Teachers’ Beings and Doings:  
A study of identity and agency of four teachers  
in English secondary schools  

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List of abbreviations

autonomous reflexivity (ARx)
Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy or ‘mad cow disease’ (BSE)
Building Schools for the Future (BSF)
Criminal Investigation Department (CID)
communicative reflexivity (CRx)
continuing professional development (CPD)
critical incident technique (CIT)
critical realism (CR)
curriculum vitae (CV)
Education Reform Act (ERA)
fractured reflexivity (FRx)
General Certificate of Higher Education (GCSE)
Global Educational Reform Movement (GERM)
Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP)
Internal Conversation Instrument (ICONI)
Individual Education Plan (IEP)
Information Technology (IT)
Initial Teacher Education (ITE)
Local Authority (LA)
meta-reflexivity (MRx)
New Public Management (NPM)
Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT)
Open University (OU)
Physical Education (PE)
Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
RAISE stands for Reporting and Analysis for Improvement through School Self-Evaluation (RAISEonline)
Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
significant event technique (SET)
Structure of Observed Learning Outcome (SOLO)
Teaching Assistant (TA)
Times Higher Education (THE)
variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD)
visual, auditory or kinaesthetic (VAK)
Abstract

Teachers’ Beings and Doings: A study of identity and agency of four teachers in English secondary schools

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Teachers’ professional lives are situated at the intersection of local, national and global educational policy contexts. What they purposefully do (agency) and how they see themselves and their roles as teachers (identity) dynamically interact with such contexts. This study argues that in order to understand the meaningful professional development work of teachers, it is important to have an understanding of this interplay. Current dominant policy discourses concerning the ‘improving teacher’ and ‘teaching as a craft’ are examples of an over-reliant emphasis on more insular narratives of agentic teachers and teaching. As the research in this thesis shows, such narratives fail to take into account the complexities of factors and discourses that impact on the beings and doings of teachers, and are therefore inadequate. Based on an iterative dialogue between particular theoretical ideas and emerging case study data, the study proposes a multi-level integrating framework for understanding the experiences of teachers as they develop and locate a sense of their professional identity. Four teachers, from different types of English secondary schools, participated in the study. Data was generated from timelines, concept maps, lesson observations and interviews with the teacher participants. The case studies were presented as written portraits.

Drawing on Archer’s work (e.g. 2012) on reflexivity, the ways in which teachers’ thinking mediated the links between their agency and structure were considered. The different modes of reflexivity that teachers employ and the ways in which teachers determine and facilitate personal projects of concern to them were found to be important to their professional identity and agency. The findings also suggested that the similarities and differences between the teachers were to do with how intersecting structural and cultural factors at global and local levels are mediated by individual forms of reflexivity. These forms of reflexivity are a reflection of evolving personal and social identities and an emerging social stance on society. The mediation produces particular professional concerns or projects that both suggest similarities that relate to powerful global discourses of education—such as performativity—but also particular types of agency and identity that are specific to those individual teachers’ classrooms and general professional stance. The essence of the daily work of teachers appeared to reflect an intersection of personal biography and the situational structures and cultures of schools in which teachers operated, which brought about differences in professional thinking and doing.

The thesis contributes to knowledge by adding to theory concerning identity and agency, as well as contributing to methodology by using portraits in understanding the nature of teacher agency and reflexivity. The factors that are identified and an insight into teachers’ reflexivity contribute to the development of a toolkit for understanding teachers’ identity and agency that may be useful for both teacher educators and policy makers.
Declaration

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Dedication

For Simon, Sarah and Sophie, who are what life is all about.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The nature of what teachers think and do as professionals has been a key issue throughout the history of English schooling, particularly since the mid-19th century when schooling started to become increasingly established as a public function. There are two contrasting perspectives that appear to have been dominant in the discourses relating to the professional lives of teachers (e.g. Gray, 2007; Priestley et al., 2012). The first perspective concerns the ‘technical’ teacher that is strongly guided by both prescriptive and proscriptive policies. A relatively recent example of such prescription and proscription was the three-part ‘starter–main–plenary’ lesson advocated by the last New Labour government as part of their Key Stage 3 strategy (e.g. Department for Education and Skills, 2004). The second perspective views teachers more as professional agents, who are enabled to respond to the pedagogical and curriculum challenges of modern schooling. Such a discourse was articulated in the 1997 ‘Excellence in Schools’ White Paper (Department for Education and Employment, 1997) that focused on ‘good teaching’ as key to improving performance and to remedying under-achievement (p.45). This White Paper also resulted in the establishment of the General Teaching Council as a professional body for teachers, focused on professional standards and teachers as crucial in the delivery of excellent teaching and learning (Teaching and Higher Education Act, 1988). Despite the contrast between these perspectives, both positions are similar in that the beings and doings of teachers are seen as malleable. With appropriate training and continuing professional development, teachers are expected to respond in an appropriately focused way, either by becoming more technically orientated (for example by knowing and applying more carefully the technical details of the three-part lesson) or by becoming more professionally agentic (for example by being able to recognise how to make pedagogical improvements through a synthesis of research evidence and professional practice).

My professional experiences of working in teacher education and development in a variety of contexts for over 20 years have suggested that this malleability is not clear-cut. Indeed, policy and practice discourses often demonstrate a very limited understanding of what creates professional identity and agency for different
teachers over time. My professional concerns have also been augmented by some of the critical research literatures (e.g. Campbell et al., 2012) that point to similar shortcomings in the policy rhetoric concerning improved teacher effectiveness and developing the ‘best’ teachers (e.g. Department for Education, 2016b). Given that my previous literature review of the professional identity and agency of teachers (Lord, 2012) had suggested that this was an underdeveloped theoretical and empirical field of study, the purpose of this thesis was to respond to this gap. The hope was not only to develop this particular field of research but also to provide important guidance to both policymakers and practitioners in relation to teacher education and development.

My position and background

My interest in teacher education and the development of professional identity has been developed through two strands of my professional life. My current role is that of a teacher educator, specialising in working with trainee teachers and newly qualified teachers (NQTs), particularly in secondary education. My background in academic psychology, specialising in applied psychology, and my growing interest in phenomenology and in meaning-making formed the springboard for exploring my professional concerns about the situational and individual factors that appeared to impact on individual teacher’s doings (agency) and beings (identity).

Over the years I have had an increasing sense of professional disquiet about programmes of teacher development that fail to fully engage with how professional doings and beings develop for teachers. For example, in my professional encounters with the ‘Future Leaders’ programme I have noted that there is a sense in which teachers’ identity and agency are viewed as generic and therefore can be prescribed. This is exemplified on the Future Leaders website, where a school can access a pool of Future Leaders looking for a senior leadership position, implying that any one of a number of leaders could employ an identical strategy and be successful in any school. Such a policy suggests that there is a lack of understanding of the interplay

1 ‘Future Leaders’ are teachers who are identified as being ready for headship in a challenging school within three years (Future Leaders, 2016).
between a number of factors to do with policy, school context and biographical factors relating to pupils, teachers and leaders, which must be taken into account if successful work is to be done in schools. What works in one school might well work elsewhere, but equally it might not. Without a detailed understanding of each particular school, its culture and context and other individual factors, a ‘one size fits all’ policy for improving ‘standards’, a powerful agenda being pursued, not just in England but globally (Ainscow et al., 2006), is unlikely to succeed.

**Statement of topic and focus; rationale and vision for the research**

Given both my professional disquiet and an evolving sense of a gap in research based on my previous work, this thesis engages with the question ‘what are the beings and doings of teachers?’.

This question is articulated partly as a result of a consideration of the two contrasting perspectives that were mentioned earlier: the first viewing teachers as technicians, directed by and subjected to the policy rhetoric and discourses of the standards agenda and of the national curriculum; the second viewing teachers more as professional agents. These two approaches are considered in the work of (e.g. Department for Education, 2010) and that of (Abrams, 2012), respectively.

Hall and McGinity (2015) note the ‘pervasive influences of the standards and performativity agendas; and the dominance of a discourse directly linked to the re-structuring of the curriculum and the organizational structure of the school’ (p.11). They suggest that despite the challenges that this contextual milieu offers for teachers, a discourse of professionalism has prevailed. Nonetheless, this is a particular form of professionalism, that Hall and McGinity (2015) describe as an ‘NPM [New Public Management] professionalism’, and that they suggest is ‘tied closely to prevailing marketized, metricized and managerialist practices’ in schools in England (p.11).

---

2 Previous work (e.g. Lord, 2012; Lord, 2013) suggested that current conceptualisations of teacher identity and agency did not take into account factors at a variety of proximal and more distal levels that impacted on teachers’ beings and doings.
In contrast to this approach, the work of Priestley et al. (2012) in Scotland identifies a relatively recent tendency in curriculum policy, both in the UK and elsewhere, that explicitly constructs teachers as agents of change. They suggest that this is a significant shift, given many years of policies that have undermined teacher professionalism by taking agency away from teachers and replacing it with many of the features of a global reform model (for instance that described by Sahlberg, 2011) such as test-based accountability policies and standardisation. Priestley et al. (2012) do not identify this form of agency as ‘NPM professionalism’ in the same way that Hall and McGinity (2015) do. Although they do suggest that teachers ‘appear to be confined as a result of the impact of policy speak on their thinking and reflection’ (p.24), they put an emphasis on teacher agency and self-determination.

Interestingly, the differences between these authors’ views of teacher professionalism and identity in English and Scottish schools, may mirror the differences between teaching in England and in Scotland, as can be seen in Michael Gove’s paper ‘The Importance of Teachers’ (Hall and McGinity (2015) and that of Graham Donaldson in ‘Teaching: Scotland’s Future’, (Priestley et al. (2012). Those differences may illustrate the importance of global and national discourses in relation to teacher agency and identity.

In examining the particular ways in which teachers are shaped by policy reform discourses, Rebecca Hall and McGinity (2015) uses the concept of teacher identity as a lens. Her work suggests that teachers’ identity and professionalism are not entirely shaped by these global reform discourses, because teachers are ‘more complex and multifaceted than that’ (p.700). There is a strong argument for the fact that global, national and local contexts of education impact significantly on teachers. For those of us involved in working with teachers and in influencing, designing and enacting policy, the implications are clear. The cultural and structural factors that frame the beings and doings of teachers should be considered and taken seriously in order for us to effect changes in practice. If we are to work with teachers and deliver meaningful training and development work for them, it is important to be able to understand the complex ways in which these factors impact on teacher agency, and also to appreciate how teachers mediate the relationship between agency and structure. In a sense, it is about explaining clearly the complexities of how
professional agency and identity actually operate in the particular lives of individual teachers. My work, therefore, is concerned with investigating these complexities and considering, in depth, the ways in which the relationship between teacher agency and educational and societal structures operate. As I have indicated in previous research (Lord, 2012; Lord, 2013b) and above, this is not an arena of thinking that is fully explored theoretically and empirically in current research literatures, which employ either a dominant descriptive sense in which teachers’ work relates to dominant discourses of educational policy, or discuss issues relating to teacher agency and professionalism at more of a distance from these discourses. My aim, therefore, is to bring particular elements of social theory to the fore that might assist with this endeavour to illuminate the complex ways that agency and educational and societal structures are related for teachers.

**Choice of research framework, setting and overall data collection strategy**

As will be discussed in depth later, my research is located in a critical realist framework, drawing on the work of Margaret Archer (e.g., 2003; 2007) concerning the role of inner conversations (or what she calls individual reflexivity) in relation to the development of individuals’ personal projects and actions. The work is also rooted in a phenomenological concern to understand the lived realities of teachers’ beings and doings. It draws on a conceptual framework I developed in earlier work (Lord, 2012) which was used to frame research reported in the literature about teachers’ being and doings. The framework located the factors and discourses that impact on teachers’ agency and identity in an ecological systems model which drew on the work of Bronfenbrenner (2005) and of Gee (2001).

Portraits of four teachers in three different schools are presented. The portraits have been constructed from case study data from a number of different sources, including the teachers’ constructions and narrations of timelines and concept maps; my observations of teachers’ teaching and discussions with the teachers based on these observations; and semi-structured interviews focusing on the teachers’ reflexivity and their considerations of their positions in their school contexts. The data was collected over an academic year.
Research questions

This work engages with the overarching research question: ‘What are the doings and beings of teachers?’

The specific sub-questions that emanate from the rationale, from my previous research and from my position and background, are:

- In what ways do teachers’ beings and doings reflect structural macro level educational policy discourse, structured meso level school practice and proximal level biographical factors (RQ1)?
- How do the macro, meso and proximal levels intersect in the doings and beings of teachers (RQ2)?
- How does individual teacher reflexivity mediate the structural and proximal to suggest the privileging of particular forms of teacher beings and doings (RQ3)?

How the thesis is structured

In this chapter I have:

- outlined the development of my interest in teacher agency and identity, particularly in relation to my professional position as a teacher educator and to the policy agendas in which the issues of teacher identity and agency are located;
- started to introduce the theoretical framework on which the study is based;
- briefly described my choice of research setting and data collection strategy;
- set out the research questions that drive my research.

The remaining chapters are as follows.

Chapter 2 introduces my conceptual framework, and contextualises the study in the relevant literatures on teacher identity, agency and reflexivity.

Chapter 3 discusses my ontology and epistemology, focusing on critical realism and
the consequences of adopting such a position. Closely linked to this chapter is Chapter 4, an account of the research methodology and methods.

In Chapter 5 the portraits of the four teacher participants are presented, and in Chapter 6 the portraits are analysed and discussed, with particular emphasis on the reflexivity of the teachers and the impact that their reflexivity has on their agency and identity.

Finally, in Chapter 7, I discuss the implications of my research for professional development work with teachers and propose a model that may be useful in understanding the agency, reflexivity and identity of teachers. A rudimentary prototype of a toolkit, TRAIT, which can be used in professional development work with teachers, is presented. In addition, my contributions to knowledge, methodologically and theoretically as well as practically, are discussed.
Chapter 2: Literature review and the conceptual framework

Introduction
In this chapter I introduce ideas about the nature of teacher identity and agency, and present the conceptual framework that I have used to shape my work.

This research was designed to investigate the sense of disquiet that I identified in chapter 1; a disquiet with some of the inadequate conceptualisations of teacher agency and identity that exist in the policy rhetorics and discourses and which oversimplify the beings and doings of teachers. Combined with this was a sense that the research literatures in this area were underdeveloped. My work explores teachers’ personal articulations of their understandings of identity as well as the links between teacher agency and identity. The overriding question is: ‘What are the beings and doings of teachers?’

The conceptual framework is based on an earlier literature review that I undertook (Lord, 2012) of the factors that influence teacher identity. In this chapter, literature to populate and exemplify the framework is described. Subsequently, the explanatory power of the framework is developed by overlaying it with ideas drawn from Margaret Archer’s work about individuals’ reflexivity—the inner conversations that people employ that mediate structure and agency (e.g. Archer, 2012).

What are identity and agency?
The concept of ‘identity’ is what Gallie (1956) and Garver (1978) describe as an essentially contested one, where there is generally an open-endedness and vagueness about the term. The definition is also subject to modification based on situational determinants. In my first research paper (Lord, 2012) I drew on the work of James Gee (2001) to argue that identity is multifarious and exists in a number of interrelated ways; it is also fluid and to an extent socially constituted. Developing this work I intend here to work with a conception of identity which Margaret Archer (2012, p.42) uses: that of identity being defined by an individual’s ‘constellation of concerns’.
Of course, individuals are recognised by other people as having an identity, too, as being a ‘certain “kind of person,” in a given context...’ (Gee (2001, p.99). Similarly, Archer (2003, p.120) asserts that ‘social identity is necessarily a sub-set of personal identity’. These two definitions indicate that there are close interconnections between the concepts of agency and identity, in that identity may be seen as determining a set of fluid parameters for viewing the development and course of an individual’s agency, their chosen actions and relations with the world. Neither identity nor agency is free floating. For teachers, identity and agency are enabled and constrained by the various discourses of education that underpin the everyday professional worlds of teachers and which, in part, form the social and cultural contexts for their professional activities and for their thinking.

Professional identity can be conceptualised using a model which looks at two key strands (Lord, 2012). The first is related to concepts and images of self (e.g. the work of Jennifer Nias (1996), and of Gary Knowles (1992)) and the second is more particularly concerned with, and related to, teachers’ roles (e.g. Volkmann and Anderson (1998)). Given the arguments about the nature of identity that are advanced by such scholars, it might be argued that, in any work on teacher identity and agency, these two perspectives can usefully be intertwined: what teachers find and believe to be important ought to be linked to their experiences in practice and their personal backgrounds. This linkage is demonstrated in the concept of ‘leading identity’ (Black et al., 2010); a conceptualisation of self that reflects a hierarchy of an individual’s motives through engaging in what Leontyev (1981) calls ‘leading activities’, and which may be useful in considering the links between teachers’ agency and identity. According to Black et al. (2010), a leading identity, made available by engagement in practice, may drive an individual’s interpretation of events and activities. The self is mediated through both practice and narration, that may involve inner conversations (reflexivity) or discourse (for example in research interviews or in chatting with colleagues). There may be apparent contradictions in individuals’ self-narratives, and it may therefore be that individuals can produce new and ‘hybridised identities’ (ibid, p.63) out of the resolution of such contradictions.
Black et al. argue that these identities can also be leading identities; they emerge from activity, but also afford a sense of purposeful progress in an individual’s beings or in their ‘becoming’ (p.69). The notion of leading identity may be a useful one in illuminating how teachers’ reflexivity mediates the structural and agentic, to suggest the privileging of particular forms of teacher beings and doings.

Influences on the development of the conceptual framework
The conceptual framework that I use to shape my work is based on an earlier literature review (Lord, 2012) that focused on the factors that influence the development of professional identity in early career teachers. This review identified numerous explanations for teacher identity but perhaps failed to adequately conceptualise a dynamic intersectionality between the factors. In addressing what I perceived to be a conceptual shortcoming, I developed the conceptual framework that I present below. The framework also draws on the developmental approach of Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and the work of James Gee (2001).

Bronfenbrenner and Gee
Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory was designed to conceptualise the systems that impact on a child’s development and the interrelationships between those systems, but can also usefully be employed in other contexts (e.g. Sanders et al., 2008). Bronfenbrenner’s approach (1979), shown in diagrammatic form in Figure 2.1, describes a nested system of relations that impact on development. At the micro level, Microsystems like the family or the classroom are key, as is what is called the mesosystem, the interaction between these Microsystems. At the next level, Bronfenbrenner describes exosystemic factors that affect the individual, but less immediately. For example, parental income or neighbourhood friends might be included in the case of a child. Finally, the macrosystem includes aspects of the environment that may connect members of a culture or subculture (such as norms, values and laws). Within Bronfenbrenner’s model the influence of the ‘chronosystem’ is also important. The chronosystem comprises the patterning of
environmental events and transitions over time, as well as socio-historical contextualisations that relate to the individual.

According to Bronfenbrenner, the effects of macrosystemic factors have a cascading influence throughout the interactions of all the other layers. For example, if a culture holds a macrosystemic cultural belief that schools are responsible for children’s examination results, then this belief may impact on factors at the exosystemic level; say, by affecting the introduction of government policies about school and teacher accountability. The impact at the micro level might concern the enactment of these policies by particular schools and teachers and the interaction of that enactment with the type or availability of resources available to support schools and parents.
In terms of teachers, Bronfenbrenner’s model is useful in conceptualising the factors that impact on the development of their professional identity. I used the model in developing my conceptual framework to facilitate the description of factors at micro, meso and macro levels that impact on teachers and to acknowledge and highlight their intersectionality. I develop this more fully in the next section.

James Gee’s work (e.g. 2001) provides a different way of thinking about identity. Gee identifies four perspectives on identity which are useful in considering how identity develops and how it is related to agency. These lenses suggest that when thinking about teacher identity, innate factors (in Gee’s terms, ‘nature identity’) as well as institutional ones and social groupings (in Gee’s terms, ‘institutional’, ‘discourse’ and ‘affinity’ identities) are key to understanding what being a particular kind of person means (Lord, 2012). What I found appealing about Gee’s ideas about identity is that they were specifically useful in developing my conceptual framework by populating Bronfenbrenner’s model with regard to the specifics of identity.

The conceptual framework

In the conceptual framework (shown in diagrammatic form in Figure 2.2), Gee’s work and that of Bronfenbrenner interplay by underpinning understandings of identity with an ecological systems approach. As a result of these influences on my thinking I developed a Person–Process–Context–Time framework (after Williams and Ceci (1997)). The framework includes all four of the foci that Williams and Ceci suggest. These are a focus on ‘person’, a focus on the biology of the individual; ‘process’, a focus on psychological process particular to the individual; ‘context’, which refers to the physical, and also to the social and psychological settings in which behaviour occurs; and ‘time’, which refers to the passage of time for the individual, as well as time-related experiences for a particular cohort of individuals and historical trends and influences. These foci add a comprehensiveness of explicatory capacity to my work.

The framework was designed to show the dynamic intersectionality of a number of factors that may mediate the professional lives and identity of teachers, and how this intersectionality might influence their agency.
Figure 2.2: A Person–Process–Context–Time based framework showing the interacting influences of factors at a number of levels on a teacher’s professional identity and agency (Lord, 2012)

The vertical axis of the framework corresponds to the conceptual ‘closeness’ of the influencing factors to the discourses with which a teacher may be engaged, reflecting the way that Bronfenbrenner’s model identifies the nested structures that impact on the individual. In relation to this axis, some of the factors that may mediate the development of identity will be ‘closer’ to the individual than others. For example, the impact of the government’s policy on what is known as ‘threshold’, where teachers move from the main to the upper pay range, will affect more senior or older staff in schools more directly than it will affect NQTs. Some factors will be ‘close’ to all teachers—for example, recent career history will affect every teacher’s professional identity, albeit differently. The horizontal axis relates to the structure/agency continuum. In relation to this axis, factors that are more related to structure might include the organisation and operation of the management hierarchy in a school and the geographical location of a school, as well as its
sociocultural context. Other factors are more intrinsically linked to agency or to an individual’s subjectively orientated understandings, such as psychological factors or an individual's self-concept, for example (Lord, 2012).

The interacting cascade of clusters within the conceptual space is central to the framework. The macro level includes a cluster of factors such as government policies and the particular norms and values of the culture in which the individual operates. The factors in this cluster mirror those in Bronfenbrenner’s chronosystem, in that they provide a ‘wash’ of the socio-historical-political milieu over the whole of an individual’s professional identity. The influence of these macrosystemic factors cascades down through the other clusters (Lord, 2012), creating discourses that permeate through the education system, hence interacting to generate further discourses about (say) standardisation and other high stakes accountability policies, characteristic of 21st century education globally (Sahlberg, 2011).

The meso level cluster in the framework comprises factors that are closer to the individual and more related to her/his sense of agency. For example, is the school in which a particular teacher works an academy, an independent school or a faith school? Is the school in a disadvantaged area? Does it have a high proportion of children who are eligible for free school meals?

The proximal level cluster includes factors that are incorporated within Gee’s ‘nature’ identity, defined as ‘a state developed from forces in nature’ (Gee, 2001, p.100). These factors, such as an individual’s age, gender and ethnic origin, are close to the individual teacher. This cluster also includes the individual’s own professional background, her/his values and emotions, and her/his personal ideas about the functions of education.

As is shown in Figure 2.2, although the clusters of factors at each level have their own defining features, they also overlap and interact. This reflects the idea that identity can perhaps usefully be thought about as a fluid concept, as Zembylas (2003) suggests, rather than as a static entity, and as a ‘constellation of concerns’ as Archer (2012) describes.
There is a complex dynamic intersectionality about this conceptual framework that cannot easily be represented by the simplified two-dimensional representation shown above. The power of the framework is located in this dynamic intersectionality, which is encapsulated in the notion that the three clusters result from a dynamic interaction between individual and institutional factors, including in this case the distinct yet intertwining concepts of agency, self and identity (Lord, 2012).

**Literature to populate and exemplify the conceptual framework**

The literature that I identify here builds on and broadens the literature review that I completed some years ago (Lord, 2012). That review concerns the factors that impact on early career teachers’ identity; in this thesis I extend the review to teachers more generally. In locating some of the literature within my conceptual framework, it is the case that some of the research operates more fully at particular levels of the framework. Whilst recognising that the intersectionality of the conceptual framework means that research could sometimes be located at more than one level, the level where the research fits most comfortably is where I have located it in the following discussion.

**Proximal level—factors related to teachers**

The proximal level cluster includes factors that are close to the individual, and that tend to have very direct clear links to identity and agency. A significant body of work has confirmed the importance of personal/psychological factors in the development of identity and of teacher agency. For example, Flores and Day (2006) investigated influences on the shaping and reshaping of Portuguese early career teachers' identities. They identify proximal/agentic factors as being crucial in the mediation of identity. As well as noting the significance of personal factors relating to identity—such as characteristics like gender, race or personal histories (e.g. Olsen, 2008)—and emotion (e.g. Zembylas, 2003), they found that the main influence on the shaping of the individual’s identity as a teacher, at least in the early years of teaching, was identified as an individual’s personal and professional
history—part of the ‘Nature’ identity suggested by Gee (2001). Flores and Day also found that prior experiences as pupils had a strong mediating role on the identities which new teachers brought into their teaching experiences. They comment that:

the key role of personal biography in mediating the making sense of teachers’ practices and their beliefs about themselves as teachers—and in reshaping teacher identity—... emerges from the data. (Flores and Day, 2006, p.230)

Lasky (2005) completed a longitudinal study in ten Canadian schools, concluding that teachers’ early professional training was a key mediator in the development of their professional identity. This is contrary to what Flores and Day (2006) noted in their study, which was that pre-service teacher education had a weak impact on the agency and self concept of teachers, perhaps because of what they call the ‘classic and widely cited gap between theory and practice’ (p.224). The difference between the two studies may well be related to the differences between the Portuguese and Canadian samples: in the work of Flores and Day (2006), none of the teachers had chosen teaching as their first choice profession, whereas Lasky’s work focused on what she identified as ‘high involvement’ teachers (p.904).

There is of course an interplay between the key influencing factors of biography, pre-service programmes and school culture factors, as is highlighted in my framework by the interlocking nature of the clusters and the roots of the framework in the ecological systems approach of Bronfenbrenner.

**Meso level**

At the meso level, factors and discourses relating to the school where teachers work are likely to be the most influential for them. Courtney’s elegant mapping of school types in England (2015) shows the variety of school types that he proposes has been spawned by the neoliberal ‘choice of provision’ agenda. As yet, there has been no systematic study of teacher identity in these various contexts, but other work on school and teaching culture indicates that school type is likely to be significant. For example, Beijaard et al. (2000) used a questionnaire study of 80 secondary school teachers in the Netherlands to investigate teachers’ perceptions of their identity.
Their research suggests that school and teaching cultures and contexts significantly determine the way that teachers perceive their professional identity, as do their own teaching experiences and biographies. However, interestingly, the teachers felt that they were affected by these in different ways: a quantitative analysis showed that the teachers disagreed on the relative and absolute importance of contextual, experiential and biographical factors.

Day (2002) also suggests that local conditions impact on teachers’ identities. He cites work suggesting that in some disadvantaged areas where teaching is challenging in very particular ways, a significant majority of teachers reported that they were consistently affected by stress. As Day suggests, this can affect teachers’ motivation and commitment, as well as their efficacy—all of which he identifies as key components of their identity. Of course, this stress is not instituted entirely locally; the particular challenges of teaching are always intensified and sometimes exacerbated by discourses from a macro level cascading down through into the meso and then the proximal level of the framework. Lasky (2005) also highlights the fact that the interplay between the meso and macro levels is significant in relation to teacher agency and identity. She argues that structural and cultural features of society such as a focus on increased managerialism and accountability (macro level factors) and particular features of schools, such as curriculum requirements (meso level) both shape and are shaped by teacher agency and identity. The structural elements of schools such as resources, the norms and values of the school and externally mandated policies which may be enacted (or not) in different ways in schools (Braun et al., 2012) are significant in schools and to teachers. Lasky’s work was done in Canada, and the fact that it can be applied seamlessly to the English system tells us something about the universality of some of the traits that we are seeing, as well as about the wide applicability of my research.

**Macro level**

In his important book *Teachers and Texts*, Apple (1988) was one of the first to identify and acknowledge the importance of the intensification of work for teachers. According to Apple, the symptoms of intensification range from not having enough time to go to the bathroom to being unable to keep up with developments in one’s
field due to the pressure of other work. He notes that in the case of teachers, such intensification is an accompaniment to deskilling and that it results in significant effects on the quality of teachers’ work as well as on their agency and identity as professionals.

Over 20 years later the same issues are still relevant for teachers and teaching. Day (2012) considers the macro level influences on teachers at length. He argues that the beings and doings of teachers have always been subject to external influences, and highlights the fact that since the 1990s there has been a fast, complex and intense set of changes at the macro level that has developed alongside globalisation. Day points out that a concomitant and similarly significant development is that of a ‘screen culture’ generation of children and that the combination of the two results in the frequent accusation that teachers are not preparing children well enough for the real world. At the same time, he suggests that schools and classrooms have become sites of struggle because of the parallel agendas of ‘financial self-reliance and pressure for ideological compliance’ (p.2). This is one reason why Day’s article is entitled ‘New Lives of Teachers’ (2012); teachers’ lives have changed in response in part to the changes to the contexts and cultures of teaching since the mid-1990s. In England the changing policy discourses which are and have been significant over the last few years up to 2016 include teacher accountability and performance management; academisation (Rayner, 2015); ‘British Values’ (Department for Education, 2014); and a focus on measures of achievement and value added, now in their latest incarnation as ‘Attainment 8’ and ‘Progress 8’ (Department for Education, 2015a). These changes often include concomitant alterations to management practices and to monitoring and assessment systems. Such changes have been introduced and implemented, but as Day claims, this introduction has not always been done well. He argues that the changes have resulted in increased workloads, periods of destabilisation and a subsequent loss of public confidence in teachers; all influences that Day concludes have had an impact on many teachers’ professional identities. Day’s work (2012) illustrates clearly and directly the power of macrosystemic factors and discourses on teacher identity and agency.
Day and Gu (2010) emphasise a ‘drive for quality’ as part of a reform of public services in general in the 1980s. The Education Reform Act (ERA) of 1988 was perhaps the most significant piece of education legislation of the last 30 years, bringing with it the idea of a national curriculum for state-controlled primary and secondary schools, local management of schools (financial control given to head teachers rather than to the local authority) and the concept of ‘key stages’ with educational objectives to be achieved at each stage. Since 1988 and emerging partly from the Educational Reform Act, the global reform movement, termed ‘GERM’ (Global Educational Reform Movement) by Sahlberg (2011) has become firmly established as educational reform orthodoxy. GERM is based on the assumption that market mechanisms are the best ways of achieving improvements to the education system. According to Sahlberg (2011), GERM has acted like a virus that ‘infects’ education systems globally. The infection is diagnosed, in Sahlberg’s words, from the existence of the following five ‘symptoms’:

1. the standardization of education and concomitant testing and accountability;
2. a focus on core subjects in schools (mainly on literacy and numeracy, at the expense of other subjects);
3. a tendency to search for low-risk ways to reach learning goals;
4. the use of business management models as a main tool for improvement; and
5. the adoption of test-based accountability policies for schools.

As I have already suggested, GERM discourses impact on teacher identity, as the work of Hall and McGinity (2015) shows. They studied the development of teacher identity in two schools in England in what they characterise as a ‘post-NPM’ (New Public Management) era, where ‘metricized, marketized and managerialist’ processes form the classic NPM troika (O’Reilly and Reed, 2011). Their work shows how there is a two-way interaction between teachers’ beings and doings and the contexts in which their lives and work are situated. Their data reveals that professional identity is a complex notion, which in this set of challenging contexts, demonstrates a number of contradictions. They identify one particular
contradiction, between autonomy and compliance, which sometimes caused discomfort for teachers. In the two schools they studied, performance improvement surveillance and academisation were two of the factors that might have been expected to affect teacher identity. Although there were impacts on teacher identity in relation to compliance and control, Hall and McGinity note that ‘the discourse of professionalism remained strong and seemingly unaffected by dramatic changes both internal and external’ (p.11). The key discourse of professionalism, which is an integral part of teacher identity, is intertwined with discourses of change and managerialism. According to Hall and McGinity (2015), the professionalism discourse can accommodate and assimilate such challenges and changes and yet remain strong, although as discussed above, it has particular characteristics that lead them to characterise it as ‘NPM identity’.

Another key influence on teacher identity is the fact that teacher education in England is currently more focused on teaching as a craft than as a rigorous intellectual discipline, a factor which was emphasised in Michael Gove’s education policy in England in his paper ‘The Importance of Teaching’ (Department for Education, 2010). Although many systematic evaluations of the School Direct programme, which emphasises this craft-based model of teaching, are still under way, early analyses such as that of McNamara and Murray (2013) suggest that the lack of emphasis on the intellectual aspect of teacher education, which they argue is central to the development of the teacher, is impoverishing the education workforce. Such developments, alongside the changes noted by Day (2012), are bound to impact on teacher identity in complex ways, as the work of Sandra Acker (1999) shows. Acker suggests that a trend now evident in that our postmodern society demands a new skill set of its workforce: skills such as adaptability, responsibility and flexibility, which are skills that teachers and schools are charged with developing. She highlights an accompanying change in teachers’ own lives as a result of these macrosystemic societal and cultural trends, and suggests that such trends permeate down to affect teachers in schools. It would be oversimplifying to suggest that teachers and teaching precisely mirror these trends, but there certainly are significant macrosystemic discourses affecting teachers’ beings and doings.
The work of Lasky (2005), mentioned above, employs a sociocultural approach drawing on activity theory to illuminate the intersectionality between factors at a number of levels, which approximate to the levels of my conceptual framework. She comments that various types of factors, including political, social and cultural ones, impact on and shape school and educational reform, and that this reform mediates both teacher agency and identity. She emphasises the importance of meditational systems, but does not discuss substantively the ways in which these systems might work, leaving a significant gap in the field.

Developing the conceptual framework to include ideas about reflexivity

Compelling as the conceptual framework is, with face and content validity, and fitting the literatures as it does, it does not hold explanatory power. The framework includes ideas of intersectionality, mediation and impact but it does not include an explanation of how this mediation and interplay might happen. As it stands, the framework suggests that:

- there is a set of complex processes, where macro aspects of policy are mediated by meso level policy enactment, that then impacts on and socialises teachers at the micro/proximal level;
- this socialisation process takes into account the fact that teachers are individuals with personal and professional biographies which may result in either acceptance of or resistance to the impact of these factors.

The framework clearly indicates that structure and agency are intertwined, but the nature of their relationship is not articulated as the framework stands. This reflects the fact that across the literatures that were reviewed in my earlier work (Lord, 2012), there was a noticeable lack of an integrating theoretical framework that facilitated the task of explaining the relationship between structure and agency in teachers. The conclusion to that work identified this inadequacy, commenting that in more of the work on teacher development there was either an ignorance or an undertheorising of some of the factors that were important in a consideration of teachers' agency and identity, and that there was therefore a need ‘to develop tools
and ways of considering ... professional identity in ... teachers, and the links between developing identity and agency’ (Lord, 2012, p.48).

Hence in this work a more theoretical approach to notions of structure, agency and identity is needed, in conjunction with my framework, as a theoretical starting point for investigating these relationships between structure and teacher agency and identity. I am drawing on the work of the critical realist Margaret Archer (e.g. Archer, 2000) to provide this theoretical underpinning to my work.

The reasons for using this approach are related to Archer’s explorations of the relationship between structure and agency, her stratified conceptualisation of individuals, and her approach to reflexivity. In my work, it is important that I articulate a clear understanding of the relationship between structure and agency so that their relationship can be explained, not simply described. In regard to this relationship between structure and agency, Archer takes an approach that denies the validity of popular conflationist approaches to the well-rehearsed structure-agency problem in sociology.

Conflationism argues that structures and agents are conceptually inseparable (e.g. Giddens, 2013). Conflationism can take the form of autonomy being denied to agency, with causal efficacy being attributed only to structure (downwards conflationism). Archer (2000, p.25) states categorically that the radical form of this approach is a step towards the eventual dissolution of the human subject. Alternatively, ‘upwards conflationism’ denies autonomy to structure and only grants causal efficacy to agency. Finally, in central conflationism (also known as elisionism), structure and agency are conflated and their separability is denied. The most prominent proponent of this approach is Anthony Giddens (e.g. Giddens, 2013) whose structuration theory sees the relationship between structure and agency as co-constitutive, through a feedback-feedforward mechanism. Giddens

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3 Archer (2000) points out that it is important neither to underprivilege nor to overprivilege human agency—a trap that I will later argue she falls into herself.
argues that just as an individual’s agency is influenced by structures, simultaneously structures are constrained and enabled through the exercise of agency.

Archer objects to central conflationist approaches on analytical grounds: by eliding structure and agency, such approaches hinder the exploration of the relative influence of each. In contrast, Archer is an emergentist concentrating on the interplay of structure and agency over time, rather than on the mutual constitution of structure and agency. In Archer’s view, structure and agency are both analytically separable and ontologically separate. Archer’s work (e.g. Archer, 2007; Archer, 2010; Archer, 2012) investigates the interplay of these distinct social phenomena, agency and structure, from a critical realist perspective. In the next section I overlay some of Archer’s ideas onto my conceptual framework in order to illuminate this interplay.

A significant way in which Archer’s work links to my conceptual framework is through her stratified conceptualisation of individuals—firstly as persons, with a personal and body-embedded history—the biographical realm. This relates to my proximal level cluster of factors where I consider people with a set of accompanying individual traits and biographical contexts. However, individuals can also exist in the sociological realm, as agents with cultural, economic and demographic features, and as actors, related to the social group, with specific interests and strategies. The notion of ‘individuals as actors’ straddles the meso and macro levels of the framework. This is illustrated in Figure 2.3.

4 This ontological and epistemological stance will be considered further in chapter 3.
A key premise of Archer’s work is that ‘the causal power of social forms is mediated through social agency’ (Bhaskar, 1989a, p.26). In other words, structural and cultural factors emerge from and are productive and effective through people and their agency. However, agents possess properties and powers that are different from those of social forms. According to Archer, we can understand how social agency manages to mediate the power of social forms if we consider both ‘how structural and cultural powers impinge upon agents and ... how agents use their own personal powers to act “so rather than otherwise” in such situations’ (Archer 2003, p.3).

Archer proposes that individuals’ inner conversations, which she refers to as their reflexivity, mediate the link between structure and agency. In *The Reflexive Imperative in Late Modernity*, she (Archer, 2012) suggests that reflexivity is:

> the regular exercise of the mental ability, shared by all people, to consider themselves in relation to their (social) contexts. (2012, p.1)

Archer sees reflexivity as an inherent ability that all social actors possess. It takes place within and throughout the internal dialogues that social actors have with themselves, when they consider their own social position, their own identities, their own actions and their own thoughts, all in relation to other social actors. Internal conversations are used by individuals to subjectively determine their practical
projects—what they do, their own agency—in relation to their circumstances and their own desires and concerns. The inner conversations that comprise reflexivity are mental activities that, critically, are orientated towards action.

I have already shown that teaching is a profession that exists within a complex set of contexts; contexts that change even as they are being worked on. The beings and doings of teachers are located in a context of environmental uncertainty which is both dynamic and complex (Duncan, 1972). There is a consequence of this; a risk to individual teachers of ontological insecurity, the fear of uncertainty which in turn threatens identity (Mitzen, 2006). In such complex, challenging and changing contexts, social action perhaps demands a greater reflexive competence among social actors/individuals than perhaps it might do in less-complex situations. Or, as Blatterer (2013, p.1) puts it:

people are not drones determined by social conditions: they think. They think about who they are and where they are headed and how. And let’s not forget that in a world in which there are no enduring guides to a life worth living, where uncertainty suffuses experience, think they must. Reflexivity is not only an essential human capacity; turned to the questions ‘who am I?’ and ‘how am I to live?’ it is, in fact, imperative.

To emphasise this, Archer uses the phrase ‘the reflexive imperative’ as the title of one of her books (Archer, 2012). Although reflexivity is ubiquitous, she argues that it is not a homogeneous concept; rather, there are a number of ideal reflexive modes, or different ways in which inner conversations are conducted. She explains the ways in which the modes differ:

practitioners of each of the ... different modes of reflexivity adopt generically different ‘stances’ towards society and its constraints and enablements...Each ‘stance’ goes above and beyond the manner in which a given subject responds to any given constraint or enablement and represents an overall pattern of response to the totality of structural powers. (Archer, 2003, p.342-343)

Archer suggests that we all engage in each of the ideal modes of reflexivity at different times and in different situations, and to different degrees. However, different ideal modes are used more frequently and are more dominant for different
individuals. Archer's work (2003; 2012) on the three ideal modes of reflexivity is summarised in Table 2.1 below.
Table 2.1: Table to show features of the three functional reflexivity types, synthesised from Archer (2003) and Archer (2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stance on life</th>
<th>Communicative reflexivity (CRx)</th>
<th>Autonomouls reflexivity (ARx)</th>
<th>Meta-reflexivity (MRx)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An 'evasive' stance on life, and collectivist towards the social.</td>
<td>A 'strategic' stance on life, and accommodative towards the social.</td>
<td>A 'subversive' stance on life, and transcendental towards the social.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal conversations</td>
<td>For CRxs, internal conversations need to be confirmed and completed by others before they lead to action. CRxs express doubt that a fully autonomous internal conversation could lead them to the right action (Archer, 2003, p.167).</td>
<td>For ARxs, internal conversations are self-contained, leading directly to action. ARxs take part in the lone exercise of a mental dialogue with themselves; they are independent, almost 'loners'. ARxs have self-confidence in their own internal conversations.</td>
<td>For MRxs, internal conversations critically evaluate previous inner dialogues and are critical about effective action in society. Self-interrogation is a feature of their thought and talk. They are idealists—this makes them social critics. MRxs seek a better fit between the person who they wish to be and a social environment that permits their expression of it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polities</td>
<td>Apolitical.</td>
<td>Tendency towards political individualism.</td>
<td>Show a deep concern for the underdog, oppressed and globally deprived.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and friends</td>
<td>Family and friends are an ultimate concern; care most about 'people'. They know their dialogic partners very well.</td>
<td>Family and friends are spoken of warmly but are not the priority—rather, work is.</td>
<td>Form durable friendships based on interests/concerns. Do not settle for easily obtained friends. Concerned with natal family but may move away emotionally as they develop their own interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupations</td>
<td>Likely to reproduce their social origins (but not invariably). They have either reached their objectives or see their goal being in reach. ARxs are characterised by a tendency to deny career projects and remain within their situational horizons.</td>
<td>Variety of social backgrounds; performatve skills are very important to this group.</td>
<td>Vocations are a feature—they ask questions like ‘what makes a good teacher, as opposed to satisfying Ofsted?’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that each of the modes of reflexivity is associated with a particular stance on life, a particular view of family and friends, a particular political approach and a particular set of occupations or occupational patterns. Individuals also engage with the process of reflexivity, and conduct their inner conversations differently.
To illustrate this we can consider an example that is based on a conversation I had with Margaret Archer at a conference in 2015. It concerns the different ways in which different individuals might engage with a situation where their car has broken down and needs some expensive work to be done.

A *communicative reflexive*, for whom internal conversations need to be confirmed by others before they lead to action, might need to discuss the situation with her/his partner before booking the car in to the garage.

An *autonomous reflexive*, whose internal conversations are more self-contained and lead more directly to action, is more likely to confirm to her/himself that s/he can afford to have the work done and that it needs doing before making the call to the garage.

A *meta-reflexive*, for whom internal conversations critically evaluate previous inner dialogues and are critical about effective action in society, might spend some time debating with her/himself about the merits and ethics of owning a car at all.

There is another mode of reflexivity that Archer (2003) describes: a non-ideal mode. She calls it fractured reflexivity (FRx), meaning that either an individual's powers of reflexivity are suspended by the intervention of some eventuality, or that the powers never developed for some reason. In the garage situation, the fractured reflexive might struggle to be able to make a decision about the car at all, or might behave impulsively and suddenly sell the car on the Internet. My research does not concern itself with this mode, as it is not common; fractured reflexives do not function well in society and hence are unlikely to be working, at least for any significant time, as teachers.

If reflexivity is indeed the bridge which mediates ‘deliberatively between the objective structural opportunities confronted by different groups and the nature of people’s subjectively defined concerns’ (Archer, 2007, p. 61), then it has a crucial
role in determining social action. If reflexivity does this mediating work, then it is potentially very powerful and emancipatory. Certainly, then, interventions based on reflexivity could be very valuable in teaching and in professional development.

Figure 2.4 shows how the mediating process of reflexivity may operate. In the figure, the inner purple core represents the teacher as agent, including proximal factors such as age, race, social background and so on. The outer ring represents the discourses that are currently relevant in education and in forming the educational milieu. The coloured orange ring shows the two-way diffusion of the determining processes of reflexivity, including, but not limited to contextual continuity/discontinuity; form of the internal conversation; and the types of dialogic relationships and dialogic partners with which the teacher engages.

Figure 2.4: A diagram showing the mediating role of reflexivity between the proximal level and the macro and meso levels of my conceptual framework
Although Archer has theorised widely about reflexivity, her ICONI (Internal Conversation Instrument) measure of reflexivity (Archer, 2007) is her only systematic attempt to undertake empirical work in the area of reflexivity. In my research I have worked with teachers to investigate the research questions, which I set out in Chapter 1, and which are repeated here for ease:

The overarching research question is ‘What are the doings and beings of teachers?’

The sub-questions are:

- In what ways do teachers’ beings and doings reflect structural macro level educational policy discourse, structured meso level school practice and proximal level biographical factors (RQ1)?
- How do the macro, meso and proximal levels intersect in the doings and beings of teachers (RQ2)?
- How does individual teacher reflexivity mediate the structural and proximal to suggest the privileging of particular forms of teacher beings and doings (RQ3)?

This is an area where my own work on identity, agency and reflexivity in teachers, using a critical realist approach, may well add to the currently flourishing debate concerning the role of reflexivity.

My research fills a significant gap in the field. Although there is a good deal of literature that examines teacher agency and identity, much of this work has underexamined the role of social theory in relation to explanations in this area. My work on teacher identity and agency and my examination of teachers’ beings and doings is enriched by a critical realist approach to the theoretical understanding of identity and agency in teachers.
Chapter 3: Ontology and epistemology

Overview of research questions

In order to investigate the question ‘What are the beings and doings of teachers?’ and to consider how teachers become, exist and develop as teachers, I have drawn on my conceptual framework (Chapter 2) to shape particular aspects of my research questions. The framework reflects a set of structures and cultures that interrelate and that are both internal and external to individuals, and that are central to how individuals articulate their reflexivity and agency. At the same time, these structures are distinct from individuals and yet become uniquely internalised through the ways in which individuals exercise their own reflexivity and agency.

In my work the individual is the unit of analysis; the meso and macro levels of my conceptual framework (see Chapter 2) are investigated inasmuch as they impact on the four teachers who are my cases, but the focus is on the individual teacher.

The research sub-questions concern the factors at each level of the framework that impact on teacher identity and agency (beings and doings), and the interrelationship between these factors. There are also questions how about how these variables intersect, and about the part that individual reflexivity plays in mediating this intersection and in generating particular forms of agency.

This chapter and Chapter 4, concerning ontology, epistemology and methodology, are rather longer than would typically be found in an EdD thesis since the focus on identity and agency that is central to my work requires a sophisticated engagement with ontology, epistemology and methods. This is because there is an intrinsic link between the development of identity and methods. Individuals narrate issues and stories; and it is the talking and thinking about the activity of teaching which can be formative in reflexivity, and hence agency. I am suggesting that the very process of narration, of talking about beings and doings, is both stabilising and destabilising, and that externalising internal dialogues explicitly to a third party results in altered forms of individual reflexivity and hence identity.
At the root of these research questions and associated research methodology are concerns with the essential reflexivity of being human and with the life project of developing a stable sense of self. Archer (2000) suggests that the self is an:

emergent property whose realization comes about through the necessary relations between embodied practice and the non-discursive environment. (p.123)

In other words, the generation of self is through practice. I argue that the essential nature of being human is about generating this sense of self, through all kinds of specific moments, in all kinds of contexts. The lifelong project of developing that stable sense of self is developed from an understanding of a continuous self, situated in a context of historic and specific moments. In relation to agency this implies that—depending on the dominant mode(s) of reflexivity that an individual employs—either change, or reproduction, or even a changed approach to reflexivity may result. Of course, an individual’s life may contain moments of dissonance in what is overall a fluid continuous self. Such dissonance can be both contained within and described by the historic and specific moments.

It is because of this lifelong project that the interplay between my methodology and my research questions about the nature of teachers and teaching is such that the two components cannot be disentangled. The approach taken by realist theorists and action researchers has therefore influenced the design and focus of my study, as I explain in more detail below.

**Ontology and epistemology**

**A critical realist ontological stance**

My work relating to teachers and teaching is concerned with a particular aspect of ontology: social ontology, an understanding of the structure and nature of social reality which concerns the features, structures and elements of social life. The factors in my conceptual framework intersect in such a way that a social ontology is required in order to illuminate these factors and their intersecting relationships. Enquiring into the social world of teachers involves developing an understanding of
the entities that comprise it, and of their properties and powers. Social ontology is that aspect of ontology which, at least in part, relates to people, and thus to teachers as both actors and agents. In my work, I take a critical realist ontological stance for reasons that I now consider.

Phillips (1987, p.205) suggests that realism is ‘the view that entities exist independently of being perceived, or independently of our theories about them’. Thinking about teachers and teaching, teachers live in a ‘real’ world. They interact in the world, and have theories and concepts about the real world. The lived realities of their beings and doings as teachers, as well as of their other social identities (as parents, siblings and friends, for example) are important to them.

Critical realism, as opposed to realism, uses a transcendental argument, starting from experience and then thinking about the mechanisms that must exist for that kind of experience to be possible. Critical realism also emphasises the importance of social ontology and of an ontology where the world is seen as both structured and changing (Bhaskar, 2013). Sayer (2000, p.78) also emphasises that ‘[c]ritical realism is a philosophy but its main focus is on ontology, not epistemology.’ Borrowing the concept of underlabouring as a ‘ground clearing exercise’ from Locke (2014 (1689)), Sayer suggests that critical realism performs certain functions for the social sciences through providing a realist framework for social theories. As Wheelahan (2007) observes, Archer quite rightly suggests that such philosophical ground clearing has implications for social theory because ontology ‘acts as both gatekeeper and bouncer for methodology’ (Archer 1995, p.22); and this is because ‘what society is held to be ... affects how it is studied’ (ibid., p.2).

Critical realism (CR) is ‘critical’ because it denies that we can have any ‘objective’ world knowledge. Hence, critical realism accepts the possibility of alternative valid accounts of any phenomenon. All theories about the world are seen as grounded in a particular world view, and so all knowledge is both partial and fallible.
According to Archer et al. (1998), central critical realist principles, discussed below, include ontological objectivity, epistemic relativism and judgemental rationality. Critical realism claims to be able to combine and reconcile these three principles.

By **ontological objectivity**, what Archer means is that the reality of objects in the physical world (chairs, mountains, etc.) does not depend on their being experienced by anyone (a mountain exists even if no one has ever seen it or climbed it). In other words, the existence of the natural and social worlds is a precondition for our knowledge of them, and they are not constructions of our minds (Wheelahan, 2007, p.187). This works well for the natural world, but more controversially, Archer suggests that ‘the existence of ideas in the world of intelligibles is not reliant on their being known by any living agent; a theory or a recipe is real knowledge, which is independent of a current knowing subject’ (Archer, 2003, p.37). So for example, ‘pensioners are constrained to trade-off heating against eating *regardless* of their understandings of index-linked incomes’ (Archer, 1998, p.198). ‘Some things do go on behind our backs and the effects of many that go on before our faces do not require us to face up to them’ (Archer, 1998, p.199).

Archer distinguishes between thoughts, which she contends have a first-person ontology, and ideas, which have an objective ontology. ‘The peculiarity of the mental world is that it has a subjective ontology; objectively it exists, but subjectivity is its mode of existence’ (Archer, 2003, pp 37-38). What Archer means is that one’s mental state and mental processes only exist in that they have a first-person, subjective ontology. Nonetheless, what Archer (2003) calls ‘the mental world’ is objective in the sense that others can engage with it, through their engagement with the individual. And similarly, knowledge, constructed using

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5 This is a development of Popper’s ontologically distinct worlds (1978): World 1, the world of physical objects and events; World 2, the world of mental objects and events; and World 3, objective knowledge. It is World 2 that is peculiar—it is objectively real, and yet it has a subjective ontology.

6 Interestingly, the ‘mental world’ is a term that Archer does not define (it is borrowed from Popper and his ‘World 2’) apart from saying that it is the ‘world of mental states’ (2003, p.36).
properly accepted protocols, is objective. Individuals respond subjectively to others’ mental worlds and to knowledge—they interpret them, and bring meaning-making and reflexivity to the process. This interpretivist response facilitates individual agency and action. In a similar vein, there are questions about the constructions which individual agents make and which are products of individual reflexivity and agency—when do these become objects for others? I argue that it is when they become clear social structures, which may then be reproduced or changed over time.

For critical realists, structure and agency are ontologically distinct; they have different properties and powers, even though they are crucial for each other’s formation and development. So, for example, structures can be centralised; people cannot: people can exercise reflexivity; structures cannot. Critical realists reject any form of conflationism, whether upwards or downwards. Instead, through analytical dualism, structure and agency are kept separate and their interplay considered. According to Bhaskar (1989b, p.25-26) ‘the causal power of social forms is mediated through social agency’. Archer (2006, p.18) suggests that the crucial word ‘through’ needs to be unpacked before this statement can be truly complete. She indicates that there is a key role to be played by human subjectivity, and particularly by reflexivity, in enabling agents to design and determine their responses to the structured circumstances in which they find themselves.

Although these general ideas provide some theoretical leverage for thinking about the analytical distinction between notions of structure and agency, in what ways might they be operationalised in relation to the subject of this particular study and to teachers’ beings and doings?

The story of Mike, who is ‘the second’ in the maths department at a local authority (LA) maintained comprehensive school, can perhaps help here. In the world of education, it is clear that educational structures exist: there are governing bodies and school faculties and departments, for instance. Within a school, the maths department itself can’t exercise reflexivity—the individuals in it can and may even do so in a way which could be seen as team reflexivity (West, 1996). But the maths department, the structure and culture that is the maths department, with its
amalgam of historic external and internal constraining and enabling factors (such as the school policy on self-assessment reporting, the lesson observation schedule, the norm of who sits where in the staffroom, who it is that checks reports for typing mistakes, who organises the Christmas outing, etc.), exists independently of the individuals within it. How the maths department is understood is open to interpretation, but nonetheless the department is always there. The structure and culture are necessarily not static, because they change with the agency and reflexivity of agents like Mike, who interact with and within it. Mike has agency in that he can both consider his position and exercise his reflexive powers in formulating and executing personal projects. For instance, he may be able to decide when to plan his lessons, how to develop his skills in assessment, or whether to rewrite the GCSE entry policy. The maths department is crucial to Mike’s agency, formation and development, just as the department ‘relies’ on Mike to teach his lessons and to rewrite the GCSE entry policy. The structure of the school and the department, the roles allocated to individuals and the nature of how individuals reflexively engage with aspects of these structures reflect issues of power and both enable and constrain agency. Part of the impetus for cultural, structural and individual change will be related to the agency of individuals such as Mike, his managers and the school’s senior leaders, as they consider their roles and debate their potential courses of action and decisions. And of course, Archer suggests that individuals enact their roles in different ways, as we have seen. If Mike uses certain modes of reflexivity, such as meta-reflexivity, he is more likely to create the conditions for change. On the other hand, if he is more of a communicative reflexive, he may be more likely to be associated with stasis. Archer (e.g., 2013a) also talks about collective or social reflexivity being a relational property of people, emerging from interactions between reflexive individuals: ‘a collective orientation to a collective output’ (Archer and Donati, 2015, p.61). As a result of the collective agency of reflexive individuals, cultures and structures can change too. In Mike’s school, change to his department or to the school may happen as a result of this collective reflexivity and also as a result of individual agency resulting from reflexive inner conversations.
Archer argues that agents are formed within a set of social structures—norms, values, cultures and subcultures, as well as power relationships. The genesis of the agent occurs within the context of these structures. On a longer time scale, the structures themselves change as a result of the agency, choices, decisions and actions of relevant individuals or groups of individuals. Mike’s role in the social structure and context of his school is to some extent preconstructed by previous agentic action—the roles and responsibilities and actions of previous maths teachers, school heads, and so on, that have shaped the current social context in which Mike finds himself. This can be explained, theorised and explored through the use of empirical data. The school and the department could both be different as a result of Mike’s choices, decisions and actions. This is what Archer means by ‘morphogenetic’, as she explains:

The ‘morpho’ element is an acknowledgement that society has no pre-set form or preferred state: the ‘genetic’ part is a recognition that it takes its shape from, and is formed by, agents, originating from the intended and unintended consequences of their activities. (Archer, 1995, p.5)

According to Archer (2014a), the morphogenetic sequence that is shown below (Figure 3.1) is one cycle in a series of cycles of conditioning, social interaction and structural elaboration. The diagram shows one of these cycles, but in fact, each of the lines in the diagram can be extended both into the past and the future, showing the links that this snapshot has to the past and the future and the endlessly cyclical flow of the morphogenetic sequence. Archer focuses on the dynamics between the system and the socio-cultural interactions. Initially (at T1) the system as it already exists conditions the practices and the systems (T2). The results of past actions are what form the current situation—inevitably and invariably, structure pre-dates the actions that subsequently transform it. Both structural and cultural factors shape the social context for agents; there is no such thing as action without a context. Hence, at T2-T3, the motives for interaction are shaped by the prior context. The interactions aim to reproduce or to transform the system, and so eventually at T3 there is a new configuration of the system. At T4, there is either morphogenesis or morphostasis. Morphogenesis refers to the elaboration of or change in a system’s form, structure or state with consequential causative power, constraints and
enablements. In contrast, morphostasis concerns social stasis, or the preservation of a system’s form, structure or state (Archer, 2015).

Although Figure 3.1 shows a snapshot of just one of these systems, many are interlinked—the cycles do not exist in isolation.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 3.1: The basic morphogenetic sequence.** Source: Archer (2014a).

In terms of Mike, his school and his department, there are already in place, at T1, a set of social relationships between teachers, managers and students, which are based in part on past interactions. If we consider how a new policy on performance management might affect Mike and Mike’s school, then we can see that at T2, the ways in which senior leaders enact the new policy and the ways in which Mike and other teachers respond to the introduction of the policy are both facilitated and constrained by prior experiences and interactions. As a result of these interactions, if the policy is accepted and implemented (T3) then morphogenesis has taken place—there has been a change in the system’s structure, in this case a change in the performance management system in school, with consequential causative power, constraints and enablements on the agency and identity of Mike and his colleagues. This example shows that over time, structures themselves change as a result of the agency, choices, decisions and actions of relevant individuals or groups of individuals, and the genesis of agents occurs within the context of these structures.
Epistemic relativism is the second of Archer’s key features of critical realism. According to Tony Lawson (2003, p.162):

[epistemological relativism] expresses the idea that our categories, frameworks of thinking, modes of analysis, ways of seeing things, habits of thought, dispositions of every kind, motivating concerns, interests, values and so forth, are affected by our life paths and socio-cultural situations and thereby make a difference in how we can and do ‘see’ or know or approach things, and indeed they bear on which we seek to know.

In other words, our knowledge will always be fallible because knowledge of the natural and social worlds is not identical to those worlds (Wheelahan, 2007, p.187). Constructivists do not have the monopoly on epistemological relativism and a ‘sensitivity’ to individuals’ stances; hence the ‘critical’ aspect of critical realism (CR). The ‘critical’ part of critical realism’s name suggests that CR can disclose structural or generative mechanisms that are unknown, or misunderstood, within actors’ interpretive schema. Although individuals are all different, they can all relate to an objective idea or structure, but do so in ways that are both relative and interpretivist. Epistemology is relative to the activities and belief systems of people who exist and act in time and space. However, there are agreed protocols, which individuals tend to abide by—for engaging, discussing and communicating—which then lead to some agreed change in structure.

This links to the third key premise, that of judgemental rationality. This is the assertion that science is not arbitrary and that there are rational criteria for judging some theories as better and more explanatory than others. According to Bhaskar (1979 (1998)), judgemental rationality means that ‘rational grounds for preferring one belief, statement or theory over another are socio-historically produced and changing’ (pp.73–74). These grounds may not be acknowledged, of course, and it is patently obvious that rational judgements are not always made; rather, they are almost always possible, at least in most cases. Theories are judged by the extent to which they accord with what we know, are materially possible as far as we know, and are productive in helping to understand and practise in the world (Sayer, 2000).
Given that critical realism denies that we can have any objective or certain knowledge of the world, that we have to accept that people have alternative formulations of the world, that everyone has world theories which are grounded in particular perspectives and that all knowledge is partial, fallible and incomplete, we can accept quite readily that critical realism is compatible with a constructivist epistemology and a phenomenological methodology. This is summed up by Frazer and Lacey (1993, p182):

Even if one is a realist at the ontological level, one could be an epistemological interpretivist ... our knowledge of the real world is inevitably interpretive and provisional rather than straightforwardly representational.

The links between this ontological realist approach and epistemology—what Blaikie (2000, p.8) describes as ‘claims about how what is assumed to exist can be known’—are clear. Ontological realism can, perhaps even should, coexist with epistemological constructivism and relativism, and hence with an interpretivist approach to methodology. In fact, my contention is that the marriage of a critical realist ontological philosophy and an interpretivist epistemology is one of the happier possible pairings; a mutual complementarity. Critical realist ontology suggests that social structures are real, and are outside of, but pertain to, individuals. Epistemologically, individuals’ tasks are to interpret and act upon those structures and that ‘real’ world: and this requires a subjective interpretivist and reflexive approach.

Danermark et al. (2002) suggest that the essential parts of critical realism can be integrated in a model that describes the stages in explanatory research based on critical realism, such as mine on teacher identity. The stage model shows how ontology and epistemology are framed and interact and this provided a useful heuristic for my research process and thinking. They detail the stages as follows:

**Stage 1: Description**—of the complex situation we hope to study, making use of everyday concepts and including the interpretations of the individuals involved and their way of describing the situation.
Stage 2: Analytical resolution—distinguishing the components or dimensions of the composite or complex. In practice not all components can be studied.

Stage 3: Abduction/theoretical redescription—interpretation of the components and aspects of the situation, using conceptual frameworks and theories.

In my work, the pilot work (Lord, 2013b), the literature reviews reported both here and in my earlier work (Lord, 2012), and the development of my conceptual framework (see Chapter 2) have contributed to these stages. The remaining stages (4: Retroduction to 6: Concretization and contextualization) are the focus of the empirical and theoretical work in this thesis. These stages are:

Stage 4: Retroduction—using a variety of methodological strategies, questions such as: ‘What is fundamentally constitutive for the structures and relations that Stage 3 highlighted? What causal mechanisms are related to each other?’ Stages 3 and 4 are closely related, according to Danermark et al. (2002).

Stage 5: Comparisons between different theories and abstractions. In this stage the conclusions from stages 3 and 4 are considered. The relative explanatory power of the mechanisms and structures that these stages identified are discussed, explained and elaborated.

Stage 6: Concretization and contextualization. In this stage the different structures and mechanisms are examined in respect of how they manifest themselves in concrete situations. The interactions of mechanisms at different levels and under specific conditions are also considered. The aim is to interpret the meanings of these mechanisms and also to contribute to explanations of concrete events and processes.

In considering this model in relation to my investigation of teachers and teaching, the emphasis on teachers as agents and on their understandings of school and the constraining and enabling contexts in which they live and work, together with the
need to address underlying mechanisms in the real domain seemed to be key. This validated my emphasis on a CR approach integrated with phenomenology in trying to understand the mechanisms underlying my research questions—in particular, ‘What are the doings and beings of teachers?’

**Identity and a sense of self**

In my focus on teachers and teaching, and on the research question ‘How do teachers become, be and develop as teachers?’, there is a necessary emphasis on change. This emphasis is also found in the work of Archer, who explains this emphasis by drawing on the work of Mauss (1985) in suggesting that a ‘sense of self’ is universal. All individuals who have ever lived have had a sense of their own body and individuality; we have a continuous sense of self. In many ways we are the same person throughout our life, whether that be as a toddler, a young adult or an elderly person. It is because of this continuous sense of self that it is possible for society to function. On the other hand, and differently from a ‘sense of self’, the ‘concept of self’ is historically and socially constructed. If we conflate these two, wrongly, then according to Archer we get a denial of the reality of self.

Our sense of self is constantly evolving. However, as well as this constant evolution there are, in individuals’ lives, particular moments or what Anthony Giddens calls ‘fateful moments’. Giddens argues that ‘fateful moments are times when events come together in such a way that an individual stands, as it were, at a crossroads in his existence; or where a person learns of information with fateful consequences’ (Giddens, 1991, p.113). These fateful moments are times ‘when individuals are called on to take decisions that are particularly consequential for their ambitions, or more generally for their future lives’. Such moments might include things like a decision to get married, or winning the lottery (Giddens, 1991, pp.112–113). Giddens suggests that in such moments, there is an altered set of risks and possibilities, and because of this, individuals may be called on to question routinised habits, even those that are closely integrated with self-identity. However, as Carrigan (2013a) points out, what he calls ‘a Giddensian individual’ (an individual who exists in the kind of world that Giddens postulates) seems to be like a rationalist computer at fateful moment times of her or his life, and yet, at other times, seems to just ‘go with
the flow' in a routinised way. Hence, perhaps the idea of ‘tiny moments’, moments that are less pivotal or significant but nonetheless potentially life changing, reflects the dynamic nature of identity change more usefully. Carrigan (2013a) suggests that Archer’s work on reflexivity can be an alternative to Giddens’ notion of ‘fateful moments’ and can help us to see how individuals may mediate between structure and agency—the emergent power of reflexivity allows us to see individuals as agentic shapers of their own worlds, within a set of constraining and enabling structures. At each tiny moment, depending on an individual’s dominant mode of reflexivity—the one most in use at that moment—an individual may make decisions that are significant. Of course, there is very often no way of knowing whether such a moment is or will be significant until after the fact, and so identity development and change is in a sense like a series of moments, some of which are tiny, some less so—which may or may not be fateful in retrospect, but which shape and drive an individual’s life. The fatefulness may constitute crossing the road at a particular point, thus bumping into a friend, or it may concern avoiding being run over. At a less prosaic (and less tiny) level fatefulness may be about the birth of a child, or deciding to spend one’s life with another individual, or about accepting or rejecting a particular job. Reflexivity plays its part in bridging the gap between structure and agency, in directing our actions and projects, and in allowing us to be agentic shapers of our own lives.

**Integration of the approaches**

To integrate these ideas about a continuous yet changing sense of self, individual agency and Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory more firmly, I look further to the work of Archer (2000, p.162), who suggests that we live in three worlds, or orders of reality, simultaneously. Figure 3.2 shows how they can be described.
According to Archer, ‘The subjective powers of reflexivity mediate the role that objective structural or cultural powers play in influencing social action and are thus indispensable to explaining social outcomes’ (Archer, 2007, p.5) Agency is necessarily contextualised. Archer expresses this (e.g. 1995, 2003, 2007a) by suggesting that structural and cultural properties objectively shape the situations that agents find themselves in. These structural and cultural properties have both constraining and facilitating powers in relation to individuals’ own concerns, which concerns are subjectively defined in relation to the three orders of reality: the practical, the natural and the social (see above). The reflexive deliberations of individual agents then produce individuals’ plans of action: individuals subjectively determine their practical projects in relation to their objective circumstances. This can perhaps be expressed more simply as real moments, understood differently by different people.

Reflexivity is the model for engagement with these orders of reality that leads to agency and identity. Therefore, our inner conversations, or reflexivity, mediate our relationship with the world. Reflexivity is not purely self-referential. Nonetheless,
Bruner (1987) emphasises the importance of understanding how reflexivity impacts on our agency, even though he does not use the term ‘reflexivity’. He writes:

I cannot imagine a more important psychological research project than one that addresses itself to the ‘development of autobiography’ – how our way of telling about ourselves changes, and how these accounts come to take control of our ways of life. (pp.694–695)

Despite this, the whole idea of reflexivity and of its impact on agency has been ignored in much social research; even Archer’s own empirical research has been less developed in this area than her emphasis on reflexivity might predict.

My research drawing on CR, including Archer’s ideas about reflexivity and on phenomenology, can help to illuminate how this process operates for agents living and working in the real world in real social and cultural contexts. Other approaches to investigating this process, and the work of mediation that reflexivity does between structure and agency, are not adequate: this is a complex set of processes, for which a competencies-based approach, for example, is not adequate, as it ignores the complexities of understandings and interactions between contexts. Critical realism and phenomenology both have a variety of accepted, rational methods and aspects of grand theory available to them, and between them they also allow for explanation and prediction. The combination of phenomenology and CR may be able to contribute to grand social theory, at least inasmuch as social theory concerns itself with themes such as the nature of social life, the relationship between individuals, self and society and the structure of society and of social institutions. Agents’ lives can be conceptualised as their understandings of their own contexts, which are interlinked by individuals’ work as reflexive agents. As such, there is something specific about the nature of those contexts that relate to individuals’ work that have stronger socialising elements than those which relate to other arenas of individuals’ lives. Archer’s approach under-socialises individual reflexivity and agency in relation to contexts such as schools—which are a part of, but not the totality of, teachers’ lives. Individuals’ home lives are of course key contexts for individuals too, but the extent to which individuals have control over—and are the creators of—these contexts makes them qualitatively different from their work in schools, even for head teachers. So, for example, the activities in which
teachers engage in school are often performed in particular kinds of dialogic space (in classrooms and staffrooms, for instance) with particular dialogic partners, such as other teachers, pupils and parents. How might teachers’ work contexts and their dominant modes of reflexivity interplay? The work and activities that are done in some schools comprise direct daily professional experiences which for some teachers can be lived in semi-automatic ways—perhaps particularly so for an individual teacher whose dominant mode of reflexivity is communicative and who is working in a school where there is little change and evolution. For teachers whose dominant modes of reflexivity are meta-reflexivity or autonomous reflexivity this automaticity is much less likely to be a feature of their lives. However, even in such stable contexts there will be fateful moments that may unsettle the individual or context and that hence require or result in particular moments of reflexivity. It could be argued that certain schools and situations in schools are likely to experience more change than others. For example, this might happen as a school considers its position in relation to academy status, or when a new head teacher is appointed, or when a key member of staff leaves.

Archer (2014b) might describe this as structural morphogenesis (the generative mechanisms of change that work to disrupt and change the existing structure and cultural elements of a situation). This change may lead inevitably to the morphogenesis of agency and hence of actors, partly because of the urgency for individuals to reflexively deal with such changes and consequential dissonance. Hence, the nature of the context in which teachers and teaching are embedded, the type of reflexive mode(s) that teachers favour and the sense of the personal and social self that develops and is narrated and changed through reflexivity, all lead to changing forms of agency and action. For example, it may be that a teacher is regarded as a success by the leadership team in one school; when they move school they may not be perceived as such a success and may eventually, as a result, leave the profession.

The nature of the structure and cultural elements of the school situation are just one part of the milieu of influences on an individual's fluid forms of agency and
action. Others might include an individual's career history or demographic factors such as her/his gender, race and age.

**Summary**

In this chapter I have discussed how a critical realist ontology combined with phenomenology is a useful theoretical stance in investigating my research question: ‘What are the beings and doings of teachers?’ Predicated on this work, in Chapter 4 my methodology and methods are considered in more depth.
Chapter 4: Methodology and methods

Introduction and links to ontology and epistemology

This chapter builds on the theoretical underpinnings and the ontological and epistemological stance outlined in the previous chapter, particularly in relation to agency, structure and reflexivity. I consider the implications of these factors for the study’s methodology and methods and then discuss the data collection methods and analysis techniques.

The methodology and methods that I chose were of course guided by the epistemological assumptions inherent in my conceptual framework. Lawrence-Lightfoot (n.d.-a) suggests that researchers should use their conceptual frameworks in their work as part of their anticipatory schema and in designing their guiding questions for their research. She suggests that such frameworks are usually constructed in precisely the way in which my conceptual framework was built:

The portraitist comes to the work with an intellectual framework and a set of guiding questions. The framework is usually the result of a review of the relevant literature, prior experience in similar settings, and a general knowledge of the field of inquiry. It also resonates with echoes of the researcher’s autobiographical journey—those aspects of her own familial, cultural, developmental, and educational background that she can relate (either consciously or unconsciously) to the intellectual themes of the work. (Lawrence-Lightfoot, n.d.-a)

The rationale behind the choice of methods is twofold, and reflects issues raised in my conceptual framework.

First, the methods had to illuminate the meaning-making which was engaged in by teachers and which enabled them to express their understandings of their beings and doings as teachers. Second, in order to consider the impact of factors at a number of levels that affect those beings and doings, it was important to choose methods which reflected the teacher-participants’ reflexivity and enabled them to express it in relation to the teaching contexts at various levels of analysis.
Study design and methodology

Case study research design
I chose to use a case study methodology. The case study method ‘allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events’ (Yin, 2009, p.4). For my research such events relate to the beings and doings of four individual teachers; beings and doings that are underpinned by the teachers' individual histories and personal lives. These teacher participants are situated and examined in the contexts of their lived professional lives in schools, which are themselves located within a broader socio-political context.

There was the potential for a large number of factors to be of interest in this work, as can be seen from my conceptual framework. Consequently, a case study methodology using multiple sources of evidence was a useful approach. I used a number of empirical data collection methods focused on participants’ narrations of their beings and doings as teachers:

- interactions with and narratives from participants as they constructed timelines and concept maps;
- observations of and discussions about participants’ teaching;
- semi-structured interviews with participants about their school contexts; and
- discussions with participants about their personal concerns, their modes of reflexivity and their agency.

There was also some desk-based research into the local, national and global educational contexts in which the teacher-participants' beings and doings were situated. This research is reflected in the portraits, analysis and discussion.

The data was collected over the period of a year (the study year). The longitudinal nature of the study was not because I was particularly expecting or looking for change over time, which is one rationale for working longitudinally (Yin, 2009). Rather, I used the research year to gain as much rich data as I could. I met the participants four times each over the course of the year. This was partly to enable me to establish a working relationship with them, which was key to the analysis of my data. If there were changes over time or events that were significant to my
participants’ reflexivity then I was able to discuss and document them. The rationale behind the timing of the data collection points is shown in Appendix 1.

My case studies were not designed to be generalisable to a wider population of teachers. Rather, in my work the function of the cases is instrumental rather than intrinsic (Stake, 2003) in that the particular teachers were chosen with the aim of gaining insights into teachers’ reflexivity and its impact on agency. Reflexivity and agency are what Stake (1995) describes as the ‘issues’ which drive the selection and analysis of the case study material. These issues are ‘not simple and clean, but intrinsically wired to political, social, historical and especially personal contexts’ (Stake, 1995, p.17). Hence, the purpose of my case studies is to expand and generate theory—what Yin (2009, p.38) calls ‘analytical generalisation’. Therefore, the criticism of a lack of statistical generalisability that is often levelled against case studies (e.g. Sarantakos, 2005) does not apply to my work.

The case studies are rooted in phenomenology, and thus enabled me to develop an understanding of the lived realities of teachers and teaching, as well as to explore the interface between structure and agency as my teacher-participants articulated and developed a sense of what it is to be a teacher in the contexts of their schools and of societal structure and culture more generally. Case studies allowed me to investigate the complex intersecting relationships between teachers’ thinking and doing and their reflexivity; relationships that I have argued at some length are central in the development of agency and identity.

**Analysing and documenting the cases—portraiture**

The method that I chose to document and analyse the case studies was the portrait (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997). The corpus of data was collated and articulated as portraits, one for each of the teacher-participants.

Portraiture is a method ... that blurs the boundaries of aesthetics and empiricism in an effort to capture the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experience and organizational life. Portraitists seek to record and interpret the perspectives and experience of the people they are studying, documenting their voices and their visions—their authority, knowledge, and
The drawing of the portrait is placed in social and cultural context and shaped through dialogue between the portraitist and the subject, each one negotiating the discourse and shaping the evolving image. (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997, p.xv)

The methods of portraiture have been developed by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) and by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997). In the preface to their 1997 book, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot talks about Picasso’s portrait ‘Girl before a mirror’ (see Figure 4.1).
4.1). Rather than seeing her own likeness when she looks in the mirror, the girl sees a more ‘penetrating image—one that is both revelatory and disturbing.’ (p.xvii). There are a number of ways of deconstructing this painting, but they all suggest that the young girl's image is not a literal one. In the same way that the image in ‘Girl before a mirror’ is not a facsimile of the individual, a portrait is more than a simple image; it is a deeper and more complex reflection of the individual. Because I used an in-depth longitudinal approach to data collection that involved getting to know the participants over the course of a year, portraiture was an appropriate method for me to illuminate the shared understanding between teacher-participants and myself. This is in much the same way that an artist painting a portrait on a canvas gets to know her/his sitter before and as s/he paints (McGee, 1995).

Portraits are designed to show the depth and penetration of enquiry, and the richness of layers of human experience. Part of the rationale for using them is that:

A persistent irony—recognized and celebrated by novelists, poets, playwrights- is that as one moves closer to the unique characteristics of a person or a placer, one discovers the universal. (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997, p.16)

The fact that portraiture can facilitate the discovery of the universal suggests that this method of analysing and documenting the cases is useful in developing analytical generalisations from the case study material, as was my purpose.

Portraiture is about making a commitment to the research participants, and contextualising the depictions of individuals and events. Developing the visual arts metaphor, Lawrence-Lightfoot suggests that what portraiture can do is use the lens of the artist to represent the participant. In creating portraits, I aimed to do as Lawrence-Lightfoot suggests, and ‘to capture the mystery and artistry that turn image into essence’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997, p.xvii). In my work portraits of the four teacher-participants were generated through my interactions with them. This underlines the fact that both the research and the portraitist are clearly defined as being partial, as has been discussed in my consideration of my own position in my research. This articulation of subjectivity and positionality, meaning that the portraits are co-constructions, is designed to bring the reader into
the lives of the teachers. There is not necessarily a disadvantage to this partiality. It means that, as Dixson et al. (2005, p.17) point out, there is room for the portraitist to ‘acknowledge her or his presence ... in the research, thereby dismantling the notion that the researcher is the only knower and expert on the lives and experiences of the participants.’ The detailed and rich portraits that I develop as a result of using this methodology reflect post-positivist notions of validity, notably trustworthiness; and also take into account a post-modern emphasis on contexts. All the events and individuals in my research are situated within the nested contexts that I have discussed when developing and presenting my conceptual framework (see Chapter 2).

The importance of narrative for portraits

While I was constructing my portraits I found that the discussions that I had with my participants and their narratives provided me with a rich framework through which the lived realities and experiences of the teacher-participants could be investigated (Webster and Mertova, 2007). Goodson et al. (2010) develop this idea, suggesting that the ‘interior conversations’ that people have, where individuals create their own individual stories and construct plans of action, are key to their identity and understanding of their own place in the world. Goodson et al. suggest that this storying process becomes a significant influence on individual agency. The links here to Archer’s (2007) conceptualisation of reflexivity, discussed above, are clear: one of the reasons for using participants’ narratives in the construction of portraits is that the manner in which someone articulates her/his narrative is likely to mirror her/his reflexivity and illustrate the way or ways in which s/he understands her/his identity. According to Goodson et al. (2010):

The way in which people understand and articulate their present situation is important as well. It is, in other words, not just the ‘now’ that is always present in one’s story of the past; it is also one's story of the now that impacts on one’s story of the past. (p.7)

The use of narrative accounts in my work was important because of the unique way in which narrative accounts can function as a route in to participants’ reflexivity. Reflexivity, as defined by Archer (2007), is about engaging in the inner
conversations ‘whereby [agents] consider themselves in relation to their (social) contexts and vice versa’ (Archer, 2007, p.4); an activity that she suggests is engaged in by all normal individuals.

The act of narrating is not an objective, neutral one. Rather, as Rosenwald and Ochberg (1992) explain:

> How individuals recount their histories – what they emphasize and omit, their stance as protagonists or victims, the relationship the story establishes between teller and audience – all shape what individuals can claim of their own lives. Personal stories are not merely a way of telling someone (or oneself) about one’s life; they are the means by which identities may be fashioned. (1992, p.1)

In other words, narration creates aspects of identity. Authentic reflective and reflexive practice, elicited through narrative, have every likelihood of leading to changes in both professional practice and in identity.

An individual’s narrative may reflect her/his reflexivity, but there is nonetheless a difference between narrative and reflexivity. Bruner (1987, p.694) claims of narrative that it is ‘form rather than content that matters’. He suggests that narrative is played out on a dual landscape: the landscape of action, on which events unfold; and the landscape of consciousness, where the inner worlds of the protagonists are represented. This landscape tells us about the individual’s motives, hopes, doubts and thoughts. In contrast to Bruner, I contend that in relation to reflexivity, it is largely the content rather than the form of inner (often biographical) conversations that is key, and I suggest that reflexivity, in the form of inner conversations, acts as the bridge between these two landscapes. Reflexivity is not the same as narrative in and about activity, but it is closely linked.

Galen Strawson (2004) raises the interesting and important question of whether we do in fact experience ourselves narratively and reflexively:

> It is well known that telling and retelling one’s past leads to changes, smoothings, enhancements, shifts away from the facts; and recent research has shown that this is not just a human foible but a neurophysiological
inevitability. Every conscious recall brings an alteration, and the implication is plain: the more you recall, retell, narrate yourself, the further you risk moving away from accurate self-understanding, from the truth of your being. Sartre is wrong to say that storytelling oneself is a universal trait, but he’s right that it is extremely common, and he is surely right, contrary to the tide of current opinion in the humanities, that the less you do it the better. (Strawson, 2004).

Archer’s thesis (2003; 2007) concerning modes of reflexivity provides us with an answer to this—we do indeed experience ourselves this way, but the ways in which we experience and demonstrate reflexivity ourselves differ. Both ‘...structural and cultural characteristics of subjects’ social backgrounds [were found to be] closely associated with the predominance of different modes...’ (Archer, 2012, p.16). I contend that Archer is correct—the majority of people do engage in inner conversations, in reflexive narratives. Importantly however, the ways in which they do this are both fallible and different from each other.

Sample sites, sample and data collection

Sample sites
The reason for concentrating my work in the secondary sector was partly because my pilot work had shown some differences between the identity and agency of primary and secondary school teachers. It therefore seemed logical to focus on just one phase and to reduce the number of factors that might muddy the conceptual waters. I also surmised that my years of working in the secondary sector would mean that I had insights that could inform my analysis. Participant recruitment was from a purposive sample of schools—a community school, a single-sex independent school and a local authority faith school. These were chosen to reflect the diversity of context in which teachers work in England.

The pseudonyms7 for the three schools from which I drew my teacher-participants are: Martindale City Academy; St. Gervase’s Catholic College and The Russell Grammar School.

7 Subsequent citations that would identify the schools have not been included and are available on request.
Martindale City Academy is an inner city academy. It was set up as a sponsored academy in 2009, and the academic year 2014–15 was the first year in which it had pupils in all years from year 7 to year 11. There were about 850 pupils as at August 2015. The school is in a disadvantaged area, its catchment area comprising one of the 1% of most deprived areas in England (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011; Manchester City Council, 2011) and the school acknowledges this as key to the rationale for the community-orientated philosophy of the school. Approximately 43% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, a rate which is well above the national average (Department for Education, 2013), and about a quarter of the pupils do not have English as their first language. Approximately 12% have an Individual Education Plan (IEP)\(^8\) involving School Action Plus or have a statement of special educational needs.

St. Gervase’s Catholic College is a large 11–18 local authority maintained Catholic school in a small English industrial town. It has over 1,500 pupils, including a sixth form of about 175 students. It is situated in a predominantly white area, with very few pupils who do not have English as their first language. There is a relatively high proportion of pupils on School Action (Ofsted report 2014). Some 21.6% of students are eligible for free school meals, slightly above the national average (Department for Education, 2013). St. Gervase’s is situated in a borough which is rated in the bottom 10% of English boroughs in the 2010 English Indices of Multiple Deprivation Report (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011).

The Russell Grammar School is a large all-boys independent school, catering for 7–18 year olds. It is situated on the outskirts of a large English city, and draws boys from a catchment area with a radius of over 50 miles. The school has approximately 1,500 pupils, of whom about 200 are in the sixth form. The fees for 2015/16 were

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\(^8\) An individual education plan is a written working document that enables all members of staff to see what the child’s strengths are and which areas of their development have been identified as needing extra support. IEPs are usually issued to plan support for pupils on School Action, School Action Plus or who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs.
£11,730 per year. According to the school website, about 15% of pupils receive full or partial bursaries.

**Sample of teacher-participants**

Four individual teachers are the cases; teachers whose beings and doings are situated and are examined in the complexity of their lived professional lives. The small number is because of the need to derive rich data and interpretations, balanced with the practicalities of how much a lone researcher can achieve in a given timeframe, as well as the need to sustain my participants over time. The teachers were chosen because they represent different schools, ages and backgrounds; they are at different stages of their careers. One participant is male and three are female. The sample is thus a purposive sample, specifically constructed for the purposes of this study.

The teacher-participants at Martindale were selected and approached by the school vice-principal, as my agent. I subsequently contacted three potential participants by email, sending them details of the study. They all expressed interest, so an initial meeting was held with each where the study was explained to them in more detail. After a two-week period for consideration, all agreed to participate. Their pseudonyms are Marie, Rory and Bay. After six months, Bay chose not to participate in the study any further, and the data that had been collected up to that point has not been included in the study.

**Marie** is a cookery teacher from Ireland. She was 25 at the start of the study year. Her degree is in food technology. She subsequently completed her Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in an English city and then came to work at Martindale as a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT). She has taken part in the school’s ’Developing Leaders’ programme, designed to encourage the next generation of leaders in education, and has responsibility for NQTs in the school.

**Rory** is a science teacher, in his late twenties when the study year began. He started off his career in project management and then moved into teaching
via what was then called the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP)\(^9\) route, training at Martindale. He is also a ‘Developing Leader’, mentoring the trainees in the science department.

The other two teacher participants are acquaintances of mine who knew of my research and had expressed an interest in being involved:

**Jill** is an English teacher. During the period of the research she was in charge of gifted and talented students at St. Gervase’s Catholic College. She was 40 at the beginning of the study year and had come to St. Gervase’s from another local school, where she had been head of English.

**Patricia** was 31 at the start of the study year. She trained as a primary teacher but now teaches mathematics at the Russell School at all levels up to and including sixth form. She came to the school from a primary school in the south of England.

My use of a purposive sampling technique has implications. Such a sample is of course inherently biased; over time the relationship that I had with the teacher-participants inevitably developed and this may well have changed the nature of the research. Patrick (2012) suggests that when using qualitative longitudinal research paradigms, it is important to consider processes for maintaining contact and to balance that sustained contact with the risks of over-involvement. Adamson and Chojenta (2007) suggest that in a longitudinal study such as mine, developing and maintaining relationships with participants is crucial in ensuring the project will meet its aims and objectives. In my judgement, the balance between minimising the risks of sample attrition and of researcher over-involvement could only be achieved by the use of a purposive sample.

Throughout the data collection year I maintained a good relationship with all of the participants; they all reported being interested in the project. Knowing the nature of

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\(^9\) The Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) was a programme for graduates who wanted to gain Qualified Teacher Status while working. It was replaced by the School Direct programme in 2012/13.
the ideas with which I was working was unlikely to have made any difference to the results of the study.

**Data collection methods**

To build up the portraits of my participants, I used a number of data collection methods, designed to complement each other and to form a picture of the lived realities of the professional and personal lives of participants. Yin (2009, p.98) highlights the need to use multiple sources of evidence in case studies but also to provide a coherent connection between the sources of evidence, the research questions, and the data collected. In my study the methods were designed to complement each other so that in the analysis and construction of the portraits, all the sources of evidence could be and were analysed together, and the portraits were built on the conglomeration of evidence from the different sources.

Each teacher-participant was seen at least four times over the data collection year. In the first session they were asked to complete a timeline and a concept map. They were then observed teaching twice during the year, and discussions were held after each observation. Finally they were asked about their school context and their personal reflexivity.

**Timelines**

The participants were each asked to draw and annotate a timeline for their career as a teacher. They were told they did not have to worry about exact dates, but rather they were asked to show any events in their life that affected their career or career choices, and also to show any events in the wider world which might have been significant to them. They could do this in any way they chose—it was a deliberately open brief (see the instructions in Appendix 2).

The purpose of this technique was to elicit personal understandings and to provide a basis for further discussion. This kind of graphic elicitation technique can be useful because it may give participants the opportunity to represent things along non-linguistic dimensions, or in addition to linguistic dimensions. This may allow them to access and represent different levels of experience (e.g. Bagnoli, 2009) as
well as to help them to engage with the question I had asked: ‘Tell me about your career as a teacher to date’, and to enhance the opportunity for reflexivity.

I engaged in discussion about the timeline either as the participant drew it, or afterwards. The completed timeline suggested, in part, the themes and foci for such a discussion. As with the concept maps, participants were asked to talk to me about what they were doing as they completed their timeline. Their comments were recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim. An exemplar timeline is shown in Figure 4.2, and the associated transcript is provided in Appendix 3.

Figure 4.2: Example of a completed timeline

**Concept maps**

Concept mapping derives from the work of Ausubel (1963) on propositional thinking and learning, whereby meanings are constructed through perceptions and interactions with objects and events in the world. Concept maps usually represent knowledge visually as a hierarchical framework of concepts and concept relations, but there are also other visual representation techniques that are derived from ideas about concept mapping and which are more flexible approaches to the collection of graphic representations of experiences (Wheeldon and Faubert, 2009).
Central to the rationale for using concept mapping in my research is that whatever their format, participant-generated maps can assist individuals to frame their experiences and mapping may facilitate the expression and externalisation of participants’ understandings (White and Gunstone, 1992), in this case of the factors that impact on them and on their beings and doings as teachers.

I asked participants to construct a ‘concept map’ on a corkboard with the central concept ‘Me as a teacher—what I think, feel and do’ (my operationalisation of the linked terms of identity and agency, that are suggestive of being and doing). Participants were asked to place cards on the corkboard that represented the influences on what they think, feel and do as teachers. In order to do this they were given a set of concepts, derived from the literatures that I had previously reviewed, from which they could choose, and they were also told that they could add others of their own (see Appendix 4 for details). In fact none of the participants added any. As the participants constructed their maps I encouraged them to talk about what they were doing, so enabling me to get a sense of the reflective process. Their comments were recorded, and their completed concept maps were photographed. An example of a completed map is shown in Figure 4.3 (see Appendix 5 for an exemplar transcript from a discussion of one participant’s concept map).
Observations and the significant event technique

My pilot work (Lord, 2013b) had shown that lesson observations were a valuable source of information and insight into the realities of teachers’ lives, but that it was particularly post-lesson discussions which were of value, partly because they had the potential to give information about the dominant mode of reflexivity which the teacher-participants use. In my pilot work, different teachers articulated their reflections about the lessons that s/he had taught in different ways. When I discussed the reflections with the participants, each of them told me that their articulations very often mirrored their inner conversations.

It was important to see the teacher-participants in the process of teaching. This was partly so I could contextualise their narratives and start to construct the background for the portraits, but also because individuals’ reflexive deliberations shape and inform their practical projects and actions (Archer, 2003, p.135).
seeing them in action in school as well as uncovering their reflexivity I hoped to be able to illuminate the link between their agency and reflexivity.

Each teacher participant was observed teaching twice, at a time and day to suit him or her. The first time was in the autumn term of the year in which the data was collected and the second was in the spring term. Doing two observations enabled me to see each teacher with two different classes at different times in the school year and therefore potentially to develop a fuller picture of the teachers’ beings and doings.

The significant event technique (SET) was used to structure the lesson observations and post-observation discussions. The SET was initially developed for my pilot study (Lord, 2013). It is an adaptation of another ethnographic technique: the critical incident technique or CIT (Flanagan, 1954). Flanagan describes the CIT as a set of procedures for collecting observations of human behaviour. It is a reflective technique, used in retrospect to study the recollections that an individual has of ‘significant incidents’ that occurred which are relevant in some way to the topic under consideration. I made some modifications to Flanagan’s original conceptualisation of the CIT to suit the educational context and developed the technique using an interactional-relational approach (e.g. Chirban, 1996) which includes self-awareness and authenticity. I renamed the modified method the ‘significant event technique’ (SET). Reflection and reflexivity are achieved by asking the teacher-participant to describe and comment on the identified significant events. Prompts were used in order to encourage this reflection (see Appendix 6 for more details of the SET). The SET involves the reflections of both the teacher-participant and the observer about any significant events that occurred in terms of the teaching and learning. Although there are various criteria for identifying revelatory or critical incidents (e.g. as suggested by the American Institutes for Research, 1998; cited by Rous and McCormick, 2006) I decided to rely on my own expertise and the experience of the teacher-participants to identify what may be significant events in lessons.
Using the SET, I observed my teacher-participants teaching their lessons. I made notes throughout the observed sessions, based on my own response to the significant events I witnessed and about any points that I wished to clarify with the teacher. The post observation discussions, which used SET, were recorded and transcribed verbatim. An exemplar transcript can be found in Appendix 7.

**Activity system questions**

I was keen to do more than just describe the factors in my conceptual framework that impacted on what the teacher-participants thought, felt and did: it would not be adequate to suggest that the aspects of context, which are framed in my conceptual framework at a meso level, affect teachers and teaching, without explaining how and why. In the final interview with each participant I used a number of questions drawn from the work of Kain and Wardle (2008) on activity theory to help illuminate the mechanisms that may help to explain the workings of the teacher-participants' schools. The questions were designed to elicit detail about the meso level contexts within which their beings and doings were situated (see Appendix 8).

**Reflexivity questions**

In the final interview with each participant, I referred to my analysis of the previous discussions I had with him or her and to the work of Margaret Archer. I asked explicitly about whether s/he had any important personal 'projects' or areas of her/his life that s/he cared deeply about, and I also gave examples that I had noted from my analyses of previous discussion with each participant. I also asked about how s/he tries to advance their projects through her/his own agency and causal powers, and about whether s/he they felt that they relied on other people in making decisions about the projects, whether s/he is decisive and how s/he makes decisions, and how s/he thinks about work and her/his personal life. I derived and modified these questions from Archer’s Internal Conversation Indicator (ICONI), a questionnaire tool which she developed to identify participants’ dominant modes of reflexivity (Archer, 2007).
Data analysis and portrait construction

The purpose of the analysis and portrait construction was to paint a dynamic picture of global policy, local structure and culture, imbued with personal and social identities and a particular individual reflexivity and social stance that are suggestive of both commonality and difference in the lived lives of four different teachers. Each individual portrait illuminates the factors that affect teacher identity and agency and illustrates how teachers use their reflexivity to mediate the relationship between structure and agency.

Transcription

All of the interviews and discussions were transcribed verbatim. I did this myself, as the resulting closeness to the data was something that I wanted and valued. Transcription can in itself be seen as an interpretative act. Only I knew how the interaction developed, how aspects of the environment and the socio-cultural context impacted on the discussions, and only I had an insight into other aspects of the interaction that had not been recorded. For example, occasionally I had made notes of participants’ non-verbal behaviour during the discussions and where relevant these were incorporated into the transcripts too. A denaturalised transcription process was used, with almost no focus on accents and involuntary vocalisations and sometimes using standard punctuation (such as semicolons and em dashes) to get the meaning of the speaker across to the reader, because I wanted to focus on the substance of the interview, and on the meanings and shared perceptions that were created in the discussions between the teacher-participants and myself. Regarding pause points and truncations of original transcripts, [...] is a truncation of the original transcript and ... is a pause by the speaker. It was a conscious decision to transcribe in this way, involving my reflecting on the purposes of the transcripts, as suggested by Oliver et al. (2005). Examples of transcripts of interviews, concept mapping narratives, timeline narratives and post-lesson observation discussions can be found in the appendices.
Working with the transcripts: thematic analysis and portraits

Van Manen (1984) suggests that there are two ways of working with texts: the ‘highlighting approach’ and the ‘line-by-line approach’. Tesch (1987) uses a mining metaphor to suggest these are akin to ‘panning’ and ‘surveying’ respectively. In the panning or highlighting approach, the researcher is looking for particular elements; in the surveying, line-by-line approach, the researcher takes more of a surveyor’s role, trying to capture what is in every part of the text or narrative. Both of these are disciplined rather than extempore processes. I have used both processes. (Exemplars of analysis documents can be found in Appendices 9 and 10.)

Part of my analysis concerned identifying themes from the participants’ data. If my conceptual framework were valid and useful I expected that themes would enable me to populate the conceptual framework and to produce an individualised framework for each individual (see Chapter 6 for these individualised frameworks).

Braun and Clarke (2006, p.79) describe thematic analysis as a method for ‘identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data.’ The purpose of my thematic analysis is, as Jerome Bruner puts it, to look at ‘how protagonists interpret things’ (Bruner, 1990, p.51) and to systematically interpret their world view. Thematic analysis is the most flexible and useful method for me to analyse the data from my teacher-participants, even though it is sometimes criticised for a lack of demarcation (e.g. Braun and Clarke, 2006). However, attempts to demarcate it clearly may result in it being limited and constrained, and hence in it losing one of its key advantages. It was important to me that I did not lose the Gestalt of the teacher-participants’ narratives and the overall feel of the data; this was one reason for using both the panning and mining approaches. The story and the subsequent portraits that were built are of course subjective; this subjectivity is valuable because my research question is concerned with individuals’ own interpretations of the factors which they feel impact on their own professional worlds. Appendix 9 shows how the themes were identified for one of the participants, Jill. The preamble to Appendix 9 shows the iterations that produced the final themes from one exemplar interview with Jill.
I considered a number of ways of completing the thematic analysis, and trialled some methods in my pilot work (Lord, 2013). However, as I had determined that portraits would be a useful way to represent the narratives of the participants, I turned to the work of Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot to guide me in choosing themes for my portraits. Lawrence-Lightfoot suggests that such thematic analysis is both an iterative and a generative process, bringing ‘interpretive insight, analytic scrutiny, and aesthetic order’ to the data. It is a search for ‘convergent threads, illuminating metaphors, and overarching symbols’, which process involves constructing emergent themes using various methods (Lawrence-Lightfoot, n.d-a). I drew on the corpus of data for each participant in constructing the portraits. Portrait construction was a developmental and iterative process over time, as I attempted to portray the ‘essence’ of the participant in their portrait.

Some of the taken-for-granted assumptions that I held about teachers and teaching may have influenced my data collection and analysis. In my previous work (Lord, 2013b) I had piloted a double hermeneutic method for analysing reflective post-observation discussions with my teacher-participants. This involved an iterative analysis to identify themes and to challenge the taken for granted assumptions which I might have held when talking to teachers and which might have skewed my analysis without my being aware of it. However, in the work for this thesis, rather than use a double hermeneutic technique as a bolt-on to my data analysis and construction of portraits, I decided to employ an approach that Addeo (2013) describes as ‘hermeneutic sensitivity’ in both my data collection and analysis. This means being aware of one’s own limitations, and also of one’s taken-for-granted assumptions. As Addeo (2013, p.27) puts it: ‘only taking into account your own presuppositions ... is [it] possible to know ... of the others’ presuppositions’. Since I was concerned with trying to understand the lived experiences of participants and also with the meaning-making that participants were doing in relation to those lived experiences, this hermeneutic sensitivity was a useful part of my data collection and analysis repertoire. It was done by firstly considering my reflections on each of the observed lessons and subsequent discussions that the teacher-participant and I had. Subsequently, with the benefit of distance from the data and with a developing understanding of each of my participants as I worked with them, this sensitivity was
developed differently: much of this work was done informally in supervision sessions, where often in discussions about the data my supervisor would challenge my conclusions or assumptions and encourage me to justify them with reference to the data.

**Looking for reflexivity**

Using the panning approach, one of the things I was looking for was clues as to the dominant mode or modes of reflexivity used by each of the participants. Key phrases that gave indications as to the mode were noted; for example, an emphasis on moral purpose might indicate the use of a meta-reflexive mode. Similarly, particular absences were highlighted; for example, no mention of friends or family by a participant might indicate the use of an autonomous mode of reflexivity. An exemplar of an analysis of reflexivity can be found in Appendix 9, and Appendix 10 shows a summary of the analysis of personal concerns and projects, as well as of reflexivity, for all four participants.

**Ethics and research integrity**

University ethical procedures were followed. Informed consent was obtained as far as possible from participants and their managers in schools. It was possible that eliciting narratives might have prompted uncomfortable memories for participants. This was unpredictable, and so obtaining truly informed consent was problematic. The teacher-participants were made aware of the potential for these outcomes, and were reminded of their right to withdraw at any time. All participants were assured that university procedures relating to confidentiality and anonymity of data had been followed.

As well as these common ethical issues, there were others that I took into account. Regular conversations with my supervisor were held so that I had an external check on these ethical issues. Working with participants over time meant that the relationships of trust and reciprocity that were developed generated very rich data. Nonetheless, I was engaging in the lived realities of teachers’ lives, and needed to be
careful about how I managed the responsibility and risk of involving myself in individuals’ lives so that I did not over-involve myself.

**Ensuring data is authentic**

Braun and Clarke (2006) and other researchers (e.g. Reason and Rowan, 1981) suggest using respondent checking to ensure that data is trustworthy and authentic. Although all my participants have been given copies of their portraits (and of their data if they wanted it), I decided not to do this respondent checking for two reasons. First, it is not necessary. Both in my pilot study (Lord, 2013a) and in this work, analysis of my participants’ narratives, timelines and concept maps showed that my data and analysis were trustworthy. The concepts identified on the participants’ concept maps echoed the themes which I drew out of the narratives—there was a natural triangulation. Second, it may not be the case that respondent checking produces valid data. If a participant says that a theme or idea does, or does not, resonate with her/him, this is their perception, which may reflect social desirability or a change of perspective or context rather than a reflection of the voice and story of the participant at the time of data collection. Hence, there may be little reason to assume that my participants in some way have ‘privileged status’ as commentators on their own action. The supposed validation that I may or may not achieve in this way could perhaps better be seen as another source of data and insight (Fielding and Fielding, 1986). When it seemed relevant, I did invite my participants to comment on the data that I had collected in previous sessions with them, but not as a means of validation, but rather because it allowed them to offer different interpretations of their responses to my questions. In this way, it was another source of data and it also said to my participants ‘I value your opinion’.

The other ways in which the trustworthiness of my data was ensured included some of those suggested by Shenton (2004):

- the development of an early familiarity with the schools and teacher-participants, balanced with over-familiarity;
- the development of tactics to help ensure honesty from participants, at least inasmuch as honesty is possible. Authenticity in the moment is perhaps more
desirable. Reciprocity and the development of relationships with the participants featured here;

• peer and supervisor scrutiny of the project;
• my own background, qualifications and experiences as the researcher.

**Issues related to insider/outside research**

In my research I am both an insider and an outsider. I am an insider in that I am a teacher and a teacher educator, and that I have a good deal of knowledge about schools, the education system and about how teachers work and live. However, I am an outsider too, in many ways: first because I am a researcher from the University of Manchester in these contexts, introduced and acknowledged as such. However, to some extent this position is mine by virtue of these extensive experiences. I am also an outsider in that, unlike my teacher-participants, I am not a specialist in the subjects or with the age range of students in the schools where my research has been conducted. Nor do I have extensive knowledge of the schools where my teacher participants work, although my years of living and working relatively locally to the schools in my study means that I know the schools and areas well.

Robert Merton (1972) sets out two contrasting positions in relation to conceptualisations of the insider and the outsider. One the one hand, some social scientists believe that only an impartial outsider can achieve an objective account of human interaction, because only he or she possesses the appropriate degree of distance and detachment from the subjects of the research: the insider, overly-influenced by the customs of his or her group, [who] remains ignorant, parochially mistaking error for truth, (Merton, 1972, pp.30–31). On the other hand, Merton's ‘insider doctrine’ asserts the exact opposite, namely, that the outsider:

has a structurally imposed incapacity to comprehend alien groups, statuses, cultures and societies ... [because he or she] has neither been socialized in the group nor has engaged in the run of experience that makes up its life, and therefore cannot have the direct, intuitive sensitivity that alone makes empathic understanding possible. (Merton, 1972, p.15)
So in other words, ‘you have to be one to understand one’ (Merton, 1972, p.15). Individuals have privileged access to knowledge by virtue of their group membership or social position. ‘The outsider, no matter how careful or talented, is excluded in principle from gaining access to the social and cultural truth’ (Merton, 1972, p.15).

My feelings as both an insider and an outsider were complex, and this led me to consider this posited dichotomy of an insider or an outsider, which is discussed by Thomson and Gunter (2011) amongst others. In my research, the idea that my identity was fluid and dialogic, as Thomson and Gunter (2011) suggest, feels right. There were times when I felt I was talking to my participants as a colleague, a teacher, empathising and sympathising with their comments about the challenges of a particular context, for example when Rory was telling me how difficult it was to teach in an open plan environment because of the noise. Sometimes, rather surprisingly, I felt like a co-teacher—as an observer sitting on a stool in the corner of Marie’s cookery lesson I was asked by the pupils to help with melting chocolate and about whether cakes baking in the oven were done yet. In the same lesson, Marie introduced me to a student who had been excluded in the previous week with the words ‘please tell our visitor where you were last week’, and when the student replied that he had been excluded, she asked me explicitly: ‘What do you think about that?’ In this instance I felt the tensions between being a teacher by profession, a researcher and a parent, very keenly.

Being aware of this in my first few interactions with the research participants, did, as Thomson and Gunter suggest, enable me to think beforehand about a range of possible reactions and responses I might make when these situations occurred. Certainly the notion of ‘research as mess’ (Law, 2004) where Law suggests that the world is ‘an unformed but generative flux of forces and relations that work to produce particular realities’ (p.7) is one which would have been anathema to me in my previous career as a scientist, but this suggestion seems to be a difficult, but more accurate and helpful representation of what I saw in my research. One of the things that Law suggests that social scientists have to do is to trouble the taken-for-
granted notions of methodological security—and that is certainly something that the research process has done for me.

**Ethical issues relating to identity change**

A further consideration was whether using a method that may result in changes to identity is ethical. Drawing on the work in the field of narrative ethics (Josselson, 2007) and that of Crossley (2000) about identity construction through narrative, I would argue that teachers are in fact constantly narrating aspects of their lives—they do so in the staff room, at home and so on. The ethical issues related to discussing a lesson or narrating a career history with me are in many ways less than in some types of studies, where there may be a greater power differential between researcher and participant. The drawing of portraits in my work was more of a co-construction, at times taking the form of a professional discussion between teachers. As Josselson (2007) discusses, in studies such as mine the whole research relationship needs to be engaged in ethically and the researcher needs to be aware of the implicit and unstated aspects of research with participants, both in the data collection and in the handling of the information. Throughout my research I have been acutely aware of the issues relating to identity change when participants are narrating their stories, and after discussion with my supervisor I decided to bring this possibility to the attention of the teacher-participants. The risk in relation to the discussions with me were felt not to be any greater than the risks would have been for teachers discussing their lessons and feelings about teaching with friends or colleagues, but the situation was nonetheless monitored.

In this chapter I have described the case study research designing, linking it to the ontological and epistemological discussion in Chapter 3. The various methods of data collection that were used and the ways in which the data was analysed and the portraits were constructed are outlined. The portraits themselves are presented in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5: Portraits

Jill

Jill is an English teacher in her mid-40s, and has responsibility for ‘more able’ students in a large 11–18 Catholic college, St. Gervase’s, in an industrial town in the north of England. St. Gervase’s has a reputation locally for being a good school, although it obtained a ‘requires improvement’ grade at its last Ofsted inspection in late 2012.

Jill lives in a slightly bigger town a few miles away from school, within about 20 minutes’ driving distance. She is married to Stuart and they have two daughters. As our collaboration started, Jill’s younger daughter, Georgia, was six and Anna was 16.

Route into and through teaching

Jill’s route into teaching has not been conventional. As a child and young adult, she always wanted to be a plain-clothes police officer, as she explained when she drew her timeline:

...when I was sort of age 7 to 18, right [laughs] I’ll just put ‘Jill Gascoine”\textsuperscript{10}, I wanted to be... CID, now the only way to get into CID was go to university, get a degree, do two years as a PC and then you get into CID and that’s all I’d ever wanted to do. So at 18 I had the forms for Cheshire, Merseyside and North Wales police... And the forms, the letters just sat on the desk at home and I had this, this is all you have ever wanted to do, so why are you not doing it? Because you’ve grown out of it... you can’t have grown out of it, it’s all you’ve ever wanted to be, a detective. Yes, but it’s not the reality now. (Timeline narrative, July 2014, 28)

As a result of that inner conversation, when Jill left school at 18, ‘saturated with study’ (Timeline narrative, July 2014, 28) instead of joining the police she got a place on the retail management trainee programme at John Lewis. Subsequently, when a

\textsuperscript{10} Jill Gascoine is a British actor who played an early British female CID detective, Maggie Forbes, in a popular 1980s TV drama called The Gentle Touch.
new John Lewis store was being built 30 miles away, Jill was earmarked for a position as a departmental manager there, but did not want to move so far. By that point she was married to Stuart and they had a mortgage, so after trying a number of commission-based jobs more locally, she ended up working as the library resource manager in the school where she had completed her secondary education. It was at this school that another member of staff identified that she had potential as a teacher.

'I’d be about 24, 25 or so and I know one day I was… shouting at a child and then somebody came out and said, ‘Can I have a word?’ And I thought ‘Oh no he’s going to really shout at me now’, and he said ‘Have you ever thought of going into teaching?’ I said ‘Why?’ He said ‘You are a natural; you made it very clear what they had done wrong, what the consequences were going to be […] you gave them the opportunity to explain themselves, not justify, but explain what they done and why, and then ‘do you understand why I’m not happy?’ He said ‘You, just you need to go into teaching’ […] and I thought ‘Could I, should I?’' (Timeline narrative, July 2014, 71)

As a result, this school supported Jill with time and fees throughout her OU English degree and her PGCE. Subsequently, Jill has worked in a number of other secondary schools. The story of how she ended up at St. Gervase’s is an interesting one. She moved there from Ashfield School, where she was head of English. She knew that the Head of English job at Ashfield was a hard job, and a colleague who later covered Jill’s maternity leave as head of department endorsed this opinion:

‘…within a week [she] said ‘I never want to be head of English it’s the worst job in a school, it is harder than maths and an assistant head’s job is easier, there’s nothing that compares to a head of English job’. Because, and even now 5/6 years down the line it’s even worse because of all the pressure the government have given you to get results in maths and English so because English is one of those subjects that you know moves and is so fluid there are no right or wrong answers…' (Concept mapping narrative, 14 July 2014, 153)

Jill’s move to St. Gervase’s is a defining moment in her career and home life. Despite the challenges of the job, Jill had no intention of ever moving from her head of department position at Ashfield School. However, after some political manoeuvring at Local Authority level, Ashfield was federated with Ladywood, a larger school
nearby. In fact, this was much more of a ‘take over’ by Ladywood than a federation. Anecdotal evidence that I gleaned from other staff and local parents over the study period suggested that Ladywood has a reputation for excellent results, but also for focusing on league tables to the exclusion of other aspects of children’s education. Jill wasn’t at all pleased about the Ladywood takeover of Ashfield, nor did she want a position in the new federated school. Hence, when Jill moved to St. Gervase’s, it was a rather unhappy move. It was more of a decision to avoid joining the new federated school than a positive step/move towards St. Gervase’s:

J: ...coming to St. Gervase’s, was that...?
Jill: That was ’cos I didn’t want to go across the way [to Ladywood]. (Timeline narrative, July 2014, 82–83)

Jill really had not wanted to join the federated school because of the takeover and the way it had been managed. Nonetheless, to start with she wasn’t entirely happy at St. Gervase’s. At Ashfield School Jill had had a reputation for being an excellent teacher, manager and administrator. Perhaps because of the divide between the faith school and the non-faith schools in the town where Jill works—a divide that I know from personal experience is acknowledged and accepted without rancour in the town—a reputation as an excellent head of English neither preceded her move nor even went with her to St. Gervase’s. Jill refers to the initial difficulties she had when she moved to St. Gervase’s from her previous school:

...the difficult first year I had here, partly because of things that happened here and partly because of the fact I felt I was forced to move because of what happened with the federation. (Concept mapping narrative, July 2014, 145)

It therefore took Jill a while to become established in her new job. One of the ironies about her current position is that from her classroom window at St. Gervase’s, she has an excellent view of the sports fields and the classrooms of the new buildings of Ladywood School. Occasionally in our meetings, Jill would refer to Ladywood and nod over towards the new buildings in a slightly hostile way;

...but I’m OK now I can sit here and look out across there [to Ladybrook] and I don’t get bitter... much [laughs]. (Concept mapping narrative, July 2014, 145).
Work context
When she was asked about her work context Jill responded quickly and intuitively like this:

Jill: [...] [Outcomes] could be anything from the dreaded GCSE/A-level results or a safe environment for a kid who was not in a safe environment, a comfortable environment whether it’s pastoral or academic for your outcomes; you’ve got your teacher... the school community whether that’s your staff, teachers support staff or the other children in the group, division of labour is the people you work with in your department, the pastoral team, for your form group, the senior leadership team, obviously the rules whether they’re in your classroom and your standards and expectations or the whole school and then obviously your teaching and learning strategies... (Interview, July 2015, 78)

What was important in Jill’s narrative, and what linked in to her sense of purpose about her profession, was that she saw differentiated relationships with children as key to her in her work:

J: What are your tools and instruments?
Jill: I think your teaching and learning strategies and how you manage the children because clearly a successful teacher is going to be one that can read the children and understand the children (Interview, July 2015, 80)
J: So part of the tools and the instruments are your relationships?
Jill: Yes.
J: Your different individual relationships?
Jill: Yes with different kids, and without that you’re not going to be a successful teacher because they won’t respond to you. (Ibid., 79–86)

In our final interview session at the end of the study year, Jill was happy to discuss her ideas about her teaching and learning ideas and projects. One of the ways in which she was realising her plans was by a career move out of St. Gervase’s.

Moving on from St. Gervase’s
At the beginning of this research project, and after four years in this context at St. Gervase’s, Jill was wondering whether to continue to apply for assistant head teacher posts. She had seven interviews, having applied for 15 jobs in the previous two years, but so far had been unsuccessful.
[...] I would have thought the portraits had a backdrop of global policy etc. the different things that you do at each interview you know you’re given 30 minutes for a RAISEonline\textsuperscript{11} document: ‘Tell us what we need to work on as far as the core is concerned: you’ve got half an hour’ and you think, ‘How am I going to write this? Do they want bullet points, do they want a table? What, what do they want?’ And then you’re being interviewed by a group of kids, you’ve been interviewed by a group of kids before, oh, not like this, this time is very different; and then you go into a meeting with a deputy and the assistant head ‘Talk us through attainment: how do you do it at your school?’ (Timeline narrative, July 2014, 120)

Jill explains in her narrative that data is not really her forte; rather, she is much more interested in teaching and learning. However, she knows that for assistant headship posts, an easy familiarity with RAISEonline is an essential requirement.

And I’m thinking ‘oh if it’s going to be like this every time’ but I say I thought ‘No, stay, what can you take from the day and use that next time?’ and it was... ‘cos that was a data job and I’m not a data person but I thought ‘you know what, will give it a go.’ (Timeline narrative, July 2014, 122)

Perhaps as a result of Jill’s ambivalence about data and her understanding of the children she teaches and the way in which they learn, one of the things that comes over strongly in her narrative is that she is in a bit of a quandary about whether she really wants an assistant head’s job, which would mean less time in the classroom.

[...] I did speak to somebody here who had no intention of leaving and then saw a job that was a re-advertisement at Easter. And she thought ‘I can’t not’ and she’s got the job and she said, ‘From talking to you, you’re going to be in that position: you need to think about leaving’.
So I don’t know—if not then I’m quite happy, and I am quite happy to just be an English teacher with responsibility for more able students because that’s a lovely job, that’s a lovely job to have in a school and you might get one or two you’re up against because they may be disaffected in some way, but they’re your case studies that you’re going to work on. The rest of the kids are going to be absolutely beautiful and hardworking and you know, but at the moment I am in a bit of a... so it could be a very different conversation we’re having this time of next year couldn’t it? (Timeline narrative, 14 July 2014, 112)

\textsuperscript{11} RAISEonline is a data system that compares schools’ data on a number of criteria such as progress and attainment with national averages and distributions. Ofsted uses RAISEonline data in their judgements about schools. It is also used by schools for their own purposes.
In fact, the conversation a year on was indeed very different. Jill had already decided that she wanted to focus more on family life and that she didn't want to be a head of English again, having done it in two previous schools, and although she was initially looking to further her career with an assistant headship post, her longstanding interest in teaching and learning was winning through. In April 2015, Jill secured a post as head of English in a local high school, St. Charles', which was in special measures. Jill had decided to apply for the job there because of a unique combination of location, the challenging nature of the role and her increasing sense of dissatisfaction with her current job. The decision to apply was not an easy one. But for the St. Charles' head of department role, Jill changed her mind about only going for assistant headship positions, as she explains here:

Jill: It just excites me because... this is like building your own department, taking the best bits of all the schools I've been to, an awful lot from here to be fair, and thinking, this is going to work and when you take on board the changes that have happened at that school this year plus the positivity of the staff, it will be, I'm hoping it will be a very quick rise, because I actually asked the question 'is there any other department is worse than this in school?' and they went 'Well they're on a par with history'. It's that bad because they have no systems, they have no systems for data management, no systems for assessing, no data, there is just nothing there, but they want it, but they've never had the personnel to deliver it to the department because the people who were helping in positions were not led or managed and so it's like the blind leading the blind.

J: So they're just all running around?

Jill: And really not knowing what they're doing, so I was also very honest with myself, somebody had said to me, ‘Why, Jill?’; ‘cos I'd said even though I wasn't applying for jobs I really didn't want to be head of English again because I'd done it in two schools, even though I'd loved it, the job, ‘be really honest, why?’ Part of it was because of what had happened with the takeover of the [Ashfield] school and part of it was what had happened here three years ago and so when I took those two parts out of the equation, did I still think I could do that job, did I still get a buzz thinking about it, yes I did, I think I said this to you, and so I think I've been fighting that with a view to an assistant headship. (Interview, July 2015, 61–83)

12 A school may be placed in ‘special measures’ if an Ofsted inspection concludes that the school is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education and if the governors and leadership team do not show the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. As a result of being placed in special measures a school will be subject to Ofsted monitoring visits and inspections until necessary changes are deemed to have been put in place successfully.
Jill explained to me how she had been into the school where she had been appointed as the new Head of English ‘twice since the interview’ (Post observation discussion, May 2015, 246) and said that ‘by the time I see you again there’ll have been a lot more visits’ (ibid., 276). These visits have been part of her starting to take on her new role and include agreeing her timetable, developing planning documents and a list of texts for the GCSE units, and arranging one-to-one meetings with her new staff in the department.

**Life projects**

It is clear from her career trajectory that work is an important part of Jill’s life, and in our discussions, Jill described work as one of two undertakings that were important to her: the other is her family. However, in many ways work and family are more than interrelated undertakings; they are her key ‘life projects’ that reflect her driving concerns.

The family ‘project’ features prominently in Jill’s narrative. She was born and brought up with her brother Pete and sister Louise in a working-class family in a local town. Jill’s parents were always supportive of her, Pete and Louise as children:

Jill: They’ve always they’ve always supported what we choose to do, whatever, even now, what we choose to do, they know that we are our own people, and whether that’s sort of in relationships, or...

J: So they weren’t massive influences like ‘you must be a detective’ or ‘you must be a teacher’ or anything like that?

Jill: No, and if that’s what we said we wanted to do, see Pete wanted to be a pigeon boy for years because the guy next door had a pigeon loft but they never said ‘No you won’t.’

J: And you...

Jill: Louise wanted to be a sweet shop... they always said ‘Yes, if you want a sweet shop, you go and get yourself a sweet shop.’ But like I say it’s just been a case of ‘let them see which way which they want to go.’ (Timeline narrative, July 2014, 59–63)

Her family network is very stable:

_We’ve always had a very solid family network in fact that’s another reason why we’re having this vows thing [Jill and Stuart were renewing their marriage vows shortly after our first meeting] because if there is anyone there on their_
own it’s because their wife and husband has died... we don’t have any divorces and there is this real strong... I mean most aunties and uncles we’re talking 40 years; we must be, because we are on 23 [years] so there’s a very supportive family, and there when you need them... (Interview, July 2014, 42)

When Jill was a young adult, her sister Louise moved to Scotland to work. Her narrative about this illuminates the closeness of their relationship:

...my sister moved away to Scotland and lived there for 4 or 5 years, and...I remember somebody was skirting round me for a while and then came to me and said...
‘You know I might have been a bit distant, I know you were upset about your sister dying.’
I went,
‘What?’
‘The way you’ve been speaking about, it’s as if she’s died.’
‘But she’s just gone to live in Scotland.’
And I remember when I was doing one of my first pieces for the OU for the tutor, I had to write about a family member, and I wrote about [Louise]... and he said ‘I was so relieved when I got to the end, I’d never been moved by a piece of writing quite so much’, he said, ‘I thought she’d died.’ And I wasn’t aware I was giving off this because she’d moved so far away. (Interview, 28 August 2014, 758–768).

Now she has a husband and children of her own, Jill still sees family as a prime concern and motivator. But equally, Jill feels that financially and practically the family is now in a position where as a unit they can further family projects. Georgia is still at primary school and so still needs supervision, but Anna, the elder daughter, is old enough to help with this, ‘as somebody we can rely on and who enjoys what she does as well’ (ibid., 85–86) and so this combination of financial security, daughters with ten years between them, and the need to be ‘proper parents, looking after, nurturing for the next 18 years or so’ (ibid., 83) has resulted in Stuart and Jill re-evaluating their ‘family’ project and considering their options in terms of careers and other life decisions:

We thought [we] are putting our foot in the water and thinking well, what sort of things can we do, where can we go? So in that sense we are very much looking forward as a unit, the four of us, about what we can do and where we are going to go and things. (Ibid., 95–98)
Although Jill was cautious about sharing too many of her nascent plans with me, she did explain that there were a few things, both work and family related, that were in the offing:

...there’s lots of other things that I want to do family wise, you know there is something that’s been on the backburner for years that is very time-consuming but that will stay on the backburner until I’ve got time to look at it, it might not be until I retire but actually it might be at some time this year when I think, ‘you know what I’ve got time to do this I’m going to do it’ and Rachel [a friend and colleague] came up with an idea yesterday because she is having some time out, of a project she’d love me to get involved in linked in with teaching resources and websites and things and producing stuff for her (Ibid.,189–196)

So work and family are always closely intertwined for Jill. Although she does sometimes discuss work with her sister and husband, she rarely relies on them in her decision-making. When we had our final meeting, Jill was about to leave St. Gervase’s and to start her new job as head of English in St. Charles’ High School in the new academic year:

...when I go to St. Charles’ one of the things my husband said was ‘do you need the hassle of it?’, ‘cos he knew the state of the school... He said ‘is it going to be a massive job?’ I said ‘Well it will be...’ [She trails off into thought.] (Post observation discussion, July 2015, 105-108)

And finally, although she had discussed her move to St. Charles with her family, the decision was hers:

J: So you’ve taken notice of your sister, of your husband and have they been important in determining what you’ve done there, or is it mostly you? Or...
Jill: Probably mostly me. Stuart is really really supportive, I couldn’t do my job without his support, but he doesn’t really get involved in the decision-making, he just goes along with what happens, because he knows then that that’s the way it’s always worked. (Ibid, 139–144).

Nonetheless, Jill does consider the implications of her work-related decisions for everyone in her close family. For example, one of the reasons for Jill to have applied for and subsequently accepted her new job is because of its proximity to where her

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13 Please refer to appendices 9 and 10.
elderly parents live—the school is on the same road. Her parents are pleased about this:

*I say ‘In September, Dad, I could come here every night from work for my tea. He said ‘you could even come at lunchtime, we’ll have your lunch ready.’* (Ibid,111–113)

One of the functions of Jill’s family is to provide a facilitating and enabling context which supports her in her other significant ‘project’ of ‘being a teacher’. In one sense the family is closely integrated with this project and supports it because Jill ‘is’ a nurturing teacher. Jill acknowledges that the two projects are intertwined: *‘to quote Jane [a friend] every day is a school day’* (Concept mapping narrative, July 2014, 156)

And yet, there is also a sense in which Jill keeps the two projects of home and work quite separate, rarely having work colleagues as Facebook friends, ensuring that her planning for school takes as little time as possible, and making sure that she makes the most of her evenings, weekends and holiday times. Her work is underpinned by her values and sense of moral purpose, which is to do with caring, nurturing and mentoring. This moral purpose manifests itself in at least two linked ways: firstly, in the cultivation of a nurturing, caring persona in relation to both the students and her staff; and secondly, a sense in which Jill acts as and sees herself as someone who can be a role model in school for younger or less experienced staff.

**Cultivating, nurturing and caring**

Something that comes through in her lessons, and which is a striking theme in Jill’s narratives, is her caring for students, which perhaps in part derives from her strong sense of family and of her nurturing role there. In this extract, she explains how she makes the link between how she nurtures her own daughters, and how she treats some of her year 10 students.

Jill: *...I said to them come May next year just before you leave if you do work hard, I’ll take you out for a meal. I said somewhere posh, not McDonald’s - somewhere we’ll have to use knives and forks. But then I did the ‘if you show me*
up ...’ and they were ‘we won’t, we won’t’ and they’re thrilled by this; there’s about 14 of them.

J: How lovely.
Jill: Again it’s all part of, ‘yes I’d take my daughters out for a meal, these kids need to go out for a meal’ because when I did the Future Scholars thing a few weeks ago I took five kids to the University of Newcastle, the train ride in itself, three hours on a train - what you do for three hours on a train? You sit there and listen to music and you talk... the conversations you have with these kids and what you find out about them, what they find out about you, because they’ve never been on a train for three hours and they’ve never been to Newcastle and you know it’s just...that’s brilliant that they can come back and say

‘I want to go to a city university’ but it’s like ‘I don’t like Newcastle because it’s not big enough’.

‘Right, OK then, have a wander round Manchester, have a wander around Liverpool’.
And then next year perhaps we will go further afield. But it’s that idea that you are making a change for them. But again because mine’s 16 I’ve seen it, done it and I can talk to the kids and relate but with Georgia being 6 I can still... it’s going to go on for the next 10/12 years so I’m still in with the kids because I understand, and that I think again is important in getting results with children in your class and being the teacher that they want for next year... (Concept mapping narrative, July 2014, 171–173)

The first time that Jill and I met she explained to me about how understanding and caring for the students she teaches is really important to her:

...you have to understand them and I understand these kids and that’s why think I’ll probably stay here because they’re my kind of kids you’ve got the influence and I can push those kids because that’s my, what my ‘more able’ job does, but when there’s kids who have got nothing at home and whether that’s material or support, or love, ‘cos you just know some of these kids just want someone to care for them and in your classroom you can do that... (ibid, 169)

This was a theme we returned to a few weeks later, and at this point Jill described how being a ‘teacher-nurturer’ was ‘what I am’.

Jill: I’ve always had that teacher-nurturer inside of me I think. [Perhaps] Jill Gascoigne [the actor] was not quite as strong an influencer she needed to be, but the teacher aspect has always been there. And so it is central to what I do because it’s what I am, I think that’s what it comes down to: it’s what I am.
J: It’s interesting that you say teacher-nurturer; we were talking last time about caring being so central?
Jill: Yes yes that’s very different from how a lot of teachers see.
J: Yes.

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Jill: I don’t know whether that’s... I don’t think that’s an age thing, I think that’s how I see the teacher’s role being. Now it might be because I started teaching in the late 90s; I was in a school the five years prior to that and so was experiencing other teachers but... that’s not how people see teaching nowadays... But I think it is a package; a teacher is not just somebody who stands up and imparts knowledge, you have to do more, you have to develop the whole child. So as far as being a teacher and imparting knowledge, that’s part of the job but there’s a lot more to it and as much as people moan about teachers you don’t go into the job to be a social worker this that and the other. I was reading something in the news yesterday that a lot of teachers go back in September and look at kids and are thinking ‘you’ve not ate properly during the summer’ and I thought am I missing this? And I’m thinking when I go back next week am I going to look at children in a different way because of where I work... (Interview, August 2014, 390–425)

It isn’t just the students and her family that Jill cares about and for. She also sees her management style as a nurturing one. After I had seen her teach in July 2015, we were discussing the lesson and she was describing what a member of staff in her new school, whom she knows from a previous school, had said about Jill’s appointment:

...she’s really positive. Even her husband has said to her, she said Noel said to me ‘you’ve been smiling when you come home from work’, and she said ‘oh Jill’s been in’, and it’s that impact and it’s like I said before, they need someone to care for them. They need someone to listen on Monday what they’ve done over the weekend, and to remember what they’ve done, and to remember birthdays. I know somebody’s got a birthday on 3 September, she’ll be getting a card off me and everybody will get a card off me and little things like that that make them realise actually ‘I’m more than just a teacher in this department.’ (Post-lesson discussion, July 2015, 38)

This role as a carer/nurturer is integrated with a moral purpose about work which manifests itself through a self-imposed mentoring role for other members of staff. In this part of her narrative Jill explains how she has given advice to the member of staff at St. Gervase’s who has been appointed as the new temporary head of English:

...it’s like today I’ve said to Lauren ‘top tip number one from Gascoine’ - she’s found out today she’s going to be running the department...she’s not getting a second [in department] and she’s keeping a form two days out of three a week...‘how are you going to work without [anyone] to help you?’ and she said ‘I’m going to use the younger members of staff, the NQTs’, and I said ‘top tip number one’, I said ‘I never advocate people plan like I do, however I think you should try it in this instance...’ (Ibid, 97)
However, although Jill is seen as an expert, and is used by other members of staff for her expertise, she is not always ‘on message’ with some of the school’s teaching and learning initiatives. In this extract she is explaining how the school had introduced the compulsory use of the SOLO (Structure of Observed Learning Outcome: Biggs and Collis (1982)) taxonomy to all lessons. The introduction and explanation to staff had been done using a YouTube video of Lego to explain how the taxonomy worked, and Jill described how there had been some resistance to it. Her own take on this CPD and the leadership team's imposition of SOLO was like this:

*I know about SOLO taxonomy because I deal with more able [students] and it's something I've come across. I was looking at it again the other day and thinking you can’t just bolt this on to every scheme of work we’ve got, you can’t have it in lesson in and lesson out because you’ve got to have some sort of flexibility, so I thought well I’ll sit and I’ll listen and I’ll do as I’m told and if they come to observe me I will deliver SOLO taxonomy but in between times my kids are going to enjoy their lessons because you’ve got to have a varied diet.* (Interview, August 2014, 309–315)

Jill’s own background, her sense of what teaching should be about and her experience mediate how she deals with the imposition of SOLO taxonomy on the staff. The implication of what Jill says is that other staff didn’t handle this in the same way at all; she suggests that in fact they were more accepting of the new policy, or at least more compliant.

Although Jill’s narrative is characterised by a relative lack of geographical movement, this stasis is not mirrored in her career or her family life. The symbiotic and intertwined concerns of work and family are sometimes facilitating (for example when her husband supports her and makes her job possible through many of the things he does at home):

*So for example when I did the school show it was...quite obvious that there were two Saturdays, one of them I couldn’t do, one I could do with Stu’s support, and I always know I can rely on his support, so I don’t tend to make a decision that I’m going to do something at school unless I know that he’s available...* (Ibid.,348-352)
In the same way, these intertwined factors can be constraining; for example, when Jill is away on a school trip, she puts plans in place to ensure that the family can run efficiently for a few days without her:

...like tomorrow I go to London for two days overnight with school so I have to organise my home life so everyone, Dad’s to the dentist, the oldest is going to go to school to pick the other one up because Dad’s not going to be... But he’s going to have to go on Wednesday and the child minder needs informing she might even need her hair doing because he might forget things; so the two do sort of blend together. (Concept mapping narrative, July 2014, 156).

Despite this co-constraint of work and family, in Jill’s narratives there is a real sense of purpose, of movement, of agency and self-determination. For example, when Jill and Stuart took the considered decision to have another child (there is a ten-year gap between Anna and Georgia) Jill weighed up the implications of this on her career, and before she got pregnant, she moved from a job in a challenging school which was 60 miles away to a more local school, and then resisted attempts to encourage her to apply for assistant headships.

And I know that when I did become pregnant the deputy head... said ‘this is why you’ve been pushing the idea of an assistant head’s job away’, whether that was at that school or elsewhere he had been pushing me to go for an assistant head’s job... but I felt I can’t do justice to that role when I knew this might be in the pipeline. (Timeline narrative, July 2014, 13)

The themes that run through Jill’s interview relate strongly to her family, both the family which she was born into, with her sister having such a close relationship with her, and to her own family, her husband and daughters. Equally key in Jill’s narrative is the link between family and work, and the constraints and enablements that this interplay brings to her life.
Rory

**Background and life history**

Rory is a tall young man, who was in his late twenties when I first met him. He is a science teacher; a biologist. Our first meeting was at the time when he was coming to the end of his NQT year, although this was far from being his first year in his current school – he has been there for some years, originally in a voluntary capacity as a teaching assistant (TA), and subsequently as a paid TA.

*I knew I’d decided that I wanted to teach but I knew I didn’t want to teach primary so I did a bit of science. I do love science; I thought I could teach science. I came in here a day a week and then I was looking for a job as a TA, and I had a year-and-a-half as a TA and I enjoyed that... [and after] the first full year I applied for a PGCE*14... (Timeline, 1 July 2014, 44)

Despite this trajectory, Rory had never originally had any intention to be a teacher. His parents are supportive of his career, but there are no teachers in his family—his mother is a PA and his dad runs a warehouse. Rory originally intended to be a professional golfer, and he still plays golf to a high standard now. After a serious knee injury sustained when playing football he gave up his dream of golfing as a career to move into project management, but it didn’t suit him. In this extract he explains why not:

[I] kind of worked in America in project management. I kind of went up quite quickly in that job I did quite enjoy it but... after a couple of years I was mainly based back in England here because the work dried up in America and it got quite boring so I came, I decided, I had a bit of a rethink, talked to my friends some of them are teachers actually. So at this point I didn’t think I’d be a teacher but I knew I wanted to work with like youth and work with kids and this kind of stuff. I think I had the idealistic dream I thought I’m doing this job now which you know with the big American company - and morally, it’s not particularly good. I want to do something where I’d get a bit more self-worth or some kind of... not appreciation, just more myself, something useful... so I thought OK, and I ended up being a cycling instructor and worked in primary schools for about a year-and-a-half. (Ibid., 33)

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14 PGCE: Postgraduate certificate in education, a higher education course that may be completed as part of the requirement for teaching in maintained schools (schools that are overseen by the local authority).
By the end of the research year, after meeting Rory a number of times, I saw a real change in him. He had developed a different kind of presence in the school and in the classroom, perhaps to do with the fact that he is on the ‘Developing Leaders’ programme that the school runs. Rory had expressed an interest in supporting the PGCE and School Direct\textsuperscript{15} teacher trainees within school when I first met him:

\begin{quote}
I’ve mentored like two trainees this year and I think I quite like that side of it so I think... the teaching and learning, and seeing them develop. I’d quite like to do that type of thing and I’ve had a couple of opportunities this year to do a bit of CPD [continuing professional development] across the school and I’ve really enjoyed it. (Ibid., 99).
\end{quote}

In keeping with the school’s ethos (expressed on their website, as well as by the staff) of letting individuals fulfil their potential and giving them the chance to ‘shine’, Rory was given responsibility for trainees at the start of the current academic year and he does this work with enjoyment.

**Martindale City Academy**

The school where Rory teaches is Martindale City Academy. It is an unusual school in many ways. It is a reasonably new school, and started off as a sponsored academy. The large corporate sponsor is still a lead partner. The school is in a disadvantaged area of a large city: school documentation suggests—and teachers tell me—that well over 40\% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and over 10\% have statements of special needs. The school also has a large migrant population; about a quarter of the pupils do not have English as their first language.

Martindale City Academy prides itself on its focus on community. In this extract, Rory explains one of the ways in which the emphasis on community throughout Martindale works in practice:

\begin{quote}
R: ...all Friday morning teaching all through the curriculum is project-based learning... and one of the criteria is whatever you do, if it’s tech., if it’s PE,
\end{quote}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{15} School Direct is a teacher training programme where trainees are recruited by schools and learn ‘on the job’. The schools work in partnership with higher education providers to provide an opportunity to obtain QTS (qualified teacher status) and often a PGCE as well.}
whatever, it has to have the community-related link or otherwise it’s not allowed to run unless it ticks a community box. And it’s a huge and very successful department...

J: It sounds as if that’s one of the key differences between this school and many other schools; all schools would say... the home–school relationship’s important but it’s its nuanced differently here isn’t it?

R: Yes I think so is maybe a bit broader, it goes a bit above and beyond really. Parents evenings and that kind of thing there’s a lot of links, there’s free adult education classes at night for learning English and not just parents but anybody can turn up, but there are lots of people who do... a lot of extras in the community like teachers and support staff and things like that... (Interview, June 2015, 138–140)

J: So community actually is quite a good word... it fits very well?

R: Yes, yes. (Interview, June 2015, 141–142)

This year, the staff and pupils at Martindale are subject to the anxieties that are perhaps inevitably produced by a macro-level discourse of performativity, as the school waits for its first set of external examination results from the first full cohort to go through the school. In my wanderings around the school, and through informal chats with teachers and school leaders, the school feels different from many. School leaders are loath to be prematurely self-congratulatory about examination results, but in so many ways they do want to advertise their success and the values on which the school is based—they are proud of what they do and the ways in which they do it. Rory supports this by suggesting:

[...] the basis of the school is brilliant it is to raise standards in the area, so it’s kind of... there’s not much to argue about really, do you know what I mean? They have to make sure that everyone is doing it for the right reasons and everyone’s working together really, which I think does happen here it’s nice. (Concept map, 1 July 2014, 190)

Staff are recruited based on values, and the selection interview that all staff go through is basically the same, based on the school's core values. These five values are described in the school prospectus as ‘underpinning every aspect’ of their work:

- Trustworthy
- Helpful
- Inspiring
- Straightforward
- Heart

When Rory was talking about the purpose of the school, he said:
The stutter

On first meeting Rory it was clear that he had a bad stutter, and I was surprised that this hadn't held him back in teaching, as it definitely affected his ability to communicate in our first meeting. However, when I saw him teaching and interacting with the pupils at school, he almost never stuttered. In fact, the worst his stutter ever was throughout the research year was when he was telling me about how his stuttering affected him. It was never evident in the classroom, whether he was talking to pupils one to one or to the whole class, or even to colleagues: it was clear that it didn't hold him back at all. Rory has developed strategies for dealing with his stutter and once I knew him better it was barely perceptible, showing itself in occasional hesitations, which I now know were due to his reframing his sentences.

Rory had thought that he wouldn't be able to be a teacher because of the stutter: it had almost stopped him from even considering teaching as a career:

*if anything it was the stutter thing that worried me; like I'm stuttering now. Because I'm speaking about my stutter I'm stuttering quite a lot but not really in the classroom.* (Timeline, 1 July 2014, 72)

However, his closest friend, a childhood pal, had said;

*...go and do it yes! And all the way I've known him all the way through school when we were kids and things like that and I think I think if there's anyone that's been going to tell me anything... you don't question it and you think yeah you know, like he'd be the person... really I think, if there's anything particularly tricky or work-based or even relationship-based, family, anything you know? I think that maybe kind of comes just with being inseparable since we were kids you know that kind of stuff?* (Ibid., 72)
As a result of his friend's advice, Rory had applied for a PGCE—and he must have had an impressive CV by that point—but in fact it was his stutter that stopped him from getting a place on that particular PGCE course. At the interview,

...we had to read from the newspaper - and if I'm stuttering I can change the words to get around it but we had to read from a text... I had to read the words and I couldn't change the words. So it was the pressure beforehand. It sort of built up as well. I was thinking 'I know I've got to read this and I can't change any of the words.' (Ibid., 76)

Rory didn't give up on the idea of teaching, and a close family friend who is a vice-principal at Martindale School offered him some voluntary work; that turned into a part-time TA post, and then into a place on the GTP\(^{16}\). At the GTP interview, his stutter didn't hold him back—he had already proved himself in the school.

...because I'd worked here the school knew I could do the job they had seen me do it. I still had a formal interview but the pressure was off, I knew could do the job and they knew I could do the job, so I got accepted. (Ibid., 48)

**Some of Rory's concerns and life projects**

Rory's concern with finding a way round situations, of adapting to change, and his keenness to take responsibility for his own decisions—as well as helping to develop these traits in the pupils and other staff with whom he works—is a feature not only of his story but also in the way he talks about Martindale's school policy.

We were discussing the purpose of school:

\[
J: \text{so the object, kind of the immediate object, which might be to get a grade in their GCSE}\(^{17}\), that's different from the outcome... it's sort of getting the best out of every child, is it? \]

\(^{16}\) The Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) was a programme for graduates who wanted to gain Qualified Teacher Status while working. It was replaced by the School Direct programme in 2012/13.

\(^{17}\) The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is an internationally recognised qualification awarded in a particular subject. GCSEs are taken in a number of subjects by pupils in secondary education in England over two years, when they are aged 14-16.
R: It’s about enabling them, yes, just allowing them to... the outcome is when they leave school they’ve got the qualifications and the ability to make decisions. Because if they’ve not got the qualifications they are not going to have certain choices because they can’t do this, can’t do that, or whatever else, but I guess the bigger outcome is if they leave qualified, and they leave with the ability and the morals and values to make right and wrong decisions and learn from things.

J: So you know when I said ‘can you affect your own destiny?’ those kind of things, I think I’m paraphrasing what you said correctly - is it about giving that agency to the kids?

R: Yes, instead of them feeling they can’t do anything...

J: Is that what it’s about?

R: I think it’s about the skills and qualifications and taking control. To me the school-wide thing... that’s kind of got to be the endgame do you know what I mean? That’s got to be the final, if they leave with the results and whatever else they need but they’re actually able to sort of take control and sort of... you know there are certain kids who’ve got certain disabilities and things like that, that we know aren’t going to be able to do that and instead of waving them off to [sighs] that’s what happens. Like some of them, we’ve just given some of them a job and we’ve hired them just because we know when they leave because of the circumstances of that if you let them go it’s [sighs]...

J: you know what you’re letting them into?

R: Exactly yes! Heartstrings get pulled and everything else, you know what I mean? But where we can, and they have the skills. We’re trying to find college places or certain apprenticeships that will cater for these kids... we can’t do that every year forever that would be quite a lot and this is our first year 11 and we can take the odd one in but we can’t take everyone in. Some are being taken as technicians, some like TA qualifications kind of moving to become TAs, and catering I think, we’ve possibly taken one on... (Interview, June 2015, 148–155)

Rory talks about their first year 11 cohort where the school has given jobs to some of these final year students. In Rory’s eyes these students have developed the skills and abilities which mean that they will be good employees, and the school’s emphasis on ‘Community’ means that this is seen as a sensible action in many ways—for the school, for the student, and for the family and local community. Rory explains that this is how the division of labour works in Martindale. It facilitates individuals’ skills being used—not just teachers’ skills but students’ as well.

I think it seems to be going quite well that division of labour and pulling on people’s skills and abilities and that they think if you kind of show that you are able or you’ve got a certain area of expertise the right opportunities definitely open up for you to do things. (Interview, June 2015, 158)
This focus on understanding pupils and their contexts and on encouraging them to develop their agency is important at an individual level for Rory as well as being part of what he sees as school policy and practice. For example, with a year 11 pupil, Barry, Rory really helped him to accept and live with his circumstances. In some schools, Barry would be defined as ‘at risk’ in relation to the current education agenda. In one of the lessons I saw, Barry came in, took his seat and immediately put his head down on the desk. It was interesting to see how Rory dealt with this: other teachers might perhaps have been very admonitory and directive. But Rory is different. He dealt with Barry by going over to him and quietly asking him to do something, and then when Barry still didn’t do any work, Rory asked: ‘Have you had anything to eat today?’ Initially I wasn’t sure whether this question came out of knowledge about Barry’s home background, but in fact it turned out that Barry is a type 1 diabetic, and, Rory suggested, ‘doesn’t manage it very well, tends just to ignore it’ (Post-lesson observation discussion, 22 October 2014, 29). To help Barry, Rory had arranged for one of his own friends, who also has diabetes, to come into school to chat to Barry and maybe suggest how he could start to manage his diabetes better. Rory is understanding, but not a fool about his pupils’ motives and actions. Today, once he had established that Barry was not in fact ill and had no need to go to the school nurse ‘it was just the case that he was being lazy really’ (ibid., 28), he told him what he needed to do and got Barry back on task.

For Rory, it is not just the pupils’ agency that he can affect. Working as a ‘Developing Leader’ with the Martindale PGCE and School Direct teacher trainees means that Rory can facilitate the development of the trainees’ agency; and in doing so, he says that this has an impact on his own. When he talks about this work, he acknowledges the enabling and constraining features of the system in which he works:

J: So in terms of the way you’re teaching, a lot of it from what you’re saying, is shaped by your mentoring of the people coming up?
R: The trainees yes, yes I mean you always focus on self-development and on picking things up but because my focus day-to-day is on helping other people do it, then it just kind of puts you in the in the mirror a little bit. You think it back and it tells me something about me, just, I think it definitely has made me better trying to help them because if one of them is stuck with AFL, you do a bit of reading and then you think, I’ll... give them this or set them this target. It’s
always in the forefront of my mind, I’m always thinking how do I want them to do it; like Rebecca, [a trainee teacher] who was with me today, I have got to... obviously like, she’s got to see best practice so that’s kind of my responsibility to kind of show her whatever I can really... and not just give her something that’s ordinary.

J: Does that put a lot of pressure on you?
R: Er, yes I think it does to some extent. I think if you’re going to try and do an outstanding lesson in every lesson all day then you’re going to be in a coffin or you’re going to quit after a few years, but I think [the trainees] are very focused and they’re getting graded every week and they are kind of... they want to get signed off as outstanding, so you’ve got to play the game; you’ve got to teach, you’ve got to be good all day long and you’ve got to do... it’s just managing that stress again... like you can’t be making 25 worksheets for 25 kids for five lessons a day. (Post-lesson observation discussion, 26 March 2015, 21–26)

Rory admits that working with the trainees is something that he takes seriously and engages in thoughtfully.

...I’ve been working with the trainees as well this year, I’ve got my ideals, you try and let, you know the job is to let them work out their ideals you know and everything else and not try and park too much on them... (Interview, 15 June 2015, 90)

In this quote Rory refers to his ideals, and this was a central feature of his narrative. In his concept map of factors that affect what he thinks, feels and does as a teacher, he chooses his politics and his own values as key concepts, clustered with his social background and where he comes from (see Figure 5.1 below).
R: I think I... where I come from and kind of that probably shapes me... I think in terms of kind of...
J: Can you talk about that a little bit? You’ve chosen politics [as a key concept, together with values and his social background]. Has that...
R: I should be available for the kids and my kind of it probably feeds into my responsibility really, it’s not a sense of responsibility that... I think as a teacher it’s been moulded by my experiences and what I’ve experienced and I believe what I believe and what is right for the kids and I think that’s where the sense of responsibility comes from. (Concept mapping, 1 July 2014, 108–110)

However, Rory was reluctant to talk about his politics in more depth in our first interview:

J: Are you quite a political animal?
R: It’s what keeps me awake
J: It keeps you awake?
R: I just think it’s a hard thing to separate the duty of care and knowing. I don’t want to give you a sob story, but you want to do better for them and you kind of appreciate what they’ve... especially in this area because it’s so deprived you’ve got to give them more than anywhere else, they’ve got to catch up, they’ve got to beat that and do everything else; so it’s kind of, I wouldn’t say a
political animal, just sort of... I'm fairly sure as to what I think is right and what I believe in. (Ibid., 111–114)

Rory was clear from our first meeting that his politics had an effect on his work and agency. Later on in the year he opened up a bit more about his values and ideals.

*I'm quite interested in Buddhism and the pathways... I kind of like the compassionate side of that, it is always bringing things back to compassion, and I do think about that. I do try and use that if you like, in life or in teaching or whatever to try and remind myself to see both sides and think compassionately about things and think you know what’s the cause of, is it that something is not working at home; or if a kid's misbehaving, to try and think, well it's not because he's being naughty and because he wants to do it, there's summat behind it, do you know what I mean?* (Interview, 15 June 2015, 85)

It was clear that this linked into Rory's own sense of agency and of his awareness that maybe this was something that some of his pupils and their families don't have. He did think that he was in control of his own destiny:

*J: so you're sort of in control of your own destiny?*  
*R: As much you can be, I mean you have to make decisions don’t you and kind of live by them I suppose I think I think... I think nine times out of ten I say I can have an impact on what’s going to happen and I am in control of but there are certain decisions where maybe I'm not...* (Ibid., 94)

In many ways Rory's comments about his career plans changing from golf to project management and then to teaching, illustrated that sense of control. But Rory also emphasises how some people find it hard to develop that sense of agency. We were talking about whether everyone can be instrumental in his or her own destiny:

*...it's maybe more difficult for some people to think like that, if you're thinking kind of long-term, kind of there are certain kids where you could argue there's less of a chance - maybe they're not able to impact the situation, like if they're ten, and they're in a situation at home they can't maybe make a decision because they're not able then, not strong enough, they're not intelligent enough yet, not developed enough.* (Ibid., 98)

He also considered the extent to which a lack of agency might be a function of age and experience:
I don’t think it’s down to age really, I think it’s more common in younger people, I guess, cos they’ve had less experience I guess, less education and that kind of thing but I think having that control and being able to drive what’s happening in your life is um... but in areas of deprivation like this it’s a massive problem isn’t it? I’ve never really thought about that before but it is... that kind of that ability to drive and make the right decisions and to say yes to things, to say no to things. (Interview, 15th June 2015, 102)

In our joint construction of Rory’s story the emphasis was on a concern to improve the life chances of the Martindale pupils. This was partly driven by Rory’s awareness of his own background, which has helped to develop his strong and principled view of society and of the function of education. Rory knows that this is related to his own background and he stresses the importance of many of the significant people in his life, particularly his best friend and his parents, in developing his agency. As well, his work with other people, in developing their agency, knowledge and skills, has an impact on Rory’s own development.
Marie

Marie is a vivacious young woman with a soft Northern Irish accent. She is a cookery teacher; she first came to Martindale at the start of her NQT (Newly Qualified Teacher) year. I first met her at the start of her third year teaching.

...my timetable is so like, the first year was music, some music, which I loved as well, last year I did a little bit of citizenship and then this year is fully cookery and I just love it because it’s so different and the fact that you’ve got three years GCSE... you’re just constantly, you know there are just always little things that you doing differently, re-developing yourself all the time which is brilliant. I really like it, I just love this subject, gorgeous. (Lesson observation commentary, November 2014, 31)

Marie comes from a farming family. None of her immediate family are teachers—her dad is a farmer, and Marie’s mum supports him by doing the books and running the household. Nonetheless, the theme of teaching is something that is a backdrop to Marie’s life story—she enjoyed playing ‘school’ with her younger sister, was always involved in helping and teaching the younger children at school and she taught Irish dancing for a while as a young adult. At university, Marie’s placement year was as an outreach officer across 15 schools in Northern Ireland. Entwined with this interest in teaching is Marie’s enthusiasm for cookery, which started as a child when she spent much of her time baking with her mum in the farmhouse kitchen. For Marie, family is all about home and food, as she explains:

M: OK, I love I love the nutrition aspect of food. That’s always been the thing that’s got me, from secondary school more so than maybe even the physical act, whereas I still enjoy that but I think my first hook... oh, I should have put that on my timeline, when I was little, my mum always... from the age of zero I remember standing on a chair to mix apple tart pastry. I have vivid memories and it came from a background where food is important and cookery is important.

J: Your mum is a good cook is she?
M: Yes, very yes not curries or flavours.
J: But just a good plain cook?
M: Yeah, your veg and your potatoes and... and it was always... and our discussions were always about food as a family and what the potatoes were like. Sounds so silly you know, growing up it’s always... and in an Irish household it’s about people coming in and having a cup of tea and having that chat and getting to know each other. You’ve got sandwiches, you’ve got cakes...
J: It just revolves around food?
M: Yes yes.
J: and more so in a farming community maybe?
M: Yes I think so too yes, with BSE\(^{18}\) and foot and mouth and you know... the scares with meat and you were always... I think my mum is always... she’s just conscious of what she makes and what she puts on the table... (Concept map, June 2014, 163–171)

Marie’s family is very supportive of her. It is her mum who is still Marie’s main contact with home, and who often mediates the contact between Marie and her dad. Marie’s dad’s prime concern is Marie’s happiness. In particular, though, Marie is close to her mum:

And I speak to my mum every day, we have a very close relationship... I wouldn’t go a day without speaking to her. So she texts me normally in the morning like at 7.30, always before 7.30 am I get a message and then I’ll ring her when I leave school and we’ll just have a little catch up. (Final interview, June 2015, 59a)

Marie’s experience at Martindale is rather different from Rory’s. This is partly because she is in a different department, which is located in a different kind of space in school, and partly because the nature of the subject she teaches is very different. Marie’s students are entered for GCSE catering at the moment, and this in itself has been somewhat unsettling, because there were some questions raised by the coalition government (which was in power for the majority of the year that Marie was a participant in my research) about the status of such subjects. When Marie and I first met, the examinations watchdog, Ofqual, was consulting on whether GCSE catering and GCSE home economics were to survive as qualifications, partly because of a perceived overlap with food technology. In March 2015 it was announced that these subjects would not be taught after 2017, and were to be to be replaced by a new GCSE in cookery and nutrition, designed both to promote healthy eating and also to prepare young people for careers in catering. Throughout the year in which I worked with Marie, there was thus some uncertainty over what would be happening with the specifications. Marie does think of herself as a cookery and catering teacher, rather than as a ‘food technology’ teacher. Although cookery and catering are not National Curriculum ‘core’ or even ‘foundation’ subjects, in this community

\(^{18}\) BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy) is a degenerative brain disease of cattle that can also be passed on to humans as vCJD (variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease).
school they hold a special significance, which is related to the fact that the school tries to prepare students for what Marie describes as ‘life’. I asked her about ‘cookery’ as opposed to ‘food technology’:

M: Cookery is about ‘I need to eat I need to… I need a meal, I’ve got XYZ in the cupboard what can I make from that? I can make that that or that, I’ll make that’, whereas food tech is ‘OK today we’re going to look at a scone mixture: this is the basic scone mixture, what can you do with that to develop it?’ So you could develop it for the luxury market or develop it on the budget.
J: OK, so this is much more cookery here? It’s about… if I say basic I don’t mean that in a derogatory way...
M: No, in this school compared to any other school I’ve been in the students have got far more food knowledge, they have far more practical skills and there are no limits to what they make, it’s unbelievable.
J: Really? Go on, tell me what they make.
M: In year eight we’re doing pizza bases from scratch, lasagne is from complete scratch, pasta sauce… (Concept map, June 2014, 175–180)

The concern that students should have skills for life, and a recognition of the disadvantaged area in which the school is situated, is clear:

M: They can choose to do catering from year 7 it’s about doing quick - stir fries, things that are cheap.
J: Things they can take home?
M: Yeah and that’s one of the reasons why Phil [head of department] always makes sure that we don’t order in from an industrial supplier. We get stuff from ASDA and it’s Smart Price and it’s the basics and what you find what you would have at home if you are cooking yourself. I think that is really strong and I think it’s really important.
J: I could see that, I thought that was brilliant ‘This is what we would use at home’ so it’s ‘I’ve seen this in the ASDA.’
M: Exactly… exactly it’s making that link more explicit. (Post-lesson observation discussion, November 2014, 110–114)

So for Marie, when she was considering the purpose of schooling and the ‘outcome and object’, although examination results and pupil achievement were discussed, they were contextualised within a bigger picture which was related to skills for life—and into just the practical, cookery-related ones. Marie’s view of the outcome is equally all encompassing.

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19 A supermarket chain. ASDA’s budget, lowest-cost products are labelled ‘Smart Price’.
I think it’s ‘life’ so students coming in, they come in to be educated academically, that’s the outside view of school, that’s what it’s there to do, but it’s about a lot more than that, it’s about setting a child up for life, it’s about developing a range of skills, it’s about teaching them values, it’s about turning them into adults, and just setting them on, letting them see options, letting them see pathways in life, and letting them see what they can do and what they can achieve. (Final interview, June 2015, 128)

When Marie and I talked about community in the context of school, she emphasised its importance and explained about community projects—such as the soup kitchen that the catering and cookery staff run for the local community and how important cookery was to the community—in relation to ensuring that the students all ate well and understood the principles of healthy eating on a very restricted budget. Many of the wall displays in her teaching areas were related to this kind of theme too. Marie had also emphasised the importance of the school breakfast club to me when she took me on a tour of the cookery teaching areas.

In Martindale Community Academy, which advertises itself as a community school, as well as the local community, the school community takes on a special importance. There are few traditional classrooms. Rather, there are ‘learning bases’ where maybe well over a hundred pupils will all be working, sometimes on different subjects, at other times all on very similar tasks. There might be three or four teachers and a number of teaching assistants and support staff as well, and it is a feature of the school that the learning areas are open and that staff go in and out of them freely. There are a couple of areas in school where individual teachers have tried to fashion classrooms for themselves out of cupboards and screens, and in some subject areas classrooms are essential for practical reasons (catering being one such area), but most teaching and learning takes place in the learning bases. Necessarily therefore the staff work together, as a community; an individual teacher will have responsibility for a class of students, but there will be many classes working in the same space. The teachers working together have joint planning time and they work in teams, which sometimes cut across their departmental teams because the planning teams are based on the physical spaces.

...in some other traditional schools I don’t know if that’s the right word but maybe not so much in inner-city schools you will find there’s one teacher and there’s not really anything that disturbs that learning. I think here there is,
you’ve got a group of students you’ve got one teacher, but you’ve also got your support staff, which are absolutely invaluable to every lesson. (Final interview, June 2015, 157)

The way that Marie talked was always about an overarching sense of community, meaning that the school community was all working towards the same outcome.

When we had briefly talked about how school could be seen as an activity system, Marie had contextualised the activity system as being a game, which she describes as the game of life (final interview, June 2015, 128). She then identified what she called ‘eureka moments’ as key instruments in the game.

J: In your game if you like what kind of things do you think are most important, the tools and the instruments that you use to try and get this outcome of life...? M: I think it’s how lessons are constructed, the contact time with the kids, because they’re not always they might be there in body but they’re not necessarily there in mind, you might think they’re listening to you but their mind could be 1,000 million miles away, so it’s about I think the instruments are probably those moments those eureka moments where something gets...

J: ‘Aha’?

M: Yes yes I don’t think it’s about the IT, I don’t think it’s about the materialistic instruments.

J: So that eureka moment... is really important?

M: Yes. (Final interview, June 2015, 133–138)

Importance of role models

Marie, like Rory, had a secondary school teacher whom she considered to be a role model and who clearly had an impact on Marie’s decision to become a teacher.

In secondary school my favourite subject was home economics, and I really liked the home economics teacher and I think I looked up to her in a lot of ways and I remember it because school puts so much pressure on to have this career and this career path and my mum and dad knew nothing about it to advise me. And I remember saying to the home economics teacher, ‘What do you think, what did you do, to become a home economics teacher?’ and she had said she went to Ulster, it was Jordanstown, studied cooking and that was her pathway, she did it and so that was why I did it, it also had a business element so it was leaving me open if I didn’t want to just do teaching... (Timeline narrative, June 2014, 13)

Subsequently, on her PGCE, Marie had another influential mentor:
M: She just had something about her that made her, that made us as her PGCE students and me as her PGCE mentee, hang on to every word that she said, and the students in school were exactly the same you know, she was just really bubbly and you know it was just something she had. Loved being around her, and I loved being in her lessons. I mean and the kids did too, and she just had such a way with them, and I know she has been probably the most massive influence on me, on my teaching style.
J: In terms of...?
M: She just, she just... she didn’t necessarily do things by the book, she never shouted at a child, she didn’t have the problems that a lot of other teachers had that I had seen and observed and it was just because of the way she was, there was a... there was a contrast between how she was normally when she was teaching and when a student had done something wrong, they knew, they knew. (Concept mapping, 94–96 June 2014)

Perhaps partly as a result of the significance of these relationships, Marie feels that it is important for her to be a role model for the students at Martindale.

M: I think when you work with... working with young people... to instil proper values into them and then you want to be a role model for them and the right sort of role model and I’m very conscious of how I am when I’m around students... And I think your hope is, as a teacher, that there will be somebody who looks to you, you know how I looked to my home economics teacher, and thinks ‘I like her, I like what she does and she’s, you know she’s got manners’ and you know things like that and you know they hope to develop into that sort of person you... just to have something to look to, that role model.
J: That role model thing’s really important to you isn’t it yes?
M: Yes. (Concept mapping, June 2014, 128–132)

Advancing projects
Marie suggested that her main life ‘projects’ were family and friends, and work. At the end of the research year, she explained how work was currently occupying her mind, probably more so than her ‘family and friends’ project was. The fact that the school was entering its first cohort of year 11 students for GCSEs was a significant factor in this, as was her own career development.

[...] at the minute yes it’s definitely work especially with year 11 this is being the first year in this school where it’s been year 11 focused and grades and that’s been a bit different. And it’s also establishing yourself and where you want to go in the future, like what avenues there are to explore within your job and your career and when you love your job like I do love it - I have the days where I might say ‘God that’s it for me’ but I do love teaching and I love being...
with young people so for me it’s quite... how, where is this taking me? (Final interview, June 2015, 15)

When we discussed agency, Marie was quite clear that she felt in control of her own destiny, but that there were sometimes structural or situational constraints that meant that this was impossible. Marie was clearly ambitious, and wanted to get on. Her motivation for this was partly financial, but not wholly, as she discusses:

J: And is money important?
M: Yes it is. It’s one of those things, you kind of have to work but I think it’s important that you’re happy in what you do. I would hate to live a life where I was not happy in my work, in my job, because it’s something you have to do you have to earn money, so I don’t want to get bogged down thinking I have to do this. I don’t like to be, I like to do my own thing; I suppose I don’t like to be held down, which is probably why I’m now single again, but I think it’s like if you know you have to do it but you can feel happy at the same time then it’s a winner.
J: So money is not really the motivator?
M: No... yes... no... yes... but no, actually because I like the development and things as well. I like to know that I’m getting more money and I suppose I want to have the nice things eventually in life as well and when you get a little bit of a taste of money, and you just want to continue a little bit more, but not to the point... that was the thing with my partner when he moved to Dubai, I couldn’t just do that, because he’s left everything pretty much to go there, but he’s got a significant pay rise. If it came down to that, I couldn’t go for a significant pay rise and leave people behind and leave your friends and your family and your memories and things behind so no it’s not, no. (Final interview, June 2015, 108–111)

Marie’s ‘projects’ of family and friends and of work are highlighted by this discussion; a key focus for her was self-development and improvement. In the year that I have known her, she has been working as a ‘Developing Leader’, on a school programme designed partly in response to Ofsted’s comment in 2012 that the school should:

Further develop middle leaders new to their role in order to extend the skill and creativity of existing staff as well as inducting and supporting new staff. (Ofsted, 2012, p.3)

Marie’s first ‘Developing Leader’ role was to develop a reward system for the school. More recently, she has been working with the NQTs in school. From the beginning of the coming academic year, she has been promoted to head of department, which
she hadn’t particularly expected. Far from it in fact—at Easter, Marie had resigned.
The outcome of that resignation wasn’t quite as she had envisaged, as she explains:

J: So tell me about head of department; how has that come about?
M: Well, apparently it was always on the cards anyhow, but around Easter time around April time, I handed in my notice because I was going... I was thinking about doing other things and I think my feelings had changed day-to-day within the workplace and just... I think it was just one of those moments where I thought ‘this is time for a change’ and then at that point it was put to me that that was an option. (Final interview, June 2015, 20-21)

It was clear at this point in the discussion that things had happened and had been said that Marie was not going to share with me. Marie didn’t respond to my gentle prompting about what had happened to make her resign without a job to go to. This extract emphasises that further:

J: One of my questions today was about to what extent do you feel that you’re in control of your own destiny?
M: Yes, no. Well I always think about that but whilst I think about it a lot I also think that I’m quite laid back in some respects as well. I know that things can change like that (snaps her fingers) and you’ve just got to deal with that as it comes. I think in terms of my control I know where I want to go and I know how to make that happen, well I think I know how to make it happen. I like to keep active in a number of ways but in saying that if something off the scene happens like something happens at home with my family or something happens with my health and I can’t come to school or... that’s going to be a massive change as well to circumstances and life and you know something could... At the minute I seem to always be able to, just... I can overthink things... my mind can just move on to other things and sometimes I think if things like that happen it makes you stronger. Other places but at the same time something could happen that just knocked me off. (Final interview, June 2015, 42–45)

**Inner conversations**

Marie’s reflexive deliberations, her inner conversations, are an important feature of her narratives, and link to the contextual continuity that is also a feature of Marie’s life, despite her move to England and away from her home, family and friends in Ireland.
J: So talking about that do you have conversations silently with yourself in your head
M: yes [laughs]
J: Go on tell me about that...
M: That’s quite funny. I put a lot of pressure on myself; I constantly... I just think about things, constantly think about everything constantly and just how... yes just how I can be doing things differently or better or change them. It’s quite really weird really. Yes, all the time.
J: When I said do you have conversations with yourself, you kind of laughed as if to say you do but almost...?
M: Yes, I think I’m a psycho in many ways [laughs]. Yes, I think I probably am; I’m a very reflective person so I will go home and think over things and make links to things. I like to read quite a bit as well so I suppose that’s my getaway. People maybe do different things, I like to just chill and think and read and think and just make links. It’s hard to explain.
J: It’s ok, that’s ok... when you say that does that then affect what you do?
M: Yes it does, it does, yes I mean I worry about what people think of me, I worry about what the kids think, what the parents think, like do they think I’m a really bad teacher? Or OK, I’ve had a good lesson or I’ve got a nice comment, I might think I’m a good teacher so I must be doing OK compared to everybody else. And then I’ll just think... why are you thinking, why you thinking about this, have you not got anything more important to be doing with your life? Maybe that’s what it is, maybe I am a bit in it a bit deep as well in some respects. I often think I am. (Final interview, June 2015, 85–92)

Marie was quite comfortable with the idea that she used reflexivity to guide and drive her projects, and as the extract above shows, she almost seemed relieved that I thought it was ‘normal’, to have such conversations. She also used her inner conversations, her reflexivity, to be thoughtful and critical about the prospects for effective action in society and about values and projects:

J: So when you are thinking a lot of the thinking, is it about values and moral questions and your ideals?
M: Yes possibly I find it hard to make sense of the world sometimes, you look at different scenarios and I think I like to have a solution to everything and it bothers me when I can’t have a solution to everything; and I don’t have a solution to everything. I like to know when you are... you add two and two and you get four and that’s it. I find that as you grow up, things are more... I was having a conversation at the weekend and it was like into people portraying a false image when deep down they’re actually really really sad, or if they’re painting a brave face because they have to, they don’t have an option, and sometimes when you’re little you just see the world as this amazing place and everybody is happy and life is brilliant, and then as you grow up it’s a different story you gradually see, illness, abuse, all of those things all intertwined. (Final interview, June 2015, 112–113)
Marie uses her friends and family partly to confirm her inner conversations before she takes specific courses of action. She was telling me about the close relationship she has with her parents in particular:

J: And you ask them for advice?
M: Yes, oh yes. So like when I was handing in my notice that didn’t just happen [snaps fingers] absolutely not. It was... you know it was talked about and then it was like, what are the options, and you know I think their concern was that it would come September and I wouldn’t have a job and all of that side of things, and yeah we discussed it a lot we discussed the very very very minute details.
(Final interview, June 2015, 59–59a)

It matters to her what these people think:

J: I’m wondering are those sort of personal aspects of your life, like family, and the professional aspects, are they intertwined or are they quite separate to you?
M: Yes I think my mum and dad have always... I think there’s been a subtle pressure there to do well... I think they’ve shown so much support that you sort of feel like you owe them something back and you know they think a lot of people here [in England] are successful and have done well. When you grow up kind of seeing that, you aspire to be in a similar position in some way.
J: So it matters to you what they think?
M: Yes, yes it does definitely. (Final interview, June 2015, 53–58)

What people close to Marie think and their opinions of her and her actions interplay closely with the values of the school and how they were important to her:

Yes I think, I have been thinking a lot about this because I think quite a lot of the people who work here are quite similar minded. I think the people who work here don’t work here because it’s a job, I think there’s something more special about this academy and I’m not quite sure what it is but I just know the first time I walked through it, it was a happy place, and I’ve never seen that before, everybody smiles, everybody, it just seemed, it just seemed and I feel like it has become... and again it’s a cliché and I don’t really know why I say it, but I feel like it’s a bit of a family, I enjoy coming in. I feel supported, I like my team now that I’m working with. (Concept map narrative, June 2014, 152)

In Marie’s story a sense of a lively, committed young woman, with a passion for cookery and for her job comes through strongly. And yet there is a hint of insecurity, of restlessness, of discontent, which is tied up with these passions. This is what makes Marie such a complex and interesting young woman.
Patricia

Patricia is a 31-year-old mathematics teacher in the Russell School, an independent boys’ school in a large English city. After completing her degree, she followed in her dad’s footsteps into finance and had a promising actuarial career in a high-pressure actuarial consultancy firm in London. But after a year, despite enjoying city life and the social aspect of work, she wasn’t really enjoying herself and was disillusioned with her career choice:

[…] I wasn’t really enjoying… I mean I was getting through the exams had sat five, passed four out of five which is good going for the actuarial exams, but I thought, I want to qualify as an actuary but I don’t want to do it afterwards; what’s the point in just doing it to qualify? But then I’m almost, I’m afraid of failure so I didn’t want to be seen as a failure so I must have had a chat with my mum and I said ‘I think I want to go into teaching’ and applied for a PGCE for the following September (Timeline narrative, 23 July 2014, 33)

A move into teaching followed, which was quite logical: Patricia had enjoyed training the new actuarial trainees who had started at her firm, and as well, teaching had been something that she had vaguely considered when she was younger:

P: [...] the first time I thought about teaching was I think when I was doing Latin and Greek at GCSE at school...
J: So it’d not been talked about at home or?
P: Oh well there was that, I suppose my mum was trained as a teacher and I always knew… (Timeline narrative, 23 July 2014, 1–3)

Patricia’s mum had been a teacher so she had some insights into what life as a teacher was like. This combination of circumstances meant that Patricia decided to train as a primary teacher. Although she had talked to her mum about her proposed career change, Patricia’s dad was less happy, as she explains:

I remember telling my dad this [about leaving the actuarial consultancy and going to do a PGCE]; he basically didn’t talk to me for about a month ’cos he thought I was giving up really a fantastic job. (Ibid., 37)

This was partly to do with the money, and perhaps partly to do with the fact that Patricia’s dad had himself had an unhappy but brief foray into teaching:
P: [...] he knew that the money, and teachers get nothing like what you get in the city and he didn’t think it would challenge me enough but having said that he did a year as a teacher at school down the road from here.

J: Oh did he?
P: Yes left uni, didn’t do a PGCE just went in as maths, or maths and statistics he did, but he did a year there he hated it so... (Ibid., 39–41)

Nonetheless, Patricia continued with her plans and after qualifying, she initially worked in a primary school in the south of England, but then relocated to join the staff of the junior school part of the Russell School. The school is close to where her parents live; this was one of the factors that she says influenced her to apply for the job, ‘I thought well it’s local, I’ll be there and can help my mum out’. (Ibid., 81)

As the Russell School also has a senior department, Patricia was given the opportunity to teach some A-level and some lower school mathematics and after a couple of years being based in the junior school, she moved to teach mathematics in the senior school. This suited her, and she was pleased that she still had the opportunity to contribute to year 5 and 6 mathematics. At the beginning of the research year she had been teaching across the senior and junior schools at the Russell School for four years.

Patricia talks about her family often; they are clearly important to her. When Patricia and her brother were young, her mother gave up teaching to be available for them:

J: Was she not working as a teacher when you were little?
P: She did some supply, and tutoring; she gave up work to look after us and be at home and she tutored me and my brother as well for 11+.20
J: So it was kind of in the atmosphere?
P: Yes. (Ibid., 4–7)

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20 The 11+ is a test is given to pupils in year 6, the last year of primary school, which is used to decide which kind of secondary school they will go to. It was universally administered between 1944 and 1976 as the basis of the English tripartite system but is now only used in a few places: the borough where Patricia had lived as a child is one of them.
Patricia has continued to rely on her mum, and on her partner too, for advice and as a source of support.

J: ...you've said before you're close to your mum and your partner? Do you talk to them about [jobs and life projects etc.]?
P: I talk to my partner a lot about what I'm doing yes and promotions and if he thinks I should go for them or not, but at the end of the day he'd always say it's up to you and go for it if you want. Or he'll say well you've just made it sound like it's a horrible job, are you sure you want to go for it? [laughs]. My mum yes I'll tell her if I apply for things if I'm talking to her. I wouldn't necessarily ring to say I've applied for, not an internal promotion, no if I'd applied for something at a different school then I probably would ring her up in advance and say. (Interview, 6 July 2015, 132–141)

When we discussed her key life concerns, family featured too. Patricia and her partner had moved in together at the start of the data collection year, and this relationship was a key one for her:

[...] we're moving house and looking at starting a family in the next few years, so that's the next few years. (Interview, 6 July 2015, 11–12)

Patricia's thoughts about having a family of their own mirrored her mum's beliefs and values and showed that family would be a priority for her. She explains how these values come from her mum:

But I think she's, she trained as a teacher originally but didn't work much at all after she had me and my brother so I think I've kind of got, I think that's where thinking if I have a family they come, that they come first. Before my own career. (Ibid., 141–144)

Despite this emphasis on family, a theme running through Patricia’s narrative was the interplay between home and work. However, there were some tensions evident here too:

P: [...] you kind of feel like if you go down the promotion route then you are putting family to one side and I, if I decide I'm going to have a family then you kind of feel how can you apply for a promotion and things like that although... one thing that people do that is common in our school is get promoted and go off on maternity leave within a few weeks.
J: On more money?
P: Yes on more money yes so it doesn’t necessarily have to be a barrier about so...
J: But it might be a barrier?
P: I’d feel bad if I said oh yes I’m going to take an extra responsibility and then I will disappear for a year and leave somebody else managing things, I don’t think that’s fair. And likewise if I had a family I wouldn’t want to be stressed at work because I just taken on more responsibility. (Ibid., 47–59)

Patricia did think a lot about work when she was at home, and she felt that ‘there’s a lot of interaction between the two in my head’. (Interview, 6 July 2015, 65–66) By no means was all of this thinking positive—Patricia expressed some ambivalence about the centrality of her work to her life as a whole. There were times when she expressed a purely instrumental approach to work, focusing on the financial rewards, and at other times she talked more about the intrinsic rewards of teaching.

Money had been an element of the rationale for Patricia’s move into actuarial consultancy in the first place. ‘[I] went off to uni and then started looking at sort of what sort of jobs you can make money with.’ (Timeline narrative, 23 July 2014, 22) Some of the reason that her dad was upset with her when she left her job in the city was that: ‘he knew that the money in teaching is nothing like what you get in the city’. (Ibid., 39) To some extent this instrumental approach has spilled over into Patricia’s approach to work ‘... next year... part of me is thinking go in and just do, with the least amount you have to do, and don’t worry about your reports, don’t spend hours checking reports and things’. (Ibid., 135). However, it was only ‘part of her’; she was still expressing contradictory feelings about her work. For example, she said that she enjoys some aspects of the job: ‘... the kids are fine, I love being with the kids’. (Ibid.,144) And she suggested, in a slightly emotional exchange when she completed her concept map, that her pupils were a significant part of her enjoyment:

P: [...] ‘Pupils/students’, affect how I feel, and what I think, and I suppose to an extent what I do as well, but...
J: in what way, how do they?
P: In fact they affect how I feel because they make me... very often they’re the ones that make me happy when I go to work. (Concept mapping, 23 July 2014, 202–204)
She gave an example about how she has developed a relationship with the sixth form in school, and about how this makes her feel:

...things like that that make you want to go to work... you don't want to go to work because of the horrible kids that... will have a go at you or whatever, but the nice ones are the ones who say 'oh yeah thanks Miss', and... a few of them... came in and was like 'oh yes thanks for everything you've done and I really appreciate it...' things like I'll set them up with work experience with a friend at [the nearest university] as he's interested in particle physics so my friend is going to show him around his lab and have a chat with him [and he said] 'yeah thanks I really appreciate it looking forward to seeing you in September too' and it's things like that, the human side, but we're good in that we've got great students at our school and you'd miss them if you left... (Concept mapping, 23 July 2014, 211)

This isn't just about Patricia's job at the Russell School; it runs deeper than that. She acknowledges that she is ambitious and keen for promotion, but there is still an ambivalence about the nature of teaching, which she recognises herself, that runs through some of what Patricia says:

[...] there is a culture in our school that you should be going for promotion and you should be career minded and this and that, and part of me thinks that’s why I’ve applied for a couple of promotions even though I don’t really know whether I want them or not, but then part of me is thinking am I going to be disappointed if I get to 60–65 and retire and all I’ve done is be a teacher but then I’m thinking what do I mean? ‘all I’ve done?’ Being a teacher is a lot and you’ve changed a lot of lives and I’m at the stage now where I kind of need to decide in my head what I want in my life. (Ibid., 261)

When we were first talking about why Patricia had trained in primary, she gave a revealing answer that expressed how she felt about working in the Russell School:

I wanted the variety, I thought I didn't just want to teach maths and I don't want to teach maths to horrible teenagers who don't want to learn it and I just thought the variety in a primary school would be good but I also thought you can get in at the roots and actually maybe make a difference early on and I still feel that... part of me is kind of a bit 'have I sold my soul all to get an easier life'. (Timeline narrative, 23 July 2014, 46)

At a later meeting we discussed this again. Patricia was talking about promotions and how she was unsure about moving schools:
P: [...] I don’t know how prepared I would be to move because I’ve become quite comfortable where I am as well.
J: But you used a phrase last time we talked which was something like ‘I’m not sure to what extent I’ve sold my soul for a comfortable life’?
P: Did I? Yes.
J: Yes - is that true still?
P: Yes I think it is true because I’m saying it’s some of the time I am thinking it’s just a job, it’s a means to an end, it gives me money so I can do things that I actually do enjoy doing. Like I said we’re in the process of buying a house but I wouldn’t be able to do it if we didn’t have good salaries.
J: Yes nice holidays?
P: Yes nice holidays; yes in that sense I’m getting paid to do something that isn’t that taxing on a day-to-day basis and do I want to make it harder for myself for little reward? (Interview 6 July 2015, 87–100)

Control, agency and decisiveness

I had explained Margaret Archer’s idea of ‘projects’ to Patricia. She had identified home, work and studying as her key ‘projects’, although she had some difficulty with the term ‘projects’: ‘... I don’t really like calling it [home] a project’. (Interview, 6 July 2015, 10) She also recognised the idea of inner conversations and of their role in advancing her projects:

J: OK so when you are having, when you’re thinking about those things one of the things that Archer says is that we have conversations with ourselves in our heads. Inner conversations. We might call it thinking things over but some people seem to have quite a definite, almost a conversation. Do you do that you talk to yourself?
P: I talk to myself in my head. I don’t think it’s a structured conversation; I tend to think ‘well if I did this what would happen?’ and then go down that line of a story or if I did that what would happen. I don’t ask myself questions.
J: So you sort of rehearse in advance?
P: Yes.
J: So if you are going to see the head about something, is that something you might rehearse?
P: Yes yes definitely.
J: What you think he might say?
P: Yes, and how I’d respond... And I also think about how I’d be perceived based on my responses as well to make sure that I was perceived in the way I wanted to be perceived. (Interview, 6 July 2015, 164–180).

When Patricia was talking about whether or not she felt she could advance her key concerns and projects, she emphasised the importance of control; this was an emphasis that ran through much of her narrative.
J: So what Archer would say is we try and advance those projects through our own causal powers; is that what you try and do then? You’ve just mentioned before we switched the tape on about advancing the project of moving house by emailing?

P: ...thinking about something my mum said to my partner last week when I wasn’t there, I like to be in control of things, I don’t like it when I’m not in control so I try and take control of things in ways that I can. So like you said for example emailing to harass people about the house to see if it helps the move, at least I feel that I’ve done something, as much as I can do. I don’t like to look back and regret well I could have done that or I could have done this. Thinking about work as a project, the changing of the review, of individual reviews next year and it’s going to be that each person has a three yearly meeting with the head. Now so the deputy who emailed about this said, ‘does anybody want to meet with him next year?’ So I said I’ll meet with him because he knows I have applied for a job and I am possibly looking at promotion, so I thought well it’s a good time to meet with him so I’ve kind of taken control in that sense as well.

J: So does it feel as if in general you are in control of your own destiny?

P: To an extent yes, or I think I like to perceive that I’m in control of it, whether I actually am or not, I don’t know, but if I feel like I’m in control than, I think I do know, that makes me feel better somehow, so, so in my head I think that I’m in control. Whether I am or not, yeah. (Interview, 6 July 2015, 27–44).

Patricia’s ambivalence about work, and about some of the projects that matter to her, was illuminated in this next exchange about her decisiveness. Some of this is because she seems logical in her thinking, someone who weighs up the advantages and disadvantages of various options all the time. Some of it is because the issues that she is considering appear to be intractable ones:

J: ...we talked about control before, are you quite decisive?

P: It depends what it is. I think I am more decisive when it doesn’t matter, so I make that decision because I know it’s neither here nor there if it goes right or if it goes wrong. I think if I know I can live with either outcome and probably am more likely to be decisive as well, but the things that matter possibly less decisive.

J: Because you’re weighing up all the time?

P: Yes yes and having those conversations in your head like we were talking about before and thinking about the different routes and there’s no easy answer. (Interview, 6 July 2015, 252–261)

Teaching methods

Patricia’s teaching style differs from that which I usually see in my professional capacity and which I had seen in the other schools in my study. Her style is more
traditional; it is what might be called ‘chalk and talk’ in a rather disparaging way by some (e.g. Peal, 2014) and is more teacher-centred than the majority of the lessons that I see. For example, in Patricia’s year 8 lesson about calculating the surface area of cylinders, the students were each given a piece of A4 paper and were asked to roll it up loosely to form a cylinder; Patricia then asked them about how they would calculate the surface area. When we talked about the lesson afterwards, Patricia said she was pleased how this had gone:

P: I was pleased that they saw where the curved surface area was coming from, a couple of them without me telling and that that was good we’ve only just done circles...
J: So you gave them those concrete… you gave them a concrete thing, do you always do that with them?
P: Erm, I’ve done it with areas of shapes when we were looking at the area of a parallelogram, I cut out parallelograms in advance and got them to chop the triangle off and move it across and the same with... and yes so it went well when I did it with that and I thought well this is something that they’re gonna... like Leo hates shape stuff so he would have looked at them all and said ah, ah, I can’t do this without even giving it a chance and just put up a brick wall, so I thought well, it might help so we’ll try it and see, but, it seemed to work so...
J: It did didn’t it?
P: I’d do it again... I wouldn’t do it with the top set because they wouldn’t have, they’d be able to, to picture, to think better but...
J: Yes, they needed the concrete.
P: Mm. (Post-lesson observation discussion, March 2015, 16–23)

Doing this kind of activity was relatively unusual for Patricia, as she explains.

J: So what have you learned something about teaching or your own teaching from the lesson?
P: Er probably not just this individual lesson, I don’t think no, I think it’s sort of adding to like my cumulative learning, so I think I’ve only done that thing with the bit of paper once before and that was probably the last time I taught a lower set be honest and so yes the fact that that’s maybe only the second time I’ve done it and it went well that means I would use it again so I guess I’ve learned that. (Ibid., 31–32)

Patricia suggests that the fact that she takes a more teacher-centred approach isn’t because of any guidance or directive from the school:

J: Are they directive in anyway about how you teach?
P: No no, we can teach how we want to, if we want to chalk and talk which is what I do then we can, if you want to do group work, fine. (Post-observation discussion, September 2014, 163–166)

But interestingly, having trained as a primary teacher, Patricia knows that there are other ways to teach that might be more fun both for her and for her pupils. She is aware that her own ambivalence about teaching may be part of the reason that she tends not to use these techniques:

J: You kind of intimated that you sort of miss the primary?
P: Mm. I do, I miss... it’s good in a way that I can still teach the maths [in the primary section of the Russell School], and I like that... but what I miss about primary is teaching things like PE or art or science. I mean I was thinking driving home last night... when I was a primary teacher I used to really enjoy planning a lesson that I knew would be fun for the students and fun for me and thinking about things like science lessons getting them to do practical things and discover things and I don’t think I have ever done that as a maths teacher, I’ve never thought ‘this is going to be a great lesson because they’re going to discover this or they’re going to do this’ and whether that’s the nature of the subject in maths, in that it is quite theoretical you can make some of it practical and I have done one or two things that are more fun, but nothing that I’ve kind of thought ‘wow yeah that’s great’, so whether that’s because there’s not that opportunity or whether it’s because I’m becoming disillusioned with teaching I don’t know... (Timeline narrative, 23 July 2014, 102–103)

Nonetheless, as I would have expected from a mathematics teacher, Patricia did emphasise the importance of physical artefacts and resources when we were discussing tools that are important in teaching:

It’s all of everything to do with the teaching isn’t it, so in terms of, you’ve got your classroom setting, the resources, textbooks, worksheets things like that, websites. Other teachers, or I suppose that might be community, your knowledge, I think your experiences in terms of what you’ve done in the past and how you know they would whether you know they would work or things that you’ve tried that you know don’t work. (Final interview, July 2015, 277–284)

In the extract above Patricia also emphasised the community within she works as being important in the school’s aim of achieving student progression. In contrast to what she says about being able to use other teachers and staff as tools—a process that seems to happen during staffroom discussions and with colleagues in
meetings—in Patricia’s school, teacher autonomy and independence in the classroom were very much emphasised:

…the only TA is… a part of the SEND [Special Educational Needs and Disability] department… So if you’ve got a student who has a SEND then you might have a TA but otherwise it’s just you in the classroom. You do have support from people but day-to-day it’s down to the individual teacher. (Final interview, July 2015, 298–302)

Another example of Patricia using a less student-centred style was in a sixth form lesson. She spent a reasonably large proportion of the lesson just sitting at her desk, while the students were working on their own on problems she had set them. After taking the register and setting the problems from a book, she wasn’t doing anything in particular; she sat and watched the students. I asked her about this afterwards. She explained that she did behave differently because I was in the room watching her and that usually she would have been marking or answering emails when the students were working on problems, but that generally she would behave in the way that I had seen. There was a sense in what she said that she knew that perhaps this wasn’t quite right:

J …So in terms of the lesson, and you said it was different because I was here, generally did you act the way that you thought you would have acted and there’s nothing that you sort of...
P: The only thing I did different I didn’t sit there and mark when they were doing their own work which they normally do, because they’d normally say can I have help with this or I’d look at each book and see who was sitting there not doing anything, but that otherwise I teach them a new topic on the board and then they do questions.
J: And you do marking?
P: Yes and then at the end...
J: So because it was different because I was here will it have made you think in a different way? [...] 
P: No the only thing the only thing I have done differently I didn’t sit with my emails and reply to email
J: Why?
P: Because you get conscious that you should be teaching when you’re supposed to be teaching.
J: Yes...
P: But it’s about time management as a teacher you grab every few minutes you can. I set question 1, I know that’s five minutes for me to do something else. (Post-lesson observation discussion, September 2014, 129–152)
So although Patricia knew that her lessons were less interactive than they might be, when I was in the room with her she changed her behaviour only to some extent. She didn’t make the lesson more interactive for the students, but nor did she feel she could do her marking. At no point did she stand up and walk round the room, or change her activities in any other way to make the lesson more student centred. Despite this, there was a very positive atmosphere in the sixth form lesson. It was much more informal than the year 8 class, which was partly to do with the group size and partly to do with the age of the students.

This informal atmosphere in the sixth form lesson was exemplified by ‘cake Fridays’:

P: Last year Sam, who was the one I got the conversation with, he said can we not have cake Fridays like we do in physics or something and I said well yes if you organise it we will, so we said every week somebody different will bring a cake in, so we started doing that again this year it’s just a nice way.
J: And they do bring it?
P: Yes yes they do.
J: That’s nice isn’t it and does that, do you have a break or would they be eating it while they’re doing the work?
P: No they normally eat it, whoever has brought the cake will normally start cutting it as soon as they come in, I’ll give them a few minutes and then while they’re eating it is the teaching bit and then they can just do it when they finished eating, so we don’t lose any time. It’s just that we’re doing the work while they’re eating. (Interview, 15 September 2014, 105–117)

The themes that run through Patricia’s interviews are about ambivalence and disillusionment, balancing work and family by taking an instrumental approach to teaching and making family a priority, and a need for control and certainty. Patricia is a young woman who is possibly facing a crossroads in her life, where she will be making hard decisions about her future as a teacher and possibly as a mother. She is self-aware, almost painfully so at times, and as well she is truly uncomfortable with her ambivalence about school and teaching. However, she is not so uncomfortable that she has made the decision to move away from the Russell School, at least not so far. Such a move would be in keeping with the behaviour of someone for whom meta-reflexivity were a dominant mode of reflexivity; but not for Patricia. Her agency is driven partly by her values, and partly by her instrumental, practical approach to life.
Chapter 6: Analysis and discussion of portraits

Introduction

Chapter 5 presents four portraits of the teacher participants, which are designed to show the essence of the teacher and to help explore the overarching question: ‘What are the doings and beings of teachers?’ In this chapter the portraits and other data are discussed and analysed in light of the research sub-questions. The sub-questions are:

- In what ways do teachers’ beings and doings reflect structural macro level educational policy discourse, structured meso level school practice and proximal level biographical factors (RQ1)?
- How do the macro, meso and proximal levels intersect in the doings and beings of teachers (RQ2)?
- How does individual teacher reflexivity mediate the structural and proximal to suggest the privileging of particular forms of teacher beings and doings (RQ3)?

In the first part of this chapter the first two research questions are addressed by an analysis and discussion of the portraits. The second part of this chapter addresses the third research question.

In considering the first two research sub-questions, the portraits are analysed using my original conceptual framework, which helps to explore elements of the macro, meso and proximal in a descriptive way and considers the ways that they appear to intersect. For each participant, a personalised conceptual framework relating to the factors that were key at proximal, meso and macro levels is populated by drawing on their portraits and corpus of data. This enables the consideration of the cascading effects of factors at the three levels of the framework as well as an exploration of intersectionality.
In considering RQ3, I draw on aspects of reflexivity to help explain how and why particular elements of the macro, meso and proximal are privileged in the teacher narratives as both educational and more general projects, as outlined in the last research question. This builds on the theoretical discussion in Chapter 2 that documents the development of the descriptive conceptual framework, presenting a more analytical model, using the ideas of Archer.

**RQ 1: Factors that impact on the teacher-participants**

In considering the portraits of the participants, I continued to use the surveying and panning method (Tesch, 1987) to draw out themes from the portraits. These themes were fleshed out further from the corpus of data that was built up from each participant’s interviews, concept maps and timelines. The participants are first considered individually.

**Jill**

A personalised conceptual framework relating to the factors that were key for Jill at proximal, meso and macro levels was populated by drawing on Jill’s portrait and corpus of data (see Figure 6.1).
Figure 6.1 Cascading clusters of factors in Jill’s beings and doings

**Macro level cluster**

Jill’s narrative account reflected the discourses of accountability, performativity and achievement which are prevalent in education at the moment (e.g. Ball, 2008; Department for Education, 2015a; Department for Education, 2016a). Achievement and data featured large in her narrative, perhaps as a function of her relative seniority in school and her trajectory to her current job via a Head of English post, both of which emphasised the consequences of examination results for her, personally. Jill suggested that for many people, the primary objective of the school system ‘could be [seen as] ... the dreaded GCSE, ... A-level results.’ (Final interview, July 2015, 78)
The other set of macro level discourses that affected Jill were those to do with the government’s ‘Building Schools for the Future’ (BSF\textsuperscript{21}) programme (Department for Education and Skills, 2003) and its academisation project (Education Act, 2002) that were joint factors in the closure of the Ashfield school and its takeover by Ladywood School. I had knowledge of this from my professional role, and Jill expresses her response to these discourses very clearly:

\textit{I felt I was forced to move because of what happened with the ‘federation’...}

(Concept mapping narrative, July 2014, 145)

Both of these sets of discourses had penetrating effects on other clusters of factors that were key to Jill’s beings and doings.

\textit{Meso level cluster}

At the meso level, St. Gervase’s school—Jill’s immediate context—was of critical importance in shaping her beings and doings. Jill had joined St. Gervase’s more out of a desire to avoid moving to the federated Ladywood School than as an active move towards St. Gervase’s, and perhaps as a result of this she was rather ambivalent about the school. When she talks about the fact that she felt there were no options for her when the federation of Ladywood and Ashfield occurred, she expresses this ambivalence and bitterness:

\textit{the difficult first year I had here partly because of things that happened here and partly because of the fact I felt I was forced to move because of what happened with the federation, but I’m okay now I can sit here and look out across there [to Ladywood School] and I don’t get bitter. Much. [laughs]}

(Concept mapping narrative, July 2014, 145).

Her ambivalence coincided with what she and her husband perceived as a qualitative change in family dynamics; for the first time she and Stuart felt that their elder daughter was able to babysit and take responsibility for the younger one. This combination meant that for the first time in years Jill was able to focus on herself

\footnote{The Building Schools for the Future was a 2003 government initiative, involving private sector partners, of investment in secondary school buildings. The policy included aims relating to securing educational transformation in low-performing schools as well as to improving school buildings.}
and on family projects. This had significantly affected Jill’s approach to her work and it was really only as she joined St. Gervase’s that she started to put an emphasis on family and on working less. Although she was reticent in talking about it, she expressed that she did want to start thinking more about family and family projects. As well as having family as a project, Jill was thinking about moving on from St. Gervase’s. In fact, as a result of her disquiet with her position at St. Gervase’s and as a conclusion to her ruminations and internal deliberations about whether she should remain as a classroom teacher or move into senior leadership, she left St. Gervase’s to move to her new school, St. Charles’, at the end of the study year.

**Proximal level cluster**

At the proximal level Jill’s definition of herself as a teacher-nurturer was very important:

Jill: *It is really central because I love what I do. And I have always have. The idea that even as a kid I taught kids in my own classes because they were mixed ability and you don’t think about that I’ve always done that... We played school, with me helping them do their homework, so I’ve always had that teacher-nurturer inside of me I think, whether Jill Gascoine was not quite as strong an influencer she needed to be, but the teacher aspect has always been there. And so it is central to what I do because it’s what I am, I think that’s what it comes down to: it’s what I am.*

J: *It’s interesting that you say teacher-nurturer, we were talking last time about caring being so central?*

Jill: *Yes yes that’s very different from how a lot of teachers see teaching.*

(Interview, August 2014, 77–79)

Jill first talked about this in one of our earlier meetings, and this theme set the scene for much of what she said afterwards. Caring was key to much of what she said and did. Jill’s values were rooted in her stable family network; both her birth family and her own family (Stuart and their daughters). Over the time she has been at St. Gervase’s her focus has shifted from one of her life projects-work-to another: her own family. This was partly as a function of age, and partly to do with the logistics of the family situation. Her stable family network, with a focus on stasis and on geographical proximity, are very much features of Archer’s communicative reflexives (e.g. Archer, 2012). Yet in Jill’s case, her reliance on her family as sources of rationality and as sounding boards for her reflexive inner conversations, is entwined
with a sense of moral purpose, of projects and of idealism, that reflects the features of meta-reflexivity. This moral purpose and idealism is associated with her teacher-nurturer role. For example, when Jill is promising to take out for a meal the disadvantaged pupils with whom she works, she says *yes I’d take my daughters out for a meal, these kids need to go out for a meal*, showing the intertwined nature of these concerns in her articulation of her moral purpose. (Concept mapping narrative, July 2014, 173).

**Intersectionality**

The interaction of factors at a number of levels in the conceptual framework can be seen in Jill’s narratives and portrait.

The BSF/academisation discourses that were features of the macro level context for Jill and the performativity/accountability discourse permeated through and had cascading effects on factors at the other levels. The BSF/academisation programme drove the takeover of Ashfield by Ladywood; evidence of how more distal and macro level factors in the framework impact on the meso level.

As Jill’s portrait and case study suggest, macro and meso level factors interact with the proximal level. For example, national discourses relating to academisation were enacted locally in the policy that resulted in the takeover of Ashfield School by Ladywood School. This takeover and the discomfort that it caused for Jill interacted with her personal circumstances and the concerns she had relating to family and resulted in her subsequent move to St. Gervase’s.

Jill did not articulate any tensions between the performativity pressures and discourses (that are features of the macro cluster of factors) and her own values and her self-image as a teacher-nurturer. I suggest that this may be because of the central importance of her family values and nurturing approach to teaching and learning in determining her reflexivity and agency. Her emphasis on this was central:
I was reading something in the news yesterday that a lot of teachers go back in September and look at kids and are thinking 'you've not ate properly during the summer' and I thought am I missing this? And I'm thinking when I go back next week am I going to look at children in a different way because of where I work now... now did I mention that we do a food bank here?... They started a staff food bank in September; once a month they put the boxes out and if you wish to you take stuff through and all the food goes to families in the area for some of our most vulnerable kids and you just think to yourself; you walk out of the shop and you think you know what and I’m probably putting far more in than I would normally - I think these are my kids these are kids, I don’t know who they are but they could be sat in front of me and they’re not getting fed and there are kids who only get a decent meal now. I’m aware of that aspect but the idea of people sending their kids out and you thinking ‘why are the kids on the street?’ is it because genuinely the parents want them to enjoy the fresh air, or is it because it’s warmer outside? (Interview, August 2014, 81–83)

For Jill, her background and upbringing in the locality where she teaches and her caring values suggested the key personal concerns—or projects—of family and work and her associated social stance and the dominant mode or modes of reflexivity.
A personalised conceptual framework for Rory, relating to the factors that were key for him at proximal, meso and macro levels was populated by drawing on Rory’s portrait (see Figure 6.2).

**Figure 6.2: Cascading clusters of factors impacting on Rory’s beings and doings**

**Macro level cluster**

There were a number of discourses at the macro level that were significant for Rory and which cascaded down through to the meso and proximal levels of the framework to have an impact at those levels. The discourses for Rory differ from those for Jill, perhaps because of the difference in their ages, length of experience in education, and the differential seniority of their positions in their respective schools. Nonetheless, one similarity was that they both emphasised the importance of ‘disadvantage’ as a driver in their careers. However, for Rory, this emphasis was more significant at a macro level than it was for Jill, and was contextualised at a
macro level as a global ideological and political issue (e.g. Sahlberg, 2011). His emphasis on how urban disadvantage being a significant issue that drove his practice was highlighted when he was talking about his motivation to teach: ‘[…] especially in this area because it’s so deprived you’ve got to give them more than anywhere else’. (Concept mapping, July 2015, 114) Such differences between participants, including the differential privileging of particular discourses, are linked to their different biographical experiences and the nature of their reflexivity—as will be discussed later.

Similarly, English government policy in relation to the decentralisation of initial teacher education (ITE) and the movement of ITE into schools through the School Direct route (previously the GTP) was also a significant set of policies and discourses at macro-governmental level that cascaded down through the conceptual space to affect the meso level context for Rory.

**Meso level cluster**
For Rory, discourses relating to accountability were significant, as they were for Jill; but Rory located and expressed them more in relation to school—being significant to him in terms of the school and his students—and therefore, rather than locating them firmly as macro level discourses and rhetorics, they are considered here as meso level factors.

Examination results and pupil achievement were discussed in relation to pupils at school; when Rory talks about achievement, the first thing he does is make reference to that fact that he knows the school is working with pupils who are disadvantaged. He is aware of the effects that the ‘austerity’ rhetoric and the global education reform movement (Sahlberg, 2011) have on education and, more particularly, on his students’ lives. Rory says ‘we know where we are in the world, we know what we dealing with but it’s not an excuse and we’ve got to have the same expectations.’ (Final interview, June 2015, 113)

Another set of discourses at meso level were more facilitating than constraining for Rory; they are those that relate to the GTP (now School Direct). The existence of
such school-based initial teacher training programmes enabled Rory to begin a career in teaching despite his stammer. After his unsuccessful PGCE interview at a university, Rory felt that he would never be able to become a teacher. But the inclusive and school-based teacher training route that was available at Martindale, where Rory was already working as a TA, had helped: ‘yes the school had seen me teach and they knew I could do it and I was teaching my own classes at that point, had started teaching on my own’. (Concept mapping narrative, July 2014, 82) The school-based route into teacher training, and the way in which Martindale City Academy engages with and enacts the School Direct policy has affected Rory’s career in two ways: in enabling him to become a teacher at Martindale in the first place and then through Martindale’s Developing Leaders programme. This programme enabled him to develop his management skills and to progress up the promotion ladder by working with School Direct and PGCE trainees. Rory said that this move into leadership was largely to do with the fact that ‘I definitely think I’m ready to give something back’ (ibid., 91). He was grateful for the opportunity that Martindale had given him and was aware that his own background and experiences could enrich those of the disadvantaged pupils with whom he was working.

The ethos of Martindale City Academy, focusing on community and overcoming disadvantage through a desire to develop pupils’ agency, is significant in Rory’s narrative, partly because it embodies his own approach to education and values—as is discussed below—and partly because that inclusive yet aspirational ethos resonated with Rory’s own personal experiences and needs when he moved into teaching. Perhaps it was also about the way in which Martindale was inclusive for him as an aspiring teacher, and how this resonates in relation to some of the other forms of disadvantage that Rory sees in his pupils.

Proximal level cluster

At this level, Rory’s values and political principles were significant. Although Rory was loath to discuss his political principles in detail, it was clear that a concern with

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22 The PGCE in England—a Post Graduate Certificate in Education—is a Masters level qualification, completed in higher education institutions, that accompanies qualified teacher status and signifies a qualified teacher.
social justice was important to him: ‘...especially in this area because it’s so deprived you’ve got to give them more than anywhere else, they’ve got to catch up they got to beat that and do everything else, so it’s kind of... I wouldn’t say political animal, just sort of I’m fairly sure as to what I think is right and what I believe in’. (Concept mapping narrative, July 2014, 114)

Linked to this is Rory’s consideration of how his family and friends, and one friend in particular, were significant in encouraging him to overcome his stammer and to become a teacher at a time in his life when he had started to feel that was impossible. Of his closest friend’s encouraging him to pursue his dreams of being a teacher, Rory said: ‘he kind of convinced me to give it a go... he was quite a big part’ (ibid., 74) Before he had applied for teaching, but was interested in working in a school, the vice-principal, Penny, who was a family friend, had encouraged him:

*I spoke to Penny, I went to school with Penny's daughter and our lives [have] been intertwined. I came in volunteering to school and then started being a TA one day a week.* (Timeline narrative, July 2014, 38)

So Rory’s family and friends are instrumental in his success. Although Rory does talk about his family and friends in this and other contexts, this is not a feature that runs through all of his narrative and is less of a significant feature for him than for Jill. More significant are factors that relate to meta-reflexivity such as idealism and his personal concerns and projects relating to social justice and disadvantage. For instance, he expressed a level of discomfort with a previous, highly paid job in project management: ‘the big American company morally, it’s not particularly good I want to do something where I’d get a bit more self-worth or some kind of ... more appreciation of myself, something useful’ (ibid., 33) That discomfiture had spurred his move into working with children on a cycling project and then finally into teaching.

**Intersectionality**

Factors at the macro, meso and proximal levels interplay in particular and significant ways in Rory’s narrative.
This is perhaps most clearly illustrated in our discussion about the purposes of school, where he focused on the agency of the pupils. Agency and taking control for himself had been key to Rory’s narrative throughout our discussions: some of this was perhaps due to his having to overcome the stammer that had hindered him moving into teaching. His understanding of the discourses concerning disadvantage and how disadvantage concerns more than material aspects of life is clear. For example, in our final interview, he made it plain that he believed that the pupils in school need to get qualifications, because that was important for getting a job, but that it is equally as important for them to develop their agency: ‘That’s got to be the final, if they leave with the results, whatever else they need but they’re actually able to sort of take control.’ (Final interview, June 2015, 153)

Another area where the complex interaction between the factors was demonstrated is in relation to Rory’s choice to work at Martindale. There were a number if factors that affected his decision here.

First, the government policies which made school initial teacher training routes such as the GTP available, and the acceptance of such a route by Martindale as part of their school policies and procedures, was serendipitous for Rory—given that his stammer had made it difficult for him to be successful in a traditional interview for teaching. The structural and structuring macro and meso contexts interacted with his personal circumstances to form a set of contexts within which his beings and doings were located.

Secondly, the move to Martindale was an active choice for Rory as he moved away from potential careers in either golf or in project management into something that felt more worthwhile for him—working in a school where fighting disadvantage was a concern. Macro-level discourses about disadvantage and social justice, the ways in which particular policies about disadvantage play out and are enacted at school level, and Rory’s own personal circumstances, beliefs and values all intertwine to impact on his reflexive inner conversations and on his identity agency. This is perhaps best captured in his thoughts about the importance of teaching:
I think that sort of the responsibility side of it and why I think this is such an important job and why I think why you work hard at it, in my previous job I never worked so hard. It was the same hours because of the nature of the job but I don’t think in terms of what you put into it mentally and physically teaching is quite draining. I think it definitely can be, it does get hold of you a little bit. (Concept mapping narrative, July 2014, 116)

His ‘it does get hold of you a little bit’ shows how Rory’s beings and doings are affected by his work and the values that are embodied in teaching for him.
From Marie’s portrait and narratives the personalised conceptual framework relating to the factors that were key for her at proximal, meso and macro levels was populated as shown in Figure 6.3.

**Macro level cluster**

Marie was unlike the other teacher-participants in that her background in farming had a big impact on her, both at the proximal level but also at this macro level. Marie was born in the middle of the BSE crisis in Britain. BSE is a degenerative brain disease of cattle that can also be passed on to humans, and the effect of the nationwide cattle slaughter programme and beef export ban on farms throughout Great Britain was huge (BBC, 1998). Marie mentioned it as being one of the
important topics of conversation in her household, and she suggested that it affected family life in Northern Ireland the 1990s, the peak years for BSE.

In terms of the national educational context, Marie's work was affected by the government shift away from GCSEs in subjects such as food technology, home economics, catering and cookery to a new ‘food and nutrition GCSE’ in 2014 (Department for Education and Gibb, 2014). During the study year, a consultation exercise was on-going, and a number of uncertainties surfaced about jobs for teachers in these subject areas.

*Meso level cluster*

At Martindale City Academy there was some unease about the discourses emanating from government about the value of teaching subjects such as catering. This was perhaps particularly so in a school like Martindale where the community emphasis had led to catering GCSE being specifically chosen for the cookery and the practical life skills that could be taught in this subject. This stress on preparing children for ‘life’—that Marie noted as a feature of Martindale—was something that the school did not want to lose and the possible changes were discussed at the highest levels in school and by the subject team. Inevitably there was some concern about whether teachers' jobs would be under threat. Nonetheless, the school's focus on life skills and community was still a major part of the meso level context for Marie. She talked about how it was important that the pupils learned to cook using ‘SmartPrice’ economy ingredients from the local supermarket, and how the school provided all ingredients for practical lessons so that children could take food home for their families. This was important in such a disadvantaged area as it supported the school's community focus in a practical way.

As with Rory, the school's Developing Leaders programme was seen as central to Marie's success at Martindale. She had been involved in a school-wide reward programme as a Developing Leader, and then as the study year came to an end she had been offered a post as head of department—she suggests that the school had planned this promotion for some time even though she had been unaware of the
plan: ‘... apparently it was always on the cards anyhow.’ (Marie, final interview, 29 June 2015, 21)

**Proximal level cluster**

At the proximal level Marie emphasised the importance of her family, and particularly of her mother, as significant influences on her. Marie had strong memories of learning to bake and cook as a young child:

> When I was little my mum... always from the age of zero I remember standing on a chair to mix apple tart pastry. I have vivid memories and it came from a background where food is important and cookery is important’. (Concept mapping narrative, June 2014, 163)

The farmhouse kitchen was a centre for the sharing of food and chat:

> ‘...our discussions were always about food as a family and what the potatoes were like. Sounds so silly you know growing up it’s always... and in an Irish household it’s about people coming in and having a cup of tea and having that chat and getting to know each other. You’ve got sandwiches you’ve got cakes.’ (Ibid, 176)

As well as this emphasis on food, Marie’s family was important to her in other ways. For example, she suggested that she would never make a significant decision without checking with her mother—for instance, when she had resigned from her post at Martindale. Before that had happened she had discussed every nuance of the decision with her family in relation to validating her ideas. In this extract, the closeness of her mum and the importance of that relationship as an influence on Marie’s agency are clear:

> Yes oh yes so like when I was handing in my notice that didn’t just happen [snaps finger], absolutely not it was you know it was talked about... and yeah we discussed it a lot, we discussed the very very very minute details; and I speak to my mum every day, we have a very close relationship. My dad not so much because he is always busy and you know things like that, but I speak to my mum every day; I wouldn’t go a day without speaking to her; so she texts me normally in the morning like at 7:30 - always before 7:30 am I get a message and then I’ll ring her when I leave school and we’ll just have a little catch up. (Interview, June 2015, 59a)
Similarly, before deciding to become a cookery teacher, Marie had talked to teachers and tutors who she saw as role models and whose advice she valued.

Intersectionality
Discourses at all levels of the conceptual framework interplay in Marie’s narrative.

Government policy in relation to BSE influenced her early years, as did the impact of BSE on her family that meant Marie had been brought up in a household that discussed food and policy as intertwined concepts. Combined with this is Marie’s own love of food—developed from her close relationship with her mother—and the geographical and social location of Martindale City Academy, with its emphasis on community and community engagement.
From Patricia's portrait and narratives a personalised conceptual framework relating to the factors that were key for her at proximal, meso and macro levels was developed (shown in Figure 6.4).

**Macro level cluster**

The difference between independent, fee-paying schools and the pressures on such schools in England, and on the teachers working in them, are very different from the pressures on other schools. One of the things that was notable in Patricia's narrative was the absence of any mention of discourses to do with Ofsted, accountability or performativity. In fact, when asked specifically, Patricia suggested that the performativity discourse surrounding achievement in non-fee paying schools were hardly evident at all in her school.
J: You’ve always said that they never put very much pressure on you in terms of results as a teacher?
P: Yes yes. (Final interview, June 2015, 110–112)

When she described her head of department:

... he never really chases you up if you have bad results, I mean we’re kind of good in the sense that the students we teach will pull it out of the bag at the last minute... (Timeline narrative, June 2014, 113)

This is an interesting feature of the Russell school and one that is contradictory to established taken-for-granted thinking about fee-paying schools (e.g. Espinoza, 2015). At the Russell school there is an emphasis on the development of privileged cultural capital. For example, the school website emphasises recent ‘adventure activities’ such as a trip to the Sahara Desert, and opportunities for pupils to perform with national orchestras of repute in international venues. There is also a mutuality of concerns between parents and teachers, as Patricia suggests: ‘You get a lot of parents putting pressure on you, and [there is a high level of] expectation in the school...’. (final interview, July 2015, 105–106) Despite that, she felt that parents did not really feature as partners with teachers in helping their children to achieve. When I asked specifically about the importance of parents, she said: ‘Parents... I suppose that you might email them and say can you tell your child to do that?’ (Ibid., 313–315)

Perhaps then it is the case that this mutuality of concerns and emphasis on privileged capitals result in a less clearly articulated emphasis on achievement and result: excellent examination results are taken for granted, and it is the other aspects of capital that are highlighted for teachers, staff and pupils.

*Meso level cluster*

The absence in Patricia’s narrative about examination results undoubtedly reflected her personal understandings of the important rhetorics at the Russell School. However, the Russell school ethos includes the word ‘scholarship’; and I know from my own professional experience and from anecdotal evidence that results are of
critical importance to the school. The school's website includes information about how in 2015 over a third of their A-level results are at the coveted A* grade, and how 70% of the GCSE results were at A*, compared to the national average of 6.6% (Joint Council for Qualifications, 2015). Clearly, then, the achievement rhetoric is clear; but this was not a pressure that Patricia felt.

The fact that the school caters for boys aged 7–18 was something that Patricia felt worked to her advantage. Teachers can teach in both the junior school and the senior school, depending on experience and qualifications, and as mathematics is a core subject Patricia had been able to work with sixth formers as well as with younger boys. Although she was initially appointed as a primary teacher, '[I] did get a higher salary because it was a private school and we were expected to do some teaching in the senior school... (timeline narrative, June 2014, 95). As well, she is now teaching lessons to the Oxford and Cambridge applicants and an advanced A-level, further mathematics, which brings some kudos with it:

I'm one of the teachers who teaches further [mathematics]... there are some teachers that say 'no I don't want do that', I'm allowed to teach what was called the Oxbridge lessons and I always feel like I get a bit of credibility for doing, and a bit of respect doing that... (Concept mapping narrative, June 2014, 304)

So, over time, Patricia had moved into having more of her timetable in the senior school, which she enjoyed. The relationships with the older pupils were important to her; ‘they’ll say “are you all right Miss?” and they just sort of keep an eye on you'. (Concept mapping, June 2014, 207)

**Proximal level cluster**

At the proximal level Patricia talked about her family and how their influence had impacted on her. Her mother had been a teacher, but her father had encouraged her to go into finance rather than teaching and had been unhappy when Patricia had left her actuarial career for primary teaching: 'my dad... basically didn't talk to me for about a month 'cos he thought I was giving up really a fantastic job'. (Timeline, Patricia, June 2014, 37) Patricia describes her birth family in warm terms and has a good relationship with them, although she does not rely on them as sounding
boards in the same way that Marie relies on her family. Patricia was also keen to start her own family and at the end of the study year was about to buy a house with her partner with a view to marriage and children. In relation to this, she showed how her values affected her agency; she had been considering applying for promotion, but had decided that it might not be right to apply for promotion if she was also thinking of starting a family. Taking maternity leave shortly after being promoted would not sit comfortably with her judgements as to what might be ‘right’.

P: Yes you kind of feel like if you go down the promotion route then you are putting family to one side and I, if I decide I’m going to have a family then you kind of feel how can you apply for a promotion and things like that? Although people, it is, one thing that people do that is common in our school is get promoted and go off on maternity leave within a few weeks... I’d feel bad if I said oh yes I’m going to take an extra responsibility and then I will disappear for a year and leave somebody else managing things, I don’t think that’s fair. And likewise if I had a family I wouldn’t want to be stressed at work because I just taken on more responsibility. (Interview, July 2015, 47–59)

Patricia also demonstrated a practical approach to her career in teaching as one of her personality traits. Money was not insignificant in her narrative, and her instrumental—rather than values-led—approach to her teaching was something that she both acknowledged and was rather uncomfortable with. As is discussed in the paragraphs below, this ambivalence was also evident in her thoughts about private education, and about how it suited her to teach in an independent school—but perhaps how it ought not to.

**Intersectionality**

In Patricia’s narrative and portraits, factors at all three levels interplay to impact on her agency. The discourses that might be expected to impact on Patricia as a teacher of a core subject such as mathematics in an independent fee-paying school did not in fact have the expected impact—in fact, she seemed largely oblivious to them and instead focused on work being a way of earning money. From being a young graduate, money had been important: ‘[I was] looking at sort of what sort of jobs you can make money with’. (Timeline narrative, June 2014, 22). Patricia was also cognisant of the fact that the school accepted boys aged 7-18, which meant that she
could still teach primary mathematics. However, being able to do that did cause her some discomfort; she was aware of how much fun primary teaching and primary lessons could be, and was rather surprised that she had not used or taken these fun techniques into the senior school, preferring instead to rely on what is known as ‘chalk and talk’, writing on the board and then talking to the pupils (the term tends to suggest that the teacher’s voice and the board are the focal points of a lesson, as opposed to the lesson incorporating more pupil-centred activities). Patricia wasn’t sure herself whether this was to do with disillusionment with teaching or whether it was more to do with other factors:

*When I was a primary teacher I used to really enjoy planning a lesson that they knew would be fun for the students and fun for me and thinking about things, like science lessons getting them to do practical things and discover things and I don’t think I have ever done that as a maths teacher, I’ve never thought ‘this is going to be a great lesson because they’re going to discover this or they’re going to do this’ and whether that’s the nature of the subject in maths, in that it is quite theoretical? You can make some of [it] practical and [I] have done one or two things that are more fun, but nothing that I’ve kind of thought ‘wow yeah that’s great’, so whether that’s because there’s not that opportunity or whether it’s because I’m becoming disillusioned with teaching I don’t know...* (Timeline narrative, June 2014, 203)

The ways in which Patricia’s own values and approach combine with features of the school where she works and its approach to teaching have a significant impact on her. Her wondering ‘have I sold my soul all to get an easier life?’ (Timeline narrative, 23 July 2014, 46) is perhaps particularly telling in regard to her agency.
RQ2: Comparative analysis and discussion about intersectionality—issues of structure, reflexivity and agency in the four cases

The preceding section provides an analysis of the portraits documented in Chapter 5. This is focused around the framing device articulated in Chapter 2 that emanates from my earlier research by the author. Issues relating to the cascading nature and the intersectionality of factors at the macro, meso and proximal factors were key to exploring those individual narratives and provided a sense in which their teaching experiences were both contextual and biographical. However, the analysis does not shed light on the ways in which intersectionality operates for each case—in other words, what elements of structure were privileged and enabling for each teacher's agency and which were constraining.

As is discussed in Chapter 2, the conceptual framework in its original form is limited in that it does not allow for an exploration of the ways that teachers' individual reflexivity about their contexts and biographies mediate macro educational discourses and localised educational practices. Such reflexive mediations are suggestive of participants’ individual concerns, privileged projects and particular forms of agency.

In addition there is little sense in the four portraits’ detail of the extent to which powerful elements of structure, either national or local, are broadly common to all of the participants’ reflexive accounts about their practice—in other words elements of structure that dominated, albeit in perhaps nuanced ways, core elements of each teacher's reflexivity and agency.

The interplay of structuring national discourses and local school contexts

At the macro level, all the teachers were differentially affected by powerful national discourses concerning achievement and examination results, partly because the schools in which the participants were teaching were so different.

Jill's narrative shows a clear focus on achievement. She was the only participant who spontaneously and explicitly mentioned examination results as being
important, which may be a function of her trajectory to her current job via a head of English post, and the consequences of examination results for her, personally. In her school, St. Gervase's (a faith school in a disadvantaged area), there was an emphasis on results, on inclusion and on trying to establish the school in a local context of uncertainty in relation to the academisation discourses that had played out relatively unhappily as Ladywood School took over Ashfield School. Jill had never really settled at St. Gervase's and, indeed, at the end of the study year, had decided to move on. This was a move that was motivated partly by the local context and partly by a desire to be physically closer to her elderly parents.

Rory and Marie at Martindale were less focused on achievement, at least in the study year. It is possible that this may be related, to some extent, to the community-based values of the school, but another interpretation is that the school had not yet had its first set of GCSE examination results at the time the study year ended. Since then the 2015 results have been published and the school's GCSE pass rate for students achieving five A*-C GCSEs including English and maths was 37%, against a national average of 55.8 % (Department for Education, 2015b). Future work on the impact of these discourses on teacher agency and identity could consider the extent to which the values of the school and the community emphasis might have altered as a result of the Martindale 2015 GCSE results.

Like St. Gervase’s, Martindale City Academy is situated in a disadvantaged area, but in a city rather than in a town, and in an area with a relatively large immigrant population. In this school, which only opened in September 2010, the emphasis is on community and values, as is seen in the articulation of school values highlighted on the school website, as well as in my observations and Marie’s and Rory’s narratives. Similarities between the portraits of the two teacher-participants who work there, Marie and Rory, are evident. However, there are also differences: the subjects that they teach and the differential importance of these subjects (science as a core subject, and cookery with its central importance to the community ethos of the school) mean that Rory and Marie experience Martindale in very different ways.
National discourses concerning achievement and accountability were notable by their absence from Patricia's narratives. She did not appear to be affected in any way by them, perhaps because of her position in an independent school where Ofsted is not the inspecting body. Despite the emphasis on cultural capital and enrichment activities that Patricia talks about, the emphasis placed on examination results in many independent schools might have been expected to have had an impact on her. If this was the case, it was not expressed explicitly either in her narratives or in her actions in school; rather, it was the emphasis on extra-curricular activities, and on the mutual complementarity of cultural, material and economic capitals that was more significant when she talked about school.

Of course, Patricia's school is very different from both Martindale and St. Gervase's—its independent status and relative affluence as well as its stated emphasis on scholarship mean that although it is only a few miles away from Martindale, it is different in many respects. Patricia's background and motivations, and the way she thinks about school and her teaching, interplay with these contextual factors. This means that although there are similarities between Patricia and the other teachers—for example in the way they talk about the children they teach—there are significant differences too, for example in the different emphases on achievement and community.

**RQ3: Structure, reflexivity and the beings and doings of teachers: how does individual teacher reflexivity mediate the structural and proximal to suggest the privileging of particular forms of teacher beings and doings?**

The above section provides an insight into the way national discourses and local contexts and schools are both similarly and yet differently narrated by the four teacher-participants who are my cases. In some respects, these narratives relate to the way the local schools both attune and differentiate themselves from national discourses: factors that relate to both the economic materiality of the contexts of schools and the ethos and values that are specific to those schools. However, such an intertwining of national and local school structures does not fully explain what
gets included, what gets left out and what gets added with regard to the specific enacted educational being and doings that are privileged by the four cases.

In other words, it does not explain how specific beings and doings connect structure and agency. As is discussed above, according to critical realists, this relates to issues of reflexivity and the factors which impact differentially on the teacher participants. The rest of this chapter considers these issues in more detail, and in particular discusses the modes of reflexivity that influence how and what gets privileged in the beings and doings of teachers.

**Reflexivity and privileged concerns**

Inner conversations, or reflexivity, comprise the dialogues that people engage in inwardly and through which they define and clarify their beliefs, attitudes and goals, evaluate social circumstances and define projects based on their main concerns. In this part of the discussion I use the data from the teacher-participants to argue that Archer’s thesis (Archer, 2012) that there are three ideal dominant modes of reflexivity which are demonstrated by individuals depending in part on their backgrounds, is both over-simplified and under-socialised. In other words, in focussing on the self and the individual, Archer’s work underemphasises the role of social factors and processes and of intersubjectivity.

A striking similarity between three of the participants—Rory, Jill and Marie—was that at times they all employed meta-reflexivity as one of their modes of reflexivity. This is as I had anticipated because, as Graham Scambler (2013) suggests, meta-reflexives are orientated to ‘values’. I contend that this orientation is to be expected in a ‘moral profession’ such as teaching (Campbell, 2008). The participants nuanced these orientations differently, and there were different degrees of meta-reflexivity expressed in their narratives. Nonetheless, a concern with the moral purpose of education and with a strategic orientation to values was evidently a feature of their inner conversations and was a key signifier of their meta-reflexivity. For practitioners of meta-reflexivity, ‘far from the social order being internalized or normalized, it [the social order] is peculiarly problematized’. (Archer, 2012, p.207, italics Archer’s own). Patricia did not demonstrate this orientation to values; she
appeared more instrumental, and demonstrates more features of autonomous reflexivity, as is discussed below.

For meta-reflexives, their inner conversations often take the form of self-examination which ‘becomes an intrinsic part of the life of the mind when meta-reflexivity is dominant’ (Archer, 2007, p.130). And it is also often the case that these conversations spiral around and around without getting anywhere; or that individuals employing meta-reflexivity are always going deeper and deeper into particular issues, rather than just working out what to do (Carrigan, 9 December 2015, personal communication). Marie articulates this quite clearly:

*I find it hard to make sense of the world sometimes, you look at different scenarios and I think I like to have a solution to everything and it bothers me when I can't have a solution to everything and I don't have a solution to everything... I find that as, as you grow up things are more... sometimes when you're little you just see the world as this amazing place and everybody is happy and life is brilliant, and then as you grow up it’s a different story you gradually see, illness, abuse, all of those things all intertwined so I just think...* (Final interview, June 2015, 113)

Another feature of meta-reflexives noted by Archer (2012) is the focus on academic qualifications:

Hence, too, the especial seriousness with which the meta-reflexives took their degrees, not in an instrument rational fashion but because the academic issues, arguments and material to which they were exposed were their raw materials for articulating precisely where they stood in relation to what they cared about most. This also accounts for the meta-reflexives being the one sub-group whose members continuously entertained taking a higher degree or even undertaking a university career. To them academic debates were not a sterile rehearsal and regurgitation of pros and cons to obtain certification ... Only in this way can they achieve the clarification and discursive substantiation of their own values and inclinations towards courses of action that underline their practical reasoning in the social order. (Archer, 2012, p.247 )

This emphasis was clear for all of the participants for whom meta-reflexivity was a dominant feature of their inner conversations (Rory, Jill and Marie). On the whole, their degrees and teaching qualifications were not solely achieved for instrumental purposes, but also because they allowed them to help establish and consolidate
their sense of identity. For example, Rory’s interest in golf was something he wanted to explore while he was studying at university, to see whether it was going to be a viable career; and it wasn’t: ‘I maybe didn’t love golf quite enough’. (Timeline construction, July 2014, 24)

Although the teachers are similar in many ways, they are also different. The ways in which the dominant modes of reflexivity are expressed and play out vary for each of them.

Jill
Jill is an individual who uses both meta-reflexivity and communicative reflexivity as dominant modes of inner conversation. Meta-reflexivity, where the social order is ‘problematised’ (Carrigan, 2013b) is key to her actions and the way that she sees the world. For example, she talks about how she had seen a news report about how many children go hungry in the school holidays because they do not have their term-time school dinner. In this extract, she expresses her concern that many of her pupils may be hungry and explains what she can do about it:

they’re waking up hungry but at least if they [parents] can send them to school they know they will get something... at school... and I just thought that is shocking that you that that happens on such a massive scale and I think again that’s part of what you do because you are creating or helping to create young adults and you can’t do that just by making sure that they know which Shakespeare play is the best or which poem has a lot of pathos in it and how to spell ‘sincerely’ correctly. Exactly and that’s why when kids, the amount of times this year, it’s not been that sort of aspect: kids have come in and not had lunch or they’re not feeling very well and I say all I’ve got is breakfast bars or an apple... My breakfast bars went, my apples went and in one day I think I had three or four apples, I take one in every day and I’m not eating them, they just all went, but it’s just they need it more than I do because I can go to the canteen after and it’s... I think to me that’s a big part, making sure the kids understand and know that you understand them as well... (Interview, August 2014, 85)

Interestingly, however, although Jill expresses her concern about children being hungry, this concern is not politicised, nor does it impact on her agency in any significant way. She does not start a school breakfast club; nor does she lobby the
local MP about disadvantage. She deals with the issue more individually, by bringing in apples and breakfast bars that she knows the pupils will eat.

As well as demonstrating some of the features of meta-reflexivity, in many ways Jill truly embodies the ‘thought and talk’ form of internal conversation that is described by Archer (2007, p.94) as a feature of the communicative reflexive. Jill is a social animal, who could well be described as an ‘extroverted chatterer’. This was obvious from the length of the interviews (Jill talked, quite openly and willingly, for almost twice as long over the year as any of the other teacher-participants) and the wide-ranging nature of the discussions that she and I had. Communicative reflexives also ‘attach supreme importance to inter-personal relations’ (Archer, 2007, p.283) and remain deeply embedded in their original social context; Jill’s key project of ‘family’ is significant to her agency. Her concern for what Archer describes as ‘relational goods’—which in Jill’s case might include love, reliance, caring and trust—and the reproductive projects to which this concern leads ‘act[ed] as a filter, sifting friendships, social activities and leisure pursuits to ensure congruity with their families’ normativity’ (Archer, 2012, p.99). Indeed, in Jill’s case, her nurturing and caring approach was evident in her professional capacity as well as in relation to her husband and daughters. For example, she says of some of her pupils at school:

*there’s kids who have got nothing at home and whether that’s material or support, or love, ‘cos you just know some of these kids just want someone to care for them and in your classroom you can do that.* (Concept map, July 2014, 169)

There is a sense in which Jill’s nurturing approach to her pupils at school was an extension of that same caring approach, developed from her natal family background, that she expressed in relation to her own husband and children. So when she is explaining about taking her class out for an end of year meal, in her own mind this action is firmly linked to her familial caring values like this: ‘yes I’d take my daughters out for a meal, these kids need to go out for a meal.’ (Concept mapping narrative, July 2014, 173)
Jill’s thoughts about her family exemplify Archer’s view of communicative reflexives who, in terms of marital/family relations, ‘appear to endorse “togetherness”’, (Archer, 2007a):

*"We’ve always had a very solid family network [...] because if there is anyone there on their own it’s because their wife or husband has died...we don’t have any divorces and there is this real strong... I mean most aunties and uncles we’re talking 40 years; we must be, because we are on 23 [years married] so there’s a very supportive family, and there when you need them... (Timeline narrative, July 2014, 42)*

These forms of reflexivity, which are evident in Jill’s inner conversations, direct her agency and shape her actions. For instance, it is partly as a result of her concern with family and with her elderly parents’ welfare that she moves to a school near to where her parents live. But there is a dual-purpose to her intention: the move to a school where she feels her skills are more useful, where she can make a difference, where her values sit comfortably, but moreover where she can reconcile her personal and professional projects without compromising on either:

*I am hoping that this is going to allow me to continue the work-life balance I’ve got and so to alleviate any fears that my husband has. (Final interview, July 2015, 30)*

Interestingly, there were no unresolved tensions evident or articulated in Jill’s narratives in relation to her focus on caring possibly being at odds with policies and practices that focus on achievement and performativity. She appeared to have subsumed the discourses about standards and performativity into a wider and more consuming set of discourses concerning caring and the holistic nature of education. If there were any tensions, either they had not significantly impacted on her, or they had been resolved or set aside as irrelevant. A reconsideration of the concept of leading identity developed by Black et al. (2010) may help to illuminate what might be going on for Jill here: she has privileged both personal and professional projects, and combined her concerns with them into what might be described as a hybrid identity which enables her to be both a teacher and a wife/mother/daughter, enacting this hybridised identity with few complications or contradictions being evident. The nurturing values that are evident in her professional life are, however,
predicated on her personal caring values; they are not evidence of a more politicised or moral concern about the nature of teaching.

**Rory**

Rory’s dominant mode of reflexivity is also meta-reflexivity, and he demonstrates this more strongly than either Jill or Marie, at least in that he uses other modes of reflexivity less frequently than they do. His internal conversations do demonstrate his problematising the social order, and indeed often spiral round and round:

\[ J: \text{Are you quite a political animal?} \]
\[ R: \text{It’s what keeps me awake.} \]
\[ J: \text{It keeps you awake?} \]
\[ R: \text{I just think it’s a hard thing to separate the duty of care and knowing, I don’t want to give you a sob story but you want to do better for them and you kind of appreciate what they’ve... especially in this area because it’s so deprived you’ve got to give them more than anywhere else, they’ve got to catch up they got to beat that and do everything else so it’s kind of I wouldn’t say political animal, just sort of I’m fairly sure as to what I think is right and what I believe in.} \]

(Concept map, July 2014, 111–114)

There is a very real sense in which these deliberations do not distress Rory; nor do they link directly to his actions and agency—he goes round and round without really getting anywhere.

Despite this, Rory’s friends and family are still important to him, and in particular he discusses issues with a friend whose opinions he values, partly because the friend is now a teacher and partly because they have known each other since childhood. Sometimes Rory will talk about financial or pastoral issues with his brother or parents, too. So when there are situations that trouble him, he uses his friends and family to engage in ‘talk and thought’ and reflects on these conversations to direct his actions. One particular example is when he wanted to pursue a career in teaching. Because of his bad stutter he had found that the selection process at one university, which included reading out loud, was one where he could not succeed. Having discussed the options with his childhood friend he eventually ended up joining the profession at the Martindale City Academy through what was then known as the Graduate Teacher programme route, where the selection process was
more flexible and suited to his needs. Although this demonstrated communicative reflexivity in action, Rory’s meta-reflexivity was interwoven with his communicative reflexivity—he was keen to become a teacher for moral and value-based reasons, rather than for instrumental ones.

**Marie**

Marie also uses meta-reflexive ways of responding to the world, and her narratives demonstrate a concern with family, much as Jill’s do. Although Marie is talkative, there is a guarded caution in her narrative that is largely absent from Jill’s narrative. For example, when Marie was talking about her decision to resign, she was evasive about the motivating factors, which contrasts with Jill’s openness about moving school. Although Marie does demonstrate a tendency to communicative reflexivity and to ‘thought and talk’, she demonstrates autonomous reflexivity as well. This is constituted through purposeful, self-contained and instrumental deliberation. For example, when she did decide to resign, she talked the decision through with her family and friends, but they were much less of a motivating factor in her decision than Jill’s family was for her when she was making a similar decision about promotion. Marie’s decision was much more individual, and much less predicated on family and friends as key to her concerns. For a young woman to whom control and agency are important, as she expresses, it seems out of character to have resigned without a concrete plan in place. However, this would be quite typical of a meta-reflexive whose values are being compromised, as Marie had intimated. So, despite using communicative and autonomous reflexivity as important modes, perhaps particularly in relation to situations regarding her family, Marie’s tendency in work-related situations is to focus on the problems of society and to use meta-reflexivity as well. In this extract from her narrative about her concept map she demonstrates both her sense of moral purpose but also her determination to live out her concerns:

> I think ‘cos you do everything for them, and they are the people that you think about all day every day whether you’re in the classroom, you’re home, you’re asleep, they are, they’re the reasons why you come into school, yes definitely... without doubt, and it’s the things that they say and it’s a two-way system, learning with them, yeah. One hundred percent that was the first choice [for
which factors are important to what she thinks, feels and does as a teacher].
(Concept map, June 2014, 74)

This concern with moral purpose is illustrated, too, by Marie’s emphasis on combating the disadvantage that is experienced by the pupils at Martindale. She does this, for instance, by putting an emphasis on ‘real’ cookery in her lessons, by teaching the pupils to make dishes that they can take home, and by emphasising the fact that in school they cook with supermarkets’ ‘SmartPrice’ ingredients, which are more affordable.

Discourses at a number of levels intertwine to impact on Marie’s reflexivity and agency. Nonetheless, for her, some macro and meso level discourses are enacted and privileged because of a reflexivity linked to a personal and social identity—the discourses concerned with BSE and her social identity as her background as a farmer’s daughter, for instance. These are so powerful for her that they push away at and engulf other key discourses, such as the individual-attainment discourse. Others, such as the changes to GCSE policy regarding food-related subjects, are less privileged in Marie’s narrative, although they still play a part in her identity and agency.

**Patricia**

The dominant mode of reflexivity that Patricia indicated employing is autonomous reflexivity. In contrast to the other teacher participants, Patricia has in some ways adopted a strategic stance towards the constraining factors that she comes up against in school. Archer (2007a) describes how this strategic stance towards society’s constraints and enablements results in autonomous reflexives “seeking to avoid society’s ‘snakes’ and to ride its ‘ladders’”. Scambler (2013) suggests that autonomous reflexives are (strategically) orientated to ‘outcome’. In Patricia’s case, the outcome might be having a job where she feels that her values are not being compromised and that keeps her comfortably off, as well having a family of her own. She was the only one of the participants who spontaneously mentioned money being key to her career choices:
London is the place to go, that’s where I need to go to get a good career, get good money… (Timeline narrative, July 2014, 22)

Although Patricia was concerned with values, this was not in the same way that Rory was—her concern did not demonstrate features of meta-reflexivity. Instead, her concern was with a tension between her own position and the values that she perceived to be those of the teaching profession, a profession that I have already indicated might be described as a ‘moral profession’, where values and a sense of moral purpose are endemic. So Patricia’s disquiet, her sense that she had compromised her values to be teaching in an independent school, troubled her, but her disquiet did not result in her moving school. Instead, she was riding one of society’s ‘ladders’ by remaining at the Russell school. Although she engaged in the self-examination that is a feature of meta-reflexivity, she did not demonstrate the trajectory that would be expected from a meta-reflexive who was idealistic and who feels distressed at the dissonance between her values and her current position. Such a meta-reflexive would be impelled to move on from the Russell School—a possible action that Patricia has only flirted with briefly. For instance, when she was describing how she had trained as a primary teacher, she explained how values and the idea of teaching as a moral profession were key to her:

\[
\begin{align*}
J & : \text{why did you want to do primary?} \\
P & : \text{I wanted the variety… I also thought you can get in at the roots and actually maybe make a difference early on and I still feel that… part of me is kind of a bit ‘have I sold my soul all to get an easier life’...} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Timeline, July 2014, 46)

Over time this distress and Patricia’s concern with values has resulted in a much more instrumental approach to her work. Patricia is keen to be seen as a principled practitioner, but she is stressed by her job and the ethos of the school, as she says:

\[
I \text{ really like working there but at the same time I hate working there sometimes because of the expectations...} \\
\]

(Concept mapping, July 2014, 221)

The fact that she does feel stressed by her job and that this causes her to see her situation as more of an instrumental one than she feels comfortable with is an issue for her. This ambivalence was evident throughout our interactions.
I don’t know sometimes I see it just as a job and it’s just money. But at times you have a really great experience in the classroom, you feel like you’ve actually made a difference to somebody and then it does seem like it’s a much bigger part of your life, but I think in my own mind I’m thinking it’s a job. (Final interview, July 2015, 72–76)

Although this ambivalence is marked, it is not a real tension within Patricia. It is a tension between her own actions and beliefs and the values conveyed by the professional discourses within which her professional life is sometimes situated. When she is at school, it may be the case that this tension is less marked, as she works with other teachers in the independent sector. However, Patricia has professional experiences outside the independent sector, and she has friends who work in non-independent schools; this may be one of the sources of her discomfiture.

**Discussion of modes of reflexivity**

In this discussion the similarities as well as the differences between the teachers have been emphasised. Every individual uses all the ideal modes of reflexivity, but each has a tendency to prefer one more than the others, according to Archer (2012). In terms of the teacher-participants’ life projects—substantive issues that they articulated as being their main concerns—my data suggests that their reflexivity reveals their orientation towards both their life projects and their life more generally. However, the intertwined nature of their concerns, focusing (say) both on family and on work (as in Jill’s case) means that a simple ‘dominant’ mode description ignores the complexities of the relationships between agents and structures that, according to my data, these inner conversations take into account. My argument is that given an under-socialised model and an inadequate conceptualisation of the intertwined nature of personal and professional projects, a more sophisticated understanding of the modes of reflexivity is essential to reflect agents’ inner conversations.

Archer does not discuss how particular contexts and moments might require different modes of reflexivity to be employed. Although there is no doubt that the personal and professional are intertwined and related to each other, there is still a sense in which they are separate. For example, the personal and professional often
play out in different physical contexts (home and school, for example) with a different set of dialogic partners, and a focus on different projects and concerns. Such structural and cultural differences are likely to result in different forms of reflexivity being employed.

Table 6.1 shows how the different nature of participants’ concerns, and how participants think about and direct their agency in different professional and personal projects and moments, is reflected in the ways that they apparently employ different modes of reflexivity.
Table 6.1: Participants’ dominant and auxiliary modes of reflexivity

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<th>Reflexivity demonstrated in:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key professional contexts and moments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jill</td>
<td>CM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rory</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>AMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia</td>
<td>A</td>
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C communicative reflexivity
A autonomous reflexivity
M meta-reflexivity

In Table 6.1, the full-size, bold, uppercase letter indicates the dominant mode of reflexivity that a participant might use in a particular context, a context that has particular cultural and structural features. The smaller, subscript, bold, uppercase letters indicate that these modes are also employed by an individual but to a lesser extent; I have called these ‘auxiliary’ modes.

So, for example, at home and with her family, Jill clearly uses communicative reflexivity as her dominant mode. Family and the values of care are important and are also associated with strong elements of communicative reflexivity. These are privileged for her. She is a C. At school, and in her wider professional life, although communicative reflexivity is still dominant, there are also features of meta-reflexivity. Those of her values that are associated with caring in the classroom and in the school are documented as elements of meta-reflexivity, but are secondary (and yet correctly part of the whole story). However, Jill doesn’t leave any of her schools because of these professional concerns. Rather, she is sidelined through the particular ways in which national and local policies play out, for example through the federation of Ashfield and Ladywood. Hence, in her case, in her professional life, her communicative reflexivity is dominant still, and interlinks with her meta-reflexivity. The higher-order purpose and project that is evident in Jill’s inner conversations is related to caring. That particular combination of her concerns for family, caring and values plays out in relation both to her family and to the pupils at
school. The dominant and auxiliary modes are intertwined in a symbiotic fashion, and direct her actions in relation to her projects and concerns. Jill’s meta-reflexivity is predicated on her caring values, derived from her family background. It is not as developed as (say) Rory’s value-driven meta-reflexivity—as I discuss below—but moments of meta-reflexivity, relating to the ethos of caring, are nonetheless there for Jill. It is an auxiliary mode, and has a supportive function in relation to her communicative reflexivity. Jill is a $\text{C}_M$ professionally and a $\text{C}$ in personal contexts.

Rory demonstrates meta-reflexivity in both his professional and personal life. He is an $\text{M}$. In his portraits and data, meta-reflexivity and his concern with values and with problematising the social order come through strongly. Although, like everyone, Rory does use other forms of reflexivity, it is really meta-reflexivity that characterises his inner conversations. There is little separation (either geographically or otherwise) for Rory between the personal and professional. For example, he lives near school and sees his pupils sometimes when he is out shopping. Although he does have friends outside school, and an active social life, there is a sense in which the personal and professional are closely linked for him, and the meta-reflexivity that he employs is largely employed consistently across his personal and professional life. In Rory’s narrative the predominance of meta-reflexivity emphasises the inadequacies of the meta-reflexive moments of the other three participants. The difference between Rory and the other participants may be related to his political understandings concerning the nature of society, systems, disadvantage and fairness, that create a sense of disquiet for him.

Marie’s personal and professional lives are in many ways more separate than are Rory’s. Perhaps as a result of this, Marie employs different modes of reflexivity in relation to her professional and personal concerns. As far as the personal goes, she has close links with her family in Ireland, and her narratives show that her upbringing as a farmer’s daughter, baking apple pies with her mother in the farmhouse kitchen, has had a significant influence on her. She still talks to her mother every day, talking about the minutiae of the day and checking out various courses of action before she makes decisions. Hence, as the table shows, Marie’s dominant mode of reflexivity is communicative, with auxiliary modes reflecting her autonomy and concern with values; she is a $\text{C}_{\text{MA}}$. As far as her professional projects
go, the emphasis for Marie is on developing her agency as an independent individual, making what might be described as ‘lonely’ decisions, but with an accentuation on her personal values and principles. She uses others as sources of ideas and decision-making, as well as drawing on her own morals, values and independence. However, the final decision is always hers and does not get ‘checked’ with anyone else. Marie is an AMC in relation to her professional concerns. She employs autonomous reflexivity as her dominant mode, but this is supported by both meta-reflexivity and communicative reflexivity, both of which derive to some extent from the structural and cultural elements of her natal background and upbringing.

Marie’s school is in England, a good distance from her birthplace in Ireland. This geographic separation and contextual discontinuity may be one of the reasons for the different emphases she puts on dialogic partners and relationships in her personal and private life, the different modes of reflexivity she employs as dominant in her personal and professional life, and the different privileging of personal and professional projects. The personal and professional can be seen alongside each other, and the forms of reflexivity that she employs as dominant and auxiliary modes relate differentially to each.

Patricia is an autonomous reflexive. She is an A both in relation to her personal and her professional life. Although there is some degree of separation between the personal and professional for Patricia, her narratives suggest that she behaves and thinks similarly about them both. Her reliance on autonomous reflexivity is very evident in relation to her personal and professional concerns. Although she does demonstrate a concern with morals and values (including the fact that she was aware of the values-laden nature of teaching as a profession) that might be thought typical of a meta-reflexive, the fact that she is still teaching in the Russell school despite her sense of disquiet shows that meta-reflexivity is not a mode of reflexivity that she employs.

So, despite her concern with morals and values, Patricia is a true autonomous reflexive who is as far as possible trying to avoid the snakes and to ride the ladders (Archer, 2007a).
The combinations of dominant and auxiliary modes of reflexivity reflect my understanding that describing a participant’s dominant mode of reflexivity is a complex task. Participants may not simply use different modes in different situations or types of contexts, but may also use elements of two or more modes in any context. This may be a useful way forward in thinking about reflexivity. The notion of having a combination of dominant and auxiliary modes of reflexivity is not just about the use of two modes at different times. Rather, this ‘combination’ approach reflects the participants’ involvements with different projects and concerns, both simultaneously and differentially. Again drawing on notions of leading identity and hybridised identity (e.g. Black et al., 2010), the data suggests that participants’ involvement with their particular projects and concerns may demand the employment of more than one of the modes of reflexivity, but in an intertwining fashion. The data is suggestive of a potential spectrum of modes of reflexivity, with different modes used to greater or lesser extents in particular contexts with cultural and structural features.

Further work might debate this idea of a ‘spectrum of reflexivity’ and the changes in the ways in which individuals may employ reflexivity over time. In addition, the possibility that factors such as gender, ethnicity, class and age are key determinants of reflexivity, as Archer starts to suggest (Archer, 2012), could be explored. These ideas are underdeveloped in Archer’s work; a more detailed understanding of them, and of the relational aspects of individuals’ lives, could lead to the development of more powerful frameworks and thinking tools.

In this chapter I have discussed the portraits and narratives of the teacher participants firstly in relation to the interplay of factors at macro, meso and proximal levels that affect the teachers’ beings and doings, and secondly in relation to their reflexivity. I have also considered the inadequacies of Archer’s suggestion that individual agents employ dominant modes of reflexivity. I have suggested that it may be more useful to think about individual agents’ inner conversations in particular contexts in a different way, by considering how modes of reflexivity might be combined. Given an under-socialised model of agency, such as that drawn on by Archer, and an inadequate conceptualisation of the intertwined nature of personal
and professional projects in her work, a more sophisticated understanding of the modes of reflexivity is essential to reflect agents’ inner conversations.
Chapter 7: Discussion and conclusions

Recapitulation of purpose, and summary of analyses

My work was designed to engage with the overarching research question ‘What are the doings and beings of teachers?’

More particularly, this work was designed to answer the three sub-questions:

- In what ways do teachers’ beings and doings reflect structural macro level educational policy discourse, structured meso level school practice and proximal level biographical factors (RQ1)?
- How do the macro, meso and proximal levels intersect in the doings and beings of teachers (RQ2)?
- How does individual teacher reflexivity mediate the structural and proximal to suggest the privileging of particular forms of teacher beings and doings (RQ3)?

In this chapter I explore a number of issues that relate to my research questions and data analysis and discussion. First I explore some of the research literatures documented earlier in the thesis, and in so doing I develop my explanatory and theoretical ideas about teachers’ thinking, beings and doings. Second, in so doing I examine how my data and thinking might help develop certain theoretical ideas associated with the critical realist perspective, in particular the thinking and writing of Archer. Finally I discuss some of the methodological issues that pertain to the study.

My work shows that teacher identity and agency are sophisticated and elaborate concepts that have a complex relationship both with structural components of society (that relate to educational systems, historical educational practices and discourses and accountability/performativity systems) and with cultural practices (for instance taken for granted understandings of the curriculum, the nature of pedagogy and of schooling). This relationship is mediated through the different forms of reflexivity that teachers employ.
By engaging with my sense of professional disquiet concerning policy discourses about teacher agency and development, my research has examined in detail the narratives that teachers constructed about their thinking and doings. These narratives reflected both their professional and personal concerns. My approach to this research has not only been about the substantive issues associated with teacher identity and agency that are reflected in the portraits of the teachers discussed in Chapter 6, but has also engaged in aspects of theoretical development with regard to critical realist thinking about the structure/agency debate, as well as with methods for investigating identity and reflexivity.

Chapter 6 shows that agency and reflexivity impact on teachers’ identity and agency—their beings and doings. My research confirms that there is a set of factors and discourses that underpin teachers’ beings and doings, and that intersect in a complex fashion. Elements of this intersection appear common to the teachers in my research and provide a sense of what it means to be a teacher, at least currently. However, there are also clear differences in the detailed and specific articulations of identity and agency documented in the teacher portraits; these are suggestive of teachers’ individual approaches, their personal projects and their preferred modes of reflexivity. Although elements of commonality between teachers’ doing and being are discussed, the substantive focus of the work considers the role of reflexivity in mediating the structural and cultural issues that are suggestive of a common understanding of teaching. These understandings, and particular forms of reflexivity, both generate and may be generated by particular forms of identity and agency.

**Developing Archer’s ideas about structure, culture and agency: TRAIt and the TRAIt toolkit**

Archer discusses how the dominant mode of reflexivity employed by individuals reproduces or changes their situations (morphogenesis/morphostasis). I discuss this approach to dominant modes of reflexivity in Chapter 2. This dominance determines an individual’s response to the way in which s/he develops her/his
personal and professional projects. However, my data has shown that in fact teachers concern themselves with intersecting projects; there is a sense in which the personal and professional intertwine, as we have seen in the portraits. This means that elements of Archer’s analysis concerning reflexivity are not adequate. In addition, her work is more descriptive than explanatory, and therefore I aimed to develop a framework that was both analytical and explanatory.

In the introduction to her book *Social origins of education systems*, Archer (2013b) suggests that:

> A social ontology explains nothing and does not attempt to do so; its task is to define and justify the terms and the form in which explanations can properly be cast. Similarly, the Morphogenetic Approach also explains nothing; it is an explanatory framework that has to be filled in by those using it as a toolkit with which to work on a specific issue, who then do purport to explain something ... The explanatory framework is intended to be a very practical toolkit ... that enables researchers ... by specifying the ‘when’, ‘how’ and ‘where’ and avoiding the vagaries of assuming ‘anytime’, ‘anyhow’ and ‘anywhere’. (Archer, 2013b, p.xi)

Archer is referring to the way in which she has developed a practical toolkit in terms of her morphogenetic approach, to help with understanding the ways in which individuals reproduce or change their social situations. I suggest that there is same need for specificity about *how*, *when* and *where* is important in looking at the mediating work of reflexivity. To this end this next section introduces a rudimentary thinking tool that I have designed, **TRAIt**: the Teacher Reflexivity, Agency and Identity tool. TRAIt is designed to explain how reflexivity might be a key mediator between the individual as agent and the factors and discourses of her/his contexts, illuminating the ‘*how*, *when* and *where*’ of these complex relationships. My development of this tool, TRAIt, is part of my contribution to knowledge.

TRAIt is a thinking tool. Thinking tools are often used in education and serve a number of functions, including being useful in making thinking more transparent and in providing ways to think specifically about different content and ideas (Mappen, 2015). In designing TRAIt, I develop an idea about the integration of reflexivity and my conceptual framework that I first advance in Chapter 2, and draws on both theory and on my empirical data. In Chapter 6 my data concerning
identity and agency combine with my theorising and lead to the development of my ideas about blended reflexivity. These ideas, in combination with my understanding—developed both from theory and from data—that Archer’s work is under-socialised, have been combined with the ideas in my conceptual framework. This has resulted in my development of TRAIIt as a thinking tool.

Figure 7.1: TRAIIt: Teacher Reflexivity, Agency and Identity tool

The three concentric rings of the TRAIIt tool are as follows.

The inner circle (yellow) shows the teacher as an agent, with agentic powers, located within the socialising structures of society and more particularly of education. This circle has a clearly defined circumference, to show the analytical separation of agent and structure.
The middle ring (purple) represents the two way determining and mediating processes of reflexivity. Although Margaret Archer said to me in conversation that she would not want to see ‘magazine articles in aeroplane seat pockets entitled “What kind of reflexive are you?”’, there is a sense in which her ICONI measure is already providing heuristics for determining individual agents’ dominant form(s) of reflexivity. The determining processes of reflexivity can be seen in discussions with teachers about how they design and facilitate personal projects of concern to them. Reflexivity is a two-way interactional process; the double-headed arrows in the diagram illustrate this. According to Archer (2012), forms of dialogic relationships and of internal conversations, the ways in which the personal projects of participants are determined and facilitated, and contextual continuity or discontinuity are the determining and mediating processes of reflexivity. These have all been exemplified in participants’ portraits. A double morphogenesis is involved: agency results in structural and cultural elaboration, but in the process, agency is itself elaborated and transformed, acquiring new emergent powers (Archer, 1995). In other words, the self-same process by which people bring about social transformation is responsible for transforming agency. People generate the elaboration of structure and culture, but they themselves undergo elaboration as people at the same time (Archer, 1995, p.253). This is represented in the diagram by the double-headed arrows, which represent the complex iterative processes of double morphogenesis. The middle (purple) ring has fuzzy boundaries that represent the interactional and mediating role of these processes of reflexivity.

The blue outer circle represents (macro level) discourses and policies and (more meso level) policy enactments and conditions, local to particular schools and areas, that impact on teacher identity and agency. This circle also has clearly defined perimeters to denote the analytical separation of structure and agency.

Below, I populate TRAlt using one of my teacher participants, Jill, as an exemplar. The conceptual framework had face validity in relation to the data generated by my interviews with and observations of Jill and so populating the framework was a relatively clear-cut process.
Figure 7.2: TRAIt populated with Jill’s data

In the TRAIt representation for Jill, the inner circle shows her as an agent, with agentic powers, located within the socialising structures of society and more particularly of education. Her age, her experiences as a teacher (both recent and over time) and the caring values that are encapsulated in the stability of her family are important in the determination of her agency and the modes of reflexivity that she employs.

The middle ring (purple) representing the two-way determining and mediating processes of reflexivity can be exemplified as follows for Jill.
**Contextual continuity**

The contextual continuity denoted by Jill's family and the close stable relationships between her and her parents and siblings, as well as her emphasis on stable relationships in her own family, are evident in Jill’s narratives. Archer (2012) argues that such stability and a focus on relational goods—such as love, reliance and trust—are likely to result in communicative reflexivity being the dominant mode that an individual employs. As I have shown, Jill does demonstrate such communicative reflexivity, particularly in relation to her personal projects. However, as a C_M, she also employs meta-reflexivity as an auxiliary mode, and this is related to the different nature of her professional projects from that of her personal projects.

**Personal and professional projects**

Jill’s personal projects were to do with the family. For example, she was planning her ‘wedding’ (a renewal of vows) when we first met, and has in mind a family project (about which she was reticent) for the next few years’ time. Professionally, her projects were related to her career trajectory; were her ambitions related to senior leadership, with all that entails, or was she more concerned with teaching English and with her classroom practice? This was a dilemma that Jill mentioned on a number of occasions, and in the new academic year following our final meeting she started a new and challenging teaching job in a school near her parents’ house. The rationale for this decision was substantially instrumental: Jill wanted her personal and professional projects to be interwoven. In this instance, she wanted to be near to her elderly parents as well as to be able to have a fulfilling career. These personal and professional concerns and their intertwined nature are key to the fact that Jill employs both meta-reflexive and communicative reflexivity, although, as we have seen, they are employed differently for different projects. For example, when Jill is considering making a career move, her family (both the natal family and her husband and daughters) impact on her thinking. This is partly through discussion with her husband Stuart, who has a key input into decisions. Jill felt that she asked his advice, and then took it into consideration in combination with other factors, in her reflexive inner conversations. Then she was able to direct her agentic decision-
making. Jill’s professional decisions were also affected by her family circumstances. For example, a significant consideration was her geographical proximity to her aging parents—and she talks about how she could visit them from her new job after school. So there is a sense in which in her ‘leading identity’ might be seen as hybridised; her personal and professional identities, as a wife and mother, as a daughter and as a teacher intersect in complex ways.

**Types of dialogic relationships and dialogic partners**

As a communicative reflexive, Jill discusses both personal and professional issues with her family, being impelled to check on her thinking with her close relatives, particularly with her husband and sister. She also has a close group of colleagues on whom she particularly relied when she wanted to discuss professional concerns. However, when it came to making decisions about actions, Jill felt that she took those individuals’ ideas on board and then made her own decisions that felt right for her and that closely aligned with her values. The dialogic relationships are important for her, but they are not the sole determining factor of her agency.

The blue outer circle represents macro level discourses and policies and more meso level policy enactments and conditions, local to particular schools and areas, that impact on teacher identity and agency. In Jill’s case, the discourses that she articulated as being particularly significant to her agency and identity (what she thinks, feels and does, in terms of her concept map) concerned discourses at a national level concerning performativity. For example, she talked about a focus on examination results. These discourses were important, and this was perhaps related to Jill’s age, seniority and experience; this focus was less evident in the other three participants who are younger and more junior. Other national discourses that impacted on Jill’s agency included a concern with the ‘ever improving teacher’ that is a continuing priority for this government (Department for Education, 2016a). More locally, Jill has been affected by the academisation programme (e.g. Rayner, 2015) that resulted in Ladywood School taking over the school where she was head of English, and the consequential imperative for her to move to St. Gervase’s.

Although this exemplar has used Jill’s data, TRAIIt could be utilised for any
particular individual teacher and this could be done by asking particular questions of individuals and their contexts. To this end I have developed a rudimentary prototype toolkit based on TRAIT. Using a toolkit in this way may enable individuals to have a better understanding of how professional identity and agency develop and to bring insights into the determining processes of reflexivity and agency that are important to teachers.

The toolkit (Table 7.1 below) is currently in a rudimentary form, but I am developing it further with teachers and leaders in education. It will eventually comprise a bank of discussion points and questions, derived from my model—that in turn is derived from data and theory. The theory on which it draws includes that of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and of Archer (e.g. 1995; 2003). The questions are pertinent to each of the rings of the TRAIT model. The responses to these questions can be combined to provide a set of predictions about an individual's preferred mode(s) of reflexivity, their personal and professional concerns, and their contexts, which can inform an understanding of the development of their identity and agency. Teachers can use the toolkit reflectively for their own developmental purposes, or it can be used by managers in conjunction with teachers to work collaboratively in relation to teacher development and agency.
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<th>Rationale</th>
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<td>Determining her/his personal and professional concerns or projects and priorities to personal factors</td>
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<td>Discussion of these ideas for consideration (in the column to the left)</td>
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<td>Discussion of the individual's inner conversations:</td>
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<tr>
<td>a) Talk and think—reliance on trusted others communicative reflexivity as preferred mode.</td>
<td>a) Does her/his inner conversations tend to be talk and think—does she/his rely on others to confirm or contribute her/his ideas and inner conversations—&quot;talk and think&quot;?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Lonely thinker—self-contained instrumental reflexivity as preferred mode.</td>
<td>b) Does her/his inner conversations tend to be self-thinker? Does she/his inner conversations do not tend to be talk and think?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Problematising the social order, ideals, inner conversations, her/his concern with morals and values—Does she/his concern with morals and values lead to go round in circles?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ideas for consideration</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRAIt toolkit</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher as agent</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family background</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal values</td>
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Table 7.1: TRAITtalker
These questions (in the column to the left) are concerned with the ways in which individuals employ different modes of reflexivity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Auxiliary Modes of Reflexivity</th>
<th>Dominant and Auxiliary Forms of Reflexivity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different forms of reflexivity given to dialogic relationships may be clues to (say) a tendency to meta-reflexivity.</td>
<td>Questions may also indicate concerns with values and morals, which suggest a tendency towards communicative reflexivity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you talk to people about your personal and professional life, about your concerns about home and work?</td>
<td>If so, who do you talk to? Where and when do you have these conversations? Do you ask for advice and listen to those suggestions?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tell me about your family. What kind of relationships do you have with them?

Determining relational reflexivity—thinking about how relations impact different forms and importance given to dialogic relationships.

What are her/his main personal and professional projects and dominant concerns? Does she think about these projects and concerns differently? How? Does s/he talk to other people about them differently? How?
Tell me about the things that you experience that you feel affect your work and your professional life—are these things easier or harder for you to deal with? Do you feel that you can take control when external things impact on your life?

What are these things, and how do you feel about them? These might be global issues like government policies or world events, or happen in school or they might be more national or local issues like things that happen there. These might be quite local issues like things that happen that make your job or the case of your work more complicated or less complicated. These might also be quite local issues that happen in your professional life—these are things that affect your work and your professional life.

These questions (in the column to the left) are designed to indicate the determinants and locations of the key discourses that either constrain or facilitate the individual’s agency.
Methodological issues arising from the research

Portraiture
Although I found portraiture compelling, both as a methodology that satisfied the criteria for my research and also in terms of the engaging portraits that it produced, I did have anxieties about the degree of artistic licence that I could legitimately take when using this method. The challenges were to encapsulate the essence of the individual in the portrait; to produce a piece of writing that was trustworthy; and to endow the portraits with the dynamic feel of the individual that was demonstrated in their narratives.

English (2000) acknowledges that Lawrence-Lightfoot’s (1983) book The Good High School uses portraiture to great effect, but he questions the authority of the portraitist in drawing portraits, and notes that there is no way of ascertaining the validity of portraits, or of readers having independent access to information or to alternative explanations. He (English, 2000) uses this analogy ‘there is no way to unmake the omelet (portrait) once it is cooked (constructed)’. However, in articulating this critique, English fails to understand the nature of portraiture. To some extent at least portraiture is about what Clough and Nutbrown (2002, p.26) describe as ‘radical listening’—in other words, attending to the voices which may be heard round a given topic. As well as the voices of research participants, radical listening involves the researcher working out their positionality, which is concerned both with what lies behind what is said by participants and what is written by other researchers in the field. As Clough and Nutbrown (2002) state quite categorically, all research is by definition positional. The standpoint of the researcher is a fundamental platform on which enquiry is developed. Throughout my work I have explained that my own position—my background, professional concerns and a sense of professional disquiet with the way in which much work with teachers is done—drives my work. Research takes place in an environment. It is not free floating, any more than teacher identity is. It is
in the nature of qualitative research that it takes account of the relationships between the researcher and the participants, and between the research and the topic of research. Such research stresses the value-laden nature of enquiry (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p.10). Hence, no research, whether it uses portraiture or more ‘scientific’ quantitative methods is necessarily values-free, a point that English (2000) does not take into account in his critique of portraiture. The way that I produced my portraits, using both the panning and surveying methods outlined by Tesch (1987), and by acknowledging and employing my partiality, is what gives them the depth of insight into the teachers’ beings and doings.

Problems that change even as they are worked on
There might appear to be elements of education and of the education systems that remain and have remained unchanged— notions of the curriculum, the teachers and the classrooms, for instance. Nonetheless, even these relatively constant elements are either disappearing or evolving. For example, at Martindale City Academy, traditional understandings of the classroom are evolving and there are almost no classrooms with four walls and a door where a teacher might work on their own with a class of about 30 pupils. Instead, there are large bases where more than half a dozen adults might be working with between two and three hundred children on different subjects in different ways. Equally, some educators are suggesting that teachers are no longer necessary—at least not to deliver knowledge (e.g. Stephens, 2013)—as online and electronic forms of education gain sway. It might also be argued that there has been a move over the last few years, certainly in England, to make ‘the curriculum’ more knowledge-based (e.g. Evans, R.J. 2013).

It is therefore the case that the nature of doing research in education is such that by definition, this kind of research deals with complex problems that change even as they are being worked on. As Archer suggests, the impact that the relational contestation between interested parties has on structure is of
course only ever temporary (Archer, 2013b, p.xv), and hence educational structures, both local, national and global are in a constant state of flux. Similarly, the identities of those agents who are operating within those structures are fluid and ever developing and changing. This makes research in the field of education—and indeed in any field, if we accept the premises of morphogenesis—a challenge, as it has to be responsive to those changes and also provide credible explanations for them.

Inductive and deductive processes
The ‘story’ of this research, told in a linear fashion as it is here, does not do justice to the ‘zigzagging’ nature of the research process, identified by Emmel (2013) that has been a feature of my research over the last five years. My work has drawn on both inductive and deductive processes, driven both by theory and by empirical data. Integrating these approaches has been what John Law (2004) describes as a ‘messy’ process. Although much is written about methodological hygiene and theoretical purity, Law (2003) argues that it is important not to ‘other’ mess, and to classify it as something alien and disadvantageous but instead to find ways of knowing and living with the complexities and confusions of mess. Although he suggests that realism cannot cope well with the concept of mess, I contend that critical realism, with its emphasis on entities being emergent, transformational, relational and process orientated can indeed do this—and can do it well. According to Bhaskar and Danermark (2006, p.280) critical realism presents a ‘maximally inclusive’ meta-theoretical perspective which can ‘accommodate the insights of … other meta-theoretical positions while avoiding their drawbacks’. As I discuss in Chapter 3, critical realism draws on both ontological realism and epistemological relativism, and hence, as Owens (2011) suggests, can advocate that research practice should be sensitive to both observation and interpretation, focused on developing an understanding of hidden processes and structures, messy or otherwise.
The constraints of a thesis such as this mean that it is not possible to explore the lack of linearity and the presence of ‘mess’ in more depth. Despite these constraints it is important to document that there was a sense in which working through the data and with the teacher participants in a holistic fashion has changed me in a very real way, both personally and professionally. For example, my engagement with these literatures and the data surrounding teachers and teaching has impacted on my thinking such that my career has developed. I now hold a senior management post in teacher education at an HEI, and simultaneously, my understanding of the intertwined nature of the personal and professional in education has impacted on my understanding of the complex intersectionality that affects my own life, both personally and professionally, as well as the lives of my participants.

**Implications and recommendations**

As it is the case that today’s educational contexts—both at macro and meso level—do impact on teachers, then for those of us involved in designing and enacting policy at either of these levels, the implications are clear. The cultural and structural factors which frame the beings and doings of teachers must be considered and attended to in order for us to effect improvements in practice. An understanding of the factors that affect teacher agency, and of the ways in which teachers negotiate and mediate the relationship between agency and structure, is key in working with teachers. To deliver meaningful training and development work for teachers and to facilitate them in framing their personal narratives about the development of their professional identity in a critically reflective way may lead to a powerful sense of agency. This was what was at the forefront of my mind as I developed the TRAIt thinking tool for teachers and teacher educators. TRAIt’s use as a tool is twofold. Firstly, it can be used to help frame teachers’ own thinking about their beings and doings in order to develop the promotion of teacher agency, by facilitating teachers in framing their personal narratives, in a critically reflective way, about the development of their professional identity. Secondly, it can be used by those working with teachers,
such as teacher educators, in framing their thinking so that the limitations of an over-reliance on the more insular views of teachers and teaching can be overcome in facilitating the development of teacher agency.

**Contributions to knowledge**

The contribution to knowledge of this work is threefold: theoretical, practical, and methodological.

**Practical and theoretical contributions**

This work contributes to theory concerning identity, agency and reflexivity. In particular, it applies a critical realist approach to an educational context. In doing this my work develops work that Margaret Archer started in the 1970s when she first emphasised the importance of education to morphogenesis (Archer, 1979). My own research has contributed to knowledge partly by using Archerian theory, but also by developing this approach and by applying it to an understanding of teachers’ beings and doings. Making links between identity, agency and reflexivity in teachers has the potential to contribute to the wider debate about identity and agency as well as to facilitate understandings of teachers’ beings and doings.

When Archer comments that her morphogenetic framework is intended to be a practical toolkit for those focusing on specifying the ‘when’, ‘how’ and ‘where’ of specific issues (Archer, 2013b, p.xi), it is clear that she sees that the practical implications of her work are key. Practical applications, and particularly, according to Archer, considerations of the education system are vitally important: she suggests that educational systems are neither self-governing nor self-organising. Instead, she suggests that they are what they are because of the ‘relational contestation’ between interested parties that gives a structure—that is of course only ever temporary—to the organisation of education (Archer, 2013b, p.xv). However, it is notable that Archer’s own work does not do this
practical work to any great degree; her contribution is in the provision of the framework.

One of my concerns in doing this research was to be able to effect improvements in practice because of an enhanced understanding of teacher agency and identity in the current neoliberal context. My work promotes teacher agency and how an understanding of it can be a contribution to resistance against many of the local, national and global discourses that work against teacher agency and professionalism. My work also provides guidance for practice for working with teachers in teacher education and development, in the form of TRAIIt, the Teacher Reflexivity, Agency and Identity tool and the associated toolkit.

**Methodological contributions**

This work uses innovative narrative elicitation techniques, such as concept mapping, and timelines, as well as the significant event technique. These methods, together with reflections on observations and on projects and reflexivity, all contribute to the construction of portraits that enabled me to develop my understanding of the nature of teacher agency and of reflexivity. Although concept maps (Castro et al., 2006) and timelines (Kolar et al., 2015) have been used as stimuli for facilitating participants’ narratives and encouraging them to articulate their understandings in other work, my work is the first time they have been used to extract understandings of reflexivity and the links between agency and structure in teachers. Similarly, portraits are a relatively new way of demonstrating understandings of teachers’ beings and doings; this method was developed specifically for educational contexts by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (e.g. Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983) but in my research it has been used specifically to illuminate understandings of teachers’ reflexivity and of their beings and doings—their identity. The understandings that are developed in this way are particularly apposite for working on the relationship between structure and agency. This is because of a number of features. As with
painted portraits, the written portraiture methodology developed by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) pays close attention to context, and includes this attentional focus as key to the interpretation of meanings. This focus was of course central to my conceptual framework and to illuminating the relationship between structure and agency for teachers. Lawrence-Lightfoot (n.d.-b) also describes how portraits are simultaneously anachronistic and contemporary and how as a result they are documents of both inquiry and intervention, as I have been able to use them here. In addition, and finally, portraitists explicitly insert themselves into the stories they tell in an in-depth process of reflexivity (Kuttner and Threkeld, 2008). The portraits were a co-construction in that they included my own and the participants’ understandings of the educational contexts in which their beings and doings are situated. For all these reasons, the particular use of portraiture in this way and in this context is an original contribution to knowledge.

**Conclusions**

The proposed policies set out in the recent White Paper on Education (Department for Education, 2016a) may well have as their consequence the abolition of education as a public function. The two contrasting perspectives (the ‘technical’ teacher and the teacher as professional agent) that relate to the professional lives of teachers and that I introduced in Chapter 1 are therefore likely to be contextualised rather differently than they have been over the last 30 years or so. Nonetheless, the positioning of the beings and doings of teachers as malleable, even if they are less likely to be subject to the same policy stipulations, is likely to remain.

My thesis has demonstrated that an understanding of reflexivity and of the factors and discourses that create professional identity and agency for different teachers over time can be useful in working with teachers. The work is strongly rooted in critical realist theory as well as in empirical data, and as such has been able both to contribute to the theoretical field and also to provide
important guidance to both policymakers and practitioners in relation to teacher education and development. Although this is only a small-scale study, it is both exploratory and explanatory, and works at a deep level to integrate theory and empirical data in these explorations and explanations, which means that I can make strong claims for theoretical and practical developments resulting from my work.

If teachers own their own professional development, this is empowering. However, there are some conceptualisations of teacher development that are limited and less than useful. For example, some solely concern what teachers might do and the consequential behavioural changes (Bell and Gilbert, 1994); others just concern the issues with which teachers may have to contend (Grossman, 1994). More satisfactory conceptualisations include attitudes, behaviours and cognitions (e.g. Evans, L. 2013). Inevitably then, an understanding of teachers’ beings and doings and of their reflexivity and agency, such as that developed in my thesis, is necessary for those of us who work with teachers. More crucially, however, these understandings are powerful and empowering for the individual teacher.
References


Archer, M. S. (2007a) *Latest Project: The Internal Conversation: mediating between structure and agency.* [Online]. Warwick, UK: University of Warwick. Available at:


Archer, M. S. (2013b) Social origins of educational systems. (2nd ed.). Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge.


Department for Education. (2014) Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools. London: Department for Education.


# Appendices

**Appendix 1: Table of data collection points**

Table A1: When and where data was collected and the rationale behind it

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Data collection event</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late Summer 2014</td>
<td>Completion of timelines and accompanying narrative. Completion and narration of concept maps.</td>
<td>Introductions, setting scene for thick description and for participants to start narrating identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn term 2014</td>
<td>First lesson observation and post observation discussion.</td>
<td>Important to observe ‘beings and doings’ directly as well as to discuss them. At this point participants were more comfortable having met me previously.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring term 2015</td>
<td>Second lesson observation and post observation discussion.</td>
<td>As above, at a different time in the school year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer term 2015</td>
<td>Semi structured interview. Focus on participants’ reflexivity and agency.</td>
<td>Summary discussion to pick up any points not covered on either part. Interview to investigate (local) meso level contextual issues. Discussion of participants’ personal projects.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Timeline instructions

For this part of the study please use the whiteboard and coloured pens. Participants were requested to draw a timeline of their career to date as a teacher on an A1 size whiteboard. The instructions included the protocol,

Please draw a timeline for your career to date. Don’t worry too much about exact dates, but if you want to put dates in that is fine. You can start at whatever point in your life you think is best.

Please can you show the significant events in your life that affected your career and career choices, and also please include any events in the wider world that might have been significant to you? For example, some people have talked about meeting their partner, or about a law that affected how they worked.

There are no ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ ways to do this timeline—please do it in whatever way you feel most comfortable and use the pens and whiteboard in the way you feel happiest.

Please take as long as you want, but it should be a task of minutes not hours. If you’d like to talk about it as you do it, great, or we can talk about it afterwards—whichever you prefer.
Appendix 3: Exemplar transcript of timeline discussion. Patricia’s timeline narrative (1–192) transcript 23 July 2014

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>P: I probably will do it chronologically and then I might end up adding stuff so the first time I thought about teaching was I think when I was doing Latin and Greek at GCSE at school yes I’ll put that first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>J: So it’d not been talked about at home or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>P: Oh well there was that, I suppose my mum was trained as a teacher and I always knew that,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>J: Was she not working as a teacher when you were little?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>P: She did some supply, and tutoring; she gave up work to look after us and be at home and she tutored me and my brother as well for 11+ and... I wasn’t very good at reading when I was little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>J: So it was kind of in the atmosphere?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>P: Yes,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>J: Was your dad working as well?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>P: Yes my dad was an independent financial adviser, that will come in later... do you want me to put an age there... I was probably conscious of that about five or six I’d say so about 14-ish, was when I was doing Latin and Greek</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>J: So this is at secondary school?</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>P: Yes I was thinking I really enjoy these what can you do with them and yes I could go into teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>J: Because of Latin and Greek?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>P: Yes because I enjoyed them teachers were, I had one good teacher in first year year seven possibly year eight as well and he was brilliant but then for actual GCSEs we had this same teachers for the Latin and Greek and they weren’t very good at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>J: But you were still very interested</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>P: Yes I enjoyed the subjects</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>J: So it wasn’t maths at that point?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>P: No maths was easy... I enjoyed those two subjects and thought what can I do with them? But then I also really like working with animals as I did a lot of voluntary work with animals so I was thinking about being a vet at the same time. Age 15 do you want me to put this on as well?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>J: No it’s okay because it’s all being recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>P: But then was talking about what A-levels to do and I had a new chemistry teacher in fifth year and she basically said to me and my parents at a choice evening, ‘well I don’t’ like ‘I don’t know she’s going to get an A* at GCSE so not sure what she would get at A level’ and for veterinary science you’ve got to be the best with... so I thought okay I won’t and still did chemistry A-level but did chemistry physics and double maths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>J: So you didn’t want to keep Latin and Greek?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>P: No no and then I remember saying to a teacher in sixth form we went through a few supply teachers, one of our maths teachers was off on maternity leave and we tore a few of them to pieces because they didn’t know their stuff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 22. | P: And then I got this really good teacher who is still teaching at that school now and I’m still in touch with and I remember saying to him, not meaning to be offensive but I was thinking at the time what can you do with a maths degree other than go into teaching and he took offence at that but sort of half laughed it off as his personality is, one of the other students in the class told me off for it but it was obviously on my mind then, thinking about it... but at the
same time in sixth form my dad had had various jobs and been made redundant a couple of
times because of all the mis-selling of pensions in the 80s, he refused to do it so he kept being
made redundant because he wouldn’t do it so he was flitting between jobs a lot and when I
was in sixth form he ended up going down to work in London so he was away during the week
and came back at weekends but then I started thinking right London is the place to go, that's
where I need to go to get a good career, get good money and that... so I went off to uni having
never and probably until sixth form I'd always thought, so go to uni come home at went off to
uni and then started looking at sort of what sort of jobs you can make money with

| 23. | J: What was the decision how to decide where you are going to uni? |
| 24. | P: Um I was one of the brightest in my year at my school and so they kind of... |
| 25. | J: Encouraged? |
| 26. | P: Yes, encouraged or my parents encouraged me to apply to Oxford or Cambridge, I applied
to Oxford because it didn’t want to do STEP papers because I thought they were hard and
there was too much effort and the exams are in, towards the end of June when you finished
everything else I thought I don’t want to do that so I applied to Oxford got in there and
obviously there's a lot of companies that come there and sell themselves to you and so did an
internship with one of these companies in actuarial consultancy and then applied for a job
with them on the graduate scheme yeah got offered a job with the two biggest consultancies
but it was all it was the same condition so I went with the one I knew when that was working
in London working finance so following almost my dad’s line of work and he'd almost
encouraged me to do that but...

| 27. | J: So the internship was while you are at uni? |
| 28. | P: Yes it was the summer between my second and third year |
| 29. | J: And that was what, so that would be just as milkround was happening and... |
| 30. | P: Yes yes and 6:00 so I went off and did that |
| 31. | J: And lived in London? |
| 32. | P: And lived in London there were bits where you were like helping or teaching the, it is hard
to explain, we were expected to do presentations like once a month that would rotate around
the office like lunchtime presentations to keep everybody up to speed on new developments
but then in the summer obviously we had the interns come in and we were working with
them training them up and that was what I enjoyed doing really and then obviously the new
graduates in September although this was when they were starting to have a few problems in
finance was about 2004–2005 |
| 33. | J: Yes |
| 34. | P: So they were cutting back it was a nice place but I wasn’t really enjoying I mean I was
getting through the exams had sat five, passed 4/5 which is good going for the actuarial
exams, but I thought I want to qualify as an actuary but I don’t want to do it afterwards what’s
the point in just doing it to qualify but then I’m almost, I’m afraid of failure so I didn't want to
be seen as a failure so I must've had a chat with my mum and and I said think I want to go
into teaching and applied for a PGCE for the following September , so this would be two years
after I’d started working |
| 35. | J: So you did two years in London |
| 36. | P: Just under two yes |
| 37. | J: And then started the September yes? |
| 38. | P: Yes but I remember telling my dad this he basically didn’t talk to me for about a month cos
he thought I was giving up really a fantastic job |
| 39. | J: Even though he been disillusioned himself with the sector? |
| 40. | P: No I’m not sure he was disillusioned he just stuck by his principles right right but he knew
that the money and teaches nothing like what you get in the city and he didn’t think it would
challenge me, enough but having said that he did a year as a teacher at school down the road |
from here

40. J: Oh did he? When he was a proper grown-up?

41. P: Yes left uni didn’t do a PGCE just went in as maths, or maths and statistics he did, but he
did a year there he hated it so

42. J: Interesting

43. P: That might have something to do with I’ve never thought of that

44. J: So where did you do your PGCE?

45. P: Homerton College Cambridge; and I would have gone back to Oxford to do it but Oxford
University didn’t do a primary PGCE and I wanted to do primary

46. J: Why did you want to do primary?

47. J: But did you have work experience in a primary school or anything

48. P: Yes yes you have to do it before you apply to

49. J: You done that when you were doing the internship or…?

50. P: No I took weeks two weeks holiday from work and spent two weeks at a primary school,
local to where we are now because it was a friend of my mum’s who she met a teacher training
college and she let me go for two weeks and then you have to do another week or something
before you went in your… I’ve lost my timeline now do you want me to add some stuff

51. J: Yes so

52. P: A-levels 1617 there was that teacher, I don’t know if you knew really fits into it as I didn’t
really think about teaching when I was at uni

53. J: Yes

54. P: Yes it was more or less from when I was about 20/21 I started work when I was 20 but it was
within that first year that I was thinking I don’t really want to do this

55. J: So you were quite young going to uni you were a year young

56. P: Yes I missed the I missed out year three

57. J: Yes right so you went to uni when you’re 17

58. P: I wasn’t sporty in school

59. J: No I think I wasn’t because I was physically you know everybody else had learned to play
netball and I missed, junior three so I graduated you kind of learn to play netball and hockey
and all those things at school and I went straight to junior 4 and couldn’t do any of it and I
think it kind of… academically it was fine

60. P: Yes interesting I don’t think it help with my reading because I didn’t like reading and things
like that but my mum was on my case and she knew what she was doing so was

61. J: So you left them when you were 20 not sure… pretty much straight away from what you
were saying about the actuary stuff

62. P: Yes I enjoyed the social life and stuff like that but it was I don’t know you were just doing, it
was the same thing day in day out that wasn’t much challenge there, and it was like here’s a
pre-programmed spreadsheet, put the data in check it by hand when it comes out, when I was
what’s the point of having a spreadsheet if you’ve got to check everything by hand but

63. J: So proper actuary work wasn’t… when people are gonna die and all that risk stuff that wasn’t
what

64. P: No because they’ve already worked it all out, we had a little book that has all the mortality
rates in and everything and you refer to it if you need to but we have these add-ons in the Excel spreadsheets that were new,

65. J: Mmm

66. P: I am and it could potentially have got more interesting but that second... when I was starting my second year in that job... I think my year they took 8 graduates on you’d expect them to take the same number on each year so you’d have the somebody picking up your lower work, you be checking but we only took on three graduates so you’re still doing the same thing so you weren’t progressing so you weren’t getting onto what potentially could be more interesting and

67. J: You didn’t get the chance to do that training that you said you really enjoyed

68. P: Yes I did a bit but it was obviously shared between the eight of us or however many were still there from my year

69. J: So it was in that year that you were thinking, yeah, teaching

70. P: Yes yes but I applied the PGCE I applied I think it was the September/October after the first year

71. J: Yes yes

72. P: Yes so there

73. P: So then it was 2005 I did my PGCE, 22 does that sound right?

74. J: Yes that will be right

75. P: Yes, PGCE yes my first job was at state primary school in Hertfordshire

76. J: Oh right

77. P: Oh I wasn’t really bothered where I got a job I wanted a job in a Catholic school being a Catholic but yeah it didn’t bother me, I didn’t have many ties at that point, applied for a job at the school attached to my parents’ church, but didn’t get that job, applied for this job at this school and got told by the head there... obviously if you apply for catholic school you need a reference for your parish priest... the parish priest at my parents’ church was my parish priest and he said he’d got told by that priest that they’d be mad not to take me and they should have taken me at that school (laughs)

78. J: So that was nice

79. P: That was nice yes so I stayed there for two years teaching my class was a year three class and every so often I taught a mixed year 3/4 class only because I didn’t want to teach gymnastics so I did a swap with another teacher who didn’t want to teach ICT and then various things happen during this time quite personal stuff I don’t want to talk about

80. J: Right

81. P: But yeah wasn’t really looking for a job then this job came up at the Russell School to work in the junior school I thought well it’s local, I’ll be there can help my mum them out, yes so applied for it thinking I’m probably not going to get it because I’m not good enough, but then I think I remember in one of my interviews there because it’s quite intensive, one of my interviews there with the head he said ‘how many other jobs have you be applied for?’ and I said ‘well I’ve not I’m happy where I am, it’s just that this job’s come up and it sounds like a great opportunity and I think that probably counted in my favour you so yes that would have been like...

82. J: So was it quite an intensive process it’s just not one interview and a mini teaching you have...?

83. P: You have... I think it was more intensive because they were starting this new junior school ... what did we have? We had had to do a lesson observation with a year seven class, obviously I had no training and never taught, I had I think four people observing; the head of the junior school, head of maths, two of the deputy heads or surmasters or whatever they call them, I had an interview with the head of maths, I had an interview with the head of the junior school and one of the surmasters, I had an interview about the co-curricular, had a safeguarding
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<th>interview and I had an interview with the head of the school.</th>
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<td>84.</td>
<td>J: Really, over two or three days then? Or all in a day?</td>
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<td>85.</td>
<td>P: No</td>
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<td>86.</td>
<td>J: Really?</td>
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<td>87.</td>
<td>P: All in about five hours start by about 8:30 9 o’clock and you were away by about two-ish</td>
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<td>88.</td>
<td>J: Goodness really intensive</td>
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<td>89.</td>
<td>P: Yes well</td>
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<td>90.</td>
<td>J: So you got the job, well</td>
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<td>91.</td>
<td>P: Right</td>
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<td>92.</td>
<td>J: But the job was to teach across, and you do now teach across...?</td>
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<td>93.</td>
<td>P: It was to teach, to be a form tutor and the class teacher either a year five or year six class because that’s all they were starting with so I had a year six form and I was coordinating the maths and the ICT</td>
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<td>94.</td>
<td>J: For the junior school?</td>
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<td>95.</td>
<td>P: Or junior school which we didn’t get any, in a normal state school you would have got a TLR point or something like that; none of that, but there were only five other staff and it was basically we expect it of all of you, so get on with it, but to be fair we did get a higher salary because it was a private school and we were expected to do some teaching in the senior school secondary school... because part of the appeal of the Junior school was they were going to have specialist teachers come down. They’d have a specialist science teacher, they went to their labs for so for them to come down it freed us up for our subject... Most of the other teachers hated it, I enjoyed it I got given a year seven class and A-level class I think because in my safeguarding interview we got a bit off topic because it was a physics, I think he was a physics teacher might be chemistry some science teacher and we were talking about science and he said to me your eyes really lit up when you were talking about all that higher-level stuff, would you be interested in teaching it? And I said yes I’d love to give it a go I said I’ll be honest I’ve not done it and not trained for it so I’ll need help but I’d love to try it and I really enjoyed teaching that A level stuff and then that year or so after I’d started in the junior school there was I think a couple of teachers that were leaving; one was going off on sabbatical to do a masters and another one I think was retiring and I was very very close to applying for a job at a secondary school for maths because the job in the junior school hadn’t been what it’d been advertised it was stressful we were being, basically every little bit was being dragged out of us expected to do so much co-curricular and we were being micromanaged all the way (time: 18:30) we all had to mark in the same way we all had to teach the same things, almost on the same day teaching this same maths lesson yet it been advertised as really creative, we need teachers to take the initiative, and teach in creative ways but then we weren’t allowed to do that so this opportunity came up and I... and I had a chat with one of my friends, a maths teacher who started the same time as me he was the one who was going off to do the masters and I said to him about this job and he said ‘does Tom know?’ who is the current head of maths... I said no, he said oh right because you might, you never know with there might be a job here but anyway he obviously went off and said something to Tom then and we had an informal chat in the staff room and he was like... oh no what was it he said? No, I don’t think he let on that Bob had said anything to him but he was talking about the timetable for the following year and he said how much secondary maths do you want you next year? And I said how much is there? And he said well how much do you want, he said you could do half secondary maths or you could do all secondary maths I said ‘oh right’ I said (time:19:55) he said is that what you want I said yes so I had to have it wasn’t an interview to go into the secondary school but it was a chat,</td>
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<td>96.</td>
<td>J: Not just with Tom but with...?</td>
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<td>97.</td>
<td>P: With one of the assistant head yes, um about why do I want to leave was it because was</td>
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something wrong with the junior school or, so being diplomatic as I am I said no I've really enjoyed teaching the maths and want to do more of that even though a lot of it came from the fact that there was a lot of stress in the junior school and I wasn't, I didn't have confidence in the head of the junior school um, and yes that was two years after I started so I must have been about 27 then so I became secondary, maths teacher obviously didn't have any training to do this and um but still teaching year five and in year six what called specialist maths which is like enrichment

98. J: Right
100. J: Right
101. P: And yes that sort of stuff, erm and I still do that now, and have done for the last four years the same sort of role, 2102 erm
102. J: You kind of intimated that you sort of miss the primary?
103. P: Mm. I do, I miss… it's good in a way that I can still teach the maths, and I like that as I still kind of feel like I'm teaching them some things and when they get taught something by the class teacher and you're sort of grinding your teeth and they ask you something and you kind of put them right but what I miss about primary is teaching things like PE or art or science. I mean I was thinking driving home last night knowing that we were going to do this interview thinking I used when I was a primary teacher I used to really enjoy planning a lesson that they knew would be fun for the students and fun for me and thinking about things like science lessons getting them to do practical things and discover things and I don't think I have ever done that as a maths teacher, I've never thought 'this is going to be a great lesson because they're going to discovered this or they're going to do this and whether that's the nature of the subject in maths, in that it is quite theoretical you can make some of the practical and have done one or two things that are more fun, but nothing that I've kind of thought wow yeah that's great, so whether that’s because there’s not that opportunity or whether it’s because I’m becoming disillusioned with teaching I don’t know… or… (time: 22:23)
104. J: And is it different in the secondary school in the upper school in that you’re not micro managed in the same way that you were?
105. P: Mm yes we given the scheme of work and it says teach these topics, and it has loads of resources alongside each topic for you so I teach them how I want to teach them which is good urm… We do have work scrutinies in secondary school, which started, I think that came off the back of it being done in the junior school urm
106. J: And what’s a work scrutiny involve? Is it the observations and looking at documents?
107. P: No they take in exercise books for a year group so you just hand over your class of exercise books
108. J: At random?
109. P: Yes somebody just sends for them yet but I think it’s, also not our most recent inspection but the one before, they fell down on the teaching because of the marking and the feedback so I think it might be a result of that as well and we are supposed to do performance management and have an observation each year and like a meeting at the start of the year; our head of department’s done one observation of me, I think about three years ago for, that was specifically for this professional management he hasn’t done it for the last two years he sees it as a box ticking exercise and it kind of is but then at the same time you could probably get something out of it if it was done, if he took it seriously
110. J: Would it be different if your results were rubbish?
111. P: No
112. J: No?
113. P: No they don’t, he never really chases you up if you have bad results, I mean we’re kind of good in the sense that the students we teach will pull it out of the bag at the last minute, yes
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<td>114.</td>
<td>J: Yes</td>
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<td>115.</td>
<td>P: I know one Christmas exam, we always get these ladders, with the results, so you'll have your top set first down to bottom set and you do expect them to go down because the top set obviously should be the best, the bottom set lowest, and one year, last year I had a year 10 maths group and it was set two out of set nine but there was a dip from my results and he said to me, he said oh were they just numpties or not behaving or what and I said no they were just numpties also there was that incident 2459 because we knew they were doing the maths exam. I have a very autistic boy in that class that has TA support he doesn't cope in exam situations so I'd arranged with the TA that he would do it in his own room they could sort out the timing or give him breaks and whatever; I got an email the day before off the head of learning support saying we've got the Ed Psych coming in so they need to observe a normal lesson. I said well I can't because this is the day we've been told they'll be doing the maths exam; he's been removed from the classroom. Basically got a reply 'OK' next thing it's the next day, the TA who's put in comes in and says, I've been told I have got to put David in here because he's got to be seen in the classroom I looked at her she said 'I know'... I said he's already worked about it because it wasn't what he's expecting so he just starts like kicking off and upsetting the others all the time and he was upsetting them all and the Ed Psych I sat and stared at her for 10 minutes and she look up once but she basically then was saying, and it wasn't that bad while the others were in there he got worse when the rest of them left, other than that dyslexic student who was having his 25% extra time, and she said 'I've never seen anything like that in my 20 years doing this job and I thought then I thought you probably shouldn't be doing your job' so</td>
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<td>116.</td>
<td>J: That's strange isn't it?</td>
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<td>117.</td>
<td>P: Mm</td>
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<td>118.</td>
<td>J: Yes so that might well have affected the exam performance on the day of the whole class</td>
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<td>119.</td>
<td>P: Yes yes</td>
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<td>120.</td>
<td>J: Yes you just said before you said that, you said something about 'I don't know if I'm getting disillusioned with teaching' (time: 26:23)</td>
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<td>121.</td>
<td>P: Yeah (sighs) I think so I think that's probably this last year, because it's been harder and there have been changes but...</td>
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<td>122.</td>
<td>J: And yet when we've talked before it sounded as if when you've analysed it you can't quite work out why it's been hard? There have been things but there is nothing you could say 'it's been that' so maybe...</td>
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<td>123.</td>
<td>P: I think they're just trying to take more out of us each year, each year they add extra little bits of admin to do and more accountability on purpose because I'm quite, I get quite paranoid and feel like I want to do the best job I can and I feel like being judged on every bit of data or whatever.</td>
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<td>124.</td>
<td>J: Mm</td>
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<td>125.</td>
<td>P: So I'm... and they also don't warn us about things at the start of the year so we know when all the report deadlines are and when parents evenings are so you plan for those and make sure you kind of keep a free weekend for them or whatever but last year they started saying to us about two weeks before, oh we got a grading exercise now so you were, you'll be expected to come up with a attainment grade and an effort grade for all the students you taught and that's okay because 'it will only take two minutes to do'. Yes if you don't care it'll only take you two minutes but I do care and so it's going to take me longer</td>
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<td>126.</td>
<td>J: And you need to think about it?</td>
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<td>127.</td>
<td>P: Yeh</td>
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| 128. | P: And another thing with the year 11s this year they asked us to predict what they would get at A-level if they sat an A-level in your subject. So for my year 11, this is the same year 10
group we've just talked about, a lot of them are considering doing further maths so I'm being
asked to predict what they would get in two years' time in further maths, which is almost 4
years' studying because it's two subjects and they're saying oh yeah that will be fine as it's only
10 minutes' work and I spent hours thinking about that because if I say, recommend
somebody to do the subject and say I think they're going to get an A or A* and then they are
hopeless at it it's going to come back on me, so...

129. J: And you would think as well that all those things especially with teenage young men that
you can't factor in, like I'll meet a girlfriend and I end up hanging round outside the high
school every night...

130. P: Yes

131. J: Gosh

132. J: Was that for entry to the sixth form for them, to kind of what was the idea behind it

133. P: It's to try and stop, it is to give us the opportunity to stop, trying to stop students doing our
subject who we think they're not good enough and by good enough, I mean getting a 'B' at A-
level, good enough to do it

134. J: But no way of knowing... so you're thinking that you might be look different kinds of jobs?

135. P: I don't know, I don't know, I'm going to see how next year goes and I'm going to try and
approach it with a fresh mind, part of me is thinking go in and just do with the least amount
you have to do, and don't worry about your reports, don't spend hours checking reports and
things

136. J: Like some people do?

137. P: Yes, see if that's better

138. P: I think the problem with teaching is you can you can never do as much as you want to

139. J: You can go on forever, it could fill 48 hours a day and not be done

140. P: Yes yes

141. J: That's interesting, yeah it's not a very nice job in some ways at the moment is it?

142. P: No

143. J: It's fine with the kids?

144. P: Yeah the kids are fine, I love being with the kids

145. J: Yeah the teaching is okay but like you said it's all that extra do this and do that and that's
probably worse at your kind of school? (time: 30:00)

146. P: Yes

147. J: Than in some other schools

148. P: Yes and I think as well with having a new head at the start of this year, he has come in and
he knows he's got to put his own mark on the place, so he's brought in changes for next year...
but he did consult the staff, but I think that was just for face value, but then he's had meetings
with staff and people have questions and it's... Obviously, they've not thought it through
completely, from the answers to the questions we're getting, so one example is everyone's got
to be form tutors next year irrespective of how many responsibilities you have, irrespective of
whether you're part-time or not everyone's got have their own form, so one of my colleagues
who's now 71 and still working at the school has got to have his own form, even though he
only does 0.2 of a timetable. He put his hand up and asked a question at one of these meetings
and said you've suggested that form tutors might have to be at parents' evenings, can you just
clarify this and they said, and the head obviously hadn't thought about this and said 'oh yes it
is something I think will have to happen, because if they've seen the subject teacher and they
want to see the form tutor it's the best opportunity', and you're sitting there thinking okay so
if I teach, say I teach year seven and in an ideal world I will only have one year seven class, so
25-30 students and I've got to see those parents then I'm expected to wait around to see the
parents of my form who might not even turn up or if I don't have a year seven form but I'm
expected to spend, to sit at school from four til 8 o'clock in case somebody wants to see me

149.  J: And the guy who is on 0.2, he can't even be in every day

150.  P: He's in every day but (32:00) he doesn't have to be in every day

151.  P: He's somebody who school's his life

152.  J: Right because you think it would be a pain to be a form tutor if you were on

P: well... this is another thing originally we would only get to see our forms twice a week and again there'll be thumb scanning for registration in the morning and afternoon and we'll meet for registration in the morning and afternoon twice a week. I raised concerns about this as a sixth form tutor and said you expect me to write references for these boys who I get to know from seeing them twice a day, admittedly, briefly, a bit...

153.  J: Yes, and you don't necessary teach them all presumably

154.  P: No no another person said from a pastoral of view how are we to notice boys who come in wearing the same shirt five days on the run because that's where...

155.  J: Or they're just having a bad day

156.  P: Yes but that's another change so we've now got to meet them briefly each day at the start of lunch.

157.  J: Right,

158.  P: Which isn't going to work for part-time staff, it means another member of staff will either pick up their form along with their own or which is not, they're not giving NQTs forms and NQTs are going to shadow heads of year because heads of year are expected to be in... or have to do stuff, so the NQTs can then take over their form when they need them to which sounds a bit dodgy legally on NQTs,

159.  J: But yeah like you say it doesn't sound well thought through although it sounds like a good idea,

160.  P: Well it's good in the sense that you get to share the load, but then you think there are reasons why people have had forms taken off then

161.  J: And some people love it, love being a form tutor, want to do it and they are really good at it and other people hate it or are rubbish at it

162.  P: Yes so you'd think that...

163.  J: Is that the way they did it Westminster or whatever, do you think is that...

164.  P: I think so and I think he tried to bring in vertical tutoring as well which is a public school thing

165.  J: The family?

166.  P: Yes but staff weren't keen on that but I mean then it was the school council that said... you know there's no way a 6th former will want to be in the same class as year seven, but so that's gone, but he is bringing in colleges for the sixth form (sighs)

167.  J: To do what? And what is the purpose of those?

168.  P: Um... it's so that there is going to be five colleges. We had a head of sixth form, a head of year 13, head of year 12; there's now going to be two other, the head of year 12 or year 13 were deputy heads of sixth form, there's now going to be two other deputy heads, so that team of five will take responsibility for a group of students, and oversee them, so it's,

169.  J: As well as a tutor?

170.  P: Yeah, so the only way I can see it is that the three who were on the sixth form team had too much to do or couldn't do their job properly

171.  J: Yeah

172.  P: And therefore they needed more people to do it but I applied for one of those, roles, and again it wasn't thought out because said how do you think it'll work and I had some ideas about how I thought it would work and they said OK, now that's interesting because we're not
really sure yet obviously something that is going to... okay but the problem is if they don't
know how it's going to work and they've not got any vision for it is just going to be awful

174. J: It's not going to work is it?
175. P: No and I think that's probably making me...
176. J: It sounds like there's a lot of uncertainty
177. P: Yes I don't like uncertainty I don't like change. (time: 35:40) I don't mind change if I think
it's going to be good
178. J: So you thought oh yeah we're getting a new head this will be good, and time to prepare for
things and notice and things like that but it feels a bit scattergun from what you're saying?
179. P: Mm, yes I mean our timetable for our days is changing as well obviously because of the
form tutoring, but we're going from a seven period day to a 6 period teaching day
180. J: Longer periods?
181. P: Yes they'll all be 50 minutes apart from the last one which is only 45 minutes, even though
when we were discussing in departments we said no we want equal minute slots because if
you end up with the last lesson of each day you know you've got to finish about 5 minutes
before the bell that's down to 40 minutes already and they are not going to listen because it's
the last lesson... so then there was talk about extending the school day, adding five minutes at
the start or five minutes at the end even though the lunch hour is now an hour and a half
because the head didn't want to take five minutes off the lunch hour
182. J: Because there's loads of extracurricular stuff going on at lunchtime, or?
183. P: That's the idea but we've managed in the past, but yes so if you can talk with staff on that,
so I sent a long email with my thoughts on it, and I said I prefer to start five minutes earlier
but then laid out all the pros and cons and said (37:00) there are all these points about five
minutes later, even though that wouldn't be my preference - I didn't get any
acknowledgement or anything for that even all anything to that which I would have expected
even just a...
184. J: Thank you for...
185. P: 'I've got this just so you know'... and then the next I heard was an email that went out to
parents at Easter, that staff get copied into, setting out the changes to the school day but
saying 'oh don't worry it's not going to get any longer' and you're like hang on a minute how's
that going to work, um, then we were in the department meeting and we have the two
timetablers in the maths department so we sometimes find out things from them, erm, I
remember Tom, head of department, where is the five minutes? And oh no it him it was
someone else he's not [missing words], (time: 37:51) quite into the emails that get sent and
we'll read them, when I said 'well that is an email that went out a couple of weeks ago saying
it's not getting any longer' at which point he said 'David do you know anything' and David just
said 'yes we are having a 45 minute last lesson' but it's the communication as well so we got,
found out through parents, nothing else has been said to us, I think we got told maybe
towards the end of June so yes so
186. J: Yes that's helpful thank you for that this is really interesting, it's interesting when you hear
about different schools and you can talk about them, how different people are
187. P: Can you read this? The other thing I have done this year is coordinate the year eight maths
but that doesn't involve much work; that involves copying last year's exam papers
188. J: Because this is year eight not year 10?
189. P: No it would be the same,
190. J: You don't actually have to do anything that is horrible?
191. P: No
Appendix 4: Concept mapping instructions

For this part of my study I am going to ask you to draw a concept map—sometimes we call them mind maps.

First of all I will show you an example of one I have put together to show the factors involved in my moving house (show example).

Now, could you please start to think about creating a concept map for what you think, feel and do as a teacher, and try and include any influences on what you think, feel and do.

Please start off with the star labelled ‘Me as a teacher—what I think and do’. Now build in other factors, as you want. I have put some ideas on this board here for you. If you don’t want these them please feel free not to use them, and please also feel free to add some of your own. There are plenty of blank stars for you to write on, and here are some pens.

Please start to construct your own map including the factors that affect what you think, feel and do as a teacher. Take as long as you want. If you could talk about it as you do it that would be great, or we can talk about it afterwards—whatever you prefer.
Figure A1: The corkboard of concepts available as prompts for participants to start their concept mapping.
Appendix 5: Exemplar transcript of concept mapping discussion.
Patricia concept mapping narrative (192 et seq.) transcript 23 July 2014

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<th>Dialogue</th>
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<tr>
<td>192.</td>
<td>J: Okay going to turn that over now (time: 39:16) (moving on to concept mapping)</td>
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<td>193.</td>
<td>(J Explains task)</td>
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<td>194.</td>
<td>P: So is it any point in time?</td>
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<td>195.</td>
<td>J: No now, but there might be things that influence you now that were perhaps...</td>
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<td>196.</td>
<td>P: Yeah right okay</td>
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<td>197.</td>
<td>J: So you were saying about the Latin and Greek or something... and there's some spare ones if you want to</td>
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<td>198.</td>
<td>P: So influencing me now?</td>
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<td>199.</td>
<td>J: Yeah it's what you think what you feel and what you do</td>
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<td>200.</td>
<td>P: Where I come from because I've come back home to</td>
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<td>201.</td>
<td>J: So that's kind of geographical yes</td>
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<td>202.</td>
<td>P: Yes yes but also the fact that my mum was a teacher, as well and she's got friends that are and she went to teacher training college with them. 'Pupils /students', affect how I feel, and what I think, and I suppose to an extent what I do as well, but...</td>
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<td>203.</td>
<td>J: In what way, how do they?</td>
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<td>204.</td>
<td>P: In fact they affect how I feel because they make me... very often they're the ones that make me happy when I go to work I mean yeah you got a couple of friends at work but it's getting to the stage of work (time: 41:38) where I'm thinking 'who can you trust now?' But they're the ones who will make you smile and (P getting tearful now) you were... I've got a great form this year and been times when I've had horrible classes and my form have seen me, and</td>
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<tr>
<td>205.</td>
<td>P: And they know [crying now]</td>
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<tr>
<td>206.</td>
<td>J: Sorry sorry [sotto voce... I'll turn this off]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207.</td>
<td>P: It's okay, and they'll say 'are you all right Miss?' and they just sort of keep an eye on you, they won't push it because they know, but they will keep an eye on you... um</td>
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<tr>
<td>208.</td>
<td>J: How old are they?</td>
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<tr>
<td>209.</td>
<td>P: 17, year 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>210.</td>
<td>J: Oh that's nice</td>
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| 211. | P: But things like that that make you want to go to work... you don't want to go to work because of the horrible kids that have, that just will have a go at you or whatever, but the nice ones are the ones who say oh yeah thanks Miss, and like one of them on the last day of term gave me, the sixth form didn't have to be in unless they were prefects, but I said to the ones that were in, oh come and say hello cause I'll be up here and I won't have anything to do so a few of them came in and one came in and was like 'oh yes thanks for everything you've done and I really appreciate it, even if you not my form tutor next year' because they know there's going to be changes, so he said they really appreciate it and thanks for everything and I said 'well if I'm not your form tutor'... I mean I know he's in my form next year but I can't tell him that I said 'even if I'm not I'll still help you in whatever way I can', and things like I'll set them up with work experience with a friend at the unit [name of place omitted for anonymisation purposes] as he's interested in particle physics so my friend is going to show him around his lab and have a chat with him so I said just check your emails because I hadn't heard anything; anyway, I said I was a bit slow, my friend texted me and said sorry for my slow response but yes that's fine so it probably took me a week to get round to emailing this boy but he replied like the next morning said 'yeah thanks I really appreciate it looking forward to seeing you in September too' and it's things like that the human side, but we're good in that we've got great
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<tr>
<td>212</td>
<td>J: Most schools I think probably have great students it’s all the other nonsense</td>
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<tr>
<td>213</td>
<td>P: Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>214</td>
<td>J: People are mostly nice people aren’t they on the whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>215</td>
<td>P: Yes yes so yeah but the thing that I don’t like and the thing that gets me is the politics</td>
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<tr>
<td>216</td>
<td>J: So this is the micro-level?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>217</td>
<td>P: Yeh you want good and bad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>218</td>
<td>J: No whatever suits... yes you can put it further away from you so that's what's going on the staff room and all the micromanagement and that kind of... (time: 44:02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>219</td>
<td>P: Yeah yeah what else? Are you, by, ‘my school/ college’ do you mean where I went to school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>220</td>
<td>J: Yeah, or it could be where you are now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221</td>
<td>P: I don’t know you see part of me, that kind of makes me feel good in a way because I really like working there but at the same time I hate working there sometimes because of the expectations so that’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>222</td>
<td>J: But that affects?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>223</td>
<td>P: Yes it affects what’s going on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>224</td>
<td>J: It affects it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>225</td>
<td>P: Can I just move some of these that don’t affect me? Local authority doesn’t, mentor doesn’t but as I don’t have one, oh I’d say my race doesn’t affect me but... we do get students in our school because of their religious background who have a problem with females, and in that sense it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>226</td>
<td>J: So your gender? Race?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>227</td>
<td>P: Oh yeah gender probably too</td>
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<tr>
<td>228</td>
<td>J: Some, something in the evening news in October about misogynistic attitudes in MGS</td>
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<tr>
<td>229</td>
<td>P: Was there?</td>
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<tr>
<td>230</td>
<td>J: That the new high master had said there’d been loads of problems with staff being treated in horrible ways, and no... the old one had said what was his name was it Martin Wright?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>231</td>
<td>P: Yes Colin Wright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>232</td>
<td>J: He’d said...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>233</td>
<td>P: He thought the staff had it in for him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>234</td>
<td>J: Oh did he? Oh, and the new bloke came in and said I haven’t seen evidence of any misogyny at all, but in a boys’ school maybe? So maybe gender does?</td>
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<tr>
<td>235</td>
<td>P: Yes but I think in the time of the old high master he employed a lot more women so there’s much more an equal staffing of male/females and promoted women too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>236</td>
<td>J: Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>237</td>
<td>P: He gave then promotions not necessarily over men, but did,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>238</td>
<td>J: Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>239</td>
<td>P: Yeah my manager (time: 46:17)</td>
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<tr>
<td>240</td>
<td>J: so that’s Tom your head of Department?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>241</td>
<td>P: Yeah yeah he’s good, people, he protects us from a lot of that politics stuff yet but then he can be a bit, it’s... he seems a little bit autistic he isn’t but you can be like that, but you know what men are like with women? If I start crying... three years ago he wouldn’t have known what to do but he... it’s complicated... now he’s seeing one of the teachers in our department</td>
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<tr>
<td>242</td>
<td>J: Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>243</td>
<td>P: Now and she’s a friend of mine, and she has a lot of flaps and things like that so I think he’s got used to dealing with tears now, but yes so I think he’s become more laid-back since seeing her but he does protect us a lot from a lot of rubbish (long pause)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>244</td>
<td>J: Nothing else really?</td>
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</table>
245. P: Head/principal yeah he is causing a lot of changes but I see him as politics... it still annoys me that the first time he had a proper conversation with me was when he'd interviewed me for that position

246. J: Really? So he’d not seen everyone beforehand or anything

247. P: He had intentions of I think meeting people and having an open doors, people could pop in and say hello but when we got inspected and then that just disappeared.

248. J: Got inspected not long after he started, November?

249. P: No, September

250. J: Oh was it right so straight away

251. P: And while he is he's around the place a lot which I at first I really liked and then I'm thinking hang on why aren't you doing what you supposed to be doing? And that he yeah he doesn't, I don't like the example he sets either to the boys,

252. J: In terms of?

253. P: His manner and his stance, he walks around with his shoulders hunched up and his head down; when he's giving presentations to staff he has his arms folded on the stage and his head and very quietly spoken. I want a leader especially in the school like ours, who looks like a leader and will have his head up and believe in everything he's doing and come across as believing what he's doing, and the day after he told me I didn’t have the promotion that I’d applied for this year, I was driving and he was cycling to work as he doesn’t live far, erm and he wasn’t being particularly careful and turned down the road in front of our school and then sat back on his bike, took both hands off the handlebars and was just sort of er almost contemplating the world it was like he was thinking, but I was thinking a lot of our boys are in this early cos they get dropped off by parents who start work at 8 o'clock and they’re there just after 7:30 and I thought there’s no helmet on his head and I’m thinking what sort of example are you setting (laughs) and I don’t mind if people in their own houses don’t...

254. J: Totally

255. P: But

256. J: Right outside school as well?

257. P: Yes

258. J: Yes gosh that’s interesting

259. P: So things like that kind of anger me in a way but then he does, like he’s got good academic ideas as well... colleagues (time: 49:52) affect what I think, how I feel because sometimes you feel you’ve got to stand up for them but they’re supportive as well,

260. J: Even though you said before you weren’t sure if you could trust anyone anymore?

261. P: Yes I think a lot of it is well a lot of my friends are leaving or have left and I think that’s it too... and no no no (mutters) my age and my peers I’m going to put them together they're going to go over here with things that I don't really like because there is a culture in our school that you should be going for promotion and you should be career minded and this and that and part of me thinks that’s why I’ve applied for a couple of promotions even though I don’t really know whether I want them or not but then part of me is thinking am I going to be disappointed if I get to 60–65 and retire and all I’ve done is be a teacher but then I’m thinking what do I mean? ‘all I’ve done?’ being a teacher is a lot and you’ve changed a lot of lives and I’m at the stage now where I kind of need to decide in my head what I want in my life

262. J: And there are things changing in your personal life too that might be...?

263. P: Yes that’s it if I’m going to have a family they’re going to come first, but it’s... well

264. J: But who knows yeh...

265. P: Yeh... politicians anger me but they don’t, they don’t we are kind of protected in a sense yeah, we have to change if the boards change what they do but otherwise we can say well we are going to do what we want anyway
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<tr>
<td>266.</td>
<td>J: Yeh... much less so than in local authority school...</td>
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<tr>
<td>267.</td>
<td>P: School policy... mmm... I suppose in a sense from the policies that we, well, I don’t think we’ve really got any formal policies, but in the sense of what I was talking about before like the work scrutiny and reporting and stuff like that, that does affect what I think and what I do and obviously I do what I’m asked to whether I agree with it or not because...</td>
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<tr>
<td>268.</td>
<td>J: Not always with a smile on your face...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>269.</td>
<td>P: Yeah because it’s expected here</td>
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<tr>
<td>270.</td>
<td>J: In a sense the things that you are not picking are as interesting as the things that you pick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>271.</td>
<td>P: Peers I don’t know I think these are less important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>272.</td>
<td>J: And they’re not always your colleagues?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>273.</td>
<td>P: No. I used to keep my own values separate from my teaching but now I do every so often say to my students I don’t agree with this but I’m being asked to do it, so they are</td>
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<tr>
<td>274.</td>
<td>J: That’s interesting because that’s the sort of thing that I think you can do with confidence when you been there a bit longer or a bit older?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>275.</td>
<td>P: Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>276.</td>
<td>J: You’re like we’re doing it whatever you think as we all think it’s nonsense... that I’m not sure I would have done that when I was first teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>277.</td>
<td>P: No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>278.</td>
<td>J: I’m quite quite often... I’m... subversive is perhaps too strong a word but I say things that I definitely wouldn’t say if there were a member of leadership team in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>279.</td>
<td>P: Yes, yes,</td>
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<tr>
<td>280.</td>
<td>J: And I think yes because I think I’m playing some kind of game really</td>
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<tr>
<td>281.</td>
<td>P: Yes it’s interesting as well, that talking about that I passed a comment to another sixth form tutor who I class as a friend but I think she is one that does associate with the right people when she needs them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>282.</td>
<td>J: Yup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>283.</td>
<td>P: I passed a comment to her about the new forms the next year and I said from talking to a couple of the maths teachers were also sixth form tutors looking our forms they’ve taken three of the nicest students from every form they needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>284.</td>
<td>P: She said no they’ve done the same with me as well, well I know I can work with the ones that are hard but and what I didn’t know at the time was the head of our year was sitting on the other side of her and I thought it’s true so don’t worry about saying it yet but had I known I probably wouldn’t have said it but still...</td>
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<tr>
<td>285.</td>
<td>J: No... that’s fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>286.</td>
<td>P: I don’t think there’s any others that but like you say of there’s probably a reason that I’ve left them out I dunno... our Board of Governors just is probably different to a normal Board of Governors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>287.</td>
<td>J: It is different isn’t it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>288.</td>
<td>P: Every so often they come in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>289.</td>
<td>J: Like the carol service and stuff?</td>
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<tr>
<td>290.</td>
<td>P: No no to meet with teachers and things I’ve never had a meeting with them on my own that had a meeting when we first set up the junior school sort of like an informal buffet lunch thing, all talking to them, then but my impression of what I know of them which isn’t that much, is that they are all business people and business minded and the school is a business and they know how to run the finances and how to get it to work as a business</td>
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<tr>
<td>291.</td>
<td>J: Not as an educational institution just...?</td>
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<tr>
<td>292.</td>
<td>P: No, well there’s I do think they have that in mind but whereas say you may get a normal Board of Governors who would...</td>
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<tr>
<td>293.</td>
<td>J: Would be less concerned with finance and commercial aspects?</td>
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<tr>
<td>294.</td>
<td>P: Yes yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>295.</td>
<td>J: Although maybe not now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>296.</td>
<td>P: True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>297.</td>
<td>J: But in the olden days when a Board of Governors was about how was the school being run kind of thing, it's not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>298.</td>
<td>P: Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>299.</td>
<td>J: Are the Board of Governors sort of local worthies then?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300.</td>
<td>P: I think the one that I always think of is the one that was a former head of M &amp; S or something so it's those sort of people CEOs of companies so some have become, got to the Board of Governors cos they've had children in the school and they've had attributes that would help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301.</td>
<td>J: Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>302.</td>
<td>P: Something, I should probably have added this to another card, something else that affects me, what was I going to say, what I'm allowed to teach, teaching opportunities for teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>303.</td>
<td>J: Sort of the curriculum?</td>
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<tr>
<td>304.</td>
<td>P: So things like I'm one of the teachers who teaches further albeit that's half our department because of the numbers of students that do it but there are some teachers that say 'no I don't want do that', I'm allowed to teach what was called the Oxbridge lessons and I always feel like I get a bit of credibility for doing, and that bit of respect doing that um but yeh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305.</td>
<td>J: That's interesting, thanks Patricia...</td>
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Appendix 6: Observations of teaching and the significant event technique

The significant event technique or SET is an adaptation of another ethnographic technique: the critical incident technique (CIT), commonly used in nursing research (e.g. Schluter et al., 2007) and also in various health and safety settings. The CIT is described by Flanagan (1954) as a set of procedures for collecting observations of human behaviour. It is a reflective technique, which focuses on what Flanagan calls ‘critical incidents’ and which is used in retrospect to study the recollections that an individual has of significant incidents that occurred which are relevant in some way to the topic under consideration. Flanagan (1954) defines an incident as:

‘any observable human activity that is sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and predictions to be made about the person performing the act’ (p.327).

I made some modifications to Flanagan’s original conceptualisation of CIT to derive the SET.

The first change was the name change: I used the term ‘significant events’ rather than ‘critical incidents’. The words ‘significant events’ carry connotations of meaningfulness and allow for small events to be included, as opposed to the connotations of danger that are carried by the words ‘critical incidents’ (Norman et al., 1992).

Secondly, the modified SET involves two individuals’ reflections on the lesson and in identifying any significant events. CIT typically only includes one individual’s reflections. In SET, the teacher-participant and the observer both identify what they consider to be significant events in the lesson. First, the
teacher-participant identifies any events from the lesson which they thought were particularly noteworthy in terms of the teaching and learning, or which were particularly unusual. Secondly, the other observer also identifies any which appear to be significant.

The final advantage of the SET for my work is that it is more reflexive than the original CIT. Given that there is an oral culture that is found in teaching and teaching practice (Carter, 1993), and given the focus on narrative in my work that I have previously explained (e.g. Lord, 2013a) I developed the SET using an interactional-relational approach (e.g. Chirban, 1996) which includes self-awareness and authenticity. Reflection and reflexivity are achieved by asking the teacher-participant to describe and comment on the identified significant events in terms of affect, beliefs and cognitions (the ABC model), borrowed from McGuire (1969).
### Appendix 7: Exemplar transcript from a lesson observation discussion.

**Rory post lesson discussion 22 Oct 2014**

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<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong></td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Right thank you revision lessons are really hard aren't they on me and I really appreciate it</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>No it's okay that swop over that was.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong></td>
<td>J</td>
<td>It worked quite well actually I was a bit apprehensive to see how it worked</td>
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<td><strong>4.</strong></td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Had you agreed it beforehand (half way through the lesson the students moved to a different part of the science base and were taught by another member of staff)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5.</strong></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Yes and then she suggested that the kids move so I said can we just move instead yeah that would work well and they responded really well to it</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>6.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7.</strong></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>They probably quite liked a break and a change so... and changing activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8.</strong></td>
<td>J</td>
<td>So just wanted to ask you if there is anything significant (interrupted by someone making a lunch in this microwave in the science Prep room) and about the fire the whole</td>
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<td><strong>9.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>(There had been a fire drill a break before the less which we were discussing and some of the students were coming in very late)</td>
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<td><strong>10.</strong></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>It did that make it who is a bit more dribs and drabs yes definitely, the entry was the lesson was obviously fragmented so it kind of, the starter got passed over without anything... a kind of discussion and we lost that starter 10-15 minutes but once I think they were told that I was aware of the fire alarm and that wasn’t an excuse any more than they came in and got very settled and that group has got certain characters in it I think like Rebecca very very boisterous that she actually really wants to get good GCSE so once you remind them that it’s got a point, it’s for the exam generally switch on really quick</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>11.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12.</strong></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>There were when they and they were focused what’s it like having this guy PPS school direct line the room with you when it’s good really it’s I get a lot of extra hands on deck and especially in year 10 just having that support kind of allowed me to do catch up lesson to compete the supervising in keeping them on task it was nice he is leading in my year sevens at the moment so it’s a bit of experience for him and you his mental yes</td>
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<td><strong>13.</strong></td>
<td>J</td>
<td>So that’s good experience, Is that part of young leaders</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>14.</strong></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>No I’m the subject coach of the science and tech said they’ve got six trainees six trainees and their training in their timetables down to</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>But it is it is a lot of work I quite like that side of it though because think I liked teacher training think I could in the future stay in that kind of role I like that yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>I wanted to ask you about the girl who in the first class threw her pen up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Rebecca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>And I was interested in how you dealt with that because you didn’t go when shout at her</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>No I think with Rebecca you’ve got to know your kids haven’t you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>I’ve taught her for the last two and a bit years I know her really well and I manage the girls’ football team and she’s in that so I just know really well so it’s kind of there is no little thing with Rebecca is nothing is going to be small, it’s going to be a big deal she scared of SIRS and she’s had a certain percentage of SIMS throughout school if she gets any more she gets excluded so it’s it’s kind of managing it she threw her pen up but once she’d caught it she said I’m sorry</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>And you were talking to her about mushrooms within the seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>It’s just getting her off onto something else then… she just kind of she is very distractible, sort of the things that distract her are anything like throwing a pen or whatever but you can also distract her very easily back with work like she just takes anything you give her straightaway and she’s kind of on to it but</td>
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<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>It was quick wasn’t it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>She does require a bit more one-to-one attention and you’ve got to bear that in mind really with her she’s going to need it you have to work for it and plan for her and wean her off it</td>
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<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>There were a couple of things that you said not particularly to her the two were sitting near to me the girl with a massively long hair and you said the worry is when she wasn’t doing something instead of saying get back on task you were sort of expressing it as a concerned the worry because you only had one piece of paper you were saying you need to have two pieces of paper because you doing it with each other and it wasn’t expressed in an admonitory way it was the worry is that you can’t do this</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Yes I think that’s more about Billy who she worked with because she is very fragile in terms of the way she takes things, takes everything ultra sensitive ultra personal, she is very very sensitive so again you’ve got really you’ve got to kind of manage her, wrap her up in cotton wool make everything about her intensive like I say ‘worried’ not ‘you’re not doing this’ or ‘do that’ she is that kind of… she’s is easily in tears you can’t handle her like that</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>So it’s about knowing your kids which brings me onto the second class the lad who had his head down when we walked in and I saw you clocking it and you just let it ride for a few minutes before you went to him and then I think you started off by saying come on do</td>
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<td><strong>something and then you went back and sat next to him and asked him if I heard right have you had something to eat today?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>28. R</strong></td>
<td>He’s diabetic type I diabetic cos my flatmate, he is also a type I diabetic so I got him to come in and speak to him cos he doesn’t manage it very well tends to just ignore it so I came in he’s got his head down it might be that he’s hypoglycaemic you’ve got to sort of manage him, and think about that but it was just the case that he was being lazy really so, tell him what he needs to do and get him back in contact</td>
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<td><strong>29. J</strong></td>
<td>J: he said he felt a bit unwell and you asked if he wanted to go to the nurse and he didn’t so it you said get your head down and do it</td>
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<td><strong>30. R</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td><strong>31. J</strong></td>
<td>Yes and then you used the technique a number of times that I like and I like the way you do it 3-2-1-0 and I noticed the lady in the next room was doing the same thing is that the school thing that everybody does that?</td>
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<td><strong>32. R</strong></td>
<td>I think it is quite wide it’s not a policy but I think it just works a lot of people use it because it works it’s quite nice way of bringing it down gradually and giving them a chance to finish whatever they’re doing I quietly doing it slowly as well doing ‘three... thank you’, ‘two...’ Thank you’. (time 32:10)</td>
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<td><strong>33. J</strong></td>
<td>You did it much more slowly than the lady in the next room who is still slow but she said 3,2,1 but the first time you did it the zero was quite a long time I actually thought you weren’t going to say zero and as you say it made much more of a process</td>
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<td><strong>34. R</strong></td>
<td>It’s kind of like the worst-case scenario that they get you get to 0 and they are still speaking so 0806 so it’s kind of like you can’t he can’t drag it out for 10 minutes you’ve got to be in control of it and you’ve got to sort of look around and see what they’re doing and kind of make them aware that you’re kind of waiting</td>
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<td><strong>35. J</strong></td>
<td>Was there anything significant in that whole lesson that you thought was different or unusual or you are really pleased about</td>
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<td><strong>36. R</strong></td>
<td>I was pleased that their commitment to it I think with revision lessons they are quite boring or they can be quite boring it’s quite difficult to make a revision lesson really exciting unless you’re planning a separate task of relearning something or if it’s just straight revision. I just tried to make it really important in terms of language that’s what I just thought I’ll pick the language and focus on that they can see why they’re doing it, the terms like. So they can see why they’re doing it so they kind of bought into that I just set that up so I could get it wrong so that they could say I have got these for a reason and I think they bought into it really well, it did work</td>
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<td><strong>37. J</strong></td>
<td>I thought it was inspired and I thought it was very confident that you were saying you can do all this no matter what your IQ is the concepts aren’t hard the language is your barrier at</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>38. R</strong></td>
<td>Yes it is I mean year 11 they are less able in that class that is the</td>
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biggest barrier for them it took me quite a while to work it out. They get it in the classroom but they can't they can't process it. When I was teacher training with them and I figured it just clicked one day they just can't read this paper they can't understand the terms in the paper so I'm just trying to have a big focus on it now

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Appendix 8: Questions derived from Activity theory

I used questions derived from the work of Kain and Wardle (2008).

1. What is the immediate object(ive) of the activity system? Do all the members of the community seem to agree on this/these objects?

2. What is the long-term outcome of the system?

3. Which people are directly involved in this system? Why are the people here doing what they are doing? What is motivating them?

4. Who constitutes the community?

5. Who is responsible for what part(s) of the activity system, the object and outcomes? How is the work pertaining to this activity system divided up?

6. What are the tools which are used to achieve the object and/or outcome?

7. What seem to be the rules, guidelines, conventions (spoken and unspoken, formal and informal) relating to this activity system? Does everyone in the community seem to have the same idea about what these rules are?
Appendix 9: Reflexivity questions for final interviews Summer 2015

1. In general, what are the three most important areas of your life now—those that you care about deeply? (Please give the most important first).

2. Margaret Archer would call these ‘projects’ that, through our own agency and causal powers we try and advance. Of course it depends on a set of circumstances too, and the causal powers of those situations... and our projects don’t always work out... but I’m testing some of her ideas, and wondered whether you thought that you try and advance these ‘projects’ and if so, how that might happen?

3. Your narrative suggested that work and your family/friends are important to you—and I’m wondering whether your personal and professional and social projects are in some way intertwined? Do you think about all these projects in the same kind of ways?

4. So, how central to your life and experience would you say is your thinking about and your being a teacher?

5. Are there particular people who were and are significant and why and when? And do you think you take notice of people when they comment on, or when you are talking about, your projects?

Do you or did you discuss things like work, family, with them? And is what they say significant—does it determine your action, or have a determining effect on your actions?

**Questions derived from Archer’s ICONI that relate to specific areas of reflexivity**

R1) Some of us are aware that we are having a conversation with ourselves, silently in our heads. We might just call this ‘thinking things over’. Is this the case for you? Has it always been like that for you?

R2) So we’ve talked about your family (if we have) to what extent is it the case that long as you know those you care about are OK, nothing else really matters to me at all?
R3) To what extent do you work so you can pay for the things that matter to you? And to what extent are there other motivators?

R4) Would you say that you think a good deal about values, moral questions and ideals? MRx Do you think you try to live up to an ideal?

R5) Do you think about work a great deal, even when you are away from it?

R6) Talk to me about decisiveness … Are you quite a decisive person do you think?

R7) So do you think that things you do can really make a difference to how things turn out?
Appendix 10: Example of analysis of reflexivity (from Jill’s transcript)

This analysis was done in 4 iterations. The transcript below shows the final analysis document. Throughout, in the right hand column, features to populate the conceptual framework at proximal, meso and macro levels are identified.

**First iteration**

The first iteration identified the following themes:

- Impact of leaving Ashfield school;
- Family;
- Geography starts to be an issue—here it’s related to family
- Nurturing;
- link between her family and her pupils.
- Job applications/career

The following features of the narrative were also noted:

- conversations as if they are/were verbatim
- inner conversations that she is having with herself.

**Second iteration**

The second iteration refined and developed the following themes. At the same time I was working on the portrait of Jill and drawing on data from other sources/interviews etc.

**Key themes**

- Teaching/interactions with kids; Classroom and behaviour management
- Work as a project—leading learning and ambivalence
- Intertwining of home and work projects

**Notes on Reflexivity**
• Insight/reflexivity re Jill’s own motivations
• Family and friends as sounding boards
• Autonomous agency but always after consultation
• Agency and decisiveness
• Moral purpose?

**Third iteration—starting to draw meta themes out**

**Possible meta-themes**

• Family
• Nurturing
• Career progression/changes
• Agency
• Teaching (e.g. activities and classroom management)
• Ambivalence about Leading learning

Starting to be obvious as more of a feature: Intertwining of projects—e.g. nurturing and teaching

**Reflexivity**

• Conversations, whether inner or verbatim
• Focus on values as well as on family

**Fourth iteration**

**Key projects and concerns**

Personal—focus on family and friends (in this analysis highlighted in pink)
Work (in this analysis highlighted in yellow)
Intertwining of these projects (in this analysis highlighted in pale blue)

**Reflexivity**

Features of communicative and meta-reflexivity very evident (in this analysis text is coloured red for meta-reflexivity, blue for communicative reflexivity)
Some aspects of autonomous reflexivity (in this analysis text is coloured green for autonomous reflexivity)
No evidence of fractured (less than ideal) reflexivity
Projects impacted on modes of reflexivity that Jill employed—noted in right-hand column

Also noted in the right hand column are factors at the proximal, meso and macro levels of my conceptual framework which impacted on Jill's beings and doings.
Chatting about Jill taking kids to Cambridge...

J: Tell me about this move... when we talked in the summer last year, you were talking about projects and you talked about work, family, and you were about to get married, 'married' in inverted commas. Projects–family–very important–Note she spent a lot of our first meeting talking about the wedding and family–this is a recap

Jill: yes

Family–proximal

J: But work was one of your projects, and you were dithering I think is a fair word, about shall I move shall I not move, and at the back of it, a lot of that was, I think correct me if I'm wrong, a sense of gratitude that you are here not there [referring to Ladywood] and massive and I'm not too keen on this but could have been a lot worse

Jill: Yes yes

Recap ideas and checking work as projects/concern - confirmed

J: But there was a sense of disquiet about here

Jill: Yes

Acknowledgement of disquiet about take over–feature of meta-reflexive thinking

J: And my sense was that you were trying very hard to be very positive

Jill: Yes

J: And you never said anything else

Jill: Yes

J: But then when you were moving it was like 'yes!'

Jill: I decided... I had my final interview two weeks before Christmas at a school I’d been to previously which was the wrong job for me and I actually said at the interview I did come here last year. ‘Yes’ they said ‘we know we saw that on your interview but that was the wrong job for you’. I said I knew that at the time, but I was looking for an assistant head job although the school seemed to be very good. Anyway I wasn't successful there and I think a combination of being exhausted, I wasn’t well, I probably

Leading learning–all work-related

Showing importance of career decision and of work as a project–a lot of talking, uninterrupted–in many ways this was like a stream of consciousness.

Reflexivity: Example of inner conversation s/ reflexivity conversations as if they are/were verbatim

Example here of ‘extroverted chattering ‘–communicative
should have been off work sick to be fair, I remember getting ready that morning for the interview when I looked in the mirror thinking 'Well you look the part, whether you can sustain this all day without passing out at some point, we'll see'. And it was a really good day and I got some excellent feedback and so I took that feedback to the head here and we talked and I said I do feel that I probably that will be my last application and she laughed and said well you did say that in the summer which I clearly did, but then you keep looking... so after Christmas or during Christmas I decided that I wouldn't look, I would build what I had here, and because I like it up on the top floor and I love being in the classroom, and I've got a passion for my subject, and all the little niche areas that I work in around the college and then various people had suggested I look at this job at St. Charles' and there was another job at St. Mary's and both schools were in a predicament because Charles' had had that OFSTED in September where they'd gone straight into special measures and St. Mary's although it was unofficial at the time had gone from 1 to a 3 and they'd lost a lot of key staff in English. I was reticent about it first and then I almost got bullied into it... 'I told you about that job because it would be perfect for you just at least have a look at it' and that was a mistake because I'd stopped looking at the Times Ed because I thought if I look I'll see things and then the spark will reignite and I don't want that but one particular friend said 'I know you better than you know yourself'. I'd sent her an email saying 'I'm applying for a job at St. Charles' and she said I knew you would she

reflexivity, but also ‘think and think’–going round in circle with meta-reflexivity

Ambivalence about leadership roles demonstrated here–related to caring as a key value (intertwined with value values and evident in Jill’s transcripts throughout)

Meso level discourses and local agendas

Personal reasons to do with proximity to family. Family stability as feature of communicative reflexivity.

Talking to sister–communicative reflexivity.

Meso level discourses and agendas
said ‘it’s got your name written all over it’. You can sort, you do what you did at Ashfield, and the were personal reasons for looking at that particular school as well so I was quite happy when the interviews came up that it was before the other one even though this is the curriculum team leader job, the other one was an assistant head/director of English, I did want this in St. Charles’ more, and like I say various things... My sister and my sister’s worked in St. Charles’... to her... she knew the school and she knew she said ‘I don’t really usually say anything when you’re looking at jobs because you don’t tend to say anything’ but if I do she’d be one of the people I’ve mentioned things to, and then she said ‘I know that that school would flourish if you’ve got the job’ she said. I’m not just saying that because I’m your sister, so I went for it and obviously got the job. So I have been... but it it just excites me because as we’ve discussed there is so much, this is like building your own department, taking the best bits of all the schools I’ve been to, an awful lot from here to be fair, and thinking, this is going to work and when you take on board the changes that have happened at that school this year plus the positivity of the staff, it will be, I’m hoping it will be a very quick rise, because I actually asked the question is there any other department is worse than this in school and they went well they’re on a par with history, it’s that bad because they have no systems, they have no systems for data management, no systems for assessing, no data, there is just nothing there, but they want it, but they’ve never had the personnel to deliver it to the Department because the people who were helping in positions were not led or managed
and so it’s like the blind leading the blind.

J: so they’re just all running around? 9.06.

Jill: And really not knowing what they’re doing, so I was also very honest with myself, somebody had said to me why Jill, cos I’d said even though I wasn’t applying for jobs I really didn’t want to be head of English again because I done it in two schools, even though I’d loved it, the job, ‘be really honest, why?’ Part of it was because of what had happened with the take over of the school and part of it was what had happened here three years ago and so when I took those two parts out of the equation, did I still think I could do that job, did I still get a buzz thinking about it, yes I did, I think I said this to you, and so I think I’ve been fighting that with a view to an assistant headship.

Communicative reflexivity–talking to others about decisions–here colleagues.

Meta reflexivity here–inner turmoil and grappling with values

J: And yes you had said as well. You’d said you didn’t want to move away from the kids.

Jill: Yes and the irony was the day before I got my job the director of faculty here i.e. curriculum team leader, got a job elsewhere, in the toilet... conversations I bet that you’re gutted about it because the jobs and I went no because I wouldn’t apply here I wouldn’t apply for any of the jobs here because they’re doing to two assistant heads plus an internal maternity cover, they haven’t got a director of faculty well they have but Lauren who second is stepping up from September to Christmas, but there are four of us leaving and they’ve got one replacement.

J: Two weeks before the end of term, well that’s interesting. So that was a real deliberate ‘this is my policy’

Jill: Yes

J: This is my project

In this discussion clear that Jill was thinking about work and also
Jill: Yes  
J: This is what I’m going to do  
Jill: Yes  
J: And real proper thinking  
Jill: Yes  
J: And that’s intertwined in some way with some of the personal projects that you said... being with family.  
Jill: Yes  
J: Which you have always said is very important to you  
Jill: Yes yes. So when I go to St. Charles’ one of the things my husband said was ‘do you need the hassle of it?’, cos he knew the state of the school, had an idea of the state of the school. He said ‘Is it going to be a massive job?’ I said, ‘Well it will be, but even...’ I’ve got my dad saying things like, I have been popping down there because they just live round the corner which is one the reasons I want the job because they’re getting older and I need to be nearer. And I keep joking with him because he fixes a smile when I walk in I say ‘In September dad I could come here every night from work for my tea ‘ he said you could even come at lunchtime, will have your lunch ready, and he said to me, he said to me I don’t think really you should be doing two jobs, you’re going to burn yourself out you know because I get home at 7 o’clock at night on Mondays (J... having been in to St C’s), my mum jumped in and said she is making life easier for herself in September, because that’s the key, as much as I’m working now this time of year is you know yourself, you are exhausted, but I have got this extra gumption in me to do things, and I do feel that I can establish myself there I won’t be seen as the new girl, they are getting in a lot of new staff but I’ll be established in my role and in the Department, I’ve

| Importance of natal family and her own family key–proximal and meso level factors |
| Family and work as intertwined projects. The projects and Stuart’s input as well as her own values directing Jill’s actions here. |
| Mother’s input here showing how family understand the intertwined nature of these concerns |
| Work–life balance is about family |
set up a number of systems and have them in place, already to be in place, and then I can go in and teach and then yes I know there is going to be a lot to do, but then there's always a lot to do at the start of a new term in your job in your school so I don't ...I am hoping that this is going to allow me to continue the work-life balance I've got and so to alleviate any fears that my husband has that yes it will just be like it is now, I know you are not seeing me on a Monday and Thursday at the moment until stupid o’clock but that’s all part and parcel of the package so for me doing that now, I’m just doing a normal teaching job come September so there are times when I stay late, but I shouldn’t be bringing any extra work home at weekends just because I’m in a new job.

J: So you frontloaded it?

Jill: Yes I think with experience you can do that, that’s another thing about the job in the new school, I think they were looking for somebody who is experienced, and that’s one of the reasons why I went for it, because they need somebody to see what’s happened and to see what there is to do, and work with those people, rather than coming in saying yes in my first job I’m going to do this

Articulating inner conversation

J: You couldn't do that could you?

J: So you've taken notice of your sister, of your husband and have they been important in determining what you've done there, or is it mostly you? Or...

Asking about communicative reflexivity

Jill: Probably mostly me. Stuart is really really supportive, I couldn’t do my job without his support, but he doesn’t really get involved in the decision-making, he just goes along with what happens, because he knows then that that’s the way it’s always worked. Before I was in teaching when I worked for John Lewis partnership, I

Talking about family and how this impacts on communicative reflexivity. So she looks at family and friends as priorities and then directs her own actions

Background in John Lewis impacting on career and values–proximal level factor
got to a point where they were making decisions for me about my future, and it was only in a conversation when I’d plucked up the kind of courage to go and see the staff manager and they said oh yes we’ve earmarked you for a job at John Lewis [name of place]. When it opens and I think well [name of place omitted] for anonymisation purposes) no don’t fancy working out there, and I sort of started my exit strategy then. And literally I said to Stuart there is in black-and-white, we had a mortgage by this point we were married on paper and black-and-white anything we can afford for me to have a different job and if I have to take a pay cut this as low as I can go. And then I started looking for jobs outside John Lewis partnership, and that’s how I got into the school in the library, and hence the journey.

J: And when you said your friend had said... was that the friend Jane?

Jill: Yes

J: So she said this job got your name all over it and she has worked with you and knows you very well?

Jill: So that was an influencing factor it was a person who works at St. Charles‘; we’d worked together at Ashfield she’s had a couple of job interviews this year and she’s now stopped she actually sent me text messages and said I can see September in a completely different light and she’s waxing lyrical and I’m saying that Jane I’ve changed in the past six years and she saying yes but you probably only got better which is lovely to hear but at the same time I’m thinking she may not like the... but she is, but she’s really positive even her husband has said to her she said Neil said to me you’ve been smiling when you come home from work, and she said oh Jill’s been in, and it’s that Again, importance of other people in checking what Jill is thinking.

Again, importance of other people in checking what Jill is thinking.

Caring as key value—proximal level factor

Work as caring project—values of caring—features of a meta reflexive. Nurturing really key to her narrative her.
impact and it’s like I said before, they need someone to care for them. They need someone to listen on Monday what they’ve done over the weekend, and to remember what they’ve done, and to remember birthdays. I know somebody’s got a birthday on 3 September, she’ll be getting a card off me and everybody will get a card off me and little things like that that made them realise actually ‘I’m more than just a teacher in this department’, and I want them to be a team, they’re a team of sorts because they get along quite well... there’s a few personality issues, but Jane in there is key because she... you know when there’s been little things that have been said, like with the year 10 coursework, she has said ‘but this is how Jill works’ and Jill works that way because that’s how the exam, she is doing this because that’s the way it should be done because it’s how the exam board want it’. She said we did all this years ago we weren’t doing our moderation as we should have done, and if it’s done then it doesn’t matter...’well I’ll do it when they get a call from the board’. No, you’ve done that work, there’s no panic, they can be put together and go to the board on the day the list comes through, because it’s all sorted.

J: Yes you are not running round.

Jill: Yes so she’s sort of championing and she was somebody who was regularly until the day that I put the application and I think it was due in on a Friday, I think I hadn’t sent it on the Thursday and she text me that day and I said I’m 99% sure it’s going in and it’s still not been sent and she said please send it in and I said I just need I said I just need a bit more time to think about it and I was almost certain it was going in but it’s just. It’s the...
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<td>Jill: Yes and it went</td>
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<tr>
<td>J: Yes yes do you remember when we talked before about inner conversations have you been having those conversations?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jill: (Laughs) yes I have them all the time and continue to have them</td>
<td>Confirmation of reflexivity and Jill’s awareness of it</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jill: a lot of the inner conversations I’d say January to February, March were convincing myself that I’d made the right decision that I wasn’t going to apply for another job, that I could be positive and I could make it work here. And I’d actually said to a core group of friends here that part of the deal was them, if I knew I had them this, there’s three of them I would be happy to do my job and you know, have that support network. And then I go and apply for a job and one of them said I’ve got a sense you’re going to get this now and I said ‘oh we don’t know’ I said ‘wait and see’ but I wanted you to hear it from me because I’d come back after the Easter holiday and I’d known all through the Easter holiday that I got an interview so I’d have plenty of time to prepare as well, I told them on the Monday and then obviously went to the interview on Tuesday. And then the conversations since then, and I’ve had a conversation with Liam who’s the outgoing director of faculty here; he said the other week ‘I keep having this dream’ I said ‘let me stop you there’ I said ‘that you can’t do this job?’ I said; he said ‘yes’, I said ‘I know I understand now I’m having the same one’ I said ‘I’ve done this job in two schools, and I’m thinking I can’t do this job, it’s too big’ and he said ‘I know, I said it’s about priorities organise delegate’ and I said when you get there you will be able to do it but you having these ‘what do I</td>
<td>Key here–talking to a group of friends about concerns/ projects–feature of communicative reflexivity. Also features of autonomous reflexive in that she makes decisions herself without immediate reference to them but has still checked things out with them–features of communicative reflexivity</td>
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<tr>
<td>More ‘extroverted chatterer’ in that Jill demonstrates communicative reflexivity. Concern here with family and a constant awareness of what her daughters are doing, but a real sense in which this is intertwined with her work projects as she can go into work for part of the day.</td>
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need to do first’ and then yesterday an email came through [from St. Charles’ ex HOD] and I’m thinking I said you don’t need to do that that’s not part of your role any more I’ll do it and I’m thinking I’ve already planned it in detail because I’ve got that week in the summer holidays, I’ve got another week when we come back from Cornwall where Georgia wants to go to a tennis school which is all the mornings; I’m thinking straightaway, mornings St. Charles’- afternoons kids, because Anna will probably be in bed all morning of she’s not at work and Georgia will be out playing tennis and I’ve got a good two hours then to do some work, and that can fill in so there will be a lot of work in the summer holidays but then the conversation in your head is the idea that come September that’s all working in your favour.

J: So that’s okay? 19.31

J: To what extent is money to do with this job?

Jill: We’re mortgage free from September so again Stun’s said I’m assuming there is a pay rise I said there is a pay rise and in my mind it’s more than a pay rise because I’ve been doing my teaching job and being paid a TLR for a more able job here so I’m being paid more than I’m getting here but I’m actually doing an English teacher’s job with a bit of management and leadership and I’m thinking that sort of comes quite naturally so it’s not so onerous so yes in this sense a pay rise that wasn’t even a question it was the role, and it was the school, it was the job.

J: And being close to your mum and dad?

Jill: That was definitely;

J: Was it nearer to home as well?

Jill: No and with the cone-age I’m

| Thinking ahead too to September—evidence of planning, agency and self-direction. |
| Work and moral purpose. It’s not money—it’s the job—meta reflexivity: values as key |
| Family as projects |
| Geography starts to be an issue- |
making that word up but I like it, with the coneage in Redbury, it’s... I had two days there the first day I went going to get going through the estate where mum and dad live to the school and I thought just go on the expressway I end up back there because the road I needed, it didn’t exist any more because of the cones so that it’s better coming home because I do get on the M56 and if it’s blocked then I just go through [name of place omitted for anonymisation purposes] like I say, along with everybody else, it’s about the same distance but I... like you say I am near to my mum and dad and my sister does an awful lot with my mum and dad, so it just means that if there was an emergency they actually live on Larch Way and the school’s on Larch Way so I look at it as a circle the school’s at 10 to 10, mum and dad at ten past 2.

J: You can be there in five minutes

Jill: Yes because they’re both getting older and you know yourself you need to be there

J: Not all the time?

Jill: No you know but you need to know you could be there and I know over the next 10 years because I plan to retire when I’m 55, the next 10 years if I can establish myself there I’m in a good position for the next 10 years with them and it just alleviates things for Louise so if there are things to do at least I can go down after work as well.

J: And you’re not putting so much pressure on her

Jill: And then again my dad might make the lunch on Monday J: you never know

J: so in terms, that was a decisive, Jill: yes

J: and is that you, being a decisive

here it’s related to family
Family as important projects and stabilising influence, also key in directing agency.
Meso level, but also proximal–impact on upbringing.

Work and home intertwining as important projects

Family ever present in her thoughts!

Importance of decisiveness—very much feeling she is her own person and has agentic powers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>person?</th>
<th>Autonomy, but reliant on communicative reflexivity too.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jill: I am yes yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>J: in your private life as well, and in school and everything</td>
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<tr>
<td>JILL: yes yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>J: Yes. so do you think then that you can make a difference to how things turn out?</td>
<td>Degree of autonomy manifested here–she is very much her own woman, but again this is expressed in a relational fashion, with respect to what others might think.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jill: Yes I do. I think sometimes people might not like the way I work, and that was said by a head that... he qualified that with but you know your subject and you know your department and I’m just a head of school, and you wouldn’t get that here- you clearly wouldn’t get that here. Remind me later about the interview because that was very telling. So he just said there are times when I’ve sort of thought oh, she wants to do this and you know you’ve gone ahead, and it’s worked, and I’m thinking I wouldn’t have done it that way myself but its work but that been other times when it’s not worked quite well, but you’ve actually come back and said you know what this isn’t doing what I wanted it to do this is what I planned to do, or you’ve taken on... you’ve gone to somebody else’s department or you’ve gone to see the leadership team and I think I would do more of that now I would ask more, after being here for six years. Because I have learned an awful lot, I would use people a lot more.</td>
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<td>J: You said before prioritise, organise delegate</td>
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<td>Jill: Delegate is part of it yes yes yes because historically in the two schools where I was head of English I didn’t really have any decent support until I got Jane, and then we were so alike that almost, she would do what I wanted to to do, she just knew and so it worked yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>J: yes</td>
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<td>Jill: She was basically, she had a job at St. Charles’ could have written her own job description could have done whatever she wanted to and she won’t leave and she said she said I know I shouldn’t have any loyalty, I know inside I couldn’t leave because of how it is.</td>
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<td>Values as important—in relation to work—reason for staying in a job. Meta-reflexive feature.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jill: And I just said because she is considering leaving teaching I said well we’ll have a good year... I said in managing the work we could do planning new courses you be teaching A-level you’ve not taught for two years, you could be a proper AST because that’s what you are in a school where teachers are crying out for training.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jill: Rather than leaving teaching?</td>
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<td>Jill: She’d been working as an AST, she is on three frees a week next year she is an AST she should have half a timetable she is doing none of that, and then there’s an assistant head who is a former head of English who’s been looking after the English Department for a year.</td>
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<td>J: So let me show you some people have described school as activity systems, you might, I don’t know if you think about this here or about it in may be in the new school [J briefly explains].</td>
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<tr>
<td>Designed to elicit ideas about context.</td>
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<tr>
<td>J: Does that make sense to you in terms of the school</td>
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<td>Jill: Yes yes the idea that they should... here (outcome) and that could be anything from the dreaded GCSE/ A-level results or a safe environment for a kid who was not in a safe environment, a comfortable environment whether its pastoral or academic for your outcomes; you’ve got your teacher over here, the school community whether that’s your staff teachers support staff or the other children in the group, division of</td>
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<td>Focus on outcomes, mention of performativity agenda here (macro level context). Also meso level ideas about the school and local area.</td>
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labour is the people you work with in your department, the pastoral team, for your form group, the senior leadership team, obviously the rules whether they're in your classroom and your standards and expectations or the whole school and then obviously your teaching and learning strategies...

J: What are your tools and instruments? 2623

Jill: I think your teaching and learning strategies and how you manage the children because clearly a successful teacher is going to be one that can read the children and understand the children you might be interested

Importance of teaching and learning as strategies

Jill: I haven’t got the results yet but you might be interested I’m in a working group and it’s about active engagement and one of the things I highlighted was how I would have a student appraisal done and one of the things I said last week was the only thing I haven’t done is the student appraisal, I said do they sit there like an Ofsted inspector with a clipboard through my lesson and Toby who has just joined us told me what he’d done, so he did it last week and six kids from a top set year 8, and set two year 8 are going out this Friday and he said just give me a set of questions, they are given six questions and it’s all based on ‘Mrs. G is going to a new school as you know, what has she done this year that you’ve loved? What has she done this year that has enabled you to learn? What should and shouldn’t she do in a new school?’ It’s very nonthreatening but the stuff that comes back off the kids, and I’d pick two from each area, top middle bottom and have done the same with the other class and I’ve picked a range of kids who don’t normally have a voice in the lesson, and those in the top set I was very careful to pick two

One of her techniques is to ask others–quite spontaneously–what they think–she then uses this in her decisions making. Small example here but another one showing her use of communicative reflexivity.
who clearly always have something to say because they are articulate and they’re very bright but then the others are the ones that I have to coax things out of them and put them in a specific group so I know they will actually interact because they won’t be overrun by others. And I think that’s part of the instruments, repertoire as well that you can manage those children in the various groups and know who is not going to speak because they’re sat with that person

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>J: so part of the tools and the instruments are your relationships?</th>
<th>Relationships as key—showing how meso and proximal levels of framework interplay</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jill: Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>J: your different individual relationships?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jill: yes with different kids</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jill: And without that you’re not going to be a successful teacher because they won’t respond to you. I’m sure that’s why wanted the set one on the set two because the set one I thought they are so good they work so hard, do they enjoy everything just because they are compliant and able and amiable? In set two, there’s a large group of kids who sit over here who have to deal with three or four others that I have to deal with and I make it very clear, they’re wasting our time I haven’t forgotten about you, it’s so unfair and you and that gives them the confidence you know she’s not just forgotten about us.</td>
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<td>J: That was the class I saw</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jill: Yes yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jill: so I say I think they need to know that you see them as individuals when there are other individuals who don’t work are rude, stop the people from working</td>
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<tr>
<td>J: And seem to be taking a lot of time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jill: Yes yes and so there are six</td>
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</table>
coming out of that class as well on Friday to go in and see Chris and he’s going to ask the same sort of questions the only thing he said to me as that of the set one he said they really hold you in high esteem and I think that’s part of it, and this was this is come through with the observations this year that I know my kids and you know one of the groups it’s the bottom set year 10 year 11 that I think you saw with the very first group, a very small group and Lauren (another teacher who was in the lesson) said at one point Lewis wanted to spray his deodorant and said no you can’t and she said why not? Don’t start sulking sort yourself out, we’ve got a lesson to do, we doing this lesson because you asked for it on Monday, I had a brilliant lesson planned i.e. because Miss [Janet] is sat there and I’ve changed it because you said can we do reviews and he ended up doing a review of 50 shades, and Laura sat with him and she and I said I hope it I said listen Lewis it can’t make me go red. ‘Have you not seen it? Oh Miss you want to go to the pictures and watch it one night, and he’s looking at me, and she said ‘he’s been very good’ she said, ‘he is quite subtle,’ she said ‘he is quite clever the way he’s written his review, he toned certain things down’. Interesting here that she had changed her lesson because I was sitting in–importance of others in directing her actions (contrast say to Patricia- who didn't change at all)

J: So he understood?

Jill: Yes he did

Jill: One of the things she said is you spoke to him like you were his mum, at first, but that got him, otherwise she said he’d have sat and sulked the entire lesson, she said... at the end of it we did a letter, the next lesson, signed off Mr. Gray!

[both laugh]

Jill: It was a funny one that one but like I say Lauren got that when she
sees me with different classes I’m a different teacher and I think that’s part of it yes, part of the tools yes you can’t just be… I’m Mrs. Gascoine, I teach English

J: And that links into what you’re saying about your new school framework that you can’t tell everybody how they are going to deliver it word for word...

Jill: It’s like today I’ve said to Laura ‘top Tip number one from Gascoine’- she’s found out today she’s going to be running the department–is the second she’s not getting a second and she’s keeping a form 2 days out of three a week, now I’m not getting a form it’s one of the things I didn’t want, ‘how are you going to work without Laura to help you?’ and she said I’m going to use the younger members of staff, the NQTs, and I said top tip number one, I said I never advocate people plan like I do, however I think you should try it in this instance. When I come back in September, I have, after any holiday the next 6/7 weeks planned, if I then find out got to go on a course for a day I look and I think ‘well they need me for that and have that lesson on the Friday there because they don’t really need me and I’ll swap’ I said that takes two minutes, I said every weekend then you are free to do your Head of English job because you will be working at home, as much as I say I won’t be and she has seen… what’s put her off–is she’s got young boys. And that’s why she didn’t apply for the job in the first place, but I said to her that you need this job, you need to make sure you make it your own from September to December and I think one of the key things she should do as I said, she said please keep giving me the top tips so I said today when I found out and had time to think to

Importance of leading learning to Jill, or her being a role model, or work as a project

Jill here demonstrating that for Laura too she believes that family is intertwined with work–more so than perhaps I would have expected–I was surprised by the emphasis here

Again interaction of factors at different levels–proximal and meso
think I said I gave her that one because I think that will help her because she does plan very well, but I just think the pressure if she is planning.

J: You said that you can sit in the car and plan and write it out when you get home,

Jill: Yes it goes through my head, that’s what I do the interview stuff, the interview, presentation, the lesson, the preparation for the data it was all going through my head when we were on holiday, I kept thinking I should have brought some... and I thought no you’ve written stuff down at home you are just processing it, I came home on the Thursday, bang it was all done on the Friday and then when Liam got his job on the Monday, I’d literally got him within 15 minutes of getting the job because I just text and said I’m assuming you’re not ill if you are where I am going to be tomorrow, I hope everything’s gone well and this email came back, text capital letters, GOT IT! Do you want any help for tomorrow? I went like no because you know what it’s like you’ve got it set in your head, you’ve got it planned and I’m not even going to look at it tonight I might go through the presentation and it was only three slides because they said three slides so I just said to him thank you but no and I text him on the Tuesday night and he said I’m going to treat myself to a Toby Carvery so I said to him tonight Stu is taking me out to the Toby Carvery and he said am I being thick or is, are you telling me? And I said I might even have a dessert as well so that’s what we did so that was quite nice... I don’t think he quite gets our relationship because I went to this job a couple of years ago and he was going off to do to Dubai and he’d signed a contract and

This section really is ‘talk and thought’-intertwines the home, friends and work projects in one big stream, family, colleagues, work–not just intertwined in her narrative but clearly in her discussion of the evening out.
everything and all the Department will like hope we get Jill otherwise it is going to be a member of the senior leadership team, and I was too naive to realise what was going on and it was that I was naive it wasn't that I was blanking it out... And when they said are you still a firm candidate if I'd have known what I know now I did said actually know but give me five minutes with him don't even waste his time interviewing him because he pulled out of that job in Dubai and you don't realise what it's like over there your name is nothing they all know each other thing was as well his brother left the Larches is been a year in Thailand a year in St. Kitts and Nevis in the Caribbean and he is finishing his third year in Madrid and he's brilliant he's not even 30s going to be an assistant head he's found his niche and he will be really good but at the same time I don't like it. Can we turn this off now?

J: Yes, thank you very much Jill that's great
### Table A2: Participants’ narrative overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Work (identified explicitly by teacher)</th>
<th>Other projects (identified explicitly by teacher)</th>
<th>Family/Friends/Home (identified)</th>
<th>Meta-reflexivity</th>
<th>Notes on reflexivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jill</td>
<td>Moving school a lot of promotions or school round</td>
<td>School for family/friends/home (identified explicitly)</td>
<td>Family and friends</td>
<td>Moral purpose</td>
<td>Extroverted chatterer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotion of job or staying in current school</td>
<td>Family/friends (identified explicitly)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Looking for a new job</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Values of nurturing and caring</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Two more projects in the future</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Immediate project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patricia</td>
<td>Having a family</td>
<td></td>
<td>Family and friends</td>
<td>Important so was family, and core stability, and core values</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Immediate project was house move</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Possible family of their own after that</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Work in the future</td>
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Appendix II: Summary of concerns/themes and projects from participants’ narratives
June 2015

Rory

Choose friends, close knit family, plus friends

One particular friend who influenced him to enrol in teaching

Marie

was working on in this case, was more than career, something that was what I needed to express my thoughts, my views, my feelings, my perspective, my experience, my knowledge, my expertise.

Communicative and meta, and also strong features of autonomy, reflexivity.

For a young woman in whom control and agency were important, it was important to have control over her own life.

Career planning, self-development, and improvement.

I think like generally teaching in the schools is quite an important job. I think it is a job that is important because it is about children's development, their growth, their learning, their education.

Moral purpose – linked to career, work is definitely more than a job. (June 2015)

It is, but an end in itself, development of teacher.

Communicative reflexivity talked about – uses family as a funding board, but moral purpose.

Communicative reflexivity taken into account, linked to purpose.

Agentic change, adaptation, moral purpose.

I think like generally trying to just be happy and kind of drifting forever.

I think like generally flying high, like a bird.

Frequent discussions with mother, asking for opinions, etc., often goes home in holidays – like to discuss with other members of family and friends, especially with children.

Social justice and disadvantage and equality, linked to work but moral purpose.

Promotion by the end of the study year.

I think I realised after becoming a teacher, it's a bit of an identity more than a job. (June 2015)

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Communicative reflexivity talked about – uses family as a funding board, but moral purpose.

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