting on their work-life balance. *Approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities* had a statistically significant influence on, and positively related with, *stress level*.

(2) In addition to workload, interview findings suggested change, particularly its rate, was also a contributory factor to the increase in the
teachers’ stress levels. It kept many teachers in constant need for up-skilling, which placed a further strain on their already intense workload. Additionally, many teachers reported that they constantly needed to change their learning/teaching resources in keeping with these changes. Concern over the rapidity of change left many teachers thinking that, to meet the goals it was intended to achieve, it would be best for the change process to be managed in a more measured and effective way to allow teachers adequate time to develop the new skills it demanded. This way, the teachers thought, learners would benefit more and teachers would be less stressed. Most participants were of the opinion that, in their current form and at their present pace, change processes were negatively impacting on their time and resources.

(3) Mean stress level for resilient teachers was low while that of at-risk teachers was very high. The biggest source of stress for at-risk teachers was overall workload. Notably, resilient teachers reported low stress on the same variable. Related to stress level and sources of stress were the symptoms which gave an indication of the extent of the impact of stress on the teachers. The most frequent stress symptom of at-risk teachers experienced was: I feel I don’t have work-life balance. Resilient teachers’ score on the same variable was lower. Difference in time spent on planning preparation and assessment outside designated PPA time between resilient and at-risk teachers was also noteworthy. Resilient teachers’ approximate total time per week spent on work-related activities was lower than that of at-risk teachers spent. Thus, unsurprisingly, at-risk teachers experienced emotional symptoms of stress more frequently than resilient teachers.

9.2.3 RQ3: What coping strategies do these teachers employ and how effective are they?

As noted in section 8.5 above, it was interesting that it was not always the most effective coping strategies that were the most frequently used. For instance, set priorities and consider a range of plans in dealing with the
**Problem** was the second most effective yet it was seventh most frequently used coping strategy.

To cope with risks summarised in section 9.2.1, these teachers used both direct-action and palliative coping strategies. Although most literature (e.g. Kyriacou, 2001) in the research field presupposes a binarised relationship between direct-action and palliative coping strategies where direct-action coping strategies were considered more effective in reducing stress than palliative strategies, there were instances where teachers reported both coping strategies to have a mediating effect on their stress levels (Glicken, 2006).

Descriptive statistical analyses indicated that the teachers used **direct-action** more frequently than they did **palliative** coping strategies. Out of the top five most frequently used coping strategies, only one – *Try to see the humour in it* – was **palliative**. Similar results on effectiveness of coping strategies emerged. It was, however, interesting that the most effective coping strategy – *Keep things in perspective* – was not the most frequently used.

The common direct-action coping strategies were: *Dealing with the source of the problem; prioritising; seeking support from colleagues on aspects individual teachers could not solve and keeping things in perspective*. In addition, the preferred palliative coping strategies were *switching off; spending time with family friends and looking forward to good things in future* such as lesson finishing times. Results showed that the effectiveness of these strategies would, to a greater extent, be enhanced by supportive relationships particularly within the school microsystem. Findings also revealed that resilient teachers used direct-action coping strategies more frequently than at-risk teachers. Resilient teachers’ effectiveness in direct-action coping was also higher than that of at-risk teachers.
9.2.4 RQ4: What protective factors enhance the resilience of these urban secondary school teachers?

As noted in sections 8.4.1 and 8.6.1 above, most teachers considered professional experience a major protective factor. Descriptive statistical analyses showed that resilient teachers were more experienced than at-risk teachers. Related to this, resilient teachers’ number of years in present school was much higher than that of at-risk teachers.

The main force characteristics on which resilient and at-risk teachers showed differences from each other were self-efficacy and coping strategies, which suggests these two characteristics are also important protective factors. Resilient teachers showed higher self-efficacy than at-risk teachers in all three factors: Influence on pupil attainment; influence on colleagues and influence on pupil discipline.

Direct-action coping also emerged as a major protective factor for this sample. Resilient teachers utilised direct-action coping strategies more frequently than at-risk teachers. Their effectiveness in direct-action coping was also higher than at-risk teachers’. Resilient teachers used palliative coping strategies less frequently than at-risk teachers. Resilient teachers’ effectiveness in palliative coping was also lower than that reported by at-risk teachers. As previous studies (e.g. Connor-Smith and Flachsbart, 2007) have found personality to strongly predict dispositional coping, these differences in coping may be related to person characteristics of resilient and at-risk teachers.

Findings also showed work-life balance to be a key protective factor. Resilient teachers experienced lack of work-life balance less frequently than at-risk teachers; spent less time per week on work-related activities than at-risk teachers and spent less time per week on planning, preparation and assessment outside designated PPA time than at-risk teachers.
9.3 Contribution to knowledge

(1) Utilisation of mixed-methods approach in a stress and resilience research is an important contribution of the present work to the field. As noted in section 3.3, thus far research on stress has been dominated by surveys (e.g. ATL, 2014; HSE, 2014; NASUWT, 2013) focusing on the prevalence of stress among teachers, whereas resilience researchers (e.g. Mansfield, Beltman and Price, 2013; Pearce and Morrison, 2011; Howard and Johnson, 2004) have so far tended to employ qualitative methodologies. Therefore, this mixed-methods study complements these studies by corroboratively offering both exploratory and explanatory perspectives on stress and resilience among teachers in urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage.

(2) Having an equal focus on stress and resilience in the present study is another important contribution this work makes. Most research in the field has tended to predominantly either focus on stress (e.g. ATL, 2014) or resilience (e.g. Pearce and Morrison, 2011), thereby missing opportunities to comprehensively examine one in the context of the other. Focusing on stress and resilience evenly utilising Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 2006) bioecological model made it possible to examine risk and resilience as occurring in the same environments not isolated. This enabled the examination of resilience and risk factors relating to person characteristics proximal processes, context and time (PPCT).

(3) Unlike most similar studies – for example Howard and Johnson (2004) – which exclusively sampled teachers considered to be resilient, the present study did not screen participants at recruitment. This led to teachers of varying resilience levels to participate in the study. Thus, comparisons between resilient and at-risk teachers were possible.

(4) Utilising a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis methodologies enabled triangulation during integrative analysis, with one method complementing another. Thus, the present study illuminated on
the multiplicity of possibilities offered by combining descriptive, factor, regression, thematic and pen portrait analyses in a single study. Very little research focusing on stress and resilience has thus far employed these analyses techniques in an integrative way. Taking into account the breadth of factors considered under this framework, the mixed methods approach appears to have a significant advantage over competing approaches. In this research, mixing methods enabled explanatory and exploratory analyses to be conducted. While they have their place in this field, single method approaches would not have the advantage of comparing and corroborating datasets.

9.4 Implications for practice and policy

Consistent with the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

(1) Overall workload, one of the primary sources of stress, needs to be better managed or reduced. Reducing contact time, for example, could potentially enable teachers to do more planning, preparation and assessment tasks during PPA designated time in school. In turn, this would help improve teachers’ work-life balance and lower workload-related stress.

(2) Stress emanating from too much change too quickly with little or no consultation with staff needs to be mitigated to reduce negative teacher perception of change. This might be developed through more collaborative change management strategies and would help promote a collegiate culture where change is managed in a way in which staff feel ownership of the change.

(3) Pertaining the difference between resilient and at-risk teachers in number of years in present school where resilient teachers had been in their current school for significantly longer – also corroborated by interview data – it seems length of time in a school can be an asset (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006) which fosters resilience. In keeping
with this, a culture whereby teachers are supported to stay and rewarded for staying in the school could help enhance protective factors and foster resilience among teachers.

(4) Last – considering most teachers felt their schools were unsupportive to teachers experiencing stress treating it as a medical problem requiring a medical solution – counselling in school would have a mediating effect on teachers’ experience of stress and, therefore, promote their resilience. Experience of mental and emotional symptoms of stress, especially among at-risk teachers, and the general reluctance by teachers to share these experiences with senior management suggests a further need for support and counselling within the school environment. This would potentially improve teachers’ wellbeing by reducing stress levels and promoting resilience.

9.5 Parameters and limitations of the research

In terms of research literature on teacher stress and resilience, the parameters of this study clearly defined a number of design and methodological limitations. Firstly, the study was geographically limited to schools in Greater Manchester and Merseyside. This would limit its generalisability to urban secondary schools in UK as a whole. Related to this is the fact that the study sought only to investigate urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage. This again may limit its generalisability to schools in different contexts, for example, rural secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage. Additionally, the study only sought to investigate stress related to particular types of schools and the associated teacher coping strategies and resilience qualities, that is, those relating to working in secondary schools in areas of multiple and complex disadvantage. Outcomes of similar research in, say, primary schools or even high-pressure selective secondary schools could yield different outcomes.
Methodologically, it was not feasible to incorporate classroom observations at each of the schools – particularly the two case study schools – and thus the research had to rely upon teachers’ reports of stress and resilience. This limited this study’s access to process and, to an extent person and context (Bronfenbrenner, 2006). Furthermore, due to limitations of time in the schools, a longitudinal investigation was not possible. Although observing the school dynamics in action would have helped to situate the data, analysis was however supported by triangulation both within and across the interview and survey data sets. Additionally, while using stress level is helpful as an indicator of resilience, a much broader resilience instrument would be helpful. In light of this, it would be worth exploring a possible instrument incorporating force, resource and demand characteristics and proximal processes to measure individual resilience – which would complement the limitations of only using stress level.

As a framework for research, Bronfenbrenner’s (1979,1993 and 1994) bioecological model offers important opportunities for contextualised understandings of individual risk and resilience. However, there remains a challenge in the extent of accessibility of some subsystems compared to others (e.g. work compared to home microsystems). With regard to risk and resilience in the context of work, alternative methods which draw more from other major subsystems such as the home and social microsystems need to be integrated. Access to these has thus far been limited by the sensitivity of exploring these subsystems which are personal. According to Fahie (2014), this ethical barrier remains a major limitation in sensitive research such as studies on stress and resilience. Thus, with more data generated on some subsystems as opposed to others, the utilisation of the bioecological framework may carry on not sitting neatly within resilience research. This is a common characteristic across sensitive research.

With regard to the questionnaire, it would benefit from future advancements insofar as resilience measurement is concerned. In the
present study, resilience has been conceived as an adaptive outcome – hence the use of the stress level scale as a proxy indicator of resilience. While data derived from this element has been complemented by other data, it would be beneficial if further advancements were made in the field to devise a stand-alone measure of resilience which comprehensively takes into account Person, Process, Context and Time in a bioecological context.

9.6 Recommendations for further research work

In light of the noted limitations, opportunities for further research in this area do exist.

(1) There is need to conduct comparative studies across different types of schools to offer a further dimension to an understanding of the role of process, person and context in proximal processes in relation to stress and resilience.

(2) Another research opportunity to explore would be a national study to provide a broader outlook on teacher stress and resilience. This could be particularly useful to the formulation and implementation of government education and health policy in relation to teacher wellbeing.

(3) Methodologically, incorporating participant diaries and observations would expand the nature of data obtained. This could help provide more insights into process, person, context and time. Bearing in mind the difficulty of gathering personal and social data about participants, it might be also worth considering conducting collaborative action research with the teachers.

(4) Furthermore, longitudinal studies would help establish the extent to which time and experience affect teacher resilience. A potential benefit of this would be the generation of more comprehensive data on time and its link to teacher stress and resilience.
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Main survey questionnaire

Dear Colleague

This questionnaire, to be completed by teachers only, is part of a study on teacher stress in Greater Manchester and Merseyside schools. The aim of this research phase is to identify and profile stress-resistant/resilient teachers in secondary schools. You are assured of absolute anonymity and confidentiality.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the freepost envelop provided.
Thank you for taking your time to complete this questionnaire.

Yours sincerely,
Controllah Gabi (Researcher)

A About you

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex: Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Do you have Qualified Teacher Status?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Are you an overseas-trained teacher? Yes | No

How many years teaching experience do you have altogether? ___________ years
What academic/professional qualifications do you have (degree and above)?

How many schools, including current, have you worked in so far? ___________
How long have you taught in your present school? ___________ Years
Did you have another career before teaching? (please specify) ...........................

What is your current job title? ..........................................................
For how many years have you held this position? ___________ 

What is the main subject you teach? .................. What other subjects do you teach? .........

B Your workload

How much time (in hours) per week do you spend on:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact time</th>
<th>Directed time</th>
<th>PPA time</th>
<th>Supervision duties</th>
<th>Cover for colleagues</th>
<th>Extra-curricular activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</table>

Planning preparation and assessment outside designated PPA time ___________
Approximate total time per week you spend on work-related activities ___________
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<tr>
<th><strong>Your perceptions</strong></th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If students are not disciplined at home, they are still likely to accept discipline in school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have enough experience to deal with almost any pupil discipline problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>When I really try, I can get through to even the most difficult students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers are a very powerful influence on student achievement when all factors are considered</td>
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<tr>
<td>When the grades of my students improve, it is usually because I used more effective approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel I have significant impact on the school improvement effort in my school</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can often significantly help to resolve conflict between colleagues</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel my views are valued by my senior colleagues</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th><strong>Sources of stress</strong></th>
<th>Part I</th>
<th>Part II</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working through breaks and lunch times</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of non-contact time</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Society’s diminishing respect for teachers</td>
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Please give examples, if any, of other particular times or events which trigger extreme stress in you.

### How you have been feeling

Please indicate whether, in the past two years, you have experienced the following feelings ranging from (1) rarely to (5) frequently.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
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<td>I feel I don’t have work-life balance</td>
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<td>I feel I can’t make decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel that life is too much effort</td>
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<td>I feel uneasy and restless</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel upset for no obvious reason</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel anxious for no obvious reason</td>
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<td>I feel unduly tired</td>
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<td>I feel stressed for no obvious reason</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel stress at home has a significant impact on my work-related stress level</td>
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</table>

On a scale of 0=not stressed to 10=extremely stressed, indicate with a cross how stressed you have usually felt during term time in the past two years.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stress Level</th>
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</table>
How you have coped with pressure

Please respond to each item in two parts. In Part I please indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 whether in the past two years you have (1) rarely to (5) frequently coped with pressure in the following ways. In Part II please indicate how effective this strategy usually is using a scale (1) not effective to (5) very effective.

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<th>Part II</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set priorities and consider a range of plans in dealing with the problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Think of good things ahead in future</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take immediate action according to my understanding of the situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep things in perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pause and think objectively about the situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avoid confrontation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t let the problem go until I have satisfactorily dealt with it</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deal with the source of the problem so that it does not happen again</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seek help from others in aspects of the problem I can’t deal with</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep my feelings under control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make sure people are aware I am doing my best</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to see the humour in it</td>
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<tr>
<td>Try to reassure myself everything will work right</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek social support to help me cope emotionally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try not to worry or think about it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express my feelings and frustration to others</td>
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<tr>
<td>How else do you cope with pressure effectively?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Participation in the following interviews
If you would be willing to participate in interviews which will follow this survey we would be grateful if you provide your details below:

NAME: E-mail: Phone/Mobile

Thank you for taking your time to complete this questionnaire. Please, now return it in the freepost envelop provided.
Appendix 2: Scope of interview schedule

Opening text
Thank you for participating in our recent survey and agreeing to take part in this interview. With your permission, this interview will be recorded to avoid inaccuracies and misrepresentation of what you will say. No one else will listen to this tape and your name will remain anonymous in reporting this research.

Biographical
1) Can you briefly tell us about your career so far? How has it impacted on you?

Workload
2) You say you have x hours a week working in total – is this a problem? How does this impact on your personal life? What are the trickiest aspects to juggle? How do you cope?

Sources of Stress
3) How do the following aspects of your job impact on you:
   i. Pupil behaviour?
   ii. Colleagues’, pupils’ and management’s attitudes towards your main subject?
   iii. On-the-job relations?
   iv. How do you cope?
   v. What could be done to improve the situation?
   vi. Parents – if not already raised
4) You teach x subject, what are people’s attitude’s to it? How do they affect you?
   a) staff in general?
   b) senior colleagues’?
   c) pupils?
5) From your self stress rating, you gave yourself x,
   a) What do you feel is the reason for this low/high stress?
   b) Do you think you cope with pressure effectively?
   c) What personality attribute do you think affects your choice of coping strategy and its effectiveness? (if not covered in ‘a’)
   d) Strategies?
   e) From your experience, how do you think stress affects teachers?
   f) What do you think could be done to make your job to make your job less stressful?
6) Generally how are your on-the-job relationships between staff?
   a) What are the tensions?
   b) What can be done to improve matters?
   c) How do you cope?
7) What are the other causes of stress in the school
   a) technical support
   b) support for special needs
   c) processes
   d) money
   e) development opportunities
8) Why do you think some teachers experience much more /less stress?
   a) What do you think such teachers should do to reduce their stress?
Appendix 3: Letter to head teachers

Dear Colleague

Greater Manchester Teacher Stress Project

We are offering you and your staff the opportunity to participate in this research and development project on teacher resilience. You may be aware that evidence has so far revealed a considerable rise in the incidence of stress in the teaching profession. Regrettably, we are not yet adequately informed about teachers who cope with, and even thrive under, pressure. We feel strongly that understanding better the complex web of factors impacting upon such teachers' responses to pressure could be valuable to others at risk of succumbing to stress-related illnesses.

The data collection will comprise a questionnaire survey and follow-up interviews. The questionnaire survey aims to examine factors causing stress to teachers and explore the personality and behaviour characteristics of teachers who appear more resilient to stress. We enclose a copy of the questionnaire for your information. You will note that respondents will be asked to indicate on the questionnaire if they are willing to participate in the follow-up interviews. To ensure complete confidentiality and anonymity, free-post return envelops are provided.

Upon completion of data collection and analyses there will be a report and consultation session with members of the school's senior management team. The report will present an analysis of the themes and issues emerging from the participant responses in your school compared with the collated responses from all participating schools in Greater Manchester. It is hoped that findings from this research will significantly contribute towards identifying particular personality and behaviour factors that protect teachers from experiencing stress and also the strategies others use to combat the effects of stress.

Timeframe

Questionnaire survey: 21/01/2008 – 04/02/2008
Interviews: 26/11/2008 – 14/12/2008 (To arranged with interviewees)
Feedback and Consultation: 04/2008 (Exact dates to be arranged with individual schools)

I will contact you in the next few days to discover if you are interested in your school participating formally in this project or, alternatively, if you would be willing to allow us to distribute the questionnaire to staff so they can respond on an individual basis, should they wish. For further information concerning the project please contact Controllah Gabi by e-mail to Controllah.Gabi@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk or by phone on 0161 286 0338.

Yours sincerely,

Controllah Gabi (Researcher)
Olwen McNamara (Professor, Education)
Daniel Muijs (Professor, Education)
### Appendix 4: Literature search results

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Appendix 5: Pilot interview schedule

Opening text
Thank you for participating in our recent survey and agreeing to take part in this interview. With your permission, this interview will be recorded to avoid inaccuracies and misrepresentation of what you will say. No one else will listen to this tape and your name will remain anonymous in reporting this research.

Introduction
1. Can you briefly tell us about your career so far? How has it impacted on you?

Workload
2. You say you have yyyy hours a week working in total – is this a problem? How does this impact on your personal life? What are the trickiest aspects to juggle? How do you cope?

Sources of Stress
3. How do the following aspects of your job impact on you:
   i. Pupil behaviour?
   ii. Colleagues’, pupils’ and management’s attitudes towards your main subject?
   iii. On-the-job relations?
      a. How do you cope?
      b. What could be done to improve the situation?
      c. Parents – if not already raised
4. You teach yyyy, what are people’s attitude’s to it? How do they affect you?
   a. staff in general?
   b. senior colleagues’
   c. pupils
5. From your self stress rating, you gave yourself yyyy.
   a. What do you feel is the reason for this low/high stress?
   b. Do you think you cope with pressure effectively?
   c. What personality attribute do you think affects your choice of coping strategy and its effectiveness? (if not covered in ‘a’)
   d. Strategies?
   e. From your experience, how do you think stress affects teachers?
f. What do you think could be done to make your job less stressful?
6. Generally how are your on-the-job relationships between staff?
   a. what are the tensions?
   b. what can be done to improve matters?
   c. how do you cope?
7. what are the other causes of stress in the school?
   a. technical support
   b. support for special needs
   c. processes
   d. money
   e. development opportunities
8. Why do you think some teachers experience much more /less stress?
   a. What do you think such teachers should do to reduce their stress?
Appendix 6: Pilot interview transcript 1

1. Me: I would like to first of all thank you for participating in the survey and agreeing to take part in this interview.
2. Interviewee: Right.
3. Me: I would like to assure you from the onset that no one else is going to listen to this tape and it's only being done for the sake of accuracy in the reporting of the research.
4. Interviewee: Okay that's fine.
5. Me: ... and your details will remain anonymous and confidential.
6. Interviewee: Aha.
7. Me: I would like ask you about your career in brief so far.
8. Interviewee: Okay.
9. Me: How has your teaching career impacted on you as a person?
10. Interviewee: Well, I suppose um, Well I always wanted to be a teacher. But certainly in the first three or four years I found it very difficult. Especially with workload because there was a considerable amount of work I used to do outside of school hours. I found that very difficult before getting used to it. Coming out of university, I think that caused me some degree of stress.
11. Me: Okay.
12. Interviewee: But recently, I mean, in the last four years, obviously I have taken additional promotions and responsibilities. And I am head of faculty. Obviously that comes with its own additional stresses.
13. Me: So can you say your coping with stress has improved with time or has it gone worse?
14. Interviewee: Um, I think my ability to cope with stress has improved, yes. I have certainly learned to, um, to rationalise my workload a bit more and to learn how to prioritise things and realise that I need to set myself clear deadlines to meet personally as classroom teacher and then also deadlines that I need to meet as a head of faculty.
Me: I have a questionnaire here. If you don’t mind I will make reference to it here and there. You indicated you do sixty hours a week in total. Is this a problem in any way?

Interviewee: Well, I think it is a problem because there was a problem with my work/life balance to suffer. I did work through the evenings. Otherwise I would usually work at weekends as well, either the whole of one day or part of both days. And then constant to that had an impact on my work/life balance. Well that’s the sacrifice I suppose I am prepared to make because I accepted that when I took additional responsibilities. Well, I don’t get to rest with my children during the weekends or during the holidays. Typically I would spend a big part of my holiday time in school working with pupils there which I think have accepted that when I took on additional responsibilities.

Me: In your day-to-day duties, which do you think is the trickiest aspect to juggle?

Interviewee: Um, I think that ... well from my point of view the most difficult aspect to balance is my commitment to my individual classes my role as a classroom teacher and then my leadership and management responsibilities because I find I have to plan my lessons on the way to work on the train and then after work whereas my supposedly free time in the school day is spent doing leadership and management tasks.

Me: And, do you think in your opinion having to plan for your work, as you say, on your way to work ... do you think it affects the way in which you are going to do your duties?

Interviewee: Um, well I think I am quite fortunate in that I do have a lot of time in the morning when I can travel to work. I live quite a distance away from my place of work. I get to the train at 5 in the morning and then I usually arrive by a quarter past six. And that gives me a full hour of working within the time before school starts. So I usually find If I can manage to get my lessons planned in the morning and afterwards. But then if I don’t quite finish planning in the morning and then I think I have got time during the day to do that. And inevitably there is something that crops up which wasn’t planned it kind of has an impact on my main job primarily teach lessons manage learning pupils. I am not always able to do that as effectively as I would want to do.

Me: So overall how do you cope with all that work?
Interviewee: Um, yes I can cope. Generally I think I can cope with it. I might not necessarily do the job as I always wanted to but I do get done what needs to be done usually on time.

Me: How do the following aspects of your job impact on you: Let me start with the most talked about pupils behaviour?

Interviewee: Um, yeah, that has quite a big impact because I usually end up dealing with other people’s problems. If a member of my department has problems with a particular child or particular pupil poor behaviour usually it gets passed on to me to deal with whereas if I personally have an issue with pupil behaviour, well I don’t have anybody else to go to I sort it out myself.

Me: And does this pupil behaviour [issue], at times, involve parents?

Interviewee: Yes, it usually involves contact with parents either by letter or by telephone.

Me: Overall how do you view the attitude of parents concerning their children’s behaviour?

Interviewee: Um, most parents are usually supportive of what you are trying to do. Um, I am not entirely sure how committed they are to dealing with to dealing with attitudes. I do think most of them do pay lip service to it and they all miss out on opportunities to help and get themselves involved and solve issues.

Me: And what about colleagues’, pupils’ and management’s attitudes towards your main subject...is it an issue to you?

Interviewee: Um, not really because I teach English so obviously that is a very high priority. Um I do feel there is a lack of understanding by other senior leaders about the nature of English – the demands of English. There is quite a fundamental aspect I think they fail to understand exactly how demanding national tests are and understand what pupils’ are required to do in order to reach level 5 or level 6 at KS3. Because it seems that in maths and science pupils do achieve very highly and they assume that those levels are exactly the same and so ask questions why they are not doing well in English as they are in Maths. And it is very difficult to explain to them why pupils are not doing as well because they are not really investing their time in understanding the discreteness of the subject.

Me: Does that really affect you?

Interviewee: It causes me great concern and it does cause me stress because ultimately I feel I am held accountable for performance of pupils who might not
even realise. And, you know, the questions are being asked – so why haven’t their targets been achieved? And, you know, we try to explain to them why they haven’t achieved their targets. Whereas I might argue that target for that particular child was unreasonably high - they don’t really get it. All they want are results and the end of the day – not the process you go through in order to achieve those results.

Me: And how do you usually cope with those challenges of senior colleagues not understanding the demanding nature of your subject?

Interviewee: Um, well, I try to explain it and I give them examples and I give them the evidence that I have gathered in relation to that particular subject.

Me: What about on-the-job relationships?

Interviewee: Um, generally they don’t cause me too much stress. Um, there are one or two members of my department who have been throwing their weight. And that caused me stress in terms of how I, how I am going to deal with that. But generally, you know the department is quite supportive of each other. They are not going to cause me too much, um, too many problems.

Me: And relations with parents?

Interviewee: Um (silence), usually it doesn’t concern me too much. Um, it concerns me when you get a letter of complaint from parents, um, complaining about an aspect of their child’s education. In a sense they are only accepting the word of the child not what you have to say. And then they write a letter of complaint making lots of these accusations. And they are not prepared to listen. When you attempt to explain it, well, all they are doing is taking their child’s side all the time which doesn’t help the situation. You do get a feeling that sometimes what they are really looking for is some sort of compensation or some kind of redress. Um, so that causes concern when I contact parents. I have to be really careful about exactly what I say and how I say it. You fear that it might come back at some point in the future, um, and I might be taken totally out of context because they haven’t really understood or they don’t believe me or etcetera.

And I quite understand why a parent might want to defend their child. But at the end of the day they we see the children more than they do and have a better understanding of what exactly they are like in school. The parents tend to think that the schools are there to service them rather than their child.

Me: Alright. So, what are the other causes of stress in the school?
Interviewee: Um, I think Ofsted causes stress, um, that causes stress to everybody, teachers and pupils. I think that, um, probably the drive to raise standards in schools does cause stress because senior members of staff focus on raising achievement and attainment rather than they forget that the people that they are gonna make victims to that are the people they should be supporting, i.e. the teachers that they constantly give reference to in terms of standards in different tasks. You sometimes wonder whether all these tasks are actually contributing to raising standards or whether they are contributing to the impression of raising standards. They make you do things that are not gonna make a difference in my classroom that’s going to look good to somebody who comes in and inspect you.

Me: And in the subjects you teach, um, do you ever have need for technical support?

Interviewee: Um, yes, I do.

Me: Have you got any issues as far as strain, maybe, emanating from the kind of technical support you get and how you get it?

Interviewee: I do find it very difficult to get technical support sometimes. In particular with ICT. And if something breaks down. Most of it is not working. It’s very difficult to get hold of somebody to sort it out.

Me: So how do you go about it? Suppose you don’t get the technical support you need in time – any contingent measures that you have in place?

Interviewee: Um, well, we all very well experienced teachers so. You either test it before you actually start. At break time or time before school. So you usually plan some sort of contingency. That increases your planning time

Me: What about support for special needs children?

Interviewee: Um, we do have one teaching assistant in the faculty. But unfortunately she’s not very good. She’s less of assistance than she does cause problems not least because she is not trained in professional conduct and as a manager that causes stress because I have to deal with that. That causes the teachers that she supposed to be supporting stress because they can’t rely on her. They will say they could rely on somebody else.

Me: And what about the processes, um, within the school – how things are done?
Interviewee: Um, generally the processes are clear and the policies are clear which include behaviour management. But it's the actual way those processes are used consistently. There isn't enough consistency in applying the process and that cause problems particularly if you thought you've been doing something correctly because that's the way you've do it before someone turns around and says, 'Well you have not done it properly so we can't do anything to help you until you do it properly and that causes stress.'

Me: Do you have any problems as a head of faculty with the kind of resources available to you or money available to you to spend in your department?

Interviewee: Um, no, no I don't think we have an issue with that?

Me: What about development issues, opportunities, sorry, for your personal development and professional development of members of your department?

Interviewee: Um, again I don't have an issue with that. I do feel people sometimes people cloud their perception of what the whole faculty is doing. Somebody may come to me and say, 'Well I want to do this.' Unfortunately it's not in the best interest of the faculty and we really do.

Me: I move on to your personal stress rating. From the scale that I am holding here in the questionnaire, um, you rated yourself between 5 and 6 out of 10. Is it 5 ½, somewhere there. What do you feel is the reason for this average stress?

Interviewee: Um, I think probably, um, the combination of day-to-day, having to deal with day-to-day problems that crop up and, um, behaviour management issues and the amount of paperwork.

Me: Do you consider this level of stress too much for you individually or it's just about what you can cope with?

Interviewee: Um, for me, it's, it's, it's okay I can just cope with it right now.

Me: Okay. How effective do you think your general handling of pressure is?

Interviewee: Very effective. I think that I should be more proactive in dealing with issues which crop up.

Me: What personality attribute do you think affects your choice of coping strategy and its effectiveness?

Interviewee: I think the desire to, um, not to cause other people stress probably influences my choice of coping strategy. So if I think that by doing, by keeping something to myself or sorting something out myself, it would be better for others than to be causing them stress. That's probably the option out.
Me: From your experience, how do you think stress affects teachers at a school like yours?

Interviewee: I think stress affects teachers to a great extent. I agree with you. I mean generally that people constantly feel pressure.

Me: Have you seen any manifestations of stress within members of your department and other colleagues?

Interviewee: Um, yes we had two members of the faculty off for a long term absence this year because of stress. And have had members of the faculty that have gone for counselling for anxiety. I mean these are, these are not issues that have necessarily been caused by working at school but they have been exacerbated by it.

Me: From the management’s point of view, what is the position regarding members of staff who do not come for work due to stress-related illnesses?

Interviewee: Um, I think they are inconsistent in their approach to it and I think they are unsympathetic unfortunately and I think they are more insistent in having teachers standing in front of their classroom than they are necessarily interested in the wellbeing of the members of staff.

Me: Has there been any effort made to try and deal with stress in teachers – I am looking at things like having training days for how to deal with stress or something like that?

Interviewee: I think there has been very minimal effort and very superficial effort. Um, the only mention of stress we had this year was when we had to complete the questionnaires.

Me: This questionnaire?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Me: Do you think it’s a step in the right direction?

Interviewee: I think it is. I would say if they would take on board the comments made in the survey – in the questionnaire and the comments you collect from the interviews I would feel that depending on whether they take it on board and in that sense do something about reducing workload, then well, I think it’s a step and half in the right direction.

Me: As far as stress is concerned, what’s your position about outside agencies like myself having to interview you on top of the other duties that you have as a teacher and manager?
Interviewee: Um, I think, two issues really, I feel disappointed that the school needs to get itself outside agencies to find out something it should find out itself. So that’s my view. I am not opposed to completing questionnaires and being interviewed basically. I feel if the school don’t know how to ask the questions, then they can use someone who can ask the questions. But I think that the more people outside of the school

Me: What do you think could be done to make your job less stressful? You have talked about workload – what other things, do you think need improving to make it more teacher-friendly, if you like, in terms of stress?

Interviewee: Um, I think, well, I think there needs to be more administrative support for the staff. Um, I think, a meaningful reduction in paperwork and administrative tasks. I think that if senior leaders need to have more open discussions about the tasks they assign to people. And I think what really helps to make very clear to parents and pupils that teaching staff and support staff are very professional capacity and the bottom line is the school would support every single member of staff in whatever situation arises and not at the expense of public relations.

Me: Why do you think some teachers experience more stress than others?

Interviewee: I want to think that it’s because of their commitment to professionalism and initially because they vary.

Me: And, finally, what do you think – we have talked about what can be done by those in positions of authority in education to reduce stress – what do you think teachers themselves should do to reduce the amount of stress they experience?

Interview: Um, well, I think teachers need to be smarter in what they do in terms of managing their time. Um I think teachers need to learn to say no when asked to do something they find unreasonable. Um, but I also think the teachers need to, certainly some of the teacher in my department need to realise that, um, ostensibly we are there to educate pupils and also learn to manage the workload and identify then they need to have forward planning in terms of their own workload as well as their teaching.

Me: Is there anything you feel needs to be discussed about stress that you may feel may have been left out that will be useful in the feedback to your school on this survey and interviews?
Interview: Um, the only thing I would say is worth mentioning is that, you know, the school should work to increase non-contact time for staff. Because at the moment we do have a minimum of non-contact time when I am not involved in classes. If the school is really committed to reducing stress and workload pressures then it should be found seeking to appoint more members of staff and that would reduce the burden of teaching.

Me: I would like to thank you very much for your time. Um, we'll be writing to you just to say thank you for participating and sometime in September we will be sitting down with the senior management to give them feedback on the research but no names will be mentioned.
Appendix 7: Pilot interview transcript 2

1. Me: I’m coming from the University of Manchester. I’m doing this project it’s part of my PhD but I am doing it with Professor Olwen McNamara and Professor Daniel Muijis. So the only purpose for this tape is so that I cannot represent you in the reporting of the research and there is no one else who is going to listen to it. It will only be used for the purposes of the research and nothing else. So maybe you can start by telling me just a brief history of your career so far in teaching.

7. Interviewee: My teaching career started in September 2003, first September 2003. So I have been teaching for the past 4 years. I had some time off in the last teaching year to have a baby. I had my baby in February 2006 and came back towards the end of the last teaching year. I teach ICT and also maths. In past I’ve taught careers.

12. Me: So which classes are you teaching ICT?

13. Interviewee: ICT is my main subject I teach ICT right through KS3 and Key Stage 4 and I also teach maths.

15. Me: And how long is your working week in terms of hours?

16. Interviewee: Right we have five periods in a day and I have 4 non-contact periods in a week.

18. Me: How many hours is that?

19. Interviewee: Five hours in a day, five days a week, twenty five hours. Four hours non-contact periods so I teach twenty one hours.

21. Me: Do you find that time enough for you to do your job or you need to use part of your free time to do your work?

23. Interviewee: I find myself giving up lots of non-contact periods to take other people’s duties. We don’t really have enough time after school to get all the work done. So yes it does encroach in my teaching and planning time, a lot of time is spent with my KS4 pupils.

27. Me: And how do you find your work-life balance?

28. Interviewee: There are certain times of the year when work takes over, however there are times of the year when I can sit back and usually sit back and relax a little bit more with my family. Usually it works, however we are coming to the end of school year next after Friday and will be free for six weeks.

32. Me: So how does this workload impact on life and personality?
Interviewee: I put extra pressure on my husband, I am very lucky and I’ve got a very supportive husband and I’ve got understanding children. I am very lucky.

Me: You must be one of the few lucky ones.

Interviewee: I’ve got a husband who doesn’t mind ironing, he is quite happy to do the cooking.

Me: What do you find the trickiest aspect of your job?

Interviewee: Coming back after maternity leave was awful and horrendous. I was not given anytime whatsoever to settle back into work. I’ve been off for few months having the baby. I would come in basically hit the ground running. Come in on Monday morning come in to teach period one that was pretty awful. However I could have coped if they had given me one timetable and let me stick to it. I had three timetables in the first 2 weeks as soon as I was given one timetable I had a chance to get used to it. Bearing in mind what my KS3 kids are. The person who had taught KS3 previously couldn’t have told me what they were up to and what they were doing and they didn’t have any written work because it was all stored up on a computer. So I had nothing to look at so I had to go into the lessons and find out from the children where they were up to so that I could deliver the lessons. Soon as I got myself sorted I knew where I was up to and was given a fresh timetable.

Me: So you’re settling in aren’t you?

Interviewee: It was a little bit more than unsettling after a third timetable in two weeks I flipped my mind.

Me: How have you tried to go around it to manage these changes of timetable?

Interviewee: It’s just not fair it wasn’t fair at all. We’ve been given a timetable we should just stick to it because there is a lot of work involved in planning. You scheme for work, plan out your lessons and get to know the kids and from there you’re expected to be able to keep them kids and carry on teaching them, put together another timetable and another timetable and another timetable within a very short period of time. It wasn’t fair and that’s why in the last school year I was off for 3 to 4 weeks with stress.

Me: with stress?
Interviewee: That's what you're doing your research on now is it? Because eventually I've found myself not sleeping at night and going over things in my head. You know, just suffering the usual symptoms basically and in the end of it I went to the doctor's and explained what happened and he gave me a sick note and then told me not to come back until I've spoken to the head.

Me: Since then have you heard any kind of... [interjection]

Interviewee: ... I started afresh, I started afresh in September and in September everything has been fine I've not had any sickness apart from a couple of weeks before Easter when I came down with flu. When you come down with flu there is no great deal you can do about it [laughing].

Me: During the time when you were off with stress did you get any kind of support?

Interviewee: No, no whatsoever no.

Me: When you came back?

Interviewee: Nothing.

Me: How do you feel about it?

Interviewee: Nobody cares. There was problem with me coming back to work after maternity leave; no one knows what the problem is no one has done anything to settle it. Having said that perhaps I should have taken the initiative. I'm going to see Mrs Hymans speak to her about the problems and what happened. Part of the problem is on me.

Me: And part is on the administration?

Interviewee: It was administration, with me coming back to work after maternity leave that should have been sorted and then I wouldn't have been off work with stress.

Me: And how do you feel now?

Interviewee: Right that period of time is over and done. Out of the way and I'm fine now. I'm not stressed. However, I do think that nothing is in place for people coming back from maternity leave.

Me: What do you think is the most stressful aspect of your job, not what you have talked about already, generally looking at your job?

Interviewee: Teaching a new subject, well actually not so much teaching a new subject, a new course where you have to learn a new programme. Because ICT is evolving all time it's not constant it's not like maths where everything is you
know, sort, how to add up and sort, how to subtract, the methods don’t change but ICT changes all the time. New programmes are brought up you have to keep yourself up to date we have recently started a new subject we have all have to learn new programme we haven’t had any training on it.

Me: So how do you cope?

Interviewee: [laughing] that’s why I bought a text book, taught myself how to use this new programme. I made some mistakes unfortunately I made some mistakes with the kids as well. To start off I was following someone else’s instructions and then was doing something until I realised the flaws in those instructions. So I went out and bought myself a text book where it tells how to do it properly and I created my own work sheets and that’s fine. However some training originally would have helped. It’s like somebody giving you a set of numbers and asks you to work them out altogether.

Me: Have you had... [Interjection].

Interviewee: I’ve asked about training in the past in ICT we don’t go on courses any courses, no money seems to be spent as far as courses or anything is concerned. Our budget is so constrained. We can barely afford anything. This year I am not sure about last year I can’t remember but this year none of our key stage 3 pupils have been able to print out because of budget constraints. We have had no paper, or ink to print if we delay those kids to print the KS4 printer will not be able to print out the documents that they need. In order to offer support we got to provide for all the working folders for coursework for the moderator.

Me: How has that impacted on you, maybe on you and the pupils you teach. Suppose maybe they must be aware that they should be printing. How has that impacted on the level of resources on your relationship with your pupils?

Interviewee: We did cope actually because I’ve explained to my pupils why they have not done the work that they should have done and they have accepted it. So they know it is not me it’s our fault. It is a problem with the resources we have. We haven’t got computers that we need to do our job. We haven’t got facilities.

Me: And the job has to be done?

Interviewee: Yeah.
Me: Is there any particular approach towards um, suppose you are being appraised on performance?

Interviewee: When you have got someone from Ofsted in your lesson and at the beginning of the lesson a technician comes up and says can you log off your terminal please? Just as you’ve got your PowerPoint set up. Yeah, imagine how that feels?

Me: So any pupil behaviour problems that you may have experienced in the past. And how have you dealt with it?

Interviewee: Efficiently, it works.

Me: Is there any kind of behaviour that sticks out to you as something that could be stretching your patience to the limit.

Interviewee: I have to deal with the fighting in the classroom.

Me: How have dealt with that?

Interviewee: Pull them apart and send them to different rooms.

Me: And parents’ involvement?

Interviewee: Yeah, when the problem exacerbated that’s... I mean it’s not something that happens every day. It happened once or twice in my teaching career, so it’s not something that is particularly worrying.

Me: If you don’t mind I will have a look at your stress rating.

Interviewee: Bearing in mind that I did fill that in very quickly.

Me: My area of interest is the scale. It seems it’s fairly low rating.

Interviewee: I don’t often feel stressed.

Me: Do you know why that is?

Interviewee: My personality.

Me: Tell me without divulging much of your details but the personality that has to do with your job.

Interviewee: well before teaching I used to work in banking. In banking I would see customers and afterwards had to explain to them why I couldn’t give them overdraft facilities, loans and things like that. Sometimes people didn’t always react to the news so you would have to deal with difficult people as well as nice easy people so I have to learn to deal with difficult situations then so perhaps that has come over into my teaching. So not to get so upset by bad behaviour I can stay calm and relaxed and deal with that. That is why I was so upset when I
came back from maternity leave. I had to deal with all that basically. Because
usually bad behaviour doesn’t stress me out that much.
Me: Doesn’t it?
Interviewee: No I can cope with it. It’s when I’ve messed about a lot that
stresses me out.
Me: Alright. And how do you advice for example NQTs who have got a problem
with coping with the demands of a teaching job? Suppose he or she comes into
your department.
Interviewee: Sit back and prioritise.
Me: How does one prioritise given that almost everything that’s on your
schedule is important?
Interviewee: We have to think what’s important to the school what’s most
important as far as the pupils are concerned. Yes definitely KS3 kids important
but KS4 kids are going to be leaving shortly with exam results so they have got
to be more important than KS3 kids. So KS4 kids are going to get a lot more of
attention than KS3 kids. Does that sound... it sounds a bit callous I think. It
sounds very callous but the KS3 kids eventually will be KS4 kids and they will
now demand all your attention. The course that we are doing is very time
sensitive. They do 4 GCSEs in the time they take to do two so we have got an
awful lot of work to do in a short period of time and also we have got to cover the
time. Like there are lots of children not working to the best of their abilities and so
tsometimes you have got to go back and do some pieces of work again.
Me: Do you ever recall helping a teacher who had experienced problems with
the job in general?
Interviewee: [pensively/silence]...um, officially to help somebody who is
experiencing problems – no, but I do talk with colleagues and discuss different
situations and tell them how to do things differently. So, yeah, as a friend and
colleague I chat with my other colleagues but...
Me: What are the key things that you hammer on when you’re helping
colleagues who are having emotional problems?
Interviewee: Basically you just need to stay calm because of course you cannot
jump until you get better. It’s really vastly important to stay calm. If you are calm
in dealing with the situation then you can deal with the situation, think about
what you are doing. If you let yourself get frustrated – if you let yourself too
much about the situation then it could quite get out of hand and you find you
have reacted in a way that perhaps you may have done something or you have
said something you do not know, so, yes, stay calm.

Me: What other strategies, for things like unbecoming behaviour of pupils, of
parents and colleagues what other strategies would you advice, a teacher who is
in that situation to use?

Interviewee: What sort of behaviour are talking about, specify something and I
will give you an answer to it.

Me: I remember when I was teaching IT pupils would want to just pull off the
plug because they didn’t want to do work basically, yeah.

Interviewee: If they in any way damage the equipment pulling out a plug from a
socket I would say it is damaging computer equipment and take them off the
network you give them written work to do. Now in that case I would give them
the most boring written work that I possibly imagine. Pupils will be still learning
ICT they are getting something out of it. They are learning ICT but they are not
enjoying what they are doing. Um, so what you know they have been taken off
and they have been given written work for damaging computer equipment.

That’s standard departmental procedure.

Me: Has there been a member of your department or maybe a colleague who
has been verbally abused by an upset parent.

Interviewee: Not at all.

Me: So you must be at a good school then?

Interviewee: I think we do have a lot of support from parents. If we have kids that
are knocking and messing about in front of parents more often parents are quite
happy to come in and discuss.

Me: So how has that impacted on the children?

Interviewee: It helps so much because if they start knocking and messing
causing problems we get parents and parents have a word with kids. But if once
if you’ve given them a few detentions you know you’ve gone through the normal
process and if they are still causing problems then get in the parents.

Me: What do you think about general staff relations?

Interviewee: Very good, very good within our department.

Me: And what about in the school?

Interviewee: Um, I don’t have time to go to the staffroom.
Me: Any particular reason for not going there?
Interviewee: Lack of time mainly and with information why would I want to go. I can have my dinner just as easily here. I go over there, I don't really know anyone to talk to, I just sit down and have my cup of tea and walk back again I do tend to um i know by law actually you’re supposed to take a break. However um I suppose it’s a choice isn’t it? It’s your own personal choice. If you’ve got the time you know you’ve got the dinner available so you eat dinner while you’re working lest you might think you’ve got time yet you haven’t got.
Me: So you would rather do your work here than take it home. So does that imply you don’t do some of your work home?
Interviewee: I do, I do work at home, yeah.
Me: And are you happy with that?
Interviewee: I watch what I am doing at home. Sometimes I have to take folders at home and there is a problem actually in getting all the folders in the car.
Me: With children I know. My son has a problem with that.
Interviewee: And the last thing you would want is tomato ketchup on somebody’s coursework. You have to watch, you have to be careful.
Me: Alright because I remember when I was taking some of my work home, my son would be demanding a lot of attention, my wife wants also part of the time so it was tricky.
Interviewee: My kids are very good actually when I am working at home they know I’m working. They stay away because they know they’re going to get chastised [laughing]. I have to organise myself so that when I’m working at home the kids are doing something and they will be sorted out.
Me: And what is your general approach to handling this work? I want to try and probe more into it because I have seen some people prefer to stay at work until they’ve done all the work and go home, come early in the morning and do some of it [laughing]
Interviewee: Um, no, I don’t do early mornings. If I’ve got childcare at home and I’ve got support at home and the majority of the school year of that support at home and then I could stay behind. Then I will do my work at school. But between May and July I haven’t got support at home so I have got to take my work I haven’t got choice. I have to pick the baby at the childminder’s.
Me: So that’s a kind of balancing act you do?
Interviewee: If I had a choice I would work at school and then leave my work here and go home.

Me: Do you think it’s different with men, I mean male teachers with similar challenges?

Interviewee: I don’t know I suppose it depends on your stage that you are in life whether you have got a family that’s what will make a difference and I think single male teachers and single female teachers feel similar, but when you have got a family possibly I would imagine in most cases the children tend to be the department of the woman. It sounds to be sexist, well it depends.

Me: From your experience how do you think stress affects teachers in general, I mean, you come in contact with friends who are in the same job as yours at other schools or here.

Interviewee: Um, I don’t know really.

Me: In general in this school what do you think is the status of stress is it high or low?

Interviewee: I don’t spend very much time at all in the staffroom. I’m the wrong person to ask, sorry.

Me: Why do you think some teachers experience more stress than others? In doing the same job, in the same department, they are teaching the same subject, same class size maybe different classes, similar lifestyles, why would they vary in their levels of stress do you think?

Interviewee: Um, basically I think it’s the case of people having different levels of the amount of stress they can cope with and it will depend on your experiences in life and what you have been exposed to in the past. If you have come from school to college, to university, to teaching, then you have not really been exposed to much of life in general. So you might think, well I don’t know, you might not be able to cope with stress quite well.

Me: So are you implying people who have done other jobs and then come into teaching are in a better position when it comes to dealing with stress?

Interviewee: It’s in their experience I think. I mean teachers who have been teaching for 20 years cope better with stress. I think with stress that comes with teaching than someone who has been teaching for 5 years perhaps wouldn’t cope quite as well. I just think it’s experience, life experience.

Me: Is there anything else you wish to say about stress that I haven’t covered?
Interviewee: Um, I don’t know. Yeah, you seem to be concentrating your research on the classroom and the children, but teachers also have to deal with the resources that we have got or the lack of resources. To teach well in ICT you know old computers crash every two minutes, you know where I am coming from. We have also got to deal with red tape from above, filling in forms, um, and the stress of teaching something new without having any training on.

Me: I would like to thank you for your time.

Interviewee: You are welcome.
Appendix 8: Pilot interview transcript 3

1. Me: I would like to start by saying thank you for participating in the questionnaire survey and agreeing to take part in the interview. I don’t know if you don’t mind me referring to your questionnaire.

2. Interviewee: Of course not.

3. Me: I will ask you to begin by telling me briefly about your career so far.

4. Interviewee: Well, before I became teacher I was working as an industrial chemist and then I trained to become a teacher on the graduate teacher programme at this school. I’ve done my NQT here and my first four years teaching. Tomorrow is my last day at this school. That ‘basically it really I’m moving on to be head of chemistry.

5. Me: Is your reason to do with other opportunities?

6. Interviewee: Yes promotion.

7. Me: Nothing to do with trying to change working atmosphere.

8. Interviewee: I really like it in the school the opportunity to advance professionally wasn’t here so it was when I begin looking somewhere else.

9. Me: You have talked about being an industrial chemist before you came to teaching. Any regrets for doing that so far?

10. Interviewee: Well really not um I enjoyed working as an industrial chemist. I enjoy teaching. I think that’s what I want to do. I put my heart into it and get right.

11. Me: So why did you leave, if you don’t mind?

12. Interviewee: I think because things were changing in the business. I was looking to move on and do something different. I do change what I do quite often in think. Um when I was in industry I moved around within the same company doing various things. At the most I did anything. It was just different types of chemistry or different Lab. It didn’t matter it’s just getting quite boring after a while when challenges just got the same.

13. Me: So are you implying you intend to leave teaching after sometime?

14. Interviewee: No because I think teaching actually is quite interesting as a career there always a new challenge which is why I am moving in September for a new challenge to become head of chemistry. Because it’s a new challenge to be head of chemistry. And I have done that I will find something else to do. But probably it
could it could be well in teaching, I think. I do enjoy it and I’m quite interested in vocational studies. Perhaps that’s my next challenge.

Me: What do you think about your current workload?

Interviewee: Um, I don’t think about it. Normally it is extremely high so much so that I’ve been doing a lot of work at night. It’s unusually high at the minute I think especially if you’re moving jobs but you can only do so much, can’t you? Well what doesn’t get done doesn’t get done. I could spend all my days and nights but it doesn’t work out.

Me: What particularly brings you a lot of pressure, in the role that you’re currently occupying?

Interviewee: Um, I think pressure comes from, mainly from the point of you getting children to pass their exams. I feel a lot of pressure really to get them mark. So a lot of pressure on marking books. Um but I don’t know I don’t really feel the pressure to be honest. It’s there, It’s things I have got to do that doesn’t worry me. I think in the school the big pressure is to get children to pass their exams and you will probably find that in any school.

Me: What impact does that pressure have on you? How do you respond?

Interviewee: Um, I think it just makes me be super organised. Which you wouldn’t think would be here at the moment. But in terms of your management of where students are up to, particular things like to know exactly where you are up to really. For me I think that helps to reduce the pressure because as you noticed I can see what they have missed and what they are up to. To me that’s not a problem.

Me: Um, so are you implying it motivates you?

Interviewee: Yeah it does because I am a bit ,um, finicky because I like things to be finished. So if I have a group of children and they are sought of hold-up I am not happy till they have all done it. So, yeah, it does motivate actually to get everything finished.

Me: And having to work at night?

Interviewee: Yeah, well, I would say that’s very unusual for me. In the last two weeks, um, something quite major has happened. Um, one of the courses in science which is, um there has been a big about turn in the curriculum and it’s just been a mad couple of weeks because we have got to finish one course up and reinstate an old course which we thought we had finished so we had got rid
of all the materials for it. So that’s been frightful. So that’s been quite difficult. So,
yeah, I am working at night at the moment but it is unusual – for me any way.

Me: How does it impact on you?

Interviewee: Um, (pause) I don’t think it’s had terrible impact on me because, um,
at night one of my things I do to relax is attempt to mess around on the internet.
So rather than messing around on the internet I am messing about typing things
in word so it doesn’t make that much of a difference to me. Um, I don’t actually
think it’s affected me at all. I just do it. It’s just, it’s got to be done so I do it.

Me: And, um, what’s the trickiest aspect of your job?

Interviewee: The trickiest aspect is behaviour management. I think that’s
something. If you let your behaviour management slip then you just got a big
struggle on your hands. I think in terms of trickiness that’s probably the worst
thing. Um, it’s very difficult to get back once you know it’s slipped.

Me: What kind of behaviour is that?

Interviewee: Um, it’s just the general classroom management. I mean children are
naturally very chatty and that’s not, um, I am not saying they are horrible on
purpose. They just coming in as children and so a big thing that teachers have
got to do is just calm them down and get them to work because it’s not really a
natural thing to tell them to sit and write and do things. So, yeah, I think it’s taking
children out of the playground and take them out of their culture into your lesson.

That’s what lessons are for formally.

Me: How do you cope? I mean, suppose you have had a bad day with pupil
behaviour – how do you cope with it?

Interviewee: Um, well, I think, I would say particularly, yeah, we have a very very
supportive department and if you’ve had the day from hell you go into the prep
room and people will cheer you up. People make a brew and have a laugh
together and I think it would have been a very difficult job. But I just think because
we got have that supportive network in the department. So, you know, it doesn’t
matter what’s happened – but you go over there and laugh it off and that makes
the difference.

Me: How long does it affect you normally?

Interviewee: Um, it depends what it is really. If I’ve just had a bad day then
probably it wouldn’t affect me out of school gates actually. But, um, if it’s been
something particularly bad – um, there was an incident which I have to say upset
Me quite a lot. But I don’t, I don’t spend loads of time thinking about it. It’s just, it’s what I might say something I have learned from, something I won’t do again.

Me: So, how did you deal with that incident?

Interviewee: Um, well, I made sure I had taken the appropriate action in school, um, and spoke to the person involved. Um, and then, I don’t know, I just satisfied myself really that it’s been dealt with and I have done all the things I could have done. Um, it’s pretty down to experience.

Me: And your relationship with the pupils or the people involved?

Interviewee: Um, it’s not bad actually. Yeah, I tend to be able to get on with most pupils actually and so it’s one of the things that’s been done. It’s been sorted and I have made a let-go of it.

Me: Um, so apart from seeking support from your colleagues, do you seek support maybe outside school?

Interviewee: Um, no I don’t actually, I mean if it’s been something really bad, you know, yeah. But I tend not to take things home because it’s not my husband’s life to have to listen to my stress in work. So I leave it in school most of the time. I have got too nice a life at home to spoil it by taking stress home with me.

Me: So can we say you easily deal with stressful situations?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Me: What personality, I mean, what makes you able to deal with such incidences – because there are some teachers, you may appreciate, who find it difficult to recover? Some may have to take days off because incidents in school or high stress levels. What makes you different from those teachers?

Interviewee: Well, I think it’s – if I think back to last year there is something that really looked bad. Even worse think that those groups are there. Um, I think what gets me through it is just that realisation that, at the end of the day, it’s children that we are dealing with and children are [emphasis] children. They don’t think about what they are doing sometimes, they don’t intend, a lot of the time they don’t intentionally do things to hurt you or to upset you because they are just children. So that to me is, no matter what they’ve done, I think in a couple of days’ time we will have done something equally gorgeous. Well that’s who they are, just children. That to me, just let it go. They will grow up.

Me: To me you are coming across as a person, I don’t know if I am wrong, who is rational [interjection]
Interviewee: yeah

Me: You rationalise things, um is it to do with your personality or experience? I mean, how have you come to be so rational?

Interviewee: Um, I think perhaps a bit of both. I think my personality is just, everything that gets thrown in your way you just shrug your shoulders and get on with it. That's the way I've always been. Um, I think the rationalising comes through experience of working with children. And because I talk to people around school, I think it makes you realise that you can have a child or a class even you say ho, I hate that class and somebody else says that class are lovely to me. I think a lot of people get upset by that but to me that just says actually we are just human beings and obviously they just don't get on with me. But I think to me that says well actually we are still people and it still can be done. We are not monsters. So that to me just helps me to rationalise, I suppose.

Me: So you haven't taught at any other school except this one?

Interviewee: No, just this one.

Me: How, do you think, being in a socially disadvantaged area could be affecting the school atmosphere in terms of children and parents?

Interviewee: I think, yeah, these children here carry a lot of baggage with them definitely. Um, and I just think, um, it's quite a good school actually overcoming those barriers, I think. Because you've got children from very well off backgrounds and children with very disadvantaged backgrounds. And, I think one thing the school does very well is getting them to work together. Um, not every one of them but they do a good job of it, I think generally. And I think as well I've noticed over the years I've been here that children themselves have got a great tendency to look after each other and they just do such nice things. Sometimes you see a child and you think they are quite comfortable to get picked on because that's just the way they are. And you see other children in the classroom actually looking out for them and looking after them. It's really nice. And I just think children from all backgrounds here mix together quite well. It's not everybody who tends to do that, but I do think one of the things this school does particularly well is rendering support for its members. And I think children, even if they are not, you know, a mentor actually they could come out and do it themselves.
Me: And, um, I am just looking at your stress rating scale. It seems it’s a healthy rating. Why do you think this is?

Interviewee: Um, I don’t like things bothering me all the way. I am quick to let go of things. You know, not just to forget them for its own sake. I put things down to experience and get on with it. Um, I don’t dwell on things because, you know, what’s done is done. The problem is there is nothing else you can do about it to deal with things. And I think it’s a case of something is wrong you do what you can to sort it out then you move on. That’s all I do with things.

Me: Have you ever come across a colleague who is highly stressed?

Interviewee: Um, [thoughtfully], I can’t think of somebody stressed I have ever met. Um, yeah, there are a few people, yeah.

Me: How have you advised them?

Interviewee: I find it difficult to advise people because I tend to find that people who are stressed are stressed because they are not dealing with the things that are stressing them. They just want to mourn about them. Um, or, um I think that’s quite about a lot of it. When people get stressed by things they can’t see their way out of it and they just want to mourn about it. And I am being forthright– I say to people, you know, try this try that and quite often you find people just quite literally want to mourn. So I know that won’t work at least but I will have tried. Um, I am probably not the best person to advice people. I am not being stressed. It’s the way I am, it’s nothing I have done particularly. So I can’t really tell other people how to be like me.

Me: Why do you think, they get so stressed?

Interviewee: I think they just don’t deal with things. I think if there is a problem for me I just do it. I will just get it sorted. And I think other people would rather sometimes just say that’s a problem, you know. But, of course, that’s as far as they get. They keep saying there is a problem there, there’s a problem.

Me: How do you think, from your experience, stress affects teachers?

Interviewee: Um, I think, um, I think a lot of teachers – um, no, well I can only report on the science department – and I think the vast majority of teachers in my department deal with stress really well. Because I think as a teacher it gets to a point when you get under so much stress that actually you just pull out of the way and you just think, like I think you could only do so much and it doesn’t matter how many people try to make you to do different things. There’s only so
much I can do with it and that's it. And I think there are a lot of teachers like that in teaching they're just so, you know – one of my friends says I am sick of constantly being told that it's not good enough. And, I think, to be honest, teachers do end up feeling like that. Being constantly told, you know, lessons aren't good enough because you need to have an element of evidence in it, you know. Your marking is not up to scratch and there's a culture of teachers constantly being told this needs improvement; that needs improvement; this isn't good enough. And I think, at the end of the day teachers under all that stress for what people just say. So I can only do my best.

Me: Have you been told that yourself?

Interviewee: No.

Me: Does that explain why you are happy?

Interviewee: Yeah. Obviously it does. I do my best in everything and if my best is not good enough, well, then tough.

Me: [laughter] And, here on this questionnaire you indicate lack of promotion prospects in your job sometimes bother you.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Me: Can you say more about?

Interviewee: Yeah, I think in these last couple of years I have been ready for moving out and taking on a bit more responsibility. I feel a bit tired actually because I really like the school. It's the school I came to and I really [emphasis] wanted to stay here but move up the scale. I mean, it just so happens that the opportunities haven't come up here. I didn't really want to move schools. Anyway I am moving now. So I got the promotion I wanted. So, yeah, it's frustrating because I didn't want to have to move schools. Um, but I think a lot of teachers find when you are an NQT in a school you get seen as an NQT and that label sticks with you. And I think it can be difficult to then progress in that school. Not for everyone because people do it though. I think as I have mentioned before that can be a curse.

Me: What's so attractive, if you don't mind, in this promotion? Is it the remuneration, is it the responsibilities?

Interviewee: Um, well, one of the things I enjoy is looking after the curriculum and pupil data – who has passed which elements of coursework. That's what I really enjoy. That's the responsibility that I want to take on. It's not really the
promotion, it’s just that I would like responsibility for looking after the curriculum and the pupil grades. So the way to get that is to go for that job. So I don’t think, I mean I have no ambitions to be a head teacher or anything like that.

Me: But you want to be more in control?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Me: How does it differ from just being an ordinary classroom teacher?

Interviewee: Um, I think, um. I think it’s just different because I have been doing a lot of rubbish here without really the actual job title. It’s been quite difficult because it feels to me that certain people were, if then asked questioned why you need that information because it’s not your job title even if you are doing jobs. I don’t know if I have answered your question.

Me: I had asked what’s the difference between being just an ordinary classroom teacher without additional responsibilities?

Interviewee: It’s not enough for me. That’s the difference. Um, I enjoy teaching my classes but I have got a bigger kick like making sure that they pass all exams and making sure teachers can do their jobs like writing their schemes of work and that’s the curriculum to me. It’s not only helping kids but it’s making sure teachers can do their job. Because there are people who just want to be in the classroom day in and day out. So, I quite like making that easy for them.

Me: Doesn’t the prospect of having colleague (in your next job) report to you scare you?

Interviewee: A little bit, yeah. Um, yeah, I think the only thing that scares me is if I get somebody who is difficult to deal with. I have done a bit of organising this year like organising catch-up with things recently. So I have been bossing people about. So I think that actually helps in the transition. For the last couple of weeks I have had to tell people what to do to get stuff finished. That probably gonna help me next year actually. I think if I have someone difficult to deal with, it’s one of them again, isn’t it? If it’s a problem just probably just do it. Um, I think it’s something I’ve learned to accept things gone through experience and I am thinking, of course on my own, probably don’t run away from problems and creating more in the long run. So I probably will just deal with it even if it’s difficult to do.

Me: So, in your previous career, if you don’t mind me taking you back, did you have any responsibilities such as having other staff members reporting to you?
Interviewee: Not specifically. I did a bit of quality assurance and that was organising teams but I wasn’t a line manager. I mean I have had a lot of difficult people to deal with, probably even more difficult I didn’t manage them so I couldn’t make them do it. But I am quite good at pestering people.

Me: How is that experience a factor in your decision or desire to have more duties?

Interviewee: Um, I think actually the people side of it is the bit that I am not comfortable with. So I think, looking back at my previous career, I didn’t have enough experience to deal with managing people. So that to me is a development need. So that’s probably part of the reason why I put myself up to be head of chemistry. To get some of that experience. So it’s a challenge.

Me: And how would you describe your relationship with people whom you come in contact with in your day-to-day job such as parents, children, colleagues and senior members of staff?

Interviewee: I think I generally have a good relationship with people because I think people understand that what you see is what you get with me. You know, I am not frightening and that’s why people generally want to get along with. And I don’t tend to ask people to do anything unreasonable. And I’m always happy to muck in as well so I think all of that fosters good relationships. Yeah, I think I get on with nice people. I am quite good at getting on with pupils as well.

Me: And observations? What do you think about being observed by seniors?

Interviewee: Oh, by other people?

Me: Yeah?

Interviewee: Um, I don’t like it but I do it. Yeah, I think it’s one of them. It makes you feel uncomfortable when somebody is watching you, I have to say. But then, at the same time it’s a necessary part of teaching because I think it reminds you to raise your game once in a while. Because I think there is a tendency sometimes to become a bit stagnant and I think when you’ve got that, you know somebody is watching today it reminds you that, yeah, actually all the lessons should be like that. So whilst I don’t like it, I understand its purpose.

Me: Are you nervous when somebody is in your lesson?

Interviewee: Um, [thoughtfully] it depends who it is and what you are teaching.

Me: Alright. Which particular areas of your curriculum are you not comfortable with?
Interviewee: I think if somebody was to walk in when I was teaching biology – right, the biologist walked in when I was teaching biology. And I can teach biology because I have done it more at school. But if a biologist came with biology degree it just turns technical.

Me: How do you deal with it?

Interviewee: Ah, well, I just shrug my shoulders. I have prepared for my lesson so I'll be fine. I just think like, you know, as a chemist sometimes you hear things – I don't think I answered that quite rightly. I think, because in your own subject area you are more aware of misconceptions and things because to me I always think I am a teacher, I am a chemist and I have always been and I will be. What's on the GCSE was there a year ago. I can always bring that back. But I think for other subjects I just have to do it, I can teach it for you, yeah I have done it. but I just think when you are under the scrutiny of somebody with biology degree or a top physicist, you know [laughter]

Me: Have Ofsted come here when you're ...

Interviewee: Yes, I've been through an Ofsted of the GTP training scheme.

Me: How do you describe your experience when Ofsted came to see you?

Interviewee: Um, I enjoyed it actually. Yeah, I had a really good lesson. Um, they came in. The lady was very nice. She was quite complimentary. I was very pleased.

Me: Why was she complimentary?

Interviewee: Because she liked my lesson that I had done. I was doing expansion and contraction. Yeah, it was a good lesson. And I think I was even more pleased absolutely because it was a normal lesson. Because when Ofsted come in now you don't know which lesson they are coming into. So it's not possible to sort of plan one fantastic lesson. Yeah, I was just even more pleased because she just wandered into one of my good lessons.

Me: We can move to class size. You indicated you have issues with class sizes.

Interviewee: Because she liked my lesson that I had done. I was doing expansion and contraction. Yeah, it was a good lesson. And I think I was even more pleased absolutely because it was a normal lesson. Because when Ofsted come in now you don't know which lesson they are coming into. So it's not possible to sort of plan one fantastic lesson. Yeah, I was just even more pleased because she just wandered into one of my good lessons.

Me: We can move to class size. You indicated you have issues with class sizes.

Interviewee: I think, for me, I teach a lot of SEN classes which are great in smaller classes and I think you can meet the needs of every pupil in those classes. And then I teach at the other end of the scale which is the top set end of the scale with around thirty. And me personally I think that it's difficult to provide another good challenge for everyone for every one of those thirty because you've got in the top set some of the really gifted ranging back down towards the
sort of average. And I think it’s difficult to anything really challenging because
you leave half the class behind. And I think even if it was just slightly smaller by
about five children and it would be enough for us. But I think it would just make it
perhaps a lot easier. And I think as well the cleverer children tend to be a bit
more devious in, you know, getting round you. But I just think, this is me,
because I know other people are wonderful with top set, but I just find it difficult
to form good relationships with thirty children, you know. And it upsets me
because I feel like the really bright children could do a lot more when in a
smaller group. That’s why.

Me: How have you tried to go around this issue?

Interviewee: Um, I think it’s; I have tried; the only thing that I can do really is just
to make sure I am stretching as much as I can in class. Going around it is a
really nice thing to do but I have lots of challenges and things to deal with. So,
yeah, I just think on every day that it would be nicest to be able to really, really
drive those pupils. But I don’t feel that I can in a class of thirty.

Me: What are your children’s attitudes towards your subject and how you, in
particular, deliver it?

Interviewee: Very mixed. Um, I think, you know, some children hate science;
some children love science. I think, well I don’t do too badly. Most of the children
must enjoy it. Because, well, they speak to me they seem quite pleased to see
me asking what we are doing today. So that’s quite good. But I think, going back
to the top set, I think there are other children who sometimes look as if they are
not getting challenged. They are getting quite bored and then see science as
boring.

Me: How do you turn around the lesson – suppose you have already started;
you’ve planned your work; you are in the middle of teaching and children are not
as enthusiastic about what you are teaching as you thought?

Interviewee: It depends what it is because – we were discussing it the other day
– it depends what it is because there are some areas of the curriculum where,
you know, you just got to do the work. There is no way round it. Because I can
do all the fun stuff but I must actually sit and do a bit of theory to support it. So I
think it’s that you would have to develop that understanding with them; that we
are doing something fun but you have got also to do the work expected of it. And
I think in the middle of the lesson it’s difficult, you can sometimes, to pull it
around I think but it’s a murky idea to do. I tend to put some games or something if it looks like they are falling asleep.

Me: Does that make you uneasy and restless?

Interviewee: Um, not really. No. I think it’s just ten o’clock to eleven then we get to the end. No. We have to do it and we do a bit of maths. We play the maths game and they respond quite well. So that’s what we do.

Me: And on how frequent you feel uneasy and restless you rated yourself 4 out of 5.

Interviewee: Alright [laughter], um I think probably the restlessness more than anything because I constantly am looking for what’s the next challenge for me.

Me: Alright. So it’s restless in the positive direction?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah probably. Less of the uneasy and more of the restlessness.

Me: Have you ever asked your senior colleagues to give more to quench that desire for challenges?

Interviewee: Um, yes and they have actually got a lot of stuff on at the moment. I think, it’s kind of um, I don’t know, it’s difficult to actually say it’s the perfect responsibility for me to be in the main. But then I think when you do so much it does kind of leave you sometimes wondering where recognition is. Not monetary but just people saying, you know, well done. And I think that’s the other side of it. You have to be honest with; yourself unless you get the recognition to go with it you can’t make it in the appointments. Because I am quite satisfied with the job that I’m doing. But in order to for me to move on again I need somebody to say I did a good job about it. You know it’s like, if nobody ever realises what you’ve done you never gonna move on.

Me: How large is this department?

Interviewee: Um, I think it’s eighteen of us – round about that. Yeah.

Me: And you are not responsible for any particular area in your department?

Interviewee: No. Um, I’ve been looking after KS4 really.

Me: So how do you view your school atmosphere generally in terms of stress?

Interviewee: Um, I think actually it’s one of the nicest schools. I think if you looked at the staff; if you went into the staffroom what you would see is people who are getting on together and we’ve quite a good mix and I think generally that to me is proof of low stress. I think stress in teaching comes from when you
lock yourself away in a room; trying to deal with on your own because you feel like everything is going wrong; the world is up against you. When you talk to other teachers they say it’s a nightmare for me today; nine times out of ten somebody also will I’m having a nightmare me as well. And then you realise that it’s not just you, you know. And I think that it’s a good coping mechanism when you’ve got staff who get on like we do. It makes a good atmosphere.

Me: And finally, in your new role where you are going to that new school – suppose they ask you to advice members of your department how best they can resist stress and its effects in the context of teaching in general and science teaching in particular?

Interviewee: Um, I’ll tell them just to talk about the problems. I think the most important thing is you’ve got to talk to each other and not to be embarrassed about confessing to problems. Because I think some teachers have a really big problem with saying this went horribly wrong today because they want to be seen as a perfect teacher. I think when you actually talk to people. So if I have asked to advise people then I will say we need to share the problems and we need to talk about things.

Me: And, as head of department, suppose you find a highly stressed department, how are you going to deal with it?

Interviewee: Um, it will be just through team meetings actually. Because, um, I’ve seen little things like when we used to have a not-so-caring head of department – previous one – we just had some meetings which more often than not somebody said something negative but then when we all talked about it, you know. It’s quite a good way to start a meeting really. It just gets people talking. I think if people aren’t talking to each other then they are gonna get stressed.

Me: Alright. Any other thing you want to say on the stress subject?

Interviewee: Um, eh, I think top and bottom of it is it’s a very, very stressful job. There is a lot of pressure from all different angles and I think it’s up to you how you choose to deal with it. And I would say my attitude is: I do my best at everything I do and if it’s not up to scratch when I am doing my best then I cannot work any better.

Me: So you just resign to accepting that this is my best?

Interviewee: Yeah, I’m more than prepared to sit; and I think that’s the other thing as well, I’m more than prepared to go to people and say this is my best,
this is what I am doing. And if it's not good enough what do you expect from me? And more often than not, when you do that with people they will say well actually that's fair enough. I think there is nobody who is totally unreasonable and if you are doing your best people generally accept it.

Me: Thank you very much.

Interviewee: Well, I hope that helps.
Appendix 9: Travers and Cooper (1996) stress questionnaire
Part B: Your Health

1. Do you smoke? Yes/No
   - Cigarette: 
   - Cigar: 
   - Pipe: 

2. Have you noticed changes in how much you smoke in the last 3 months?
   More than usual/less than usual

3. Do you drink alcohol? Yes/No
   - If yes, how many units per week on average do you drink? (1 unit = 1 pint of beer, 1 glass of wine or 1 measure of spirits)

4. Have you ever felt the need to cut down on your drinking? Yes/No

5. Over the last 3 months have you noticed any changes in your drinking habits?
   More than usual/less than usual

6. What proportion of your consumption would you say was for stress relief?
   Smoking: %
   Drinking: %

7. Are you at present taking any prescribed drugs? Yes/No
   If yes, which of these:
   - Antidepressants
   - MAO inhibitors
   - Other

8. How often, on average, do you consume the following?
   - Coffee
   

Section 2: Your Physical Health

Please tick the answer that applies to you.

1. Do you often feel fatigued for no obvious reason?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Often
   - Usually
   - Very often

2. Are you troubled by deafness or shortness of breath?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Often
   - Usually
   - Very often

3. Can you walk as quickly as you used to?
   - Always
   - Usually
   - Sometimes
   - Occasionally
   - Never

4. Have you felt tired or have indisposition?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Often
   - Usually
   - Very often

5. Do you feel that life is too much effort?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Often
   - Usually
   - Very often

6. Do you feel unsteady and unwell?
   - Rarely
   - Occasionally
   - Sometimes
   - Often
   - Very often

7. Do you sometimes feel lightheaded or get dizzy sensations in your head, ears, or ears?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Often
   - Usually
   - Very often

8. Do you repeat much of your past behaviour?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Often
   - Usually
   - Very often

9. Do you sometimes feel really anxious?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Often
   - Usually
   - Very often

10. How do you cope with stress?
    - Never
    - Sometimes
    - Often
    - Usually
    - Very often

11. Do you take any regular physical activity?
    - Never
    - Sometimes
    - Often
    - Usually
    - Very often

12. Do you have a regular pattern of work and sleep?
    - Rarely
    - Occasionally
    - Sometimes
    - Often
    - Usually

13. Do you feel less able to take care of yourself?
    - Never
    - Sometimes
    - Often
    - Usually
    - Very often

14. Do you feel that life is too much effort?
    - Never
    - Sometimes
    - Often
    - Usually
    - Very often

15. Do you feel unsteady and unwell?
    - Rarely
    - Occasionally
    - Sometimes
    - Often
    - Very often

16. Do you feel that life is too much effort?
    - Never
    - Sometimes
    - Often
    - Usually
    - Very often

17. Do you feel unsteady and unwell?
    - Rarely
    - Occasionally
    - Sometimes
    - Often
    - Very often

18. Do you have a regular pattern of work and sleep?
    - Rarely
    - Occasionally
    - Sometimes
    - Often
    - Usually

19. Do you feel that life is too much effort?
    - Never
    - Sometimes
    - Often
    - Usually
    - Very often

20. Do you feel unsteady and unwell?
    - Rarely
    - Occasionally
    - Sometimes
    - Often
    - Very often

Section 3: Your Behaviour

Could you please circle one number for each of the 14 questions below, which best reflects the way you behave in your everyday life. For example, if you are happy when you are happy, circle the number 4. If you are sad when you are sad, circle the number 5. If you are usually sad, circle the number 3.

1. Casual about appointments
2. Not competitive
3. Good listener
4. Never feel rushed even under pressure
5. Can wait patiently
6. Take things one at a time
7. Slow, deliberate talker
8. Can't stand waiting for help; no matter what others may think
9. Slow doing things
10. Easy going
11. Express feelings
12. Many outside interests
13. Unemotional
14. Casual

Section 4: Your Job Satisfaction

This set of items deals with various aspects of your job as a teacher. Please tick how satisfied or dissatisfied you felt with each of these aspects of your present job. Use the scale below to indicate your feelings.

Please answer by circling the number of your answer against the scale shown.

1. I am extremely satisfied
2. I am very satisfied
3. I am satisfied
4. I am not very satisfied
5. I am extremely unsatisfied

Reminder: There are no right or wrong answers. Give your first and natural answer by working quickly, but be accurate, and answer all questions.

1. The physical working conditions
2. The freedom to choose your own method of working
3. Your fellow teachers
4. The recognition you get for good work
5. Your immediate boss
6. The amount of responsibility you are given
7. Your rate of pay
8. Your opportunity to use your abilities
9. Industrial relations between management and teachers in your school
10. How sharply of promotion
11. The way your school is run
12. The amount of variety in your job
13. How much social security

490
### Section 5: Sources of Pressure You Face in Your Job

About many things can be a source of pressure (some even in a good way) and individuals perceive potential sources of pressure differently. The person who says they are "under a tremendous amount of pressure" usually means that they have too much work to do or not enough time to do it. This same individual may feel very little pressure if the work is enjoyable and they enjoy the work they are doing.

The items listed below are those which teachers have expressed as being potential sources of pressure in their role as a teacher. You are required to rate them in terms of the degree of pressure you perceive each may place on you in YOUR role as a teacher.

Please answer by stating the number of your answer against the note shown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Very disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Building and maintaining relationships with pupils</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Overall lack of resources</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Relationships with pupils’ parents</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Over emotional involvement with the pupils</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dealing with issues behavioral problems</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Having to cover in unfamiliar areas of the curriculum</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The unpredictability of &quot;new&quot; periods</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. When &quot;new&quot; for almost colleagues leads to larger classes</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Inability to plan ahead due to constant changes</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Knowing that my classroom will look different for other staff</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The need to constantly re-educate in the classroom</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The daily variations of teachers approach</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The heavy impact of grading</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
<td>123456</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Remember: You are required to rate these items in terms of the degree of pressure you perceive each may place on YOU in YOUR role as a teacher.

- The number of students in the school
- Lack of support from the school governor
- Duration of the school holidays
- Society's diminished respect for my profession
- The number of daily interruptions in the school
- The lack of inclusiveness in the teaching of the curriculum
- The lack of support within the profession
- The response to students taking place within the profession
- The more towards a "Westford Curriculum"
- The lack of information, too slow for changes to be implemented
- Having to do a "lack of all rounds, matter of non-renewal"
- Introvert role, i.e., within the school
- Academic pressure within the school
- Increasing involvement with parental issues
- High demands from parents for good results
- Lack of support from the head teacher
- Feeling that my training is not appropriate
- What I perform is overviewed by others
- Lack of job security within the profession
- Teaching those who do not value education
- Teaching those who take things for granted
- Dealing with children who demand immediate attention
- Continuously having to form new relationships

### Remember: You are required to rate these items in terms of the degree of pressure you perceive each may place on YOU in YOUR role as a teacher.

- The extent of the work in the school
- Lack of "non-contact" time
- Being a "good" teacher does not necessarily mean promotion
- Administrative duties
- Having to produce "measures" of pupils
- Moving in and out of pupil's classrooms
- Teachers can face life situations over which discipline
- Conflict between my department and others for resources
- Lack of participation in decision-making in the school
- The "harmful" nature of the members of my school
- Conflict between the teaching of my department/less, and the views of senior management
- Lack of support from the government
- School suppression from pupils
- Physical aggression from pupils
- Lack of parental "back-up" on matters of discipline
- Lack of support from the Local Authority
- Increasing increasing aggression between pupils

*491*
### Section & How You Cope with Stress You Experience

While there are varieties in the way individuals react to sources of pressure and the effects of stress, the fact that each individual will react in a somewhat similar manner to any given stressor suggests that, regardless of the specific source of stress, certain patterns of stress reactions may be expected in the aftermath of events to which we may expose ourselves. The following questions are intended to elicit in terms of the manner in which you might have reacted to one or more stressful situations in the past, or might react under similar circumstances in the future. Please answer these questions in a manner that will most closely reflect your individual experience.

Please answer by shading the number of your answer against the code shown.

**1.** Deal with the problems immediately or as they occur.
**2.** Try to recognize my own limitations.
**3.** "Stay firm" and stick the basic approach.
**4.** Look for ways to make the work more interesting.
**5.** Recognize my work.
**6.** Seek support and advice from my superiors.
**7.** Enlist the help of colleagues and peers.
**8.** Try to deal with the matter objectively in an impersonal way.
**9.** Effective time management.
**10.** Supinate events and try not to let the stress show.
**11.** Having a home that is a refuge.
**12.** Talk to understanding hands.
**13.** Emancipate separate "home" and "work".
**14.** "Stay free".
**15.** Use alcohol.
**16.** Minimize things on the job through the use of energy.

**17.** Identify and eliminate outside work.
**18.** Have enable relationships.
**19.** Use selective attention (concentrating on specific projects).**20.** Use distractions (to take your mind off things).**21.** Set priorities and deal with problems accordingly.
**22.** Try to "wind down" and think through the situation.
**23.** Recruit to roles and responsibilities.
**24.** Delegation.
**25.** Force others to behavioral habits and then follow through.
**26.** Accept the situation and learn to live with it.
**27.** Try to avoid the situation.
**28.** Seek as much social support as possible.

Stress can be caused by personal or work pressures, or a combination of the two. If you have experienced some pressure rapidly, which of the following people did you talk to about this stress? Please check appropriate boxes.

- **Mom/Dad/Mother**
- **Relative**
- **Teacher**
- **Work/Coworkers**
- **Friends/Outside Work**
- **Other**

Please check that you have completed all sections, then return the questionnaire as indicated. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.
Appendix 10: Gibson and Dembo (1984) Teacher Efficacy Scale

A number of statements about organizations, people, and teaching are presented below. The purpose is to gather information regarding the actual attitudes of educators concerning these statements. There are no correct or incorrect answers. We are interested only in your frank opinions. Your responses will remain confidential.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please indicate your personal opinion about each statement by circling the appropriate response at the right of each statement.

KEY: 1=Strongly Agree 2=Moderately Agree 3=Agree slightly more than disagree 4=Disagree slightly more than agree 4=Moderately Disagree 6=Strongly Disagree

1. When a student does better than usually, many times it is because I exert a little extra effort. 1 2 3 4 5 6
2. The hours in my class have little influence on students compared to the influence of their home environment. 1 2 3 4 5 6
3. The amount a student can learn is primarily related to family background. 1 2 3 4 5 6
4. If students aren't disciplined at home, they aren't likely to accept any discipline. 1 2 3 4 5 6
5. I have enough training to deal with almost any learning problem. 1 2 3 4 5 6
6. When a student is having difficulty with an assignment, I am usually able to adjust it his/her level. 1 2 3 4 5 6
7. When a student gets a better grade than he/she usually gets, it is usually because I found better ways of teaching that student. 1 2 3 4 5 6
8. When I really try, I can get through to most difficult students. 1 2 3 4 5 6
9. A teacher is very limited in what he/she can achieve because a student's home environment large influence on his/her achievement. 1 2 3 4 5 6
10. Teachers are not a very powerful influence on student achievement when all factors are considered. 1 2 3 4 5 6
11. When the grades of my students improve, it is usually because I found more effective approaches. 1 2 3 4 5 6
12. If a student masters a new concept quickly, this might be because I knew the necessary steps in teaching that concept. 1 2 3 4 5 6
13. If parents would do more for their children, I could do more. 1 2 3 4 5 6
14. If a student did not remember information I gave in a previous lesson, I would know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson. 1 2 3 4 5 6
15. The influences of a student's home experiences can be overcome by good teaching. 1 2 3 4 5 6
16. If a student in my class becomes disruptive and noisy, I feel assured that I know some techniques to redirect him/her quickly. 1 2 3 4 5 6
17. Even a teacher with good teaching abilities may not reach many students. 1 2 3 4 5 6
18. If one of my students couldn't do a class assignment, I would be able to accurately assess whether the assignment was at the correct level of difficulty. 1 2 3 4 5 6
19. If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students. 1 2 3 4 5 6
20. When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment. 1 2 3 4 5 6
21. Some students need to be placed in slower groups so they are not subjected to unrealistic expectations. 1 2 3 4 5 6
22. My teacher training program and/or experience has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher 1 2 3 4 5 6
## Appendix 11: Interview annotation example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify ideas for coding</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Potential codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R: I would like to, first of all, thank you for participating in the survey and agreeing to take part in this interview</td>
<td>Ethics: Checking with participant</td>
<td>Interviewee consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Right</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: I would like to assure you from the onset that no one else is going to listen to this tape and it’s only being done for the sake of accuracy in the reporting of the research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Okay that’s fine.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: ... and your details will remain anonymous and confidential.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Aha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: I would like to ask you about your career in brief so far.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Okay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: How has your teaching career impacted on you as a person?</td>
<td>Always wanted to be a teacher</td>
<td>Long-term choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Well, I suppose um, Well I always wanted to be a teacher.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Purposive career choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Yeah</td>
<td></td>
<td>No prior exposure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: I always wanted to become a teacher. But certainly in the first three or four years I found it very difficult. Especially with workload because there was a considerable amount of work I used to do outside of school hours. I found that very difficult before getting used to it coming out of university. I think that caused me some degree of stress.</td>
<td>Difficult first three or four years due to inexperience</td>
<td>Early career struggles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Okay</td>
<td></td>
<td>Micron-time/Meso-time/Proximal process issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: But recently, I mean, in the last four years, obviously I have taken additional promotions and responsibilities. And I am head of faculty. Obviously that comes with its own additional stresses.</td>
<td>Promotions/ additional responsibilities = additional stress</td>
<td>Proximal stress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
R: So can you say your coping with stress has improved with time or has it gone worse?
T: Um, I think my ability to cope with stress has improved, yes. I have certainly learned to, um, to rationalise my workload a bit more and to learn how to prioritise things and realise that I need to set myself clear deadlines to meet personally as classroom teacher and then also deadlines that I need to meet as a head of faculty.

R: I have a questionnaire here. If you don’t mind I will make reference to it here and there. You indicated you do sixty hours a week in total. Is this a problem in any way?
T: Well, I think it is a problem because there was a problem with my work/life balance to suffer. I did work through the evenings. I would usually work at weekends as well, either the whole of one day or part of both days. And then constant to that had an impact on my work/life balance. Well that’s the sacrifice I suppose I am prepared to make because I accepted that when I took additional responsibilities. Well, I don’t get to rest with my children during the weekends or during the holidays. Typically I would spend a big part of my holiday time in school working with pupils there ... I have accepted that when I took on additional responsibilities.

R: In your day-to-day duties, which do you think is the trickiest aspect to juggle?
T: Umm, I think that ... well from my point of view, the most difficult aspect to balance is my commitment to my individual classes, my role as a classroom teacher and then my leadership.
and management responsibilities because I find I have to plan my lessons on the way to work on the train and then after work whereas my supposedly free time in the school day is spent doing leadership and management tasks.

R: And, do you think in your opinion having to plan for your work, as you say, on your way to work ... do you think it affects the way in which you are going to do your duties?

T: Umm, well I think I am quite fortunate in that I do have a lot of time in the morning when I can travel to work. I live quite a distance away from my place of work. I get to the train at 5am in the morning and then arrive by a quarter past six. And that gives me a full hour of working on the train. So I usually find if I can manage to get my lessons planned in the morning, that makes it easier. But then if I don’t quite finish planning in the morning, then there is still more to do at work. Then I think I have got time during the day to do that. And inevitably there is something that crops up that wasn’t planned for that kind of has an impact on my primary role; my main job; teach lessons manage pupils learning etc. I am not always able to do that as effectively as I would want to do.

R: So, overall, how do you cope with all that work?

T: Um, yes I can cope. Generally, I think do cope with it. I might not necessarily do the job as well as I always wanted to it done but I get done what needs to be done usually on time.

R: How do the following aspects of your job impact on you: Let me start with the most talked about … pupil behaviour?

T: Um, yeah, that has quite a big impact because I usually end up dealing with other people’s problems. If a member of my department has problems with a particular child or particular pupil poor behaviour, usually it gets passed on due to Work overload

Live far away from work

5am train; 6.45am arrival

Works an hour on the train.

Quality compromised by work overload.

Copes by getting it done rather than doing it well.

Work overload

Pupil behaviour passed on due to Proximal processes:

Interactions with pupils

Proximal outcomes:

Quality compromise

Developmental/

Adaptive outcomes:

Impact on quality of work

Distance from work

Travel time

Work overload

Competing roles

Work pressure

Work overload
passed on to me to deal with. Whereas if I personally have an issue with pupil behaviour, well I don’t have anybody else to go to. So sort it out myself.

R: And does this pupil behaviour [issue], at times, involve parents?
T: Yes, it usually involves contact with parents either by letter or by telephone.

R: Overall, how do you view the attitude of parents concerning their children’s behaviour?
T: Umm, most parents are usually supportive of what you are trying to do. Um, I am not entirely sure how committed they are to dealing with, to dealing with their children’s attitudes. I do think most of them do pay lip service to it and they all miss out.

R: And what about colleagues’, pupils’ and management’s attitudes towards your main subject...is it an issue to you?
T: Umm, not really because I teach English so obviously that is a very high priority. Um I do feel there is a lack of understanding by other senior leaders about the nature of English – the demands of English. There is quite a fundamental misconception. I think they fail to understand exactly how demanding national tests are and understand what pupils are required to do in order to reach level 5 or level 6 at KS3. Because it seems that in maths and science pupils do achieve very highly and they assume that those levels are exactly the same and so ask questions why they are not doing well in English as they are in Maths. And it is very difficult to explain to them why pupils are not doing as well because they are not really investing their time in understanding the discreteness of the subject.
R: How does that affect you?
T: It causes me great concern and it does cause me stress because ultimately I feel I am held accountable for performance of pupils who might not be capable of meeting those targets. And, you know, the questions are being asked, “So why haven’t their targets?” And, you know, we try to explain to them why they haven’t achieved their targets and so on. Whereas I might argue that target for that particular child was unreasonably high - they don’t really get it. All they want are results and the end of the day – not the process you go through in order to achieve those results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of stress:</th>
<th>Microsystem/ Proximal processes</th>
<th>Macrotime influences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over pupil results</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils not</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reaching targets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils set</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unreasonable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>targets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of understanding by colleagues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overemphasis on results over process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: And how do you usually cope with those challenges of senior colleagues not understanding the demanding nature of your subject?
T: Umm, well, I try to explain it and I give them examples and I give them the evidence that I have gathered and if they are not satisfied then there is nothing more I can do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disconnect between senior management and subject teacher</th>
<th>Interactions with senior management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Results pressure from senior management/ Tension</td>
<td>Defensive Accountability Resignation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defend self with evidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: What about on-the-job relationships?
T: Umm, generally they don’t cause me too much stress. Umm, there are one or two members of my department who have been throwing their weight. And that caused me stress in terms of how I, how I am going to deal with that. But generally, you know the department is quite supportive of each other. They are not going to cause me too much, um, too many problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Two members throwing their weight - Conflict/ Stress/ tension.</th>
<th>Interactions with colleagues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsure how to deal with it</td>
<td>Tension with colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from department</td>
<td>Challenge appraisal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
R: And relations with parents?
T: Umm (silence), usually it doesn’t concern me too much. Umm, it concerns me when you get a letter of complaint from parents, umm, complaining about an aspect of their child’s education. In a sense they are only accepting the word of the child. And then they write a letter of complaint making lots of these accusations which don’t really stand up to scrutiny. And they are not prepared to listen; when you attempt to explain it, well, all they are doing is taking their child’s side all the time. You do get a feeling that sometimes what they are really looking for is some sort of compensation or some kind of redress. Umm, so that causes concern when I contact parents. I have to be really careful about exactly what I say and how I say it. You fear that it might come back at some point in the future, umm, and I might be taken totally out of context because they haven’t really understood or they don’t believe me or etcetera. And I quite understand why a parent might want to defend their child. But at the end of the day we see the children more than they do and have a better understanding of what exactly they are like in school. The parents tend to think that the schools are there to service them rather than their child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stressors</th>
<th>Interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ complaints</td>
<td>Complaints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contradiction – Doesn’t/ Does</td>
<td>Conflict with parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concern me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusations</td>
<td>Complaints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents siding with their children</td>
<td>Unsupportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents not prepared to listen</td>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impression that parents are looking for compensation/ redress</td>
<td>Lack of trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned that she has to watch her every word when dealing with parents’ complaints</td>
<td>Insecurity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative view of parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ self-interests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: Alright. So, what are the other causes of stress in the school?
T: Um, I think Ofsted causes stress. That causes stress to everybody, teachers and pupils. Umm, I think that, um, causes stresses. I think that, umm, probably the drive to raise standards in schools does cause stress because senior
members of staff focus on raising achievement and attainment they forget that the people they are gonna make the victims to that are the people they should be supporting, i.e. the teachers that they constantly pressurise in different tasks. You sometimes wonder whether all these tasks are actually contributing to raising standards or whether they are contributing to the impression of raising standards. They make you do things that are not gonna make a difference in my classroom that’s going to look good to somebody who comes in and inspect you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>Targets</th>
<th>Vulnerability</th>
<th>Lack of support</th>
<th>Tension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on raising achievement and attainment</td>
<td>Teachers not supported</td>
<td>Teachers made victims of raising achievement and attainment.</td>
<td>Doing things to impress people coming from outside without real benefit to standards in the classroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: And in the subjects you teach, um, do you ever have need for technical support?

T: Um, yes, I do.

R: Have you got any issues as far as strain, maybe, emanating from the kind of technical support you get and how you get it?

T: I do find it very difficult to get technical support sometimes. In particular with ICT. And if something breaks down, Most of it is not working. It’s very difficult to get hold of somebody to sort it out

R: So how do you go about it? Suppose you don’t get the technical support you need in time – any contingent measures that you have in place?

T: Um, well, we all very well experienced teachers. So You either test it before you actually start. At break time or time before school. So you usually plan some sort of contingency. That increases your planning time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objects/ Access to resources</th>
<th>Concern about technical issues</th>
<th>Extended planning time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very difficult to get technical support</td>
<td>Inadequate technical support increases your planning time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
R: What about support for special needs children?
T: Umm, we do have one teaching assistant in the faculty. But unfortunately she’s not very good. She’s less of assistance than she does cause problems not least because she is not trained in professional conduct and as a manager that causes stress because I have to deal with that. That causes the teachers that she supposed to be supporting stress because they can’t rely on her. They will say they could rely on somebody else.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEN</th>
<th>Proximal/Interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support inadequate</td>
<td>with colleague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty TA not very good</td>
<td>Inadequate support for SEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unprofessional conduct</td>
<td>Tension with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Supported’ teachers not supported</td>
<td>SEN support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causes stress as I have to deal with that = workload</td>
<td>colleague</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: And what about the processes, um, within the school – how things are done?
T: Umm, generally the processes are clear and the policies are clear which is positive. But it’s the actual way those processes are used inconsistently which is problematic. There isn’t enough consistency in applying the process and that cause problems particularly when or if you thought you’ve been doing something correctly because that’s the way you’ve done it before someone turns around and says, “Well you have not done it properly, so we can’t do anything to help you until you do do it properly,” and that causes stress because it’s the sort of situation involving different applications and completing necessary paperwork.

| Inconsistent processes | Influences on effective functioning of proximal processes |
| Problematic | Inconsistent processes |
| Conflicting signals | |
| Being told you haven’t done it properly when you have been doing it that way all along. | |

R: Do you have any problems as a head of faculty with the kind of resources available to you or money available to you to spend in your department?
T: Um, no, no I don’t think we have an issue with that?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfied with resources</th>
<th>Access to resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adequate resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: What about development issues, opportunities for your personal development and professional development of members of your department?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfied with opportunities for progression</th>
<th>Force/Perspectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

502
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T: Um, again I don’t have an issue with that. I do feel people sometimes feel there aren’t enough opportunities. That clouds their perception of what the whole faculty is doing. Somebody may come to me and say, “Well I want to do this,” unfortunately it’s not in the best interest of the faculty. But generally, yeah, I think that is it.</th>
<th>Conflicting views with colleagues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R: I move on to your personal stress rating. From the scale that I am holding here in the questionnaire, um, you rated yourself between 5 and 6 out of 10. Is it 5½, somewhere there? What do you feel is the reason for this average stress? T: Um, I think probably, um, the combination of day-to-day, having to deal with day-to-day problems that crop up and, um, behaviour management issues and the amount of paperwork.</td>
<td>Main stressors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Day-to-day problems cropping up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behaviour management and paperwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher’s role/ Demand characteristic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work overload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conflicting role demands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Do you consider this level of stress too much for you individually or it’s just about what you can cope with? T: Um, for me, it’s, it’s, it’s okay I can just about cope with it right now.</td>
<td>Coping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Just about coping - borderline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coping resources under strain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Okay. How effective do you think your general handling of pressure is? T: Very effective. I think that I should be more proactive in dealing with issues which crop up.</td>
<td>Coping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concerned about issues which crop up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unplanned-for issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: What personality attribute do you think affects your choice of coping strategy and its effectiveness? T: I think the desire to, umm, not to cause other people stress probably influences my choice of coping strategy. So if I think that by doing, by keeping something to myself or sorting something out myself, it would be better for</td>
<td>Coping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Considers others’ possible reactions in choice of strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Force/ Disposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concern for impact on others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant pressure in teaching</td>
<td>Constant pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Have you seen any manifestations of stress within members of your department and other colleagues?</td>
<td>T: Um, yes we had two members of the faculty off for a long term absence this year because of stress. And have had members of the faculty that have gone for counselling for anxiety. I mean these are, these are not issues that have necessarily been caused by working at school but they have been exacerbated by it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two long-term stress absences Faculty members on counselling for anxiety Causality contested Anxiety exacerbated by working in the school</td>
<td>Microsystem/ influences on functioning of proximal processes Impact of stress on colleagues Handling stress in the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: From the management’s point of view, what is the position regarding members of staff who do not come for work due to stress-related illnesses?</td>
<td>T: Umm, I think they are inconsistent in their approach to it and I think they are unsympathetic unfortunately and I think they are more insistent in having teachers standing in front of their classroom than they are necessarily interested in the wellbeing of the members of staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management’s handling of stress Inconsistent Unsympathetic Overemphasis on attendance rather than staff wellbeing</td>
<td>Interactions within microsystem Lack of support/ empathy from management Demand characteristics Presenteeism/ Pressure to attend Staff wellbeing trivialised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Has there been any effort made to try and deal with stress in teachers – I am looking at things like having training days for how to deal with stress or something like that?</td>
<td>T: I think there has been very minimal effort and very superficial effort. Um, the only mention of stress we had this year was when we had to complete the questionnaires.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal effort dealing with staff stress</td>
<td>Lack of support within microsystem Lack of effort to deal with stress in the school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
R: This questionnaire?
T: Yeah.
R: Do you think it's a step in the right direction?
T: I think it is. I would say if they would take on board the comments made in the survey – in the questionnaire and the comments you collect from the interviews I would feel happy and in that sense do something about reducing workload, then well.

R: As far as stress is concerned, what's your position about outside people like myself having to interview you on top of the other duties that you have as a teacher and manager?
T: Um, I think, two issues really, I feel disappointed that the school needs to get itself outside agencies to find out something it should find out itself. So that's my view. I am not opposed to completing questionnaires and being interviewed basically. I feel if the school don't know how to ask the questions, then they can for someone that can look ask the questions. But I think that the more people outside of the school.

R: What do you think could be done to make your job less stressful? You have talked about workload – what other things, do you think need improving to make it more teacher-friendly, if you like, in terms of stress?
T: Umm, I think, well, I think there needs to be more administrative support for the staff. Umm, I think, a meaningful reduction in paperwork and administrative tasks. I think that if senior leaders need to have more open discussions about the tasks they are assigning to people. And I think what really helps is to make very clear to parents and pupils that teaching staff and support staff are very professional and the bottom line is the school would support every single member of staff in whatever situation arises and not at the expense of public relations.
Because I do have a feeling that parents and pupils get away with it sometimes.

Parents. (Area of concern?)

Lack of support for staff when dealing with parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R: Why do you think some teachers experience more stress than others?</th>
<th>T: I want to think that it’s because of their commitment to professionalism and initially because they vary.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some stressed more than others due to commitment to professionalism and differences in personality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Force characteristic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demands for professionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Differences in personality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| R: And, finally, what do you think – we have talked about what can be done by those in positions of authority in education to reduce stress – what do you think teachers themselves should do to reduce the amount of stress they experience? |
| T: Um, well, I think teachers need to be smarter in what they do in terms of managing their time. Um I think teachers need to learn to say no when asked to do something they find unreasonable. Um, but I also think the teachers need to, certainly some of the teacher in my department need to realise that, um, ostensibly we are there to educate pupils and also learn to manage the workload and identify when they need to have forward planning in terms of their own workload as well as their teaching and identify. |
| Individual coping suggestions |
| Better time management |
| Saying no to unreasonable requests |
| Prioritise teaching |
| Plan ahead |
| Demand characteristic |
| Time management issues |
| Unreasonable requests |
| Not planning ahead |
| Teaching not prioritised |

| R: Is there anything you feel needs to be discussed about stress that you may feel may have been left out that will be useful in the feedback to your school on this survey and interviews? |
| T: Umm, the only thing I would say is worth mentioning is that, you know, the school should work to increase non-contact time for staff. Because at the moment we do have a minimum |
| School issues |
| Increase non-contact time |
| Very little non-contact time |
| Appoint more staff |
| Microsystem risk |
| Lack of non-contact time |
| understaffed |
of non-contact time when I am not involved in classes. If the school is really committed to reducing stress and workload pressures then it should then it should be found seeking to appoint more members of staff and that would reduce the burden of teaching.

R: I would like to thank you very much for your time. Um, we'll be writing to you just to say thank you for participating and sometime in September we will be sitting down with the senior management to give them feedback on the research but no names will be mentioned.

T: Thank you too.
## Appendix 12: Example of interview data initial codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person characteristics</th>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Microsystem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource</strong></td>
<td>Professional experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Force</strong></td>
<td>Personal beliefs about one’s professional role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Force/ Dispositional</strong></td>
<td>Perceives teaching as a job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Considerers</strong></td>
<td>teaching a childhood passion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demand</strong></td>
<td>Views teaching as a source stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Previous career/ No previous career</strong></td>
<td>Protective Factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource</strong></td>
<td>Teaching experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Force</strong></td>
<td>Teachers’ beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-efficacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personality</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perseverance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persistence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demand</strong></td>
<td>Dual teacher/union rep role for some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Force/ Resource</strong></td>
<td>Coping Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPCT</td>
<td>Protective Factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROCESS</td>
<td>TIME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Microtime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions with pupils</td>
<td>Answering back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor pupil behaviour</td>
<td>Lesson disruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions with parents</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents evenings</td>
<td>Confrontation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>Seeking information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions with colleagues</td>
<td>Offers of support as relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support with pupil behaviour management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support with coping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions with senior management</td>
<td>Monitoring targets and results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targets-oriented</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results-oriented</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 13: Example of emerging themes from interview data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential themes</th>
<th>Exemplar extracts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PERSON</strong></td>
<td><strong>Exemplar extracts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource/ Force</td>
<td>But I love teaching kids (...) so I have been paid to do something I really enjoy. [teaching]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills/ Commitment</td>
<td>To deal with those tricky aspects of my job (...) I (...) I do it by being as good as or as or better than anyone else at it and I don't ask staff to do anything that I wouldn't do myself. [leadership]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I still do training every year for staff on more aspects of it. [training]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The parent comes in (...) he's angry or upset or nervous or all three. I will then just rationally talk him through what the problem is and then I try and get the parent to come up with a solution. If they do that then I will say, ‘Oh, that’s a good idea! Why didn’t I think of that?’ It usually works. [interpersonal skills] – Enoch, School 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PERSON</strong></td>
<td><strong>Exemplar extracts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource/ Force</td>
<td>To me pupil behaviour is not one of the problems (...) I think it can be to some (...) but I've been doing the job for quite a long time now and so I am used to dealing with pupils. – Josephine, School 10 [pupil behaviour management]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional experience</td>
<td>Yet I had had the best results in the school (...) I had the best SATs results the school had ever had and the best level 5 results the school had ever had. To make it in teaching you've got to be charismatic. You've got to be a drama teacher really. You are on stage so umm, (...). You've got to be committed to the kids. You can't do the job if you hate kids. You've to be one of the best with kids, umm, and be a role model really. Um (...), you can't be drowsy in teaching (...) you've got to keep kids engaged. – Gabrielle, School 1 [subject skills]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PERSON</strong></td>
<td><strong>Exemplar extracts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force</td>
<td>I trained as an English teacher at the University of Manchester. Altogether um (...), I've been teaching for one year and half (...) prior to teaching I was in the retail sector. – Rumbi, School 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal beliefs</td>
<td>Yes (...), I believe happy teachers usually mean happy pupils who can go on to, um (...), learn and achieve. Yes, happiness can take us a long way, you know? I also believe that the emotional health of staff can (...), you know, contribute to the overall ethos and feeling of the organisation (...), the harmony. – Ivy, School 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal attitudes towards teaching</td>
<td>What has changed is (...) I am retiring in four years (...) I don't give a toss anymore (...) I mean sort of. I do, I mean I care about the children, and I come in and I do a professional job (...) and I am interested. I'm not (...) I'm not giving up. You know, I'm not just coming in and going home and doing nothing. But, at the end of the day, whatever we do to the kids doesn't really matter. – Enoch, School 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>I haven't, at any stage, thought of or considered leaving the profession (...) no. No. I am a fighter. If somebody tells me I am a failure, I will prove them wrong (...) yeah, I always fight (...) You see, I've got to prove people wrong. And, um (...), I don't know really. I just want to prove people wrong. So I have LEARNED that you gotta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSON</td>
<td>Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSON</td>
<td>Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSON</td>
<td>Demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSON/PROXIMAL PROCESSES</td>
<td>Force/Resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROXIMAL PROCESSES</td>
<td>Interactions with colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROXIMAL PROCESSES</td>
<td>Interactions with parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTEXT Microsystem Processes</td>
<td>Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTEXT Microsystem Workload</td>
<td>Workload</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that, it had an impact on my work/life balance. – Zoe, School 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
<th>Microsystem</th>
<th>Cover</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>Zoe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Covering for absent colleagues um (...) before Christmas it was becoming an issue because I felt like I was being used too regularly (...) I think I was being used a couple of times in a week. My friend is a union representative in school and he said it was very average and I wasn’t being overused (...) and I haven’t been used since then um (...) it’s really painful and it can be quite stressful and I don’t like it. It’s just the pressure in your planning time and the realisation that you’ve got another planning to do. At times you’re told you should be in such and such a room (...) that annoys me (...) because I have my own plans. – Rumbi, School 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROXIMAL PROCESSES</th>
<th>Support from colleagues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 10</td>
<td>Rumbi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And then other colleagues within the department are helping them, not the head of department. – Gabrielle, School 1

… but I do talk with colleagues and discuss different situations and tell them how to do things differently. – Grace, School 1

So there’s always that support network where you can either ask, “What should I do with this incident or what’s your advice?” – Enoch, School 10

But now I feel a bit more (...) I have to be careful what I say to certain people (...) and I don’t really feel like there’s a lot of support from my department. – Rumbi, School 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
<th>Mesosystemic work/home link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>Grace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are certain times of the year when work takes over. Um (...), I put extra pressure on my husband (...) I am very lucky (...) and I’ve got a very supportive husband (...) and I’ve got understanding children [...] I am very lucky. I’ve got a husband who doesn’t mind ironing (...) he is quite happy to do the cooking. – Grace, School 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
<th>Mesosystemic work/social link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>David</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At one time I used to be out on a weekend (...) I used to belong to a pub questing. But over the last few years I have just let everything slide because of the way this job has changed. – David, School 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource: Experience</th>
<th>Ecological transitions (transfers: past and imminent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 10</td>
<td>Josephine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As I said, I have taught in six schools in total since I started teaching. Initially um (...), the key reason for my between-schools transfers was mostly attributable to the re-organisation of the education system at the time. For example, one of the schools I was in was closing down and um (...), therefore, I had to move. On another occasion (...) um, there was redundancy which meant there wasn’t any room for me in the school (...) that was when I had to train as a Special Needs teacher. – Josephine, School 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
<th>Mesosystem</th>
<th>Schoolwork at home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 10</td>
<td>Josephine</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

I am usually in school from 7.30 in the morning (...) to about (...) four o’clock in the evening After that um (...), I will then do a bit of work at home. – Josephine, School 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXT/TIME</th>
<th>Mesosystem/ Microtime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 10</td>
<td>Rumbi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Last week it got to the point where I said, “That’s enough,” (...) I didn’t take any work home with me. I came home and watched television and felt much better. – Rumbi, School 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
<th>Microsystem - Social</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTEXT</td>
<td>PROXIMAL PROCESSES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mesosystem</strong>&lt;br&gt;Ecological transitions (from school to LA to union)</td>
<td><strong>Protective links</strong>&lt;br&gt;Generally, parents are very supportive. – Enoch, School 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exosystem</strong>&lt;br&gt;Influence of home context on pupil behaviour in school</td>
<td><strong>Exosystem</strong>&lt;br&gt;Um (…), I think there is a general social decline in politeness. Um (…), certainly, I think the biggest stress that staff find with pupil behaviour is answering back and questioning. You ask the pupil to do something quite reasonably, and the immediate answer is, “Why?” – Enoch, School 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Microsystem:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Home&lt;br&gt;Influence of own children on work organisation</td>
<td><strong>Macro&quot;system/Exosystem</strong>&lt;br&gt;But what I have found out (…) what has happened (…) some of the reasons it’s caused so much stress in the profession is that this government do not have an idea of what it means to be in the classroom. They don’t know what it’s like facing kids day after day (…) it’s a very draining experience. Also they come up with a new idea and do not allow us time to embed the first idea before they drop something else on us. – David, School 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Macrosystem</strong>&lt;br&gt;Implementation of government initiatives by Ofsted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTEXT</td>
<td>Macrosystem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
<th>Exosystem</th>
<th>LA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In general um (…), there has been a lot of questioning of the roles of the Local Authority from the society at large. – Josephine, School 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>So the LEA had to put me on like a therapeutical placement to finish my NQT. I am just thankful to people for the way they helped me like ATL (…) which is my union which helped me (…) and the Lancashire LEA which helped me as well through that really tricky part of my starting out (…) and my parents as well (…) because they really helped. Gabrielle, School 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
<th>Exosystem</th>
<th>Union</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alongside this, we are also aware of union guidance on several things like PPA time (…). Oh, yes, PPA is planning, preparation and assessment time. So, yes, we’re aware of union guidance on PPA time, cover, attendance and other such stuff (…) workload, yes. – Ivy, School 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
<th>Macrosystem</th>
<th>National standards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Because senior members of staff focus on raising achievement and attainment, (…) they forget that the people they are gonna make the victims to that are the people they should be supporting, i.e. the teachers that they constantly pressurise in different tasks. – Zoe, School 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>As union rep, I’ve had very few colleagues come to me for advice on dealing with work stress. My advice to them is very much dependent on the specific situation um (…) if it’s serious um (…), I pass it on to the union who can deal with it (…) hopefully. – Josephine, School 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
<th>Macrosystem</th>
<th>National tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The National Curriculum (…) the testing, the reporting of the tests has destroyed that. So it’s Science most kids don’t enjoy (…) they don’t like it. It’s just another subject to do. And, increasingly, kids won’t go on to study it at post-16. – Enoch, School 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>There’s quite a fundamental misconception. I think they fail to understand exactly how demanding national tests are and do not understand what pupils are required to do in order to reach level 5 or level 6 at KS3 (…) – Zoe, School 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
<th>Macrosystem</th>
<th>League tables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I also hate the idea of targets (…) the league tables (…) I don’t think that does anything for the kids (…) it’s only a competition between schools and if something is league-driven then it doesn’t show the true value that our kids get. This is not a factory (…) this results in pressure. – David, School 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
<th>Macrosystem</th>
<th>Results culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The most stressful aspects um (…) getting things done (…) not having enough time. I can work at home, but that has a lot of impact on the social side. – David, School 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All they want are results at the end of the day (…) not the process you go through in order to achieve those results. Well (…), I try to explain it and I give them examples and (…) I give them the evidence that I have gathered and, if</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
they are not satisfied, then there is nothing more I can do. – Zoe, School 1

It wouldn’t matter to me if all my children fail (…) but I know that I’ve done my best job and they have tried their hardest (…) so it wouldn’t matter to me (…) it’s really what children are getting out of it and not what the results are. – Rumbi, School 10

The Government like to do things and they set themselves targets. They don’t meet them but they then forget them (…) the school doesn’t meet them, they send Ofsted there. – Enoch, School 10

I find paperwork (…) alongside the targets-based culture (…) very stressful. Targets, in particular, compromise the cooperation one should be getting from colleagues (…) this results-oriented approach (…) as well as targets associated with performance management (…) adds considerable pressure on teachers (…) I don’t think this targets culture is producing much benefit because the kids are not equipped for the outside world but just drilled for exams. – Josephine, School 10

The most stressful aspect in all the work I do as a teacher (…) marking books or marking coursework (…) I don’t like assessments and setting targets for children. I don’t enjoy doing that because I have to do six assessments per child per year group (…) and I find that quite difficult. – Rumbi, School 10

I also hate the idea of targets (…) the league tables (…) I don’t think that does anything for the kids (…) it’s only a competition between schools and if something is league-driven then it doesn’t show the true value that our kids get. This is not a factory (…) this results in pressure. – David, School 1

It causes me great concern and it does cause me stress because, ultimately (…), I feel I am held accountable for the performance of pupils who might not be capable of meeting those targets. And, you know, the questions are being asked, “So why haven’t their targets?” And, you know (…), we try to explain to them why they haven’t achieved their targets and so on. Whereas I might argue that the target for that particular child was unreasonably high (…) they don’t really get it. All they want are results at the end of the day (…) not the process you go through in order to achieve those results. Well (…), I try to explain it and I give them examples and (…) I give them the evidence that I have gathered and, if they are not satisfied, then there is nothing more I can do. – Zoe, School 1

Also they come up with a new idea and do not allow us time to embed the first idea before they drop something else on us. So you try and juggle so many different balls at the same time (…) and then the first idea seems to fade into the background and it’s ignored. There is no emphasis on it any more (…) it’s the latest thing (…) it’s like having new fashions (…) everyone has got to have the latest style of trainers (…) and the government is acting the same way with education. – David, School 1
The things that most people say is, um (...), far too much change and over too short a time period. Um (...), it’s changes and initiatives usually coming from government level (...) to be brought in for you to finish in two to three years (...) three-year projects and programmes. If you are doing anything in a school, particularly if you are teaching a subject (...) if you start a new curriculum or a subject, it takes a minimum of three years to get (...) to feel comfortable with it.

Things don’t last that long. Change moves more rapidly than that (...) um (...), similar to administrative systems as well (...) it takes two or three years from when something comes in, to get it settled (...) and then, BANG, another change comes in.– Enoch, School 10
Appendix 14: Example of codes and emerging themes by research question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Bioecological Level</th>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **RQ1:** What person characteristics do teachers in urban secondary schools serving areas of multiple and complex disadvantage have? | Person | **Resource:** Professional experience, Professional skills  
**Force:** Personal attitudes towards teaching, Persistence/Person characteristics, Beliefs, Commitment, Sense of Collegiality, Personality Self-efficacy: Influence on pupil discipline, Influence on colleagues, e.g. support with coping, Influence on pupil attainment  
**Personal beliefs** |
| **RQ2:** Which stress risks do these teachers report and how do these risks affect them? | Person  
**Process**  
**Context:**  
Microsystem  
Mesosystem  
Exosystem  
Macrosystem  
**Time** | **Force:** Personal beliefs, Personal attitudes towards teaching,  
**Demand:** Dual teacher/union rep role, Interpersonal relations,  
**Microsystem:** Processes, Workload, Cover, bioecological transitions,  
**Mesosystem:** Schoolwork at home, Stressful links, Influence of own children on work organisation  
**Exosystem:** Influence of home context on pupil behaviour in school,  
**Macrosystem:** Change initiated by the government, Implementation of government initiatives by Ofsted, Ofsted inspections, National tests, National standards, League tables, Results, Targets, Change patterns,  
**Effects:** (Mental, Emotional and Physical symptoms)  
**Microtime/ Mesotime/ Force:** Irritability, Fatigue, Upset, Feeling the need to stop/pause and recover, Anxious, Uneasy |
| **RQ3:** What coping strategies do these teachers employ and how effective are they? | Individual  
**Microsystem**  
**Mesosystem** | Coping Strategies, Personal beliefs, Persistence, Social involvement, Stress at school being coped with at home, Stress at work referred to union representative, Bioecological transition (from school to LA to union) |
| **RQ4:** What protective factors enhance the resilience of these urban secondary school teachers? | Person  
**Process**  
**Context**  
Microsystem  
Mesosystem  
Exosystem  
Macrosystem  
**Time** | **Force:** Personal beliefs, Persistence  
**Proximal processes/ Microtime/ Mesotime:** Interpersonal relations, Support from colleagues, Support from family,  
**Mesosystem:** Protective links,  
**Exosystem:** Influence of home context on pupil behaviour in school, Union |
### Appendix 15: Theme review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person characteristics</th>
<th>Proximal processes: Roles/activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional experience</td>
<td>Dual teacher/union rep role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal beliefs</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal towards about teaching</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual attributes</td>
<td>Pupil behaviour management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>Planning, preparation and assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>(PPA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence/Person characteristics</td>
<td>Meetings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coping strategies: Direct action/Palliative</th>
<th>Protective factors: PPCT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coping Strategies</td>
<td>Protective Factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switch off</td>
<td>Protective links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend time with family</td>
<td>Support from colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take days off</td>
<td>Support from family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch tv</td>
<td>Union support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress at school being coped with at home</td>
<td>Departmental support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social involvement</td>
<td>Individual Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek support with job aspect from colleagues</td>
<td>Professional experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek support from union</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek support from friends</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tell colleagues and management what one can and cannot do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress at work referred to union representative</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do my best</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being organised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just do the work</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Prioritise important tasks</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proximal Processes: Interpersonal relations</th>
<th>Risk: PPCT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal relations</td>
<td>Change patterns</td>
</tr>
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<td>Relationships with colleagues</td>
<td>Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departmental relationships</td>
<td>Change initiated by the government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with management</td>
<td>Workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with pupils</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with parents</td>
<td>Schoolwork at home</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Roles and responsibilities</td>
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<td>Stressful links</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Influence of home context on pupil</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>behaviour in school</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Influence of own children on work</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>organisation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Implementation of government</td>
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<td></td>
<td>initiatives by Ofsted</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ofsted inspections</td>
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<td>League tables</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Targets</td>
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<td>Individual experiences</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LA</th>
<th>Ecological transitions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transfers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ecological transitions (transfers: past and imminent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ecological transition (from school to LA to union)
Promotions
Appendix 16: Theme links

- PPA
- Context/Microtime/Mesotime: Roles/Activities
- Protective factors
- Person: Experiences
- Micro/Meso/Macrotime
- Ofsted
- Teaching
- Resource: Professional experience
- Force: Personal beliefs/Self-efficacy
- Demand: Roles
- Palliative: Switch off
- Direct action: Seek support
- Direct Action: Do my best
- Coping strategies
- Proximal Processes
- Ofsted
- Macrosystem
- Mesosystem
- Relationships with colleagues/Senior management
- Relationships with pupils
- Relationships with parents
- Person

Stress risks

Person characteristics

Macrosystem

Mesosystem

Microsystem

Roles/Activities

Context/Microtime/Mesotime

Protective factors

Relationships with colleagues

Relationships with pupils
Appendix 17: Final thematic map

Person characteristics

Person characteristics

Process

Process

Context

Context

Microsystem Mesosystem Macrosystem
Appendix 18: Resilient and at-risk teacher scores on selected variables and factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low stress level</th>
<th>High stress level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Resilient teachers)</td>
<td>(Scores 0 – 2)</td>
<td>(At-risk teachers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Scores 8 – 10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experience (years)</td>
<td>15.87</td>
<td>11.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in present school</td>
<td>14.33</td>
<td>9.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated PPA time per week (hours)</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning, preparation and assessment outside designated PPA time (hours)</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>4.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload per week (hours)</td>
<td>43.53</td>
<td>4.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-efficacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence on pupil discipline</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence on colleagues</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence on pupil attainment</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sources of stress</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload/ Time constraints</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational processes</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil behaviour</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra/ inter departmental climate</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental support</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stress symptoms</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of emotional symptoms</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of mental symptoms</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency of coping strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct-action coping strategies</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palliative coping strategies</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effectiveness of coping strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct-action coping strategies</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palliative coping strategies</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 19: Literature search strategy

“A search of the literature is an important part of every research project” as it plays a significant role in determining the breadth and depth of any study (Hart, 2001:3). In this study, the literature search followed a general-to-specific orientation. The aim for the search was to gain a broader understanding of the phenomenon such as historical information, advancements in the field, technical terms and knowledge niches. To make the search more manageable, the search terms were subdivided into four broad categories, namely topic literature, theoretical framework, contextual literature and methodological literature. This was an adaptation of Hart’s (2001) two categories: topic literature and methodological literature. The table below depicts the key terms and relevant related terms organised in their respective categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key literature search terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Terms</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theoretical Literature</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contextual Literature</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methodological Literature</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Derived from Hart (2001)

The following electronic databases and search engines were consulted in this process: PsycINFO, the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), the British Education Index, the Australian Education Index, the Social Sciences Index, the Humanities Index, Social Science Information Gateway (SOSIG), the Zetoc electronic table of contents and the British Library Electronic Thesis Online (EThoS). In addition, the Manchester Metropolitan University Library and the John Rylands University (JRUL) electronic library catalogues and Google Scholar were also used. Abstracts of scholarly
journal articles, theses and library book synopses were then skimmed for relevance after which the selected relevant materials were retrieved and studied. It was during the broad search stage that key search terms were identified which led to more focused searches.
# Appendix 20: Historical overview of stress research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Psychologists link identify the ‘storm and strain’ experienced by adolescents as a key pedagogical problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903 – 15</td>
<td>Emergence and development of writings about emotional problems related to fatigue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>The term ‘stress’ is used in reference to emotional difficulty (attributed to Hans Selye)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938 – 51</td>
<td>Studies reveals teachers perceive themselves to be under strain, tension and anxiety other professions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950s</td>
<td>Stress conceived as a physiological non-adaptive syndrome triggered by excessive demands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interest in studying coping outcomes of at-risk children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>Increased interest in characteristics of coping behaviours and role of extrinsic support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974 – 76</td>
<td>Selye proposes that distinction should be made between stress and distress and conceives of stress as rate of ‘wear and tear’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Longitudinal studies reveal about 33% of at-risk children thrive in life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>Dunham conceptualises stress in 3 models, engineering; physiological and interactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Growing interest in coping capabilities among at-risk children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>Increase in critique of stress as a concept, mainly due to it being imprecise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000s</td>
<td>Increased interest in vulnerability and hardiness among professionals, including teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Further focus on the role of bioecological factors in promoting positive coping outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Derived from the literature*
# Appendix 21: Pilot questionnaire

## Greater Manchester Teacher Stress Survey

Dear Colleague

This questionnaire is phase one of a study on teacher stress in Greater Manchester schools. The aim of this research phase is to identify and profile stress-resistant teachers in challenging schools in Greater Manchester. **You are assured of absolute anonymity and confidentiality.**

Please return the completed questionnaire in the freepost envelop provided.

Thank you for taking your time to complete this questionnaire.

Yours sincerely,

Controllah Gabi (Researcher)

### A About you

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have QTS?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What academic/professional qualifications do you have (degree and above)?

Are you an overseas-trained teacher? Yes ☐ No ☐

How many years have you been teaching altogether?

How many schools, including current, have you worked in so far?

Did you have another career before teaching? (please specify)

What is your current job title?

For how many years have you held this position?

What is the main subject you teach?

What other subjects do you teach?

### B Your workload

How much time (in hours) per week do you spend on:

- Contact time
- Directed time
- PPA time
- Supervision duties
- Cover for colleagues
- Extra-curricular activities
- Planning preparation and analysis outside designated PPA time
- Approximate total time per week you spend on work-related activities

---

Greater Manchester Teacher Stress Survey
### Your perceptions

Please indicate whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), are undecided (U), disagree (D) or strongly disagree (SD) in each of the following cases by ticking the appropriate answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If students are not disciplined at home, they are likely not to accept discipline in school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have enough experience to deal with almost any pupil discipline problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I really try, I can get through to even the most difficult students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are not a very powerful influence on student achievement when all factors are considered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the grades of my students improve, it is usually because I used more effective approaches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I have significant impact on the school improvement effort in my school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can often significantly help to resolve conflict between colleagues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel my views are valued by my senior colleagues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sources of stress

Please respond to each item in two parts. In **Part I** please indicate the extent to which the following are issues in your school on a scale ranging from (1) not an issue to (5) a serious issue. In **Part II** please indicate the extent to which you perceive these aspects of your job as causing you stress, ranging from (1) little stress to (5) high stress. If your working environment is free of a particular aspect, please circle the respective (NA) not applicable response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Stress</th>
<th>Part I</th>
<th>Part II</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with pupils</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra-staff conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil behavioural problems</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical aggression from pupils</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of consistent and robust school policy on behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truancy and absenteeism of pupils</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant changes in national educational policy</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor communications within the school</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorly defined school policies and practices</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large class sizes</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support for my pastoral role</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism of colleagues</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The unpredictability of cover periods</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of involvement in decision making</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paperwork</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of clarity concerning my role</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling that apart from teaching I have no other employable skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending parents’ evenings</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abusive behaviour from parents</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on schoolwork at home</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time to solve problems with individual pupils</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support from my union</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part I</td>
<td>Part II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support from the local authority</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall workload</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing demands of Every Child Matters</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing effective relationships with parents</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial tensions within the school</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal abuse from pupils</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression between pupils</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of professional development opportunities</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The inability of my department to plan strategically</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ineffective implementation of change in my school</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of resources</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict between my department and others</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support my subject teaching</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covering for absent colleagues</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of parental support</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low expectations from parents</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hierarchical structure of my school</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building schools for the future (BSF)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of non-contact time</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The inclusion of pupils with special educational needs</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support staff</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of promotion prospects</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working through breaks and lunch times</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of social support from colleagues</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism of school premises</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society’s diminishing respect for teachers</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of league tables</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of control over my own work</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please give examples, if any, of other particular times or events which trigger extreme stress in you.

*Note: Same items as main questionnaire. Only different order*
### How you have been feeling

Please indicate whether, in the past two years, you have experienced the following feelings ranging from (1) rarely to (5) frequently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel I don’t have work-life balance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I can’t make decisions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that life is too much effort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel uneasy and restless</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel upset for no obvious reason</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel anxious for no obvious reason</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel unduly tired</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel stressed for no obvious reason</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel stress at home has a significant impact on my work-related stress level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a scale of 0 = not stressed to 10 = extremely stressed, indicate with a cross how stressed you usually feel during term time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress Level</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### How you have coped with pressure

Please respond to each item in two parts. In **Part I** please indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 whether in the past two years you have (1) rarely to (5) frequently coped with pressure in the following ways. In **Part II** please indicate how effective this strategy usually is using a scale (1) not effective to (5) very effective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Part I</th>
<th>Part II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set priorities and consider a range of plans in dealing with the problem</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think of good things ahead in future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take immediate action according to my understanding of the situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep things in perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause and think objectively about the situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid confrontation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t let the problem go until I have satisfactorily dealt with it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deal with the source of the problem so that it does not happen again</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek help from others in aspects of the problem I can’t deal with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep my feelings under control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sure people are aware I am doing my best</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to see the humour in it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to reassure myself everything will work right</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek social support to help me cope emotionally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try not to worry or think about it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express my feelings and frustration to others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How else do you cope with pressure effectively ?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Participation in the following interviews

If you would be willing to participate in interviews which will follow this survey we would be grateful if you provide your details below:

**NAME:**

**SCHOOL ADDRESS**

**POST CODE**

**E-MAIL**

**Phone/Mobile:**

Thank you for taking your time to complete this questionnaire. Please, now return it in the freepost envelop provided.
### Appendix 22: Criteria for and characteristics of award of statuses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Part criteria for and characteristics of award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sportsmark</td>
<td>Development of sports partnerships within the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>opportunities for competition for students within and outside the school setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunities for continuous professional development for teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunities for students to extend their experiences outside the core curriculum, in out-of-school-hours clubs and with other sports organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The promotion of fair play and the encouragement of positive sporting attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artsmark</td>
<td>Opportunities for the continuing professional development of teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partnerships with artists and arts organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out-of-lessons arts activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage effective partnerships between schools and arts practitioners and organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco Schools</td>
<td>Increases motivation in pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Building strong partnerships with the local community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involves pupils, teachers, non-teaching staff, governors, parents and other relatives, local clubs, associations and businesses, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helps to improve student/staff lines of communication and unites the whole school community behind a common cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased sense of responsibility in pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enhances and thrives within a caring school community where the views of others are valued and action is taken in response to these views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Many schools following the programme have reported an improvement in the behaviour of pupils as they develop an increased sense of belonging and pride within the school.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investors in People</td>
<td>Standard directly affects:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employee-oriented human resources policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organisational social climate measured by the level of trust, cooperation and commitment perceived among employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The level of human capital flexibility that companies possess, which is represented by the level of employees’ skills flexibility, employees’ behaviours flexibility and human resources practices flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The level of non-financial performance of the company, which is assessed by the quality of its products and services, the ability of the company to attract and retain essential employees, the degree of customer satisfaction and the quality of the employees’ relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Healthy School</td>
<td>Promotes the link between <strong>good health, behaviour</strong> and <strong>achievement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whole school approach focusing on:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff professional development needs, health and welfare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Partnerships with parents/carers and local communities build confidence and emotional resilience in pupils working with other agencies to support individuals and their families.

Leadership, management and managing change

School culture and environment

Extended School

| Offers: study support, sport and music clubs, combined with childcare in primary schools |
| parenting and family support |
| community access to facilities including adult and family learning, ICT and sports grounds. |

“Schools will need to work closely with parents, children and others to shape these activities around the needs of their community and may choose to provide extra services in response to demand.”
## Appendix 23: School 1 and 10 teachers’ self-efficacy table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>School 1</th>
<th>School 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are a very powerful influence on student achievement when all factors are considered</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the grades of my students improve, it is usually because I used more effective approaches</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I have significant impact on the school improvement effort in my school</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I really try I get through to even the most difficult pupils</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have enough experience to deal with almost any pupil discipline problem</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can often significantly help to resolve conflict between colleagues</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel my views are valued by my senior colleagues</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If students are not disciplined at home, they are still likely to accept discipline in school</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVERALL</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>143</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 24: Discussion/ Research question overview

RQ1, concerned with the teachers’ person characteristics, uses descriptive statistics on teachers’ biographical and demographic data (section 4.2); self-efficacy (section 4.3); coping behaviours (section 4.7) and comparisons of self-efficacy and coping behaviours of resilient and at-risk teachers (section 4.8). Factor analyses of self-efficacy (section 5.2) and coping behaviours (section 5.5) are also drawn on. Reference to regression analysis results (sections 6.2-6.7) and teacher pen-portrait and case study analyses (chapter 7) is also made.

RQ2, focusing on stress risks to and their effects on the teachers, draws on descriptive statistics on sources of stress (section 4.4); stress symptoms (section 4.5); stress level (section 4.6). In addition, it utilises factor analyses of sources of stress (section 5.3) and symptoms of stress (section 5.4). RQ1 also utilises regression analysis results (sections 6.2 – 6.7) and teacher pen-portrait and case study analyses (chapter 7).

The research question considering teachers’ coping strategies and effectiveness (RQ3) draws on relevant descriptive statistics (section 4.7); factor analysis (section 5.5) and regression analysis (sections 6.2 – 6.7) and teacher pen-portrait and case study analyses (chapter 7).

Finally, RQ4 – to do with protective factors which enhance the resilience of these teachers – relies on comparisons of resilient and at-risk teachers (section 4.8) and teacher pen-portrait and case study analyses (chapter 7).
Appendix 25: Section C variables

- If students are not disciplined at home, they are still likely to accept discipline in school
- I have enough experience to deal with almost any pupil discipline problem
- When I really try, I can get through to even the most difficult students
- Teachers are a very powerful influence on student achievement when all factors are considered
- When the grades of my students improve, it is usually because I used more effective approaches
- I feel I have significant impact on the school improvement effort in my school
- I can often significantly help to resolve conflict between colleagues
- I feel my views are valued by my senior colleagues
Appendix 26: Section D variables

- Working through breaks and lunch times
- Lack of non-contact time
- Lack of support staff
- Time spent on schoolwork at home
- Paperwork
- Large class sizes
- Lack of time to solve problems with individual pupils
- Lack of support for my subject teaching
- Increasing demands of Every Child Matters
- Overall workload
- Lack of control over my own work
- Awareness of league tables
- Lack of support for my pastoral role
- The unpredictability of cover periods
- Lack of involvement in decision making
- Lack of clarity concerning my role
- The inability of my department to plan strategically
- Conflict between my department and others
- Poor communications within the school
- The ineffective implementation of change in my school
- The hierarchical structure of my school
- Poorly defined school policies and practices
- Constant changes in national educational policy
- The inclusion of pupils with special educational needs
- Building schools for the future (BSF)
- Absenteeism of colleagues
- Covering for absent colleagues
- Racial tensions within the school
- Lack of social support from colleagues
- Intra-staff conflict
- Relationships with pupils
- Pupil behavioural problems
- Verbal abuse from pupils
- Lack of consistent and robust school policy on pupil behaviour
- Physical aggression from pupils
- Truancy and absenteeism of pupils
- Aggression between pupils
- Abusive behaviour from parents
- Developing effective relationships with parents
- Lack of parental support
- Low expectations from parents
- Attending parents’ evenings
- Feeling that apart from teaching I have no other employable skills
- Lack of professional development opportunities
- Lack of promotion prospects
- Lack of resources
- Lack of support from my union
- Lack of support from the local authority
- Vandalism of school premises
- Society’s diminishing respect for teachers
Appendix 27: Section E variables

- I feel I don’t have work-life balance
- I feel I can’t make decisions
- I feel that life is too much effort
- I feel uneasy and restless
- I feel upset for no obvious reason
- I feel anxious for no obvious reason
- I feel unduly tired
- I feel stressed for no obvious reason
- I feel stress at home has a significant impact on my work-related stress level
Appendix 28: Section F variables

- Set priorities and consider a range of plans in dealing with the problem
- Think of good things ahead in future
- Take immediate action according to my understanding of the situation
- Keep things in perspective
- Pause and think objectively about the situation
- Avoid confrontation
- Don’t let the problem go until I have satisfactorily dealt with it
- Deal with the source of the problem so that it does not happen again
- Seek help from others in aspects of the problem I can’t deal with
- Keep my feelings under control
- Make sure people are aware I am doing my best
- Try to see the humour in it
- Try to reassure myself everything will work right
- Seek social support to help me cope emotionally
- Try not to worry or think about it
- Express my feelings and frustration to others
Appendix 29: Interview analysis flow model

1. Familiarising with the data
Repeated reading of the data, annotating and identifying ideas for coding. Searching for meanings and patterns.

2. Generating initial codes
Production of initial codes. Identifying interesting aspects in the data that may form the basis of repeated patterns (themes) across the data set.

3. Searching for themes
Sorting the different codes into potential themes. Collating relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes. Collapsing some codes. Identifying candidate themes and sub-themes.

4. Reviewing themes
Refinement of candidate themes identified in phase 3. Merging, collapsing or discarding themes, as appropriate, on the basis of internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity.

5. Defining and naming themes
Define and further refine the themes that will be presented for analysis and analyse the data within them. Integrate the different components from stages 1 to 4 in light of the ecological framework in a coherent way. Revisiting collated data extracts for each theme and organising them into a coherent and internally consistent account, with accompanying narrative.

6. Produce the report
Write-up