
**SUBJECT TO CHANGE?
THE LIVED EXPERIENCE
OF A TEACHING LIFE POST 2010:
A NARRATIVE STUDY**

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Declaration

I, Eithne Josephine Flynn, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Eithne J. Flynn

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Abstract

Changes signalled in the White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching* (DfE, 2010), stepped up the pace of English educational reform and radically reworked the education landscape. This study draws into focus the teacher's voice and offers a personal story of a teaching life at this time. Literature on teachers' careers highlights the teacher as a person, who they are and what motivates them, and underlines the importance of a positive professional identity and a sense of agency. The study introduces Angela, a novice assistant head in a newly opened academy whose teaching life spans twenty years. Angela's lived experience is embedded in her working and personal stories; her tellings are co-constructions, and her artful selections and elisions all offer insights into her sensemaking. The approach in this psychosocial narrative inquiry is holistic and interpretative and uses the lenses of identity, agency and the defended self to lay open fresh possibilities. Angela highlights the primacy of schools as communities, where relationships are based upon care and responsibility, alongside the demands of her leadership role, focused on teachers' performances and the school's standards agenda, and the dissonance therein. Sociocultural and psychosocial readings summon additional interpretations and an alternative story is crafted with Angela as an active agent working purposefully to accomplish her personal ends. Her responses and positionings, a complex and contradictory mix of accommodation, resistance and denial, are orchestrated to satisfy her needs, realise her desires and defend against her anxieties. This writing of self brings to light the value of eliciting and sharing teachers' stories. Greater understanding of the ways that individuals negotiate and make sense of their lives increases empathy and can be a source of support and inspiration. It is a means of pushing back, nurturing the self and small steps towards further resistance, both personal and collective.

Impact Statement

This psychosocial narrative study offers a story of one teacher's professional and personal understandings of her lived experience as an assistant head at a new academy. It shows how the prescribed ways of working as a senior leader demand personal and professional change and that this exacts a practical and affective toll. It provides insights into how she conducts herself to meet the requirements of the role and to align and reconcile this with her ways of living, being and relating as a teacher. It also considers why she might choose to position herself in particular ways and what she is trying to achieve.

Using the conceptual lenses of identity, agency and the psychosocial concept of the defended self, the study offers a story of an individual working purposefully to meet her personal needs in the day to day, as well as satisfying those of her psychic self. In actively selecting subject positions, from those available, the teacher experiences a sense of agency and also pushes back and resists the performative discourses and practices which constrain her ways of being a teacher. Working in this way she sustains a positive professional identity which enables her to go on with things, with her colleagues, and in her setting.

The study adds a story about the teacher's experience to the literature on the self-improving school-led system and educational reform, where teachers are too often represented as faceless, replaceable entities. It contributes to the literatures on teachers' lives and careers, identity and agency, and adds a psychosocial narrative inquiry from an education context to the narrative research literature.

The study builds upon sociocultural models for teacher identity and agency to offer psychosocial frameworks which recognise that the unconscious is at work in the social-cultural world and that each is generative of the other. These models encompass the unconscious that the teacher brings to her setting and may be used to interrogate changing teacher professional identity over time.

The study insights have implications for the work of schools from the individual to the organisational level. It demonstrates how changing teacher professional identity may be used to make sense of the teacher's lived experience and proposes that models for professional identity and agency should be embedded in teacher formation and continuing professional development.

In foregrounding the teacher, their personal purposes and what they are trying to accomplish, the study points up implications for the work of school leaders and the culture they engender in the setting. It also underscores the need for leadership development programmes which explicitly strengthen understandings and skills for working empathetically with colleagues.

For the research participants, the study was a welcome space in which doubts could be articulated more freely. Such spaces offer possibilities for teachers to work collectively in examining and critiquing their practices. In this way, they care for themselves and provide inspiration and support for colleagues in this work. Dissemination of these insights could contribute to wider discussions about teachers' wellbeing and teacher retention.

The EdD: a personal reflection

In reflecting on my experience of doctoral study, I tack back over 30 years in education to share a personal story of changing professional identity, against a backdrop of ongoing educational reform, and the making and remaking of this over a working life.

A move to HE and a professional doctorate

After 15 years teaching secondary school science, including middle and senior leadership, I moved to a midlands university in 2007 to work for a new national science network providing continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers. Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education was high on the Government's education reform agenda at this time, and a range of initiatives were being funded to inspire teachers and young people and to create future scientists and technologists. It was an exciting project and a great personal and professional opportunity, but not everything about moving on is forward and positive. Teachers often find the relocation from school to HE disruptive and unsettling (Maguire, 2000; Williams & Ritter, 2010). They may leave roles in which they feel valued and are considered expert, for ones in which their skills have little currency, and amidst this uncertainty questions of identity come to the fore. Halse (2010) writes that 'becomings' often involve 'loss, abandonment [and] (re)alignment of subjectivity and identity' (p.25) and this resonates with my own experience of a loosening grip on a familiar and secure 'expert' teacher identity. Over time, as I grew to understand more about the culture of the university and its relationship with teacher education, I recognised that in order to thrive I would need to acquire a more acceptable teacher/researcher identity. The EdD held out the possibility of enabling this transition and also of making sense of the increasing tensions in my professional life at this time.

The EdD taught modules

My route through the taught modules and assignments maps strongly onto my new professional preoccupations and interests and speaks of the demands of my role and changing professional identity, and the wider educational context. The EdD did not make me feel more expert, as somehow I had hoped it might, instead it was a further experience of 'unbecoming' as I took up a new student identity. It was a time in which things came further apart, and in this unravelling, my assumptions and understandings were deeply challenged.

In two of the EdD modules, Foundations of Professionalism (FoP) and Contemporary Education Policy (CEP), my assignments focused on the STEM agenda and in these I see the seeds of a growing and continued interest in policy and its impacts.

My FoP assignment; *The Implementation of the STEM Agenda: Implications for the professionalism and professional development of science teachers*, considered how STEM identities might be nurtured in science teachers through ITE and CPD and argued that if the STEM agenda was to be successful in creating a strong supply of scientists, engineers and technologists, the construction of the good science teacher would need to change. In this early work I ignore Ball's 'contexts of practice' (1993) and blithely abstract the teachers and the agenda from the complex settings within which teachers work and live. However, I was able to revisit and redress this in the later CEP module assignment in which I used the Science and Innovation Framework: Next steps document (2006) to examine the policy process. In this work I paid greater attention to the messiness of policy processes and the ways that policies accrete over time in schools and the challenges that this presents.

The CEP module deepened my understanding of how education policy is subordinated to economic policy and the implications of this for schools, teachers and students. Time passing and changing governments and agendas have also helped me to understand that policy is the activity around problems, and it is this

activity and the subjectivities involved which is of greatest interest. Too often little is known about how policy is received and reworked in different settings and if, how, or to what degree, subjects are constructed by policy. This question has persisted across the EdD and is at the heart of my thesis study.

The work for the Methods of Enquiry modules was developed from two different CPD projects undertaken with science teachers. In my assignment for MoE1, *Cluster, Collaboration and Community: A model for science teachers CPD*, I proposed an investigation into the impact of extending a one day CPD event using a Wiki, where the participants could develop their learning further through collaborating in a national online environment. Unfortunately, there was insufficient interest in engaging in the Wiki and so it was not possible to take the project forward to MoE2 and the IFS. Instead I researched the process of supporting teachers undertaking physics action research projects; *Promoting quality action research: Empowering teachers to critically investigate pedagogy and learning in physics classrooms* and here I focused on the role of the CPD facilitator and how they could be more effective. MoE2 was an opportunity to conduct semi-structured interviews and to use cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) to theorise the CPD project and the research process, and both aspects were developed further in the IFS.

These projects and my approach were strongly shaped by time and place and the prevailing discourse and practices which framed the possibilities for my researcher identity. In the wider educational environment, there was a growing expectation that the research community would provide solutions to teaching problems and that research should offer evidence-based interventions which 'worked', and which could be readily translated to any classroom. In my own professional context, this corresponded with the dominant instrumentalist view of teachers' professional development as primarily about increasing teachers' skills and knowledge and a focus on questions such as 'What makes effective CPD?'(DfES, 2005).

In the CPD network we wrestled with ways of increasing and measuring the 'impact' of the work, which we needed to demonstrate to our audiences (schools) and to our funders. Our mission and messaging shifted from inspiring science educators to persuading schools that undertaking science professional development would lead to improvement in their students' exam results. It was a time in which it became ever more difficult to align my role and my identity, and the EdD was crucial in this process and in helping me to make sense of my experiences and to care for myself (Ball & Olmedo, 2013).

The Institution Focused Study

For my IFS I had planned to work with the Science PGCE students; they seemed to be a more accessible research participant group than teachers and I hoped to develop a research question which would provide insights into the CPD needs of NQTS and RQTs. However, the ITE tutor team was keen to evaluate their school university partnership tools and as they were the gatekeepers to the students and their placement schools, to gain the support and access I needed to undertake the study, I proposed a project to investigate how the lesson observation tool was being interpreted and used across the partnership. Through negotiating and designing the study I learnt much about the nuts and bolts of conducting 'real world' research (Robson, 2002) and in particular, the importance of relationships in the process.

My IFS study, *Singing from the same hymn sheet? The lesson observation profile as a mediating tool in the school-university initial teacher education programme*, was an opportunity to build on my experience in MoE2, to develop my skills in undertaking semi-structured interviews and to use CHAT as a tool for conceptualising and interpreting the problem and the findings. Following MoE2 I had been encouraged to be less rigid in constructing my interview schedules and to allow more space for the research participants to talk freely. In doing so here, I

found that the students offered rich stories of personal experience and this sparked my growing interest in narrative research approaches.

The changing researcher

The year 2012 was a terrible time and I interrupted my studies for five terms. Coming back to the IFS and reengaging with the programme, albeit very slowly, was an important personal step and I am deeply grateful to the people who supported and encouraged me. Throughout the EdD I have had a wonderful personal tutor and supervisor, Dr Ralph Levinson, and also the unstinting support and inspirational mentorship of my Faculty Deans, who, in different ways, enabled me to keep going with the EdD, even as my professional role became more challenging and precarious. On returning to the programme I audited a further taught module, *Rethinking Education: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Learning and Teaching*, and also undertook a narrative research course. My research purposes and interests were changing, so too my personal perspective on the limits of sociocultural approaches, as I increasingly came to see that these alone could not provide all of the answers.

Post 2010 - developing the thesis

My ideas for my thesis were brewing in the adhocery of the changing educational landscape post the 2010 White Paper (DfE, 2010). Like other middle tier organisations, the CPD network had less funding and new responsibilities. We were charged with developing the capacity of high performing schools, like the new Teaching Schools, to lead science CPD in the new self-improving school-led system. Through this work I met many inspirational teachers who were carving out new roles in this shifting, uncertain environment. Their professional identities were in transition and their stories offered unfolding perspectives on their changing selves and the messy contradictions of their changing settings. Their experiences were at

once familiar and unfamiliar, their professional identities were shifting in ways I recognised, but their contexts were very different.

In 2015 I was appointed to a new role in establishing a university wide interdisciplinary institute. This offered possibilities for a very different professional identity and the opportunity to meet and work with colleagues from all areas and disciplines across the university. This move away from science education and from working with schools and teachers was a lifeline at this time. I was no longer an insider researcher (Sikes & Potts, 2008) and able to approach and engage my teacher colleagues more freely as participants in my study. They were keen to be involved and open to expressing their doubts and exploring their situations critically.

It was a time of upheaval across the university sector and through my work I heard many personal stories of change. I empathised with my university teaching colleagues; identities were being rewritten and new constructions of roles favoured some areas over others, creating winners and losers. Visiting academics offered similar stories from across the country and from around the world and these further affirmed my sense that surfacing these personal accounts was valuable work. My thesis study offers one narrative, but this stands in for others across education, where people are responding to a 'cacophony of calls' (Britzman, 2003, p.223) and working to bring their roles and identities together in ways which, if not harmonious, are at least bearable, and which enable them to go on with themselves and their colleagues.

In taking time out of the EdD programme I had lost touch with my own cohort of students, and I missed those important relationships which had been forged at a special time. My new role connected me with postgraduate students and the research community and here I found new sources of scholarly support and a welcome respite from hours spent as Tomalin (2017) observes on working at home, in 'silence, hard slog, loneliness [and] old clothes' (p.284).

Through uncovering these connections, I have set out one story of my EdD journey. It has been a lengthy one and on the way everything has changed, but most significantly me, the researcher and my perspectives, and everything that this might mean for the work. Through my thesis I have developed a keen interest in narrative research, the psychosocial subject and the 'dream work' (Britzman, 2009). My understandings of the possibilities for research and what this can be have grown beyond the instrumental and 'what works', to encompass approaches which seek to enlarge the problem and to understand it in new ways.

List of abbreviations

STEM Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics

ERA Education Reform Act

NPM New Public Management

SISS Self-improving School-led System

NLE National Leader of Education

LLE Local Leader of Education

MAT Multi-academy trust

TSA Teaching School Alliance

Ofsted Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills

DfE Department for Education

LA Local Authority

ITE Initial Teacher Education

VITAE Variation in Teachers' Work, Lives and Effectiveness

CPD Continuing Professional Development

PLP Professional Life Phases

OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

SLT Senior Leadership Team

AH Assistant Head

NPQSL National Professional Qualification for Senior Leaders

HoD Head of Department

HoS Head of Science

HoKS3 Head of Key Stage 3

HoY Head of Year

BNIM Biographical-narrative interpretive method

PIN Particular Incident Narrative

SQUIN Single Question to Induce Narrative

TQUIN Topic Questions Inducing Narrative

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Although the EdD often feels like a lonely pursuit, there are many people who have made invaluable contributions and who must be highlighted here.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Post 2010: a rapidly changing educational landscape

Since the Education White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching* (DfE, 2010), the English school system has been undergoing deep and wide scale reform and the educational landscape is being rapidly recontoured.

The 2010 White Paper was the harbinger of extensive changes and processes which signalled the Government's intentions in relation to education. It set in motion the early moves to working towards a 'self-improving school-led system' (SISS) in which increasingly autonomous schools would become ever more accountable for their own improvement (Greany & Higham, 2018).

Although educational reform and the direction of change are being driven by similar forces in a range of settings across the world, England is 'an outlier' in terms of the intensity of change and the pace at which this has been pursued over the last twenty years (Day & Smethem, 2009, p.6). School cultures and practices have been changed through small, but cumulative, policy moves over time; this 'ratcheting up' of policy, a process in which 'each move makes the next thinkable, feasible and acceptable' (Ball, 2008, p.97), alongside the ever increasing influence of the evidence based practice movement in education (Bridges & Watts, 2008), helped to lay the groundwork for the 2010 White Paper and to enable the government to drive their reform agenda at a remarkable pace since 2010.

At this time, further research is needed on teachers' professional and personal experiences and what it means to be a teacher working in these post 2010 cultures. In this chapter I set out my interests, questions and perspectives to provide my rationale for this study and suggest ways that fresh insights might contribute to enlarging understandings in this area. Following Clandinin and Connolly (2000),

I revisit my own experiences in education to uncover the connections between these and my understandings of the research problem and to locate myself in the study. I also set out the research questions that the work will address and an overview of the thesis structure.

1.2 The missing teacher

Research attention has thus far been strongly focused on structural changes across the school system; for example, the myriad of new schools created as a result of new legislative freedoms and funding arrangements and the new multi-school structures, multi-academy trusts (MATs) and teaching school alliances (TSAs) and their relationships (Courtney, 2015; Greany, 2014; Greany & Higham, 2018; West & Wolfe, 2018, 2019).

There is also interest in the experience of the system leaders which include Headteachers, alongside those in newly created roles, National and Local Leaders of Education (NLEs and LLEs), a new Teaching School Council (TSC) and since 2014, the Regional School Commissioners (RSCs). However, the voice of the teacher is missing here and so the lived experiences of teachers are underrepresented. To redress this absence and increase understandings of how these changing settings work in and through their professional and personal lives, the study wishes to add the teacher's voice.

1.2.1 Who the teacher is matters

There is a long standing and deep recognition of the connection between the person the teacher is and the work they do (Goodson & Ball, 1985). The teacher matters because more is communicated in teaching than simply the material and this includes the teacher's 'emotional world' and even that which is 'unconscious' (Britzman, 2009, p.81). Setting aside at this point the difficulty of proposing the

unconscious at play in the classroom, teachers' experiences are important because the teachers' worlds affect the work they do.

Greater understanding of teachers' subjective experiences can contribute to enlarging understandings and the development of theory on teachers' working lives. This knowledge should underpin Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes and be used to target continuing professional development (CPD) which will support and sustain teachers throughout their careers (Day et al., 2006; House of Commons Education Committee, 2018).

Examining teachers' experiences is a way of making sense of school life and teachers' work. Greater understanding of the ways that institutional change plays out in the working lives of individuals can provide insights into the possible trajectories of reform processes, the ways that these are likely to proceed and the potential implications. This is important in identifying and planning for future developments and needs, as well as highlighting research priorities.

1.2.2 The teacher recruitment and retention crisis

In England, large numbers of teachers leave the profession within five years (House of Commons Education Committee, 2017; Lightfoot, 2016). In relation to this study it is noteworthy that secondary school teacher numbers have been falling since 2010, and more teachers have been leaving the profession for reasons other than retirement since 2012 (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018, p.3).

Governments' responses and work in this area have been focused on teachers' roles and their concerns about retention have further narrowed this to a spotlight on teacher workload (DfE, 2017). Whilst workload is unquestionably important, technocratic discourses which seek to focus only upon what is manageable and measurable, draw attention away from more ambiguous, messy and complex

questions about the people; why they became teachers in the first place, how they understand their work, and why and how they continue to pursue their careers in teaching, if indeed they do.

Criticisms of the Education Department's progress with this work are damning, highlighting a poor grasp of the problem and little understanding of how their planned interventions would address these issues (House of Commons Education Committee, 2017). Moreover, their focus on recruitment rather than retention has been less cost effective and likely to further exacerbate problems in developing and retaining future school leaders.

Whilst workload is certainly an issue, and it is widely felt that tackling workload and teachers' pay will go some way to addressing shortages, there is evidence that school cultures where teachers experience 'constant scrutiny, the need to perform and hyper-critical management' (Perryman & Calvert, 2019, p.17) are also damaging. Negative cultures and unreasonable workloads may together contribute to a teacher's decision to leave the profession. In other words, it is not simply the volume of work which is significant, but the nature of this work, and how this feels in particular settings.

This lack of understanding of why teachers leave teaching, or why and how they stay, points towards a gap in contemporary research on teachers' professional lives. This study will contribute to greater understanding in this area and is an important reason for investigating teachers' subjective experiences of their working lives at this time.

1.3 The research puzzle - subject to change?

All schools and teachers broadly experience the same policies and accountability pressures from central government, but how far are teachers subject to the changes wrought by the policy technologies of different governments or able to be active agents in mediating and reworking these in their local contexts? Whilst some research suggests that reform processes are reshaping the work and lives of teachers and rewriting identities (Ball, 2008) others argue that because schools are very diverse and teachers are individual and idiosyncratic, policy is mediated in very different ways from one setting to another (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012). Schools comprise a spectrum of individuals with different generational experiences and missions (Stone-Johnson, 2011, 2016) and idiosyncratic sociocultural and psychosocial biographies and histories. Teachers filter their experiences of school life and educational reforms and policies through these lenses and in this way schools and teachers are not simply produced by these processes. Within a broad shared context there are limitless stories of local change, creating different stories of personal change.

Perhaps now, more than ever, 'where you stand depends on where you sit' (Colebatch, cited in Maguire, Braun, & Ball, 2015, p.3). A school may, for example, become an academy, a Teaching School, or take the lead in forming a new multi-academy trust (MAT), and new opportunities will be opened up for some teachers in these settings. In these situations, and for some individuals, the changing system may be understood and experienced differently, less a project of reform and instead a chance to try something new, refresh energies and commitment, and feel creatively engaged with their careers and their lives. Whilst creating opportunities for some teachers, others may be positioned less favourably, or precariously, in changing structures and cultures and the available possibilities, to comply, to resist, or to walk away, will feel less optimistic.

In earlier work on teachers' lives and careers, teachers were 'shadowy figures on the educational landscape' (Goodson & Ball, 1985, p.6) and favoured research approaches focused on understanding teaching through investigating the teacher's role (Goodson, 2014b). These observations are still resonant and amplify the concerns of the current study. In this post 2010 context, teachers are too often presented as faceless and interchangeable, and so understandings about their lived experience and what it means to be a teacher at this time remain elusive and puzzling.

Talking to friends and colleagues to pinpoint what was interesting and researchable, an observation offered by an ex-primary Headteacher struck a chord; 'Some teachers adapt, others don't: end of.' John had been a Head in the mid 2000s, a period of intensive educational change when schools, particularly the primary sector, were in the grip of the New Labour Government's education reform project. In John's experience, teachers either accepted and integrated the required changes and 'got on with things', or they did not. Those who were unable to adapt their practices often left teaching, too many, sadly, ill, stressed or burned out, faced premature retirement. His closing 'end of' provided a spur for my thinking. Was it simply a question of teachers adapting or not? Or complying with changes or not? Could learning more about the ways that teachers make sense of their working lives at times of change illuminate how and why they respond in the ways that they do?

1.4 Getting personal

There is no masterful vantage point from which to view and consider these questions. I am also part of the landscape, moving through and changing this as it too changes and unfurls around me. My paths have crossed those of my research participants and I must retrace those steps to unravel the research puzzle and uncover my interests and perspectives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

I date my career in education from 1988 when, following the Education Reform Act (ERA), I was co-opted to the new governing body of a local secondary school. My experiences here led to a Science postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) and fifteen years in the classroom, including middle and senior leadership. In 1992 I took up my first teaching post, entering schools grappling with a rash of reforms including the new National Curriculum. This was to be a period of ongoing educational change and although reforms were coloured by differing ideological perspectives and different priorities and commitments have prevailed at particular times, the trajectory of change, under successive governments, has been unswerving.

From 1997 onwards, the Labour Government pursued an intensive reform programme characterised by centrally driven programmes of school improvement, notably the national literacy and numeracy strategies which expanded into the National Strategies and extended across all levels of primary and secondary education. Alongside these, underpinned by the rational economic imperative to ensure the supply of scientists and engineers needed for future economic growth, there was an eruption of centrally funded initiatives to inspire young people and to improve learning and teaching in science, and more broadly to strengthen science, technology engineering and maths (STEM) education.

I share this to provide a flavour of educational reform and the institutional narratives of the time. For some, these were exciting developments, offering new CPD opportunities including collaborative projects, action research and the potential for moving into alternative careers in education. We embraced these possibilities, we were not teachers whose resistance had to be overcome (although there were some of those), we were 'career entrepreneurs' (Sikes, Measor, & Woods, 1985) and like Little's 'reform enthusiasts' (1996) keen to extend our reach beyond the classroom. In 2007 I moved out of school to work for a national CPD network based at a Midlands university. Like many teachers moving into HE, I found the transition

challenging. All change involves learning and unlearning and disrupts professional identity (Halse, 2010), and at this time I also started my Educational Doctorate (EdD). In my professional role, I was part of a growing 'middle tier', the mediating level between schools and government, and a space traditionally recognised as the domain of the Local Authorities. Following the White Paper (DfE, 2010) the changes afoot for schools, including new roles in leading Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and teachers' CPD, plus radical new funding arrangements, demanded a nimble response from middle tier organisations involving repositioning, new relationships and fresh ways of working.

My 'lived experience' of these times is encapsulated by Britzman (1992) in her writing on teacher's identity:

Role speaks to function, whereas identity voices investments and commitments. Function, or what one should do, and investments, or what one feels, are often at odds. The two are in dialogic relation and it is this tension that makes for the 'lived experience' of the teacher. (p.29)

Across the system my colleagues in the educational middle tier, on governing bodies and in academic and professional roles in universities, often deeply ideologically committed in their work, were also struggling with the processes of aligning identity and role in increasingly managerialist environments (Devine, Grummell, & Lynch, 2011; Lindblad & Goodson, 2011).

Alongside my research participants I was also travelling through this shifting landscape; living the changes in the system brought about by intentions signalled in the 2010 White Paper and the policies which flowed from this, and whilst we tell different stories about what happened to us, we share the times of our lives.

1.5 A narrative inquiry

A narrative inquiry approach is appropriate for uncovering insights into teachers' understandings of their experiences because these are embedded in stories of professional and personal lives (Chase, 2005). These personal narratives are 'meaning making through the shaping of experience; a way of understanding one's own or other's actions, of organising events, objects, feelings or thoughts over time (in the past, present and future)' (Chase, 2018, p.549). In this way, the changing context works on both the individual's current understandings of their professional life, and also on their sensemaking of experiences overtime. That is, it works *through* their professional lives, reworking past events, feelings and thoughts and their projections for imagined futures.

Following Clandinin (2013), a narrative inquiry is one in which the data gathered and the method for investigating, thinking and writing about this are both narrative. For the narrative inquirer the work is a puzzle involving 'a sense of a search, a (re)search, a searching again' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.124) where the researcher proceeds iteratively, making sense and reframing the problem as things go on.

In this study personal narratives of teachers' working lives were investigated using a holistic, psychosocial, interpretative approach which evoked alternative stories of professional lives. Using data from one research participant, Angela, the study offers a story about a novice assistant head in the newly opened All Faiths Academy and considers how Angela's lived experience of her teaching life might be understood as she undertakes this new role in a changing setting in this post 2010 context of reform.

1.6 Study overview

Chapter 2 sets out a review of selected literature; It outlines the changing educational context from 2010 onwards, scans the research over 40 years on teaching lives and careers and identifies pertinent concepts, and considers contemporary questions in narrative research and understandings of what a narrative can offer. Chapter 3 discusses the methodological approach and the tools of interpretation used. Angela's story is set out and developed through an iterative process of analysis in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. In the discussion Chapter 7, the study findings are brought together with the literature to further theorize Angela's lived experience. Chapter 8 considers the potential implications of the study and ways that the work could be taken forward in educational scholarship and practice.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction and purpose

This chapter sets out the theoretical fabric of the study and is organised in three sections (2.2- 2.4).

Section 2.2 provides an overview of structural changes across the English education system since 2010 and the changing environment within which schools are operating and where teachers work.

In Section 2.3 the provenance of the research questions is traced through a broad exploration of research on teachers' lives and careers against a background of ongoing educational reform over the last 35 years. The purpose here is to draw attention to the ways that researchers have approached similar questions in different reform contexts, and what has been learned from this work and may be relevant and applicable here. It also underlines emerging research questions and agendas highlighted in recent work and considers how this study contributes to enlarging understandings of teachers' lived experiences of their working lives at this time.

In Section 2.4 I locate myself as a narrative researcher within the key current debates in narrative research theory. I show why a narrative approach is appropriate for this project and establish a methodological framework for designing and conducting the research.

2.2 A changing school landscape

The context of this study is English schools and the education system post 2010, following the publication of the White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching* (DfE, 2010). This landmark policy document set out the Conservative-led Coalition Government's vision for schools and education in England and heralded a new era. Key policies signalled here and instituted since the general election that year, clarified and sharpened the direction of travel of educational reform. It stepped up the pace of change of schools and educational structures and signalled far reaching reforms intended to radically shift and reshape the educational school landscape. In so doing, the 2010 White Paper set out both the intention and the structural means to complete a process of reform initiated in 1988 with the Education Reform Act, a 30 year project of intensive educational reform in England (Earley & Greany, 2017; Stevenson, 2011).

The context of the White Paper and the policies which flowed from this was the ongoing critical debate in the educational research community about 'evidence based' reform in education and the increasing clamour for 'what works' or 'best practice', too often in isolation from a consideration of purposes, ends and values. Whilst the use of evidence to inform practice and policy might be deemed to be very desirable, it raises questions about what sort of evidence is appropriate and the kind of role it could play and how (Bridges & Watts, 2008). Too often ideas about what constitutes high quality research in education are conflated with the kinds of outputs produced by quasi-experimental approaches and this renders much of educational research undertaken from different methodological perspectives irrelevant (Bridges, 2008). Most importantly perhaps, and too often overlooked, is that whilst 'what works' evidence can point to possible connections between actions and their potential impacts, education is about values, and decisions about the means in

education must be driven by our purposes and what we desire to achieve (Biesta, 2010).

It is important to locate the White Paper within this context because it illuminates how the education community was readied for the vision and intentions expressed here and further, that the White Paper draws legitimacy from being evidence based, or at least evidence informed (Biesta, 2010; Wiseman, 2010). This helps to make sense of the pace of the reforms which followed and further underscores the importance of researching this topic over this period of time (2010 onwards).

A detailed discussion of the changing system and its impacts is beyond the scope of this work and covered extensively elsewhere (see for example, Coldron, Crawford, Jones, & Simkins, 2014; Greany, 2014); my purpose here is to show how and why 2010 onwards is a period of significant educational reform and worthy of attention, and to bring to the fore the ways that system level tensions permeate schools and work on and through the lives of teachers in their day to day experiences of this system in transition.

2.2.1 An accelerated reform programme

2.2.1.1 The academy model

Since 2010 a plethora of new types of schools have been instituted, creating a complex ever shifting schooling map. There are around 70 different types of schools (Courtney, 2015) including Teaching schools, Trust schools, Free schools, University Technical Colleges (UTCs) and Studio schools. Although different in name and purpose, these are all academies, that is centrally funded schools which are independent from their Local Authorities. Academies have statutory freedoms around the curriculum they offer, pupil admissions, and pay and staff conditions and qualifications, all of which are managed by contract law between the Academy Trust and the Department for Education. Unlike state maintained schools which have

governing bodies run in accordance with statutory education law, the legal entity for the academy is the Academy Trust.

The term 'academy' embraces all schools which have the features outlined above; however, there are significant differences between academies depending on the prevailing circumstances and political climate of the time of their institution. Although the roots of this development may be traced back to the city technology colleges (CTCs) introduced by the Conservative Government in 1986, the academy programme was first instituted under the 1997- 2010 Labour Government around 2002. Whilst these early academies were deemed by Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) to be 'failing' schools, following the Academies Act 2010, the 'convertor' academy was introduced, and these were Ofsted rated 'Outstanding' schools. By April 2011 all schools deemed to be 'performing well' (West & Bailey, 2013, p. 148) could apply to become academies, and new academies were also established under the label of 'free schools', a difference of title only (West & Wolfe, 2019).

The proliferation of academies attests to the pace and ambition of the Coalition Government's academisation programme. For comparison; in March 2010 there were 203 academies in 83 Local Authorities, with a further 100 planned to open that year (House of Commons, 2015), and by January 2018, 7,472 of the 21,538 state-funded schools in England (35% of all state-funded schools) were academies (National Audit Office, 2018).

Determined to accelerate the pace of change, the education white paper, Educational Excellence Everywhere (DfE, 2016) included a plan to force all schools which were deemed underperforming to become academies, plus an expectation that by 2022 all schools would be academies, and that most would also be part of a multi-academy trust (MAT). Although the planned bill faced widespread opposition

and was eventually dropped, the academisation principle and goals were affirmed at this time (Adams, 2016). An ambition which, time may show, was only slowed by the unprecedented challenges of the UK Brexit referendum in 2016 and the all-consuming political activity that this engendered.

2.2.1.2 The rise of the multi-school

The intentions and possibilities for schools working together towards a school-led system have been actively researched, see for example, D.H. Hargreaves' thinkpieces (2010, 2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2014) commissioned by the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL). Towards this end, the 'multi-school' emerged as an increasingly important unit in the government's vision for system wide school improvement. Although schools have always been involved in collaborations and networks, the new academies necessitated novel structures and relationships, and all schools have been strongly guided to become part of the new Teaching School Alliances (TSAs) and the multi-academy trusts (MATs).

With different histories and purposes the TSAs and the MATs have evolved in different ways, and their parallel development is outlined here as an example of how these processes might have been experienced by those working in schools and middle tier organisations at this time.

Announced in the 2010 White Paper the Teaching School was hailed as a flagship innovation and the proposed network of high performing schools, 500 at the outset, was expected to be the lynch pin in the Government's new school improvement strategy. It would provide the testbed for a tranche of new initiatives, only very lightly sketched out at this time, including Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and the development of middle and senior leaders across the system. Further, they were expected to play a key role in school-to-school support including the brokering of the services of the new National and Local leaders of Education (NLEs and LLEs) and

later the Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs). In this way it was expected that the Teaching Schools would seed the policy technologies for securing the 'school-led system for school improvement' (Matthews & Berwick, 2013, p.50) and lay the groundwork for a future self-improving school-led system (SISS) in which schools would be increasingly responsible for their improvement (Greany & Higham, 2018).

Following the 2010 Academies Act the MATs were encouraged and promoted as a means to support schools to collaborate. In funding terms, the MAT is a single legal entity which enters into a Master Funding Agreement (MFA) with the Government, and within the MAT academies operate under one governing body. This provides a tight and formal structure for organising the schools, unlike the looser, more informal fabric of the TSAs.

For schools and individuals investing in these new structures there was a pressing need to understand the government's longer term plans for the TSAs and the MATs, including expectations of what they would achieve and future funding. Meanwhile, the two operated in parallel with little guidance, and questions as to how they might work together and even what they were for, were left to those on the ground to resolve (Gu, Rea, Smethem, Dunford, & Varley, 2015; Husbands, 2015).

Clarification was provided in the white paper (DfE, 2016) where the organisations' distinctive and complementary roles in school improvement were highlighted. Here the strength of the MAT model to 'formally bring together leadership, autonomy, funding and accountability across a group of academies in an enduring way' was underscored, positioning the MAT as the 'best long term formal arrangement for stronger schools to support the improvement of weaker schools' (DfE, 2016, p.57).

This endorsement, together with the expectation that all academies would become part of the MATs, presented challenges to the work and future of the Teaching Schools and their relationships within their alliances and critically, it raised the

spectre of future funding uncertainties. Moreover, there was an embedded expectation that the two would somehow find the means and motivation to fuse their resources and agendas productively, and in ways which enabled them to be both competitive and collaborative.

The education system is one in transition both 'highly fragmented and highly opaque' (Greany & Higham, 2018, p.9) and my purpose here is to provide a sense of the fluidity and uncertainness of the environment. Different ways of working engender new relationships and produce distinctive, complex and often poorly understood arrangements for leadership, governance and funding across the schools. These stresses in the evolving relationship between the MATs and the TSAs are reflected at system level in the tensions between the contradictory policy agendas of collaboration *and* competition (Greany, 2014; Greany & Higham, 2018).

2.2.1.3 A changing middle tier

Changes to schools and new roles for the TSAs and the MATs have led to a radical reworking of the intermediary mediating layer, or the 'middle tier', between governments and schools. In England, the Local Authorities have historically been the backbone of this layer, responsible for managing school provision and the funding of 22,000 schools through around 150 LAs (Chapman, 2013). Although the LAs were not directly subject to reform in 2010, they were allocated a specific role as 'strengthened champions of choice' (DfE, 2010, p.52) in which they became responsible for the overall allocation of school places, and particularly for the placement of vulnerable children. Like the development of the MATs and the TSAs, here the approach was similarly laissez-faire, and the LAs were expected to reposition themselves in a competitive market, with reduced funding and significantly less influence and reach, particularly in the secondary sector (Simkins, Coldron, Crawford, & Jones, 2015).

Overtime changing schools and structures across the system have redefined the middle space, which has grown to include, among others, the new multi-schools, MATS and TSAs , National and Local Leaders of Education (NLEs and LLEs) and since 2014, the new Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs) responsible for monitoring the academies and free schools in their areas. These changes produced an uneasy amalgam of new and old organisations with different areas of control, all in the process of transition and all subject to central directives. For example, whilst the new school system leaders became increasingly important in relation to secondary academies, the LA continued to be influential with the still largely maintained primary sector (Simkins et al., 2015), and for many schools and teachers these changes were experienced as a disruption of local relationships, cultures and practices.

Despite the rhetoric of autonomy, a key driver in encouraging academisation, without the mediating bridge of the LA, many schools were now more exposed to central control; directly subject to government agendas and regimes of testing, inspection and intervention, within a system which demanded increasing accountability. Alongside this, as part of MATS, academies are no longer legal entities and this has worked to radically reduce the autonomy of individual schools (West & Wolfe, 2019). This conflict at the heart of the academisation programme is reflected in the wider tension between autonomy and accountability across the system.

2.2.2 Looking wider: a global perspective

Whilst this study argues that England is 'an outlier' in terms of the scope and pace at which it seeks to implement widescale educational reform, the drive for evidence based educational reform is a global phenomenon (Wiseman, 2010). For example, in the period 2008-2014, 450 educational reforms were reported across the thirty-six countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2015). Although the pace of the work and approaches differ across settings, the direction of change and the reforms implemented are similar because, globally, similar forces are driving change. All countries must respond to the fourth industrial revolution, including shifts in social cohesion, migration, and new technologies and the need to be economically competitive in changing labour and employment markets, and reforms are widely inspired by efforts elsewhere and achieved through 'policy borrowing' (Halpin & Troyna, 1995). What is happening in England is part of a global education reform movement (GERM) with shared features across a range of settings (Sahlberg, 2016).

2.2.2.1 New Public Management (NPM) and educational reform

In England educational reform is part of a wider process of public service reform underpinned by the principles of New Public Management (NPM). As NPM has been an established feature of reform efforts since the 1979 Conservative Government, it is less new than middle aged (Hood & Peters, 2004) and in England three distinctive iterations of NPM have been identified across this period (Hall & Gunter, 2016). This discussion is beyond the scope of the study and covered extensively in a range of literatures, here the term NPM encompasses the ideologically neoliberal principles and private sector practices favoured over those associated with the public sector operating within the welfarist state. It's characteristic features include; increased markets and competition between providers, private sector styles of management practice and increased professional managerialism/leaderism, and the development

of standards and the means of measuring performance in terms of these and other system outputs (Hall & Gunter, 2016; Hall, Gunter, & Bragg, 2013).

In England the post-welfarist public education system (Gewirtz, 1997) is one in which required reforms have been brought about by an education reform “package” ‘comprising three *policy technologies*, market, managerialism and performativity’ (Ball, 2003, p.215). Following the Education Reform Act (ERA) the new national curriculum was introduced in 1990 and this was accompanied by national testing with expected national standards. This reform ‘package’ created a means of ranking schools and ostensibly provided parents with the information they needed to compare schools and make informed choices. It also furnished governments with data to generate performance targets for schools, teachers and students. In this way, the work of schools and teachers was made more visible; it could be monitored, measured and assessed and the means was created whereby teachers could be held personally accountable for their students’ progress and attainment. Taken together these reform moves have been translated into extensive ‘standards agendas’ and examination performance or ‘standards’ and the need to ‘drive these up’ is widely discussed in education (Leat, 2014). The national standards policy works through ‘a very public technology of performance – made up of league table, national averages, comparative and progress indicators, Ofsted assessments and benchmarks’ (Ball, Maquire, Braun, Perryman, & Hoskins, 2012, p.514). This creates a culture of performance evident in the everyday business, concerns and practices of the school. From national directives, schools produce their own locally interpreted standards agenda which is determined and managed by the school leadership. In the day to day activities of ‘delivering’ the standards agenda, neoliberally inspired managerialist processes and discourses have been normalised and embedded in the fabric of schools and in the psyche of teachers and in their work.

Alongside these reform moves and over time there have been parallel shifts in teacher education. Initial teacher training (ITT) has replaced initial teacher education (ITE) and this has enabled a progressive narrowing of the work to a focus on the mapping of trainee teachers' progress against the measurable 'competencies' of the Teachers Standards (DfE, 2013).

Schools are both subject to market forces in education and expected to exercise autonomy in their responses to these, and at the same time they are key implementers of government agendas and required to be highly accountable in their work. Education must equip the next generation with the skills needed to meet future economic needs; a message strongly communicated by the Coalition Government Prime Minister David Cameron and Nick Clegg in their introduction to the 2010 White Paper;

what really matters is how we're doing compared with our international competitors. That is what will define our economic growth and our country's future.

(DfE, 2010, p.3)

In this way the need for schools to continuously improve standards is harnessed to the nation's future and the goal of a flourishing economy. Moreover, schools have a vital role in securing the social changes and reforms needed to underpin societal policies. When governments are concerned about issues that society seems unable to address, for example, tackling the radicalisation of young people, encouraging resilience, or delivering sex education, or even addressing intractable national health problems such as obesity, or mental health, the task is given to schools because they are understood to be uniquely positioned in relation to families and communities to undertake this work. In responding to these needs, the school's scope for autonomy over curriculum choices is narrowed and individuals are stretched further, crafting ever more elastic selves (Devine et al., 2011).

In this section, I have highlighted some important structural changes and how these have been brought about since 2010. The discussion considers the academy model, relationships between the developing multi-school structures, the MATs and TSAs, and how the educational middle tier is changing and LAs are responding. Looking more widely, the ways that NPM reforms in the public sector have been taken up in education over the last 30 years and the implications of this for the work of schools and teachers is considered. Whilst England is a 'mover and shaker' (Hood & Peters, 2004, p.268) in terms of the pace and vigour with which it has pursued educational reform, particularly since 2010, it is part of a broader reform movement in which nations driven similarly by wider global concerns seek evidence based reforms to underpin and legitimise their educational policy making practices.

The ubiquitous and powerful landscape metaphor underlines the fluidity and dynamism of the educational environment at this time and evokes a consideration of place, time and sociality and the connections between these dimensions. A landscape offers different relational perspectives; for some working in this context will be experienced as a 're-disorganisation' of professional and teaching lives (Pollitt, 2007), whilst others will interpret their experiences differently. Surveying the vista, the observer is also part of the landscape, and their presence changes it in transitory or more permanent ways, as they move in and through. Overall, greater understanding of teachers' lived experiences is needed at this time and the accelerated pace of reform makes this need more pressing. In focusing on a personal story of change, the study will provide a small contribution to this underexamined area, and will show how learning more about the ways that 'people change internally and how that personal change then plays out through institutional change' (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 57) can uncover compelling insights.

2.3 Teachers' lives, careers and educational reform

2.3.1 Context and background

In this section I highlight some key literature in the area of teachers' careers, work and lives over the last 40 years, a period of ongoing educational reform in England. I set out, in broad terms, what is known about teaching lives and careers in different reform contexts, the questions arising from this for teachers working in schools at this time, how findings from research inform my study and where my work might contribute fresh perspectives.

2.3.2 Teacher identity – who is the person in the teacher?

In understanding something as intensely personal as teaching it is
critical we know about the person the teacher is
(Goodson, 1981, p.69)

This connection between the personal and the professional in teaching is firmly established in the research and at the very heart of my study. In developing my approach I have drawn from work which sought to understand teaching lives by focusing on teachers' subjective experiences of their careers (Goodson & Ball, 1985; Sikes et al., 1985) as well as the landmark, longitudinal studies on teachers and careers in this area (Day et al., 2006; A. Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006; Huberman, 1989; Huberman, Grounauer, Marti, & Neufeld, 1993).

The impulse and the starting point for the study is the work of A.Hargreaves (1994), who saw the central role of the teacher as one which was often overlooked. He argued for the importance of recognising the elements that impact upon teachers' work including; the teacher's purpose, the person the teacher is, the context and culture of their settings and how this supports or hinders them in their working lives.

This builds upon Goodson and Ball's expression of the relationship between teacher identity and teachers' work:

The ways in which teachers achieve maintain and develop their identity, their sense of self in and through a career, are of vital importance in understanding the actions and commitments of teachers in their work. (1985, p.18)

and an understanding of teachers' careers, or working lives, as 'the moving perspective in which the person sees his [*sic*] life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his various attributes, actions, and the things which happen to him' (Sikes et al., 1985, p. 1).

Drawing upon data from 200 teachers in eight secondary schools in the USA and Canada which reviewed experiences from 1970 to the 1990s, A. Hargreaves and Goodson (2006) highlighted five broad 'change forces' at work in schools and their contexts. These wide ranging forces; waves of policy reform, changes in leadership and leadership succession, changing students and community demographics, changing teachers and their generational missions, and shifting relationships between schools, worked together overtime to bring about education changes. In this way the study draws into focus the complexity of researching any particular aspect of change, because at any point in time teachers, schools and their contexts are changing and are themselves located within the wider political and historical sphere, which is also changing and driving change. This work resonates with my understandings of the current reform context. These change forces (and maybe others) are also at work here and whilst educational reform is an important factor in the way that teachers experience their teaching lives, it is not the only factor and is only part of the wider cultural and societal changes impacting upon professional and personal lives. In listening to teachers' experiences of their working lives, the study is not seeking to understand the impact of reform, rather, and inspired by a similar

approach in the Profknow project (Goodson & Lindblad, 2011) comparing the working lives of teachers and nurses across Europe, it seeks insights into the ways that teachers' lives 'are conceived of and handled by professionals... their stories, perspectives and strategies to deal with their work' (Lindblad & Goodson, 2011, p.5).

The Variation in Teachers' Work, Lives and Effectiveness (VITAE) project (Day et al., 2006) was a novel methodological undertaking from 2001-2005 which brought together two hitherto distinct research areas, research on teachers' work and school lives and work on teacher effectiveness. Commissioned by the Department for Families, Education and Schools (DfES), the study involved 300 primary and secondary teachers across 100 schools in seven regions in England with the purpose of investigating the factors that contributed to teachers' effectiveness, and if and how teachers became more effective at different stages in their careers. Here teacher effectiveness was measured both in terms of the teachers' personal perceptions and by assessing their students' progress using baseline tests and national end of key stage assessments. This was the first time that national assessment data was available for this purpose and its use here is an example of how the prevailing political and educational context shapes the lens brought to bear upon the field and the data (Goodson & Ball, 1985). The wider context was a period of rapid educational reform under the New Labour government (1997-2010); with significant changes underway in the school curriculum under the auspices of the National Strategies, alongside moves to address teachers' workload through the radical reimagining and reconstruction of the teaching workforce.

Building on earlier work on teaching careers and career development (Huberman, 1989) the study identified teachers' identities and teachers' professional life phases (PLPs), based on experience, rather than age and responsibility (as in Huberman's work), as key influencers in teachers' effectiveness. Commitment, agency and

resilience were theorised as significant contributory factors in sustaining a 'positive' professional identity.

The VITAE project described the teacher's professional identity in terms of three interacting dimensions; a personal dimension, including all elements of the teacher's life, the situated dimension, drawing in all aspects of the teacher's setting including colleagues and students, and the professional dimension, comprising the requirements of the teacher's role and the wider policy environment. Within and between these dimensions things are continually shifting and in flux, and across the teaching life, through different PLPs, the teacher works to manage and stabilise these elements. Throughout this process a number of important interacting factors are at work. A 'positive professional identity' (Day et al., 2006, p.69) contributes to a teacher's sense of her efficacy in her role, that is her belief that she can make a difference to the lives of her students, and this in turn contributes to her effectiveness. In this way a positive identity contributes to teacher effectiveness. Commitment, agency and resilience are important factors in sustaining a positive identity and are also linked to the individual's capacity to maintain 'upward trajectories of commitment' (Sammons et al., 2007, p.686) and further a 'sense of personal and professional agency and moral purpose' (Day et al., 2006, p.148). The teacher's desire to live their commitments is an enduring aspiration linked to the individual's 'hopes, fears and desires for the future' (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p.971) and so connects to their possibilities for achieving agency in their context and maintaining a positive professional identity.

In tune with its ideological and political context, the VITAE study considered educational reform to be an integral part of the teaching life. Teacher resilience, that is their 'capacity to maintain equilibrium and a sense of commitment and agency' (Gu & Day, 2013, p.26) in their teaching lives, was identified as an importance factor here. Although change can be a significant influence on teachers' understandings of

their working lives, they must be able to integrate and manage reform moves positively to sustain their careers in education. For individuals, VITAE found that this involved mobilising a range of resources: personal, social, cultural and psychological, in ways which enabled them to find new positions of equanimity. These new positionings differed for different teachers in contrasting settings and across PLPs; however, the work underscored the importance of targeted CPD to support teachers across all PLPs in ways which enabled them to reflect on their experiences of these processes (Day & Gu, 2007). These understandings of teacher identity and the factors which contribute to sustaining a positive identity across a teaching life have continued to be influential: they are pertinent to my research problem in the current context and inform my focus on identity and agency.

In a rapidly changing policy environment (late 2000s), teacher identity continues to be a keen focus for research and a review of the growing literature (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009) provides a broad overview of debates in a diverse international field, where identity has been put to work using different methodologies to investigate a range of questions. In contrast to the scale and approach of VITAE, the authors highlight a number of small scale narrative studies which offer individual stories to draw into focus understandings of identity and experience. Examples of such work include: the 'unorthodox' teacher (Watson, 2009), whose story shows how the construction of a counter narrative enables him to position himself with comfort within his setting; Halse (2010) traces one teacher's experience of changing identity through a professional development programme to disrupt the notion of linear professional development through a teaching life; through a story of a 'reform enthusiast', Veen, Slegers & Ven (2005) investigate what is at stake for the individual in engaging with reform, and consider the implications of the current reform culture for the recruitment and education of future teachers.

Such studies offer inspirational models for working with individual narratives and inform my research approach.

2.3.3 Conceptualising teacher professional identity

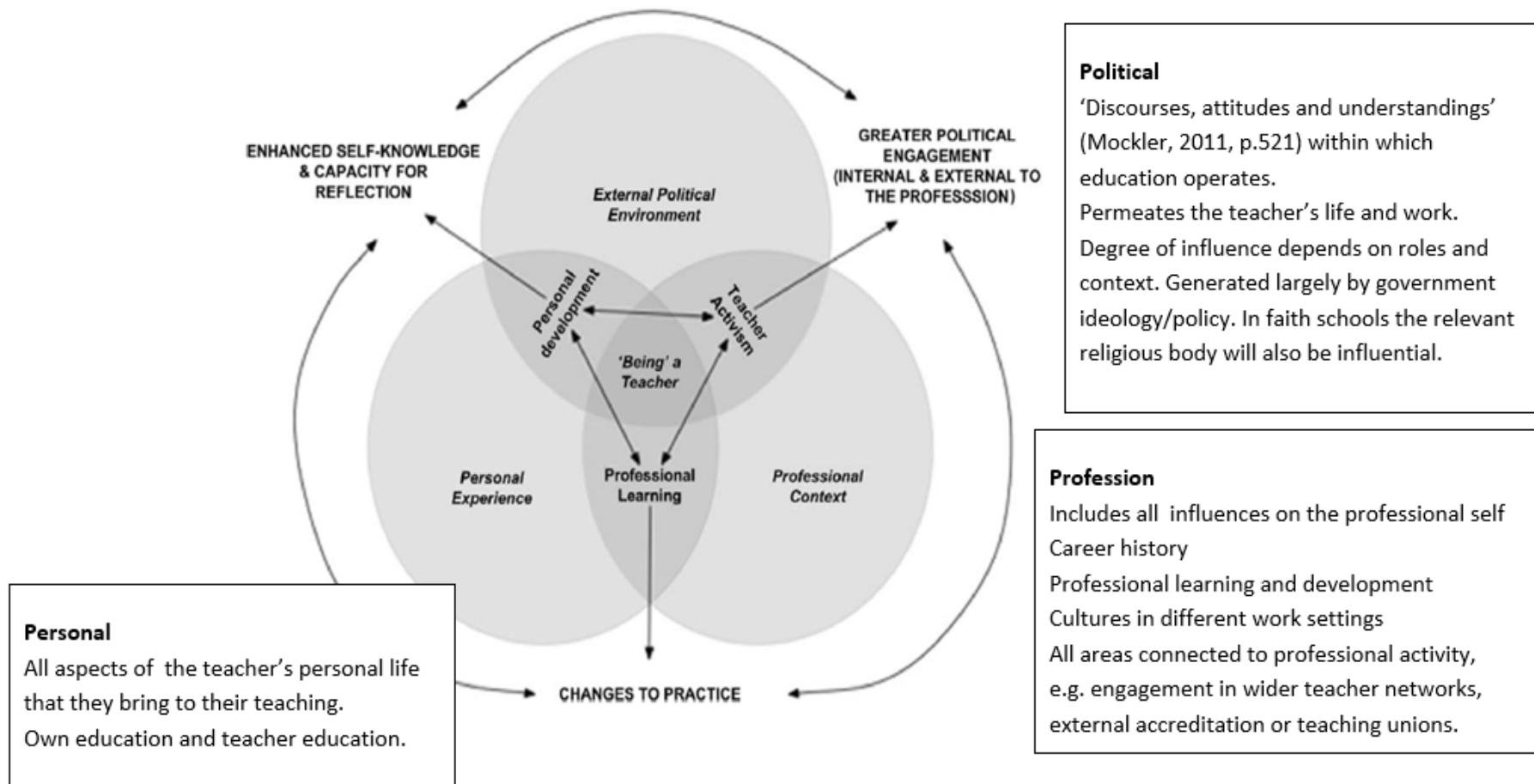
Teachers' identities are important because the person and the work they do are deeply connected, or as Watson suggests 'in a sense professional action is doing professional identity' (2006, p.510). McCarthy & Moje (2002) offer a view of identity in terms of who the person is in the world. They argue that identity is the way that humans make sense of the world and their relationships, and that these interpretations shape the ways that people respond to each other. This conception translates readily to the classroom where every aspect of the day to day pedagogic relationship 'is framed and constituted through [teachers'] understanding and positioning of themselves as a product of their professional identity' (Mockler, 2011, p.517).

Mockler (2011) offers a view of teacher professional identity as the way that teachers see and make sense of themselves in their work both individually and as a profession, that is their self understandings in their professional settings. In postmodernity, the idea of a fluid, multiple identity is broadly recognised and embraced, but day to day where people wrestle with negotiating the uncertainty of their lives, there is a desire to pursue a recognisable and secure self. This is not an unchanging self, but one which enables us 'to know how to go on with those around us' (Bauman, 1996, p.19) and one in which we can 'face ourselves' (Nias, 1989, p.305).

McCarthy and Moje (2002) offer a conception of identity which embraces this complexity; it draws into focus the shared elements which hold people together, common histories, cultures and languages, and recognises that identities are lived out in relationships, and situated within particular places and settings, so

subjectivities are also at work here. People bring personal biographies, histories and experiences to the context and because they are located in particular ways in relationships, power and the potential for agency is at play and must be negotiated. In this way they propose an understanding of identity which is both coherent *and* hybrid and also stabilising *and* dynamic.

Mockler's framework (2011) is a means of conceptualising these processes at work and understanding the teacher professional identity as it is continually reworked throughout the teaching life. Drawing upon the earlier influences of Huberman (1989) on the teaching life cycle and the construction of professional identity in the VITAE project comprising personal, professional and situated elements (Day et al., 2006), the framework includes three fields or dimensions; personal experience, professional context and the political environment (See Figure 2.1). This is a multi-faceted, fluid identity which can both respond to and manage change. At the same time, it is an emergent identity; ever seeking a recognisable self which holds professional concerns with personal beliefs and values, in dialogic tension, within the framing ideological and political environment.



A framework for teacher professional identity

Adapted from Mockler (2011)

Figure 2.1 A framework for teacher professional identity

These fields are constantly in flux, shifting and repositioning in response to changes within and between the dimensions. At the core of the model is the teacher's 'unique embodiment' (Clandinin et al., 2006, p.9), or what it means for the individual to be a teacher. Across the trajectory of a teaching career and through different professional life phases (Day et al., 2006), understandings of this are changing and the framework is continually realigned and remade in the ongoing work of constructing and sustaining a secure self, not fixed, but workable, and one which enables the teacher to face themselves and go on with others. In this way, the model offers a way of thinking about teachers' professional identity which embraces the conception of identity sketched above (McCarthy & Moje, 2002) and it can be used to interrogate the shifts and repositionings which occur both day to day, and at times of significant professional upheaval.

The framework sets out the dimensions of the teacher's professional identity and the work undertaken daily and over a career in making and remaking professional identity. Alongside this, the research problem conceptualises the teacher's lived experience as the ongoing work to hold role and identity together in 'dialogic tension' (Britzman, 1992). Bringing these ideas together, the framework is a tool for thinking about the work which constitutes the lived experience of the teaching life. In recognising the interactions between the personal, professional and political dimensions, it offers a rich theorisation of lived experience which underscores the importance of 'the person the teacher is' (Goodson, 1981, p.69) and what they bring to the setting, and counters thinking about teachers' work and experience solely in the technocratic terms of role/function (Crow & Møller, 2017).

2.3.4 Affect, feelings, emotions and emotional labour

Britzman's understanding of identity where 'function, or what one should do, and investments, or what one feels, are often at odds' (1992, p.29), brings feelings, emotions and the unseen realm of affect into view.

Affect is a wider, more abstract and elusive concept than feelings or emotions and one which is not readily defined. Gregg and Seigworth (2010) suggest that it 'is the name we give to those forces -visceral forces- beneath, alongside or generally other than conscious knowing' (p 1). When we are affected by something, feelings and emotions are produced and these are some of affect's 'visible and conscious products' (Moore, 2018, p. 27). Although affect may be hidden, beyond conscious reach, it is known, and its effects are experienced and acknowledged in the conscious world. It can also be drawn upon, mobilised and worked on in the conscious world, and so plays an important part in the ways that people behave, relate to others and their environment and the subject positions that they choose to take up in response to these (Moore, 2018).

Clandinin's 'unique embodiment' (2006, p.9) at the centre of Mockler's framework (2011) connects identity work with the realm of affect and the feelings and the emotions that this produces. Here the teacher strives to locate a recognisable self, not one in which all ambiguities and contradictions are resolved, but one wherein these are permissible and safely held. If the individual cannot locate an authentic self they may struggle, burn out or leave teaching, or as expressed by Nias (1989) in her extensive work with primary teachers, they may 'implode, explode or walk away' (p.305).

At times and in particular settings, identity work which requires resilience and commitment, may also involve emotional labour (Day et al., 2006, p.32). This is a significant element of many jobs, including teaching, which requires that the

individual 'induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others' (Hochschild, 2012, p.7). Depending on role, setting or circumstance, the demand for emotional labour will vary. It is required in the everyday practices of school life where teachers must affect emotions with students or colleagues that they may not feel, or in which they feel conflicted. Sustained high level performances may also be demanded, for example where school leaders must instantiate their leadership roles, supporting their colleagues and living the school values, even where these conflict with their feelings, values and beliefs. Gendered expectations associated with roles and relationships may also be at work; this can mean that women may be expected to take up the caring work in their setting and this too is a further demand for emotional labour (Blackmore & Sachs, 2012).

Work on emotions in teaching is growing (Kelchtermans, 2005; Zembylas, 2003a, 2003b; Zembylas & Schutz, 2009) and provides a welcome counter to techno-rationalist constructions of teachers' work; however, the two are not often brought together productively. This study contributes to working at this join and draws into focus the complexity and messiness of teachers' experiences and school life.

2.3.5 Teachers' responses to educational reform

Although individual teachers are positioned differently in relation to reform, broad possible responses are identified; teachers may integrate change readily and continue to thrive, or they may simply accept and comply with changes.

Alternatively, they may resist and reject changes in their settings or, going further, if the challenges are too great, they may respond by leaving the profession (Stone-Johnson, 2016). Beyond these categories there are many very nuanced responses and positionings to reform, depending upon the nature of the changes demanded and how these connect to the individual's personal history and

biography, including earlier experiences of reform (Goodson, 2008; Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Current roles and responsibilities are also important here, for example, for some teachers reform is experienced as centrally mandated policies, 'coming down the pipe' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996, p.25) which require changes in their classroom practice. Alternatively, teachers may have roles which involve leading others in reform initiatives, either school or system wide, and their approaches may be linked to their roles and their potentially upward career trajectories.

Work by Moore, Edwards, Halpin, & George (2002) is an influential contribution to understanding in this area. Undertaken in the late 1990s, a period identified by the researchers as one of rapid education reform in which there was a sharpened awareness of the impact of socioeconomic factors on educational outcomes; the study focused on teachers' self understandings of their work and responses to educational reform and involved 80 teachers, including Headteachers, in nine schools, both primary and secondary settings. In addition to the broad responses to change outlined above, additional possibilities of 'eclecticism' and 'pragmatism', both 'principled' and 'contingent' were also explored. Although pragmatists exhibited similar behaviours in response to reform, the principled pragmatists presented themselves as being content with their freely chosen stances, whilst the contingent pragmatists were uneasy and compromised in their positions. The study argued that, despite the enactment of similar behaviours, individual responses to reform processes, and explanations for behaviours, were likely to be personal and very differently motivated. Revisiting the study data from a psychosocial perspective (Moore, 2006), the author argued for the importance of considering the teacher's conscious and unconscious desires in making sense of their individual responses; further, that an openness to combining sociocultural and psychological lenses in reading the data can point towards alternative potential explanations for why someone might behave the way they do. The compliant 'principled pragmatist', for

example, may have resolved personal tensions relating to the demands of the reforms by finding a new position of personal comfort (Linde, 1993). One which aligns and reconciles the demanded behaviours of their setting, alongside a deep, perhaps unconscious, personal need to secure the approval and approbation of colleagues. Moore's work resonates with the intentions of my study and has inspired my psychosocial approach to the interpretation of the narratives.

Teachers with roles which involve responsibilities for reform initiatives are of particular interest in the current study and work by Little (1996) contributes valuable insights into the experiences and career trajectories of such 'reform enthusiasts'. Little's work focused on the affective side of reform and found that where teachers were involved in working extensively with colleagues beyond their own classrooms, they experienced powerful emotional responses. The study linked the participants' experiences to turning points in their teaching lives which led to important career and life decisions to either 'pull back' from this work, 'hang in' or 'move on' from the setting (Little, 1996, p. 346).

This study (Little, 1996) built upon earlier work which brought together Huberman's (1989) life cycle study of teachers' careers with the available 'school improvement' literature of the time to identify the potential relationship between teachers' careers and reform moves (Huberman, 1988; Huberman et al., 1993). This research highlighted alignments between personal career phase and external reforms and their potential implications, noting that it was usual for teachers, at some point in their careers, to look to use their skills beyond their classrooms. However, disappointing experiences of reform could lead to a retreat to more internal and personal concerns, either to tending 'the gardens of their individual classrooms' (Little, 1996, p. 346), or to life outside school.

Although the Little study (1996) was small scale, the early pilot involved two sites and 140 teaching and non-teaching staff, it pointed towards the emotional toll of engaging in educational reform initiatives outside the classroom. At this time, it set out an agenda for a fresh line of enquiry in the work of teachers' lives and careers, that is, investigating the affective aspects of leading/managing reform processes. As Little suggests, such work troubles the notion that reform is only a structural or organisational matter, or one which will be solved through the acquisition of new knowledge or skills alone and, importantly, overlooks the significance of the professional identities of the individuals in their contexts and the personal challenges that reform may present. My study offers an individual story of leading change and responds to the agenda set out by Little (1996) in the current reform context.

2.3.6 Teacher identity, NPM and leaderism

A range of studies highlight the implications of working within the NPM educational landscape for teachers' professional identities. For Ball (2003) the 'terrors of performativity' go beyond demanding changes in teachers' work and are a move to rewrite teacher subjectivities and similarly, Day and Smethen (2009) argue that reforms since ERA have eroded teacher autonomy and impacted on both teachers' individual identities and broader teacher professionalism. Hall, Gunter and Bragg (2013) identified NPM itself as 'identity work' (p.176) to reconstruct the professional identities of some public sector workers. Viewed through this lens, the neoliberal teacher is a 'compliant operative' (Hall & McGinity, 2015, p.6), a faceless, unnuanced subject who does not attempt to encompass the myriad ways that schools and individuals mediate and enact change (Ball, Maguire, et al., 2012; Day & Smethem, 2009; Luttenberg, Imants, & van Venn, 2013). Whilst NPM is a valuable lens for conceptualising the education system and through which to explore

educational reform, its potential for making sense of teachers' lived experiences is limited.

An example of this identity rewriting and pertinent to this study, is the rise of 'leaderism' in education and the invitation to empowerment and agency which is threaded through the narrative of the self-improving school-led system. This is part of a wider shift to leaderism across the public services which has not replaced managerialism, but is a parallel and complementary development to underpin longer term aims for public services to move towards becoming self-improving systems (O'Reilly & Reed, 2010). Under New Labour (1997-2010), tensions between managerialism and leadership within NPM itself necessitated discursive moves to reconstruct the Headteacher as the transformational leader of their school (Hall, 2013b). Although the concept of the charismatic 'Superhead' was short-lived, due largely to a rash of high profile failures (Millar, 2016), the discourse of leaderism was established and, overtime, through the layering of discursive changes, the discourse was expanded to one of distributed leadership (DL). Senior management teams (SMT) became senior leadership teams (SLT) offering new identities to senior managers, and later the offer was broadened further to include possibilities for leadership identities across the school workforce and also the student body. The complex history and development of DL is beyond the scope of the study and my purpose here is to highlight this and its potential effects; Lumby (2013), for example, argues that DL offers a 'mirage' of leadership and generates an 'apolitical' (p.582) culture which corrals school staff in ways which secure their uncritical support.

For Hall (2013b) the rise of leaderism is a 'strange case' (p.467) because the facility to offer leadership at any level in education is nominal. Despite the rhetoric of freedom, independence and autonomy promoted through government driven narratives around the school-led system, staff at all levels in schools are highly constrained in their ability to take decisions freely. Headteachers are wholly

accountable to central government and the risk in not 'delivering' the government's standards agenda is very high; for the individual who is likely to lose their job, and for the school which risks an Ofsted judgement of 'inadequate', or deemed to need 'special measures'. Such environments can produce authoritarian leadership where the Head requires compliance from all staff, and the freedom to act autonomously in any area can only be permitted within prescribed limits (Hall, 2013b). In some situations the pressure to achieve targets can become so great, regardless of the health and wellbeing of the staff, that the Head's leadership produces a toxic culture, in which their determination for personal and institutional survival overrides a focus on the broader moral and social purposes of education (Craig, 2017).

Building upon data from earlier studies; Hall, Gunter and Bragg (2011) which focused on the social practices of school organisation, together with further work investigating teacher professional identities undertaken from 2008 -2014, a period of 'rapid neo-liberal reform', (Hall & McGinity, 2015, p.7), later work by Hall and McGinity (2015) sought to understand more about these cultures and teacher professionalism therein. Focusing on two schools, the authors found that the teachers were broadly compliant with their Headteachers' agendas and that their 'buy in' had been achieved through the discursive positioning of teacher resistance as negative, and cooperation as positive, professional and progressive. They identified this as a 'NPM professionalism' (p.11), where the teachers' 'demanded compliance' (p.9) was accepted as a necessary and legitimate action within the performative contexts of their settings, and that this was secured by the suggestion of trust and autonomy, even if questioning or challenge was not permitted.

These findings pointed towards teachers' more complex positionings in relation to their Headteacher's agendas and highlighted the relatively small number of studies which focus on understanding teachers' responses and their resistances in contexts in which their behaviours appear to be wholly compliant. They identified the need for

further work employing methods which could probe the granularity of teachers' responses and set out the following research questions for future investigation; If compliance has been secured - how has this been achieved by school leaders? Do the teachers lack the capacity, or the desire, to resist performativity? Is dissent dangerous, or is resistance happening elsewhere where current research approaches do not reach? (Hall & McGinity, 2015).

In offering a story of lived experience in schools in the post 2010 reform context, my study responds to this agenda, and will contribute in a small way to research and knowledge in this area.

2.3.7 Teachers and agency- the irresistible lure of autonomy

The pursuit of agency in any aspect of life, if not easily defined, is understood. A sense of agency may be experienced when an individual feels able to pursue their own goals, and for teachers, agency is important in sustaining a positive professional identity (Day et al., 2006). More widely, Bandura (1988) suggests that personal agency may be achieved when one has a belief in one's capability to exercise control over events in life, and from a psychoanalytic perspective, Ruti (2009) offers a view of agency as the human capacity to play with and within the circumstances within which we find ourselves, and in this way a means to engage creatively with our lives.

For Headteachers and others in senior roles, the leadership discourse seems to hold out the possibility of agency and empowerment. Hall (2013a) argues that this rhetorical invitation (for that is all it can be) may be so attractive that it works to hide, or 'veil', aspects of performativity which have been difficult to reconcile, making these more acceptable and manageable.

The leaderism discourse is threaded through the narrative of the self-improving school-led system; here a central role for the teacher, at the heart of education system, is premised on the implicit notion that (some) teachers will be agentic and agents of change in their own settings and beyond (Earley & Greany, 2017; Mourshed, Chijioke, & Barber, 2011).

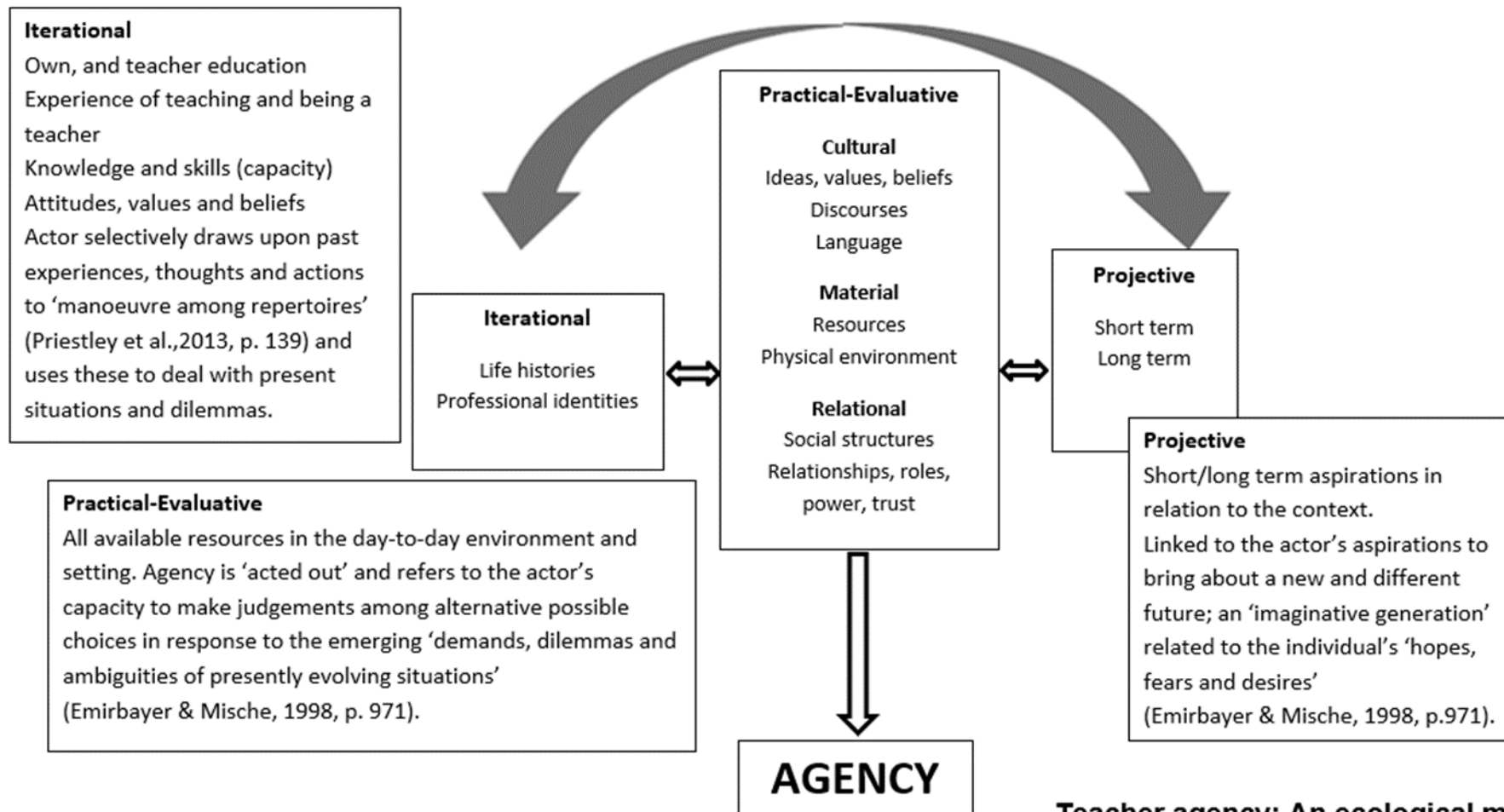
For many teachers, the possibility of agency in their work will be very appealing and a welcome move away from a lengthy period of prescriptive policies and practices. From an optimistic perspective this might be viewed as an acknowledgement of the importance of teachers contributing actively to shaping their work and its conditions for the overall quality of education. However, whether this construction of the agentic teacher is a new 'freedom' and real empowerment is debatable (Priestley, Biesta, & Robinson, 2013). In some contexts, teachers have been given greater scope to exercise more autonomy in some settings and areas, for example, curriculum development and delivery; however, such freedoms have been accompanied by the continued regulation and scrutiny of teaching outputs. This 'giving with one hand and taking away with the other', or 'output regulation' (Leat, 2014, p.69), are practices which characterise this 'high autonomy and high accountability' (Greany & Higham, 2018, p.11) educational environment and hence, the 'strangeness' of the rise of leaderism (Hall, 2013b). Others argue that teachers' agency is poorly conceptualised and understood, with teachers too often positioned as change agents implementing another's programme of reform, with little possibility for agency, and with little or no autonomy (Priestley, Robinson, & Biesta, 2012).

This view of agency underpins the notion of 'capacity building' communicated strongly in the Education White Paper, (DfE, 2016). Here the 'lack of capacity' of schools or teachers to improve is bemoaned and system leaders, including RSCs, NLEs and SLEs, are exhorted to 'build capacity' by boosting the necessary requisite knowledge and skills (DfE, 2016). To speak in terms of building the 'capacity' of

teachers in this way, backgrounds the 'vital influences' of person, purpose, context and culture and distances us further from the person and their purpose (A. Hargreaves, 1994). It underplays what teachers bring to their situations and the possibilities and resources the context offers, and both are critical in terms of teachers' potential for agency in their settings (Priestley, Biesta, & Robinson, 2015).

2.3.8 Teacher agency: an ecological approach

To make sense of how agency is achieved in different educational contexts, Priestley et al. (2013; 2016) propose an ecological model (see fig.2.2). This pays close attention to the environment in which teachers operate as well as their personal capacities, and describes agency as something to be achieved, as opposed to an inherent quality, or capability, of an individual which can be exercised. Their model draws upon the work of Emirbayer and Mische (1998) who propose a 'choral triad' (p.970) of human agency composed of three different constitutive elements; the iterational, the projective, and the practical–evaluative. In producing intentional actions to bring about a change or intervention, all three dimensions are present and work together, although not necessarily harmoniously. The model sets out these dimensions of teachers' agency and the contributing elements and their relationships; it is a means of understanding more about how individuals operating in particular contexts achieve agency, and what supports and inhibits this process. Teachers achieve agency when they can choose between different options and are able to make decisions about what is most desirable, both in the setting, and within the wider purposes of the practice in and through which they act.



Teacher agency: An ecological model
Adapted from Priestley et al. (2013)

Figure 2.2 An ecological model for teacher agency

2.4 Narrative Research – a theoretical framework

2.4.1 Introduction

Narrative theory is a diverse and complex field comprising a multiplicity of approaches with different theoretical roots and underpinnings. The researcher's understanding of what a narrative is shapes the research approach and decisions about methodology and methods. To this end, I sought to position myself in relation to the current key debates in narrative research (Chase, 2008; Smith & Sparkes, 2008) by investigating the following questions:

What might narratives tell us about people's experience of their lives?

What can be learned from narratives about the sociocultural and wider contexts within which lives are lived?

What is the relationship between narratives and identity?

Are narratives true?

2.4.2 Narrative and experience

Although there is a broad consensus among narrative researchers that narratives can tell us about experience, understandings of this differ (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Informed by Dewey's conceptualisation of experience as 'interaction and continuity enacted in settings' (Clandinin, 2013, p.12), a view of lives as 'storied' is proposed where experience is located within the stories we tell ourselves and others, and the stories that are told about us. Our lives are composed and shaped by these stories, and their (re)tellings enable the individual to make sense of their past and imagine futures (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 1996).

Dewey's 'interaction' highlights the importance of the relational at the core of experience where, in addition to personal reflections, lives are lived in engagement with others in social contexts. 'Continuity' encapsulates the sense in which the

individual's experience is the accretion of all of their experiences, building and layering one upon another. In this way, current and future experiences are shaped and informed by the individual's history, biography and personal understandings.

Working from here Clandinin and Connolly (2000) offer their three dimensional narrative inquiry space as a means of thinking about and making sense of narratives. This framework is an investigative tool for guiding the narrative inquiry and includes an exploration of the personal and social (interaction), past, present and future (continuity), and place (setting).

Along with other narrative researchers (Andrews, Day Sclater, Rustin, Squire, & Treacher, 2004; Phoenix, 2013), Clandinin and Connolly (2000) suggest that narrative inquiries, although starting from an individual's experience, can also provide access to wider social and cultural narratives within which their experiences are located. This is not an objective reality, but a view of the time and place at a particular point from the perspective of the narrator.

2.4.3 Narrative and identity

Whilst the connection between stories and identities is widely embraced, researchers position themselves very differently in terms of the relationship between these two and there is a wide spectrum of understandings. Early work such as Bruner's explorations of 'life as narrative' (1987) led to theorisations of a strong connection between story and person; however, contemporary research has moved away from the position that narrative constructs identity (Phoenix, 2013). Bamberg rejects the argument that a narrative is the 'speaker's answer to the who-am-I question' (2012, p. 203) and argues that, rather than being or representing identity, the narrative is a place where identity work is done in interactions, which will change from one setting to the next. That identity is something we 'do', rather than who we are (Widdicombe, 1998), suggests that narratives are sites for investigating and

interpreting the identities presented and this approach is broadly embraced. From this perspective, a narrative is a place of construction where the narrator works to claim preferred identities and to 'make something of themselves' (Ochberg, 1994, p.143).

Many narrative researchers argue that co-construction is a feature of all narratives and that, regardless of how the research is designed and undertaken, all stories are organised and performed with an audience in mind (Brannen, 2013; Phoenix, 2013; Riessman, 2008; Salmon & Riessman, 2013). The story offered is shaped by the listener; time and place also play a part in contouring the telling, and influence both content and form. This opens the way to many possible tellings and identities in different settings (Spector-Mersel, 2011).

All narratives are embedded within different contexts which influence the possibilities for the stories told and because the personal story is constructed within these contexts or 'spheres' (Zilber, Tuval-Mashiach, & Lieblich, 2008), they cannot be read simply as an expression of individual identity. Although it would be impossible to attempt to identify and take account of all possible contexts, attention should be given to three spheres of influence; the intersubjective context, where and with whom the story is exchanged, the wider social field of the story, that is the ways that the lives of the listener and the speaker relate and overlap, and the meta-narratives, or accepted social and cultural understandings, which underpin and provide the material from which the stories will be constructed (Zilber et al., 2008).

2.4.4 A psychosocial lens and the defended self

Researchers who take a psychosocial approach offer a very different theorisation of narrative and identity. A psychosocial perspective recognises that there are unconscious elements of the self which are not accessible, but which are at work in the social and cultural contexts in which narratives are produced and told. We are psychosocial beings because we affect and influence our surroundings, and the social and cultural environment works on us shaping both conscious and unconscious aspects of selves (Bibby, 2011). Frosh and Baraitser (2008) propose a 'psychic reality' as the place where the individual lives; here neither the outer nor inner worlds, nor the conscious nor unconscious elements are emphasised or elevated, rather the two flow continuously together; to imagine this they offer the metaphor of the non-orientable Moebius Strip, where both 'underside and topside, inside and outside, flow together as one' (p.349).

Insights into the individual's psychic reality can be found in their accounts of their lived experiences and these, it is argued, offer both the imprints of the social and cultural as well as insights into the individuals 'agentic struggles ...as they locate themselves in relation to these discourses'. In this way the conscious is both 'generated by this struggle and generative of its consequences' (Frosh, Phoenix, & Pattman, 2003, p.42).

In addition to revealing selves, narratives may also be a means of concealing and keeping unbearable aspects, and the anxiety that they constantly provoke, hidden. This is the 'defended' psychosocial self at work (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). Here the story offered is the only one that can be told and borne, and is constructed as a cover to shield the narrator from that which is unbearable and which must be kept at bay (Craib, 2004). This 'bad faith' narrative is one in which the narrator seems to deny their agency and refuses to confront and take responsibility for how things

could have been otherwise if they had not denied their agency to make different choices. Craib's construction of 'bad faith' narratives bring understandings from both Sartre and Freud together arguing that, whilst their conceptions of the individual and consciousness are very different, there is a productive overlap between Sartre's 'pre-reflective' thought and Freud's 'unconscious'. Although Sartre posits unconsciousness as 'nothingness', there is still the possibility here of a pre-reflective thought in which the individual makes choices about the ways that they relate to the world. The unconscious for Freud encompasses aspects of the self that must be repressed, and which individuals strive to keep hidden. Both 'share the status of not being thought, although they might be reflected upon' and both are 'open to denial' (p. 66). In this way, the bad faith narrative is a place to investigate the defended subject at work.

2.4.5 Towards a methodological approach

A narrative approach was selected because the study seeks to understand more about teachers' lived experiences of their working lives from their personal perspectives. These are embedded in people's lives and through the process of narrating their personal stories of their experiences, people make sense of these and of their lives (Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 1996).

Narratives are about the individual's sensemaking about their personal experience and they also point up their understandings of their social and cultural worlds and their place therein. Whilst they may contain practiced elements, they are also places for the narrator to construct and claim preferred identities which include identities developed to protect and hide the self (Phoenix, 2013).

These processes and understandings may not be readily gleaned from the material. To gain insights into the narrator's selves and their experiences, narratives require interpretation and in this work the researcher's self, with all of their 'fantasies, biases

and horizons of understanding' (Josselson, 2007, p.545), is the primary tool of interpretation.

Further layers of meaning are accreted because the narrative is a co-construction between the researcher and the research participant. Josselson (2011) suggests that 'to whom the story is told shapes the telling by its calling out certain aspects of self' (p. 42); in this way the narrative is a dialogue between particular aspects, conscious and unconscious, of both researcher and the participant. The story offered is created with particular intentions and purposes; it is one that *can* be produced in this context, one which can be expressed, an acceptable version of a life which can be borne. The story heard by the researcher is also one which they can hear and bear. In this way the work is a deeply relational endeavour in which every aspect is touched by the ethical relationship.

In using narratives as a starting point from which to uncover and compose potential stories, the narrative researcher is also a narrator; they must ask the same questions of the stories that they compose, as of the ones that their research participants offer. At a minimum, this involves the researcher in probing their own location and interest in their research and recognising that we are all 'in the midst' of our stories (Clandinin, 2013). Our stories are in process and changing perspectives create fresh understandings and new tellings.

In this section I have considered what a narrative is and what it might offer, and the key implications of this for the study and the researcher's role. These understandings inform the study approach, the methods and tools of interpretation used, and this is set out fully in the following chapter.

Chapter 3 Research approach and methods

3.1 The research problem

Seeking to locate myself as a inquirer in this 'research puzzle' (Clandinin, 2013), I talked to colleagues with whom I shared different professional and personal overlapping histories. Their stories were also my stories, like me, post 2010, they were working in settings which were responding quickly to the new agendas; some were in Teaching Schools, others in academies in the process of becoming multi-academy trusts. All were undertaking new roles related to these changing environments; they were Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs), Directors of Teaching Schools or assistant heads in growing leadership teams with new responsibilities in school improvement work, Initial Teacher Training (ITT) or continuing professional development (CPD) in their own settings and beyond. Their new roles involved constructing and living changing identities framed by the shifting values of their changing settings and the ways that the contradictory system level themes, collaboration *and* competition and accountability *and* autonomy, were playing out in the changing relationships at a local level (Greany, 2014; Greany & Higham, 2018). These conversations helped me to identify what was 'storyworthy' (Chase, 2005, p.661) in our lives and from here to shape my research strategy.

3.1.1 Research questions

In a narrative inquiry (see 1.5), the researcher cannot know at the outset what the research participants will share, and so where the research will lead and what will emerge as interesting. For this reason the research question is often expressed as a puzzle; a wonder to be explored in pursuit of greater understanding (Clandinin, 2013), or in terms of the people who are of interest to the researcher and whose stories she would like to hear (Chase, 2003).

How might Angela's lived experience of her teaching life be understood as she works in her changing setting in this post 2010 context of reform?

In this study the broad research question is focused on a specific person in a particular context; it is open-ended and invites exploration, rather than simply seeking an answer. In this way it provides direction for the study, but also allows scope for what will develop as the inquiry proceeds.

The overall question is parsed to set out the following sub-questions;

RQ1 How does the context work on and through Angela's professional life?

RQ2 What are the implications for her self-understandings?

RQ3 How might psychosocial insights into Angela's sensemaking illuminate the ways that she responds to tensions between her role and identity?

RQ4 What are the implications of the findings for future practice?

These research questions are developed both from my experience and my reading of the literature, and reflect my core theoretical position that the teaching life may be understood in terms of a changing professional identity overtime. However, the nature of the work is inherently inductive and the purpose of the RQs here is to construct a guiding working framework for thinking through the inquiry at all stages, from the research design to analysis and writing. They are constructed to be open and malleable so as to provide space for questioning my perspectives, and to reframe, or expand the problem, as the inquiry goes on (Agee, 2009).

3.2 Designing a narrative inquiry

3.2.1 Encouraging stories

The researcher's work in the data gathering process is to encourage, listen and interpret the stories offered by the research participants, to uncover their sensemaking and to gain insights into what is important for the narrator, what might be at stake for them here and what they are trying to achieve (Ochberg, 1994). To this end, creating an environment where stories would be forthcoming was all important. This required attention to all aspects of the process, including the initial approach to the schools and teachers, decisions about interview locations and timings and, most importantly, my relationships with my three research participants.

From the outset I sought to build rapport and gain the interest and trust of my participants and worked to engender warm, empathetic and respectful relationships. The 'data' produced reflects the nature of the relationship between the research participant and the researcher. The greater the rapport and the trust that is built between the two, the greater the likelihood that the participant will feel comfortable sharing their experiences openly and fully (Josselson, 2007).

3.2.2 Ethics

Drawing upon the data from one research participant, Angela, the work is an in-depth study of the lived experience of a novice assistant head in a newly opened academy. My choice to work with Angela's story was an expression of my faith in the relationship that we developed through the research process (Hendry, 2007).

It was in my work with Angela that people, setting and circumstances came together in ways which created the most conducive space and place for storytelling, and so here I felt most fully able to realise my intentions for the research.

In procedural terms, it is a relatively straightforward task to set out the explicit agreement clearly; details of my research intentions and approach and the participant's commitment were set out fully in the information pack provided (see Appendices 1-5), and further questions or concerns were discussed by telephone. Consent forms were signed at the beginning and end of the interviews to denote ongoing consent for the use of the material and I assured the anonymity of participants through my commitment to fictionalise the settings and change all names throughout. The interview transcripts were also made available for the participants to read.

However, neither the researcher nor the research participant knows what will emerge in the research process and, most importantly, how they will feel about this. Ethical questions are lived out in the research relationship where procedural processes do not resolve the researcher's difficulty of deciding what they should write about and how to do this, nor provide a solution to living with participants' potential responses to their interpretations. The endeavour is deeply relational and it is here that the ethics of the process are focused and where the moral responsibility of the researcher resides. Throughout the study I wrestled with balancing my desire to capture the reader's imagination with a story that 'rings true', and to which people can relate their own experiences, indeed, the very purpose of narrative inquiry, and my overriding responsibility to Angela and respecting and ensuring her privacy.

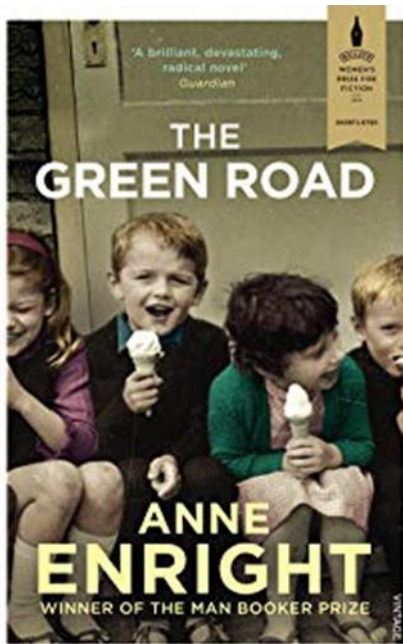
The validity of narrative inquiry is intrinsic to the relational ethics because it is within the context of the research relationship, and its ongoing negotiation, that the co-production is enabled. The stories offered and the interpretations that can be developed from these depend wholly upon the conditions established within the relationship which enable the co-construction of the narrative to take place.

Working with Angela, the co-constructed narrative (see 2.4.3) is the story which could be told because of who we were in this relationship at this time and place. In the telling aspects of self (researcher and narrator) are 'called out' (Josselson, 2011, p. 42), and this process both generated and was generative of the mutuality and equity of our relationship. To illustrate the ways in which I feel that this was brought about I share two stories here; a chance meeting with Angela in which the possibility of her participation in the study was first mooted and our first research meeting (Session 1).

At the time of planning my study I bumped into Angela on a Sunday morning in a local park. We have a longstanding professional relationship which dates from our time as new Heads of Science in the 1990s. Our paths diverged when I moved to work at the university and although we still saw each other intermittently at CPD events, this meeting was the first after a long gap. It was good to see Angela again and on sharing brief updates, we found that we had both faced significant professional changes during the last year. On reflection, I understand this shared experience of upheaval, professional and emotional, and the unsettling and unmaking of identity that this exacts, as a point at which a new equity in our relationship was established, and it was here that I introduced my research and invited Angela to consider participating in the study.

At our first research meeting the cover photograph of Anne Enright's novel, *The Green Road*, evoked memories of childhood holidays in Ireland and prompted us to share reflections on our Anglo-Irish Catholic backgrounds and growing up in Irish Catholic communities. This summoned our Catholic schoolgirl selves and opened the way to a rich seam of shared experience (see further 4.3).

Figure 3.1 Book cover *The Green Road* Anne Enright (2015)



Angela was generous in sharing her stories; in doing so she signalled her understanding and expectation that what she offered would be heard with tolerance and empathy, and would be respected in the research. This 'implicit contract' based on our mutual understanding framed the ethics of the research relationship and these permeated all aspects of the project, throughout the processes of data gathering and in thinking and writing.

Although Angela indicated that she had read the transcript following session 1, and session 3 provided the opportunity to us to probe some of my emerging interpretations, she has not seen the final writing. Time too has passed since our research meetings; I have produced a summary of my findings for my participants, and whether this will elicit any further interaction I do not know. By working within an ethic of care and to sustain an ethical sensibility I hope that I have worked 'ethically enough' (Josselson, 2007, p.560).

3.2.3 Biographic narrative approaches

Biographic narrative methods are designed to produce extended narrative accounts and a distinctive feature is the focus on the biographer's 'gestalt' and encouraging them to share their stories according to their own choices and design (Chamberlayne, Bornat, & Wengraf, 2000). In this 'gestalt sense of biography' (Rosenthal, 1993, p.3) the narrator's selections and elisions link particular experiences together to produce their account; not all the process is conscious and accessible to the narrator; nor is the selection process arbitrary and subject to whim, but neither is the life story ready to be produced on demand. In this way, the story is told according to the narrator's own 'system of relevancy' (Wengraf, 2001, p.124) and what is included, or what is left out, foregrounded or faded, are all important and considered in developing interpretations. These theoretical underpinnings resonated with my research orientation towards a psychosocial study in which the unconscious and unknown elements of biographies are considered and weigh equally in interpreting the participant's narrative.

3.2.4 Big and small stories

Criticism of biographical narrative methods comes from those who argue that the approach only encourages 'big' stories and undervalues the everyday 'small story' (Bamberg, 2006a, 2006b; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). Proponents argue that the act of formally removing the story from the day to day, or 'life on holiday' (Freeman, 2006), is the very strength of this approach. Here the space created in the interview setting provides time for consideration and reflection and so allows the narrator access to understandings which may not be available in the day to day of a busy life. However, the short, more informal snippets of which most day to day communication is composed, the stuff of small stories, is also important in making sense of the narrator's experiences and in providing access to understandings about identity.

In designing the study I sought an approach which would embrace both 'big' and 'small' stories and also one which would not elevate the sociocultural over psychological elements and this led me to the biographical-narrative interpretive method (BNIM) (Wengraf, 2001; Wengraf & Chamberlayne, 2011).

3.3 Biographical-narrative interpretive method (BNIM)

The BNIM offers a distinctive and highly structured approach to obtaining extended narrative accounts of lives. Together its composite elements, biography, narrative and interpretation, produce a method which involves the exploration of the individual's whole (or part) life story, and which focuses on both the story and the telling. It recognises that narratives are both sociocultural and psychosocial constructions, and that all aspects of the work are interpretative.

The psychosocial biographic orientation of the BNIM, resonated with my research intentions to consider both the conscious and unknown elements of the individual's biographies; in addition, the BNIM's three session narrative interview offered different research settings where both big and small stories could be encouraged.

Although the full method includes analytical strategies for handling and analysing the data generated, the authors encourage researchers to use the BNIM interview flexibly, to adapt the strategies as needed and to feel free to work with the material using any other interpretative approaches (Wengraf, 2001). For the novice researcher, this assurance and freedom was welcome. The highly structured guided approach to data collection was helpful in planning the work and in engaging potential participants, and in an evolving research strategy, it was also important to be responsive to the data without the fear of undermining the theoretical underpinnings of the method (Smith & Sparkes, 2008).

3.3.1 BNIM three part interview design

The BNIM process comprises three interview sessions; Sessions 1 & 2 are expected to take place on the same day with a short break in between and Session 3 may follow up to 2 months later, as needed.

Interview sessions 1 & 2

In Session 1 the researcher poses a Single Question to induce Narrative (SQUIN) which is designed to encourage the research participant to tell her story in her own words.

My SQUIN

I would like you to tell me about your career, all the events and experiences which were/are important for you. Start wherever you like, take all the time you need, or it takes, include whatever you like, whatever seems important to you. I'll listen first, I won't interrupt you, I'll just take some notes for afterwards.

During the interview the researcher takes notes outlining the order of topics and noting the participant's own key words. A SHEOIT notepad to record Situation, Happening, Event, Occasion/Occurrence and Time was useful here (Wengraf, 2001) These notes are used to generate 'narrative pointed' questions, Topic Questions inducing Narrative (TQINS) to be used in guiding Session 2.

In Session 2 the researcher works through the topics in the story in the same order as presented, using the participant's language to pose narrative pointed questions. In this way, the researcher retains and builds upon the structure that the participant has provided to generate more stories, and so remains faithful to the participant's biographic framework (Rosenthal, 1993).

TQUIN

The BNIM ideal is that the TQUINs should act as a stimulus for the narrator to broaden out the narrative with further additional stories; however, composing follow

up questions which are truly 'questions pointed at narrative' is challenging in the short time available between Sessions 1 and 2, and it is recognised that the researcher often asks an open ended question which 'allows' narrative, rather than the ideal 'closed and pointed' narrative inducing question (Wengraf, 2001). This was indeed my experience and although my TQUINS did not draw out additional new stories, these detailed mini-narrations, or Particular Incident Narratives (PINs), extended and enriched the material.

An example TQUIN:

So, you talked about applying for the Head of Year post and you said that you thought [about a colleague that was thinking about applying] 'you're rubbish, if you're applying, so am I' Do you remember any more about that time?

Interview Session 3

In the BNIM design the inclusion of Session 3 is optional and so it has no fixed structure and may be developed for use as required. The researcher plans a time space between the two research meetings to enable some preliminary analysis to be undertaken and, following this, the third session is available for the researcher to either ask further questions related to the material and the ongoing analysis of this, or other questions relating to the research problem (Wengraf, 2001).

Details of the interview structure were supplied to the research participants as part of the research pack (see Appendix 3 BNIM Information Sheet). The first session generates a relatively coherent 'whole story' or 'long narration', and Session 2 provides more story about a number of recalled PINs; taken together, this provides rich material for any method of narrative interpretation (Wengraf & Chamberlayne, 2011).

3.3.2 BNIM in practice - reflections on the process

Response to the SQUIN

A key feature of the BNIM approach is that research participants are encouraged to respond in their own words, imposing their own order on their story, and the role of the researcher here is to enable and encourage this process. Although the BNIM seemed to offer security to the novice researcher at the outset, it is not a foolproof recipe for producing a narrative account. As Brannen (2013) warns, there will be times when people do not respond narratively to the SQUIN; sometimes they may be unable to respond, finding themselves literally lost for words when confronted in the moment with the emotions which arise as they try to articulate their stories. My participant's responses to the SQUIN ranged from about 10 to 30 minutes and for each, like Brannen's Irish grandfathers (2006), the work was effortful.

In approaching teachers and their schools, I was cognisant of the commitment that would be involved for individuals and it was important that the project was deemed to be significant work. Framing this in terms of teachers' careers, linked the work to wider concerns about recruitment and retention of teachers across the profession and, in this way, it was seen to be valuable and 'storyworthy' (Chase, 2005). Whilst this construction was useful in stimulating the interest of schools and participants, as the interviews progressed, 'working life' quickly emerged as the shared understanding of 'career' and a preferred description, and I wondered whether replacing 'career' with 'working life' in the SQUIN might have encouraged different tellings in Session 1.

The researcher's work- 'letting go'

As I experienced, stories may not be forthcoming, and the researcher must be responsive and adapt the structure and setting as needed. Sociological questions, for example my own question about careers, often unwittingly posed, 'pull people

away from their own experiences' (Chase, 1995, p.10) and elicit reports rather than stories. The researcher's task is to encourage and facilitate the participant in telling their stories, and to do so they must put the responsibility for this with the individual. This is more difficult to achieve in the interview setting than it might sound because it requires that the researcher leaves the narrator to draw out the relevance of the telling for the listener. This involves trusting one's participants and letting go of the desire to drive the process, and in this way fully embodying the principle that the individual's experiences are embedded in their stories about their lives.

Adapting the BNIM

For different reasons all three participants experienced narrative difficulties in responding to the SQUIN and the setting had felt cold and uncondusive to their story telling. Moving into Session 2, I understood, viscerally, that my work was to create an environment which encouraged my participants' stories, and that this far outweighed my commitment to following the interview schedule. To this end, although I used the TQUINS to guide the session, I focused on being truly present for my participants and bringing all of my 'emotional attentiveness' (Riessman, 2008, p.24) to their narrations. The researcher's facility to do this is contingent upon a research relationship which is respectful, trustful and empathetic; responding to participants appropriately in the moment also hinged upon this relationship, and this too was the basis for establishing a climate that enabled stories to be shared (Josselson, 2007).

Session 2 was a more productive and positive experience and I assured my participants that they would be encouraged to talk freely about things that they wanted to communicate in our next research meeting (Session 3) . In this way the work co-produced in Session 3 was a more significant contribution to the data than is suggested in either the method, or my original information sheet.

Field notes

After each interview, I followed the BNIM recommendation to write freely; recording as fully as possible all impressions and thoughts as these arose. The gestalt principle which underpins the approach to the participant's narrative is also encouraged for the researcher, and ideally this should take place in the same location to stimulate the free association of thoughts (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). These field notes are a record of my impressions; the atmosphere, the non-verbal information that the recording does not capture, plus the talk around the interview, before the recording starts and after it has been switched off.

3.4 Tools of analysis and interpretation

In analysing the data, the whole narrative, including field notes, was the unit of analysis and a holistic interpretive strategy was used to work across the material. In this approach, the researcher pays attention to both content and form and the ways that the different elements seem to work together and, in this way, particular sections are identified for closer investigation to examine their significance and purpose.

My approach was flexible, drawing lightly upon narrative theory and borrowing and adapting methods and tools as needed. The data was considered from both sociocultural and psychosocial perspectives to spark fresh interpretive possibilities and stories and the approach throughout was iterative. Interpretations were provisional and tentative and as new understandings emerged, these fresh perspectives were a further lens through which to revisit and reconsider earlier work.

3.4.1 Listening to the narratives

All interviews were fully transcribed producing a substantial volume of text. From the very act of transcribing the recordings, interpretative decisions were made about how to capture and communicate the whole of the narrative, including what was said and how. This process involved close reading of the transcriptions alongside the recordings and these, together with my field notes, breathed life into the text and brought me back to the experience of those meetings. On my long daily commute, my research participants travelled with me. I wanted to get to know their voices intimately, to become attuned and sensitised to their ways of speaking and how they spoke about different subjects. This process enabled me to grasp the overall stories and also to listen closely to how certain stories were being told. Listening to inflections, pace of speech, changes of pitch, speech mannerisms, tone and how different emotions were emphasised were all important in hearing and interpreting the voices within the narrative (Chase, 2005). I continued using this close listening strategy over months and throughout the data analysis and interpretation phases.

This approach draws lightly upon Gillian's (2015) feminist psychological inquiry narrative work, *The Listening Guide*, and sets out a method with distinctive psychological underpinnings and practical strategies for analysing narrative data. These include close reading and listening; attending to the 'I', the first person voice 'as it speaks of being and acting in the world' (Gilligan, 2015, p.71) and for the voices communicating different psychological positions.

3.4.2 Key narratives and preferred identities

Locating the 'I' in the transcripts is a starting point for identifying key narratives (Phoenix, 2013). Here narrators construct their accounts to communicate 'emotions, worldviews, characters or events in ways that illuminate why particular accounts are produced in particular ways' (p.76) and in this way they relate their processes of

sense making. To locate key narratives the researcher can look for repeated content; this may be the same story retold, or similar themes and content being revisited in different contexts. Alternatively, stories which have been rehearsed and reworked through many tellings may form part of a key narrative (See 4.3 for a full discussion of how Angela constructs and reworks her key narratives).

In addition to key narratives there are a number of other significant stories; some are PINs, and some are accounts or explanations which may be constructed to strengthen and reinforce specific elements and offered along the way to direct the listener towards (or away) from certain understandings. In addition, narratives also contain sections of extended and complex talk in which there may be identifiable stories which need to be unearthed and restoried (Creswell, 2012; Riessman, 2008).

3.4.3 Guiding questions

Throughout the work guiding questions provided a useful framework for identifying key stories and in aiding my provisional working interpretations. Spector-Mersel (2011) suggests an approach to the text which poses the following questions:

What is there? What seems to be missing ?

What has been sharpened/flattened in the telling?

Sharpening brings to the fore and assigns special importance to certain elements, conversely, flattening makes something seem less significant, and both invite attention. Examples of these features in Angela's narrative include the sharpening of the 'turning point' story (4.2.3) and the flattening of the long period when she describes herself as 'settled' at St Peters and in which she experiences significant change and upheaval in her personal life (6.2.1)

Further guiding questions from Riessman (1993; 2008) include:

What is the purpose of the story?

Why is this incident being narrated in this particular way?

Why does it occur at this point in the conversation?

What has shaped the narration? How does this excerpt fit with other parts of her story as narrated during the interview as a whole?

3.4.4 A three dimensional narrative enquiry space

Clandinin and Connolly's metaphorical model (2000) was used to map out complex, unbounded stories which unfolded over time, in life and in the narrative, involving different people and their perspectives. Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002) offer a graphic organiser for working with the model (Appendix 6) and an example of this in use with the turning point story (4.2.3) is provided in Appendix 7.

3.4.5 Structural analysis

Two approaches were used to examine the structure of particular stories closely; the evaluation model (Cortazzi, 1993) and a model inspired by Riessman's adaptation of the work of James Gee's work (2008) which uses the stanza as the key unit of discourse.

The evaluation model

Drawing upon the work of Labov and Waletzky, Cortazzi (1993) proposes a strategy for examining teacher's stories which are discrete and clearly bounded. Here the story is organised to identify the following elements; abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, result, coda (See Appendix 8 for an example). Identifying the evaluation uncovers the purpose or point of telling the story. It sharpens what the narrator thinks is significant, 'tellable' and 'newsworthy' (Cortazzi, 1993, p.66) and offers insights into the narrator's perspective and their purposes in selecting and presenting this story in this way at this time.

The stanza as a unit of discourse

Where stories are lengthy and complex Riessman (2008) encourages an approach adapted from the work of Gee (1991), in which the material is organised or 'chunked' into stanzas, where each communicates an idea, a person, an event, or an experience. In contrast to the evaluation model above, this is suitable for more extended and unbounded data. Stanzas are typically four lines, but can be longer /shorter, and the lines may have similar structures and/or delivery in terms of pace and tone. To organise the material into stanzas the researcher must listen closely to the recording slowing this down to identify, pitch, tone, and inflections. A change of pitch can indicate the point, or the focus, of the story. Breaks and restarts and new stanzas are signalled by a change in narrative tone, accompanied with the use of connectives, for example 'and so'. The approach is useful for highlighting circular speech where the narrator returns to underscore an idea, and this makes visible the active (re)constructing and (re)working of her ideas in the telling.

Using this approach, stories can be explored thematically and structurally and there are a number of examples in the data chapters. (See 5.2.1 The technology teacher, 5.2.5 Line Managing the Head of English, 5.3 Angela's approach to work).

3.4.6 Identity and agency

From the literature two models were identified to interpret changing professional identities across the narrative; a framework for the formation of teachers' professional identity (Mockler, 2011) and an ecological model for teacher agency (Priestley et al., 2015). Through the study, these models are further developed to work with the data using a psychosocial lens (see section 7.4, figs.7.5 and 7.6).

3.4.7 The defended subject

The narratives were also read using a psychosocial lens to identify the presence of the 'defended self' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). This work involves uncovering

potential areas in the narrative where the narrator may be working to hide unbearable aspects of herself, or events or experiences. The researcher's work here includes looking for the omissions, the 'gaps, silences or contradictions' (Chase, 1995, p.19) in the text, or for the disjunctures, places where the narrator seems to strives too hard to produce a smooth telling; where things feel too tidy, where something feels to be flattened, or where the narrative seems come apart, these are all sites for closer investigation. They provide cues to what is being offered, what may be being kept out of sight and what might be at stake for the narrator in being uncovered.

3.5 Working with the research questions

Recognising the multivocality of narratives and their many possible interpretations, Angela's story is one of many that could be told. This story arises from our co-constructed narrative and my sensemaking of this and it is offered tentatively (Josselson, 2011).

As outlined the research questions are a flexible framework to guide and structure the analysis and discussion (see 3.1.1). RQ1 and RQ2 are explored in the research chapters 4 - 6 in which I set out an overview of Angela's professional and personal stories and her key narratives (Chapter 4), an account of her experience of life as an assistant head at the new All Faiths Academy (Chapter 5) and a psychosocial consideration of selected aspects of the narrative (Chapter 6). RQ3 frames the discussion chapter 7 in which working interpretations are brought together with the literature to further theorise Angela's lived experience. Implications for practice (RQ4) are considered in Chapter 8.

Chapter 4 Angela's story and key narratives

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I introduce Angela and provide an overview of her professional and personal stories. The story opens at the end of the 2015-6 academic year when Angela had nearly completed her first year as an assistant head in the new All Faiths Academy. Angela's teaching career spans twenty years and for fifteen of these she had been working at St Peters, which was also where she attended school as a student in the 1980s. When Angela moved to work here after five years in her first school, Appleyard High, it was to fulfil a long term personal intention to teach in a Catholic school. St Peters closed in July 2015 and reopened in September as the new All Faiths Academy.

Figure 4.1 Key characters in order of appearance

Key Characters (in order of appearance)	
Angela	Narrator
Roger	Long serving Headteacher at St Peters
Maureen	Acting Headteacher at St Peters (2013-5)
Andrew	New Headteacher All Faiths Academy (2015 onwards)
Tom	Angela's partner (teacher at St Peters and All Faiths)
Mary and Lyn	Angela's elder children
Sophie and Jack	Angela's younger children
Lucy	Assistant Head SLT All Faiths (AH2)
Anne	Assistant Head SLT All Faiths (AH3)

4.2 A career story - a new teacher

Angela had always considered teaching as a career and after her physics degree and a brief period in retail she embarked on a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) at a local university. She speaks positively about her PGCE year and describes 'really enjoying' her teaching practices in local schools where she worked with 'great people'. Although she became pregnant with her first child during this year she continued to the end and, despite being 'heavily pregnant', on completing her final teaching practice successfully, she was retained at the school with pay until the end of the summer term.

Only ten days after the birth of her first daughter, Angela attended an interview for a teaching post at Appleyard High. It was a desirable school and a well-managed department; she was happy to secure her first appointment here and started work in January 1996.

Whilst Angela was in her second year of teaching at Appleyard, a vacancy arose for a Head of Year 7 (HoY7). Although this was an ambitious step for a young teacher at this early stage, she had already identified her interest in the 'pastoral route' and so she applied for the post. Her application was successful, and she took up the new role in the summer term, visiting the local primary schools to meet the year six students and to ensure their smooth transition to the secondary school in September.

Angela describes five happy years at Appleyard High; however, during this time she determined that, when the opportunity arose, she would move to a Catholic school, and so started the process of looking for potential posts locally. The nearest Catholic school was her old school St Peters; other schools would have involved significant travel, also, there were fewer posts advertised in Catholic Schools as there was relatively little movement of staff in these settings. When a Head of Physics role was

advertised at St Peters, although she had doubts about the suitability of the role, a curriculum responsibility rather than pastoral, and about leaving a good school where she was happy, motivated overall by her desire to move to a Catholic setting, she visited the school to investigate the job further. As a former student, Angela was welcomed and strongly encouraged to apply. She was successful in this process and appointed to the role.

4.2.1 Moving to St Peters

Angela quickly established herself in her new setting; she took on further responsibility, covering for an absent colleague in a pastoral role, and following this the opportunity to apply for the Head of Science post arose. Like her earlier appointment to HoY7 at Appleyard, this significant middle leadership role was an important career step for a young teacher and not one she might have expected, or was seeking, at this early stage; however, she was strongly encouraged by senior colleagues to apply. Again, she was successful and noted, “that was me settled at St Peters, for some time”. This was to be a lengthy period of about 11 years.

In her short scene setting account in Interview Session 1, although the style feels anecdotal, that of one reminiscing, even nostalgic, Angela purposefully seeded important information needed to make sense of her unfolding narrative. She conveyed that she was/is a good teacher and one who had stood out from the start. She is resilient and able to cope with difficult things that others would find daunting and she is/was committed to Christian education and teaching in a Catholic School. In this way she established her preferred identities (4.4).

4.2.2 Changing times

In 2012, the school faced significant changes internally and externally. Firstly, the long serving Headteacher, Roger, was leaving St Peters following a difficult period in 'Special Measures'. Although the school had made the necessary progress and achieved a 'Good' Ofsted judgement, the Head had resigned and before leaving was charged with establishing a new temporary and transitional structure for the senior leadership team.

Across the Local Authority ambitious plans were in development for a major reorganisation, under the auspices of the Government's Building Schools for the Future programme (BSF) (DfES, 2008). This involved school relocations to new or upgraded buildings, and new alliances and partnerships between schools across all phases. Plans for St Peters involved closing the Catholic School which had been operating on the same site for the last fifty years and reopening as a new academy in a new building on a new site in September 2015. All Faiths Academy would be a co-ecumenical multi-academy trust, jointly sponsored by the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England Dioceses.

The outgoing Head of St Peters, Roger, would be replaced by an externally appointed temporary Headteacher for two years who would prepare the school for the closure of St Peters and the opening of the new Academy, including the appointment and development of a new senior leadership team (SLT). During this time, a permanent Catholic Headteacher would be sought, appointed and inducted. This process of restructuring started in 2013 under Roger, when a number of temporary senior leader (SL) posts were advertised; Angela applied and was appointed to one of these new roles.

4.2.3 A turning point story

The opportunity to apply for the new senior leadership posts in 2013 was a 'turning point' for Angela and in her telling she 'remembers' the process clearly and gives a detailed account. A 'turning point' strongly signals an important event, a shift in the story where 'a frustrating situation gives way to hope' (McAdams & Bowman, 2001, p.5). At this stage, I simply sketch out the events in 2013; however, this is a pivotal story and one which I revisit in my developing interpretation and to which I return later in the analysis.

Angela described her uncertainty about applying for a SL role; she had two young children with her new partner Tom, in addition to her eldest two, and was very unsure about the challenges of combining this demanding role with family life. In her account she 'recalls' thinking that, at this point, Roger would have been reviewing his time with regret. In her view he was facing an unsatisfactory career end, retiring earlier than he might have planned and, she imagined, feeling that he had 'missed out' on spending time with his family, and that this would be a source of deep personal regret and loss. Angela did not want a similar future for herself and when questioned by colleagues about her intentions in relation to the SL roles, she shared this perspective, moreover, when she was approached informally by Roger about the role, she told him the same. This led to a lengthier conversation which provided the opportunity for Angela to probe Roger's experience of leadership and to test out her ideas about the (in)compatibility of senior leadership with family life. She describes how he strongly rejected her framing of his career in the terms outlined above, indeed was 'quite offended', and laid out instead an alternative view of school leadership as a satisfying professional career, 'I've enjoyed every minute of it', and one which had not distanced him from his family.

With different perspectives and voices, this is a textured story. It was a 'turning point' for Angela in thinking about her career and senior leadership; from here, she went on to apply for one of the new SL roles and joined the new SLT in 2013, under the leadership of the acting headteacher, Maureen.

At the outset, the new team comprised six members; two current assistant heads (AHs) and four new SLs;

everybody [was] jostling for a position and all that sort of thing, not really sure about this new Head and where we sat, and unsure about the future as well.

This was to be an interim arrangement as a further restructuring of the team would take place before the move to the new Academy. One year later, at the end of 2014, a new SLT structure was proposed with three new assistant head (AH) posts and all six senior staff were required to reapply and compete for these new roles. Angela was subject to these processes and of this time noted, "that was difficult.... I wasn't involved". Again, Angela was successful in her application and was appointed as a temporary AH. At the end of the school year, this temporary appointment was made permanent and in September 2015 she moved to the new All Faiths Academy, as part of the new SLT, under the leadership of the new Headteacher Andrew.

4.3 A personal story

In this section, drawing on interview transcripts, fieldnotes and research conversations, I set out some important elements of Angela's personal story.

At our first meeting we established our shared experience of growing up in Irish Catholic communities and Catholic education, plus a love of Anne Enright's work (3.2.2). Although our parents were part of different waves of Irish emigration, mine to London in the early 1950s and hers to the Midlands a decade later, we were both second generation Irish. Angela had grown up in a close knit Irish community which revolved around the Church and the Catholic Schools, including St Peters, and for her family, Ireland was 'home'. She remembered going there even as a very young child to spend summers with an extended clan of relatives and how, on returning to England, "there were always tears".

Her formative experiences were shaped by these Catholic communities and this is a foundational part of her cultural and personal identity. She is part of a close family with three siblings, all of whom, as adults with their own children, continued to live within the same community. When she moved to St Peters as a teacher, her children started at the local Catholic primary school, which was also the same primary school that she and her siblings had attended. The local Catholic church 'St Petes' was at the heart of this community and all the families attended services (Mass) there together:

We always went to St Petes and I was a foundation governor for the kids' school and involved in the church and knew, not everybody, but lots of people in the congregation at St Petes and Father Stephen...and all those things link up together.. and it is just one big community.

In moving back to the area and sending her children to her old primary school, Angela sought to replicate her own experience of growing up in a Catholic community for her children;

that was what I had grown up with as well and that was the norm for me, and I liked it. It was important for me that Mary and Lyn were brought up that way and y' know they love Father Stephen and all those things, and that was the norm for them, and they were brought up in a Catholic school, like me.

During her time at St Peters, Angela's personal circumstances changed significantly; she divorced, remarried and now had two young children with her new partner, Tom. The family had also moved to Market Town, at a distance from the school and the community.

This information was communicated at the end of Interview 1 (3.2.1) where she closed her account with the following summary;

I also had two children in there as well -I'm not even sure that came through -so I would have been Head of Science, got divorced, met Tom who also works at St Peters and got married and then had Sophie six years ago and Jack four years ago, so that was all at St Peters. We moved to Market Town as well. We had always lived in New Town close to St Peters.

This relocation disconnected Angela for the first time from the community in which she had grown up. Angela's daughter, Sophie, had started school at the local Church of England (CoE) primary and the family had begun to attend services at the local CoE Church linked to the school. Her new younger family were now growing up in a very different setting to that of their elder siblings.

Commenting on this time and the major changes in her personal situation, whilst she allows that these were 'big, big things', she suggests that she doesn't remember this as being a difficult time:

It all seems a bit of a blur actually and getting divorced is obviously not a nice thing and it wasn't an easy thing, but it's not one of those things where I look back and ... I don't really see it as a life event at all. Now whether that's because I am blocking it out, or it really wasn't that difficult, but I don't remember it as being difficult at all.

Here Angela consciously signals the possibility that she may be protecting herself from the feelings associated with these events and this points towards an important area for close investigation (6.2). Instead, the story she offered about the time was a happy one;

we didn't spend forever planning the wedding at all, y'know it was cheap and cheerful and lovely. He got on well with the kids, it all just slotted into place really. I then had Sophie that was just a natural thing to do and -it's funny isn't it they don't seem like big things? They just seem like just normal things, meant to be I think yes, meant to be, more than anything.

4.3.1 Choosing a school for Sophie

Angela's opening to this story, "now interestingly", clearly signals that what follows is 'storyworthy' (Cortazzi, 1993). When the family relocated to Market Town the younger children were both baptised at the local Catholic Church, which she describes as "very impersonal...very different to the sort of churches that I went to and certainly St Petes" and so the family began to attend services at a small, informal and welcoming CoE church nearby, "a little tiny church that's falling down, round the corner from us where she [Sophie] knows everybody and her friends go".

When choosing Sophie's primary school, instead of the local Catholic school, currently in Ofsted 'Special Measures', Angela had decided that Sophie would go to the nearby Ofsted rated 'Outstanding' CoE school. This was a difficult decision and one which Angela found even more difficult to explain. Although on the surface, the decision could be ascribed to their changed circumstances, the choice of local churches and the relative Ofsted ratings of the two schools; certainly, this would have been a workable 'cover story' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996, p.25), if one was needed; however, Angela communicated that the 'real' story was more complex and contradictory, and not at all easy for her to explain.

Her choice had not been a straightforward decision and as her opener suggests, to everyone who knew her it would be a surprising one, and one which required an explanation. Although Angela had a number of persuasive and acceptable reasons to explain why she might have chosen the CoE School, for each of these, she presented the counter argument to reveal its weakness; for example, "I could say that it [the CoE School] was closer, but the Catholic School isn't far away...'

The explanation that she finally settled upon was that this school was the best choice in terms of the family childcare arrangements. This was workable and consistent and, alongside the Ofsted ratings for the two schools, provided a rational explanation for her decision. However, the difficulty remained; whilst Angela would have *liked* to be able to say that she had made the decision on this basis, she acknowledged that her 'real' reason for this choice was connected with her changed relationship with the Church and "the fact that I couldn't take communion" rather than the relative Ofsted assessed merits of the two schools, or the benefits of the after school club. She reinforced this strongly in reflecting on the difference between her choice for Sophie and her experience of choosing a school for her elder children, Mary and Lyn, for whom, "it was absolutely, they would definitely go to the Catholic school; there was no doubt about it".

When I think back to then - it would have been Catholic school and it doesn't matter whether it's special measures, doesn't matter whether it's difficult to get them there in the morning. I can't imagine ever, y' know, doing anything different for those two, but I think that's to do with my relationship with the Church rather than the kids.

'Absolutely, 'definitely' and 'no doubt' strongly reinforces the clarity of her decision to send the older children to a Catholic School. Her repeated 'doesn't matter' underscores the import of this and the strength of her message. In those days it wasn't a choice for her, the children would be attending the Catholic School. Now, for her younger children, a Catholic education is no longer a given and the story points towards a shift in Angela's perspective on the value of Catholic education. This is an important story and one which I will revisit (6.2).

4.3.2 Looking forward: future plans

When gently encouraged to consider if there was ‘anything else?’ at the end of research Session 1, Angela offered the following coda;

I think the thing I thought about just talking, is that I have never had a plan. I don't think I have known that I have never had a plan, I think when I stop and look back at it, I think actually these things have just happened

Never having a plan is applied here to both the professional and personal realms of her life. This was illustrated in the context of her career in her story about applying for the Head of Year post at Appleyard High. Here Angela suggests that she had not even considered the possibility until a conversation with a similarly inexperienced, ambitious, colleague who, unlike her, did have a clear career plan, and intended to apply for the post as his next move. This prompted Angela to think that she would also apply for the role and that this was both something she *could* do and that she *would like* to do (her emphasis).

As her teaching life progressed, although she had believed that her strengths and interests lay in the pastoral side, “this is my passion, this is what I want to do, this is what I'm good at, I would always go down the pastoral route”, she didn't have a plan, different opportunities arose and other things ‘simply happened’:

Perhaps there is a bigger plan for me somewhere, but certainly I've never had a plan ... it's just been accidental, but very happy with it all.

4.4 Identifying Angela's key narratives

In sharing her narrative, the narrator works to make sense of her experience in ways which communicate particular things about who she is in this current version of her story. In this way she constructs her preferred identities which can be located in her key narratives (Phoenix, 2013).

Key narratives can be identified in repeated stories, told over at different points, or where the same material or themes are represented in a different context. In this section, I show how these key narratives are presented and identified in Angela's story and how she uses different contexts and stories to reinforce and often rework these across time.

Taken together, the key narratives set out a working provisional sketch of Angela's claimed identities: who she is here, how she deals with life and how she goes on with things. From these I learn that Angela is a good teacher who enjoys teaching and has always enjoyed her work. She is conscientious, she cares and works very hard. She is also resilient and copes well with demanding situations. Angela's Catholic values and beliefs firmly underpin her work and she is strongly committed to the school as a Catholic community. Her colleagues recognise her qualities and they respect and trust her, in turn she values their good opinion and strives to retain this. She is an experienced teacher who has seen significant change in her time in education and she understands schools, teachers and students.

4.4.1 A good teacher

Angela's narrative opening describes her two successful teaching practices and paints a picture of a very capable student, who showed early promise (4.2). Drawing on our mutual understanding that retaining and paying a student at the end of their final teaching practice was a marker of esteem denoting the student's particularly successful performance in their teaching placement, her telling builds strongly on

our shared sociocultural experience as beginning teachers in the early 1990s. This story establishes that Angela had always enjoyed teaching and from the outset her ability and potential was recognised. Enjoying her work is an underpinning key narrative, reinforced though the regularly repeated refrain 'I really enjoyed ...' in talking about different stages and roles throughout her career across the story. In reinforcing her satisfaction in her work, Angela distances her experience from that of the unhappy and overworked teacher, like some colleagues who she describes as 'struggling'. In regularly affirming that she enjoys her work, Angela opens a space for talking safely about things which she doesn't enjoy, and it is important for her to establish this.

4.4.2 A hard working and resilient teacher

These two key narratives are drawn together and further reinforced in Angela's vivid memories of her first long hot summer as the new Head of Year 7 (HoY7). With over 1000 students, Appleyard High was a large school and the HoY7 role was a substantial pastoral post and a significant promotion for a novice teacher. This story reworks her 'good teacher' narrative and allows her to reiterate that she was capable and that her abilities were recognised.

Drawing lightly on Gee's approach as adapted by Riessman (2008), the story is set out below in stanzas, where each describes a key idea (3.4.5).

I was so keen, so passionate
I had gone out to visit them all in their primary schools
which took forever, because there were so many of them
so I spent a summer doing that and it was a very hot summer

I remember that time very fondly
and the kids, my kids, wouldn't have been very old
they would have been toddlers at that time
my husband was working away

So I would come home
get the kids sorted (so y' know, do all those bits and bobs)
they would be in bed by seven
then that was my time

There was no husband at home
so that was my time then to focus on work
I came up with so many good ideas
lots of different things

We did lots of different things
and we got the kids involved
It was really good
I did really enjoy that job
I really did enjoy it

Her presentation of the story serves to persuade the listener of her enjoyment of her work, as well as communicating her strong work ethic, capabilities and commitment.

The listener is invited to look over the shoulder of the young Angela, efficiently juggling two full time roles, working mother and committed, enthusiastic teacher. We hear her positive anticipation of 'her time' when the children are in bed and she can devote herself to the new exciting and creative possibilities of her pastoral role.

Through a small personal story, culture is also made visible; Angela's painting of the working mother with very little support, tackling school work at the end of a long hot tiring day when all other family needs have been met, points up wider familiar stories about women managing work, family, and wrestling to find work-life balance. The account also communicates how Angela deals with the world; she is someone who

cope with demanding situations and gets on with things and this 'no nonsense' key narrative is offered in a range of contexts, both personal and professional. For example, in talking about significant personal events: divorce, remarriage, a wedding, moving house (4.3); although she acknowledges that these were 'all big events', her telling communicates that she is someone who is able to cope with experiences that others might find stressful and demanding. She manages and takes things in her stride, here talking about her wedding and starting her new family, Angela underscores this key narrative, "we didn't spend forever planning the wedding at all, so y' know, that bit didn't take over my life at all, not that it ever would, but I know for some people it does". Suggesting further that, for her, these things, "just seem to have happened very, very easily, they just seemed natural ... all very smooth and not traumatic and everybody just gets on with it."

The message here is that, for Angela, unlike others, life events do not take over.

Similarly, in her professional life,

we've got new A levels coming, we've got new GCSEs
we've got assessment without levels. We've got all those things
but that's easy, it's predictable, we can manage it, that bit's easy

This list of curricular and pedagogic activities, ticked off on fingers as she spoke, encompasses the range of demanding reforms that teachers and schools were wrestling with at this time. In this way Angela underscores her self presentation as someone who copes with difficult things and can integrate and manage changes in her professional work with ease. In identifying these changes as easy, she lays the groundwork and readies the listener for the things which she finds difficult. Through these stories, Angela makes key identity claims about how she routinely deals with the world and goes about things. This is both a projection of identity, and an identity claim about the sort of person she is, and in this way she directs the listener's interpretation.

4.4.3 A Catholic educator

Early in her career narrative Angela established that she had always intended to work in a Catholic School. This story enabled her to put her personal beliefs and values at the forefront of her biography and is an example of how she uses identity as a resource to warrant aspects of the story that she offers later (Widdicombe, 1998), Angela's Irish Catholic heritage is at the core of her personal and cultural identity (4.3). In her experience schools are Catholic communities and this sense of community and importantly, the underpinning Christian values, was missing in her first teaching setting at secular Appleyard High:

It wasn't acceptable, not that it wasn't acceptable,
it just wasn't the done thing to sit down and talk about
what's the right thing to do and what's not the right thing to do?
and *we need to stop and think about these people*

So daily prayers really, so we didn't have daily prayers
But it wasn't just about saying a prayer
it was about that thought and those conversations
about *is that the right way to treat people?*

It wasn't easy to have those conversations
it was a bit weird to have those conversations
of course, that was what I grew up with
it was at a Catholic school where that was common language

If someone had been told off
it was about *what they were doing wrong*
and how that was going to affect other people
that language was very, very easy - the norm

Then we had the daily prayers
If anything happened *we would always be talking about it*
talking about how it affects other people and what we could do to help
That was a daily focus at St Peters

Although Angela describes being very happy and enjoying her HoY7 role, she communicates her sense that it was not appropriate in this setting to tackle pastoral matters from a Christian perspective. This perception worked to constrain her flexibility in her pastoral approaches because she was reticent to openly and freely draw upon her personal Christian moral framework in dealings with her students.

Beyond the current setting, the story conveys her memories of the day to day practice and stuff of Catholic school life including daily prayers and a sustained focus on relationships and helping others, and here she implicitly communicates her understanding of what makes a good school. For Angela, the essence of life in a Catholic community is crystallized in her questions (my italics above): Is this the right way to treat people? How does my behaviour affect others? What can we do to help? These signal what is important for her and the beliefs and values which underpin who she is, personally and professionally.

In focusing on Angela's experiences and their meanings, this story highlights her lived experience as a Christian working in a secular school setting. Over time the tension between her role and her identity could not be sustained and the account provides a narrative linkage and an explanation for her eventual move from this setting to a Catholic school.

There were strong professional arguments against moving schools; her salary at this time would have been above the teachers' main payscale and her accelerated career progression suggested that she would have been well positioned here for future promotion; also, the Head of Physics (HoP) post at St Peters was a curriculum focused role, rather than a pastoral one (her preferred direction), with a lower salary. In describing the process, she highlighted her conflicted feelings and uncertainty at each step. Layer upon layer, she builds and 'thickens' this story with these tensions (Riessman & Speedy, 2007), and in this way she underscores her key narrative, that is, her commitment to Catholic education, the deep strength of her personal beliefs and values and the importance of living these in her professional life. In her world view, it was important to live and work in line with her personal Christian values and her repeated emphasis on the conflict and uncertainty that she experienced in deciding to move constructs a canonical narrative; 'You must be true to your principles and beliefs'. Bringing the two stories together in this

way, Angela uses identity as a resource to 'set up a moral worldview and warrant her position within it' (Phoenix, 2013, p.77).

On moving to St Peters, Angela was soon encouraged to apply for the Head of Science post:

"Rob [the Head] thinks you're great and you must apply for it"
but I thought, Really? I don't have a chance
"What have you got to lose?" he kept saying
"What have you got to lose?"

"You haven't even got the price of a stamp...
Look, here is a part filled in application form
you just need to add in your letter"

So I was kind of humouring him really
because I was never going to get it anyway
so it almost happened by accident really

In this telling Angela conveyed afresh two of her key narratives; she is a good teacher, evidenced by both her accelerated career trajectory and the fact that colleagues recognise her capabilities, and also, that she was liked and valued at St Peters.

Through some selected examples, this discussion has highlighted Angela's key narratives and the ways that she used these to construct her preferred identities and to make identity claims. The key narratives focus attention on what is important for Angela and what she wants to communicate, and they also point up wider sociocultural discourses. This is a provisional, working picture of Angela, and open to further challenges, but it provides a foothold from which to examine her account of life as an assistant head in the new academy, and to explore her investments in presenting this version of herself (Murray, 2003).

Chapter 5 All Faiths Academy

5.1 The senior leadership team

In this section, I introduce Angela's colleagues in the senior leadership team (SLT) at All Faiths; the new Headteacher, Andrew, and the two other assistant heads (AHs); Lucy (AH2) and Anne (AH3) who have both transitioned from St Peters.

Andrew is fresh to both the school and the local area and at this time was nearing the end of his first year at All Faiths. This is his first Headship and like Angela he also has a young family. His background is in physical education and Angela describes him as a 'rugby man'. Here she shares a story about one of his early school assemblies where he compares himself to the successful England rugby team coach, Clive Woodward. Although addressing the students, his assembly conveyed important messages to the staff about his identity claims, vision and leadership approach:

When he first started, he's a rugby man, and he talked about - is it Clive somebody? I don't know, don't ask me - the top rugby coach of England? He said this to the kids, not to the staff, he said to the kids that he modelled himself on this - whatever his name is. That he has the right people in the right places doing the right things, essentially they do all the work and he's got that model down to a tee.

Here Angela's interpretation suggested that Andrew explicitly connected his leadership with that of Sir Clive Woodward ¹ and signalled his intention and approach to shaping the school workforce and getting the 'right people in the right places' to deliver his vision for the school. Angela's observation that he has 'this model down to a tee' is a reference to her experience of Andrew as someone who is good at delegating and 'passing work on'. Taken together these two messages firmly position the AHs as those 'right people doing the right things' spearheading the Headteacher's plans for the school.

¹ Coach of the England Rugby team 1997-2004.

This reference echoes Collins' (2001) exhortation to 'get the right people on the bus' (p.13), an idea which also influenced Woodward's leadership. Whilst there is little firm evidence, it is argued that this strategy is being taken very seriously by school leaders seeking to raise standards, and that those who embody or express alternative ideas about education are being removed from the bus and 'disappeared' through a range of processes including: staff restructuring, coercion, capability processes, or non-contract renewal for NQTs (Courtney & Gunter, 2015).

Insights into the relationships and ways of working within the senior leadership team were offered across the narrative. In Angela's view, the Head is 'very good at not working' and he 'doesn't make unreasonable requests'; he has told the senior leadership team that they should not work in the evenings, or at weekends, as this is family time and in this he leads by example. Since there is clearly more work to be done than can be completed within the school day, his position is contradictory, and this is examined further (5.3).

In describing the AH team, Angela noted that she and her colleague Anne (AH3) are "very, very conscientious" and Lucy (AH2) "isn't at all" and "would turn up having not done things and things would be late". Of her 'conscientious' colleague (AH3) Angela observes, "she's like me, she would NEVER not have done something, she would NEVER have turned up to a meeting without having completed something" (Angela's emphasis). Within the team more work is given to those who will get it done and in Angela's view, this inequity hasn't been addressed.

This year Anne had been away from school on parental leave and had now returned in a parlous state;

[she has] just come back off maternity leave and she's still feeding, and she is absolutely shattered, she is completely and utterly shattered, and she does work very hard, she is very conscientious, but she is exhausted.

From here Angela proceeded to explain how she had advised Andrew to allow Anne to work from home, arguing that this would be good for Anne and, because she is so conscientious, the work would still get done. The Head had acted on Angela's advice, but also strongly urged Anne to "go to bed and go to sleep, y' know, that sort of thing". Angela's response here seemed to be bemusement: from her perspective it would be impossible for Anne to act on his suggestion because she is very conscientious, and so, Angela believed, she would not be able to rest when there was schoolwork waiting. This story serves for Angela to rework her key narrative about her own conscientiousness and approach to work. It is also a means to communicate significant information about her colleagues, that the Head is "very good at not working", and that Lucy also shares this seemingly 'favourable' characteristic. Angela, by contrast, is 'not good at not working'. Working is both 'good' and 'bad' and this ambiguous position is revisited further on (5.3.1).

Claiming an identity often involves 'delicate discriminatory work' where the narrator contrasts herself favourably against others (MacLure, 1993, p.379). Working identities for the AHs are sketched out below and in this way Angela communicates her view that Lucy has neither capacity nor willingness to contribute fully to the team.

Figure 5.1 *Contrasting characteristics of Assistant Heads at All Faiths*

AH1 Angela	AH2 Lucy	AH3 Anne
conscientious	not conscientious	conscientious
capable	not capable	capable
committed	uncommitted	committed
hardworking	lazy	hardworking
bad at not working	good at not working	bad at not working

Commenting on the Head’s response to Lucy and her contribution to the SLT, Angela notes, “he was disappointed at first, but now he expects it, and he certainly hasn’t tackled it.” Having inherited a leadership team with different skills, capabilities and work ethics, here, as elsewhere in the school, he is making moves towards “getting the roles as he needs them”. To this end, he has supported Angela in undertaking the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leaders (NPQSL) and at this time she had almost completed this. In the SLT too, Andrew is seemingly working to get the ‘right people in the right places’.

That these issues have not been discussed openly in the SLT contrasts sharply with Angela’s expectation and experience of Catholic school life, where she described ‘always talking about things’ and questioning how people are being affected and how they can be helped. For Angela, this communication was a defining feature of being part of the Catholic community and central to her desire to work in a Catholic school (4.4.3). The tensions in Angela’s relationship with Lucy evoke the wider contradictory impulses of competition v collaboration at work across the system (Greany, 2014; Greany & Higham, 2018) and is an example of the ways that ‘the flows of neoliberalism’ (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p.93) work at the level of subjectivity.

5.2 Angela - assistant head

Angela's account of her current role and her experience of life as an AH at All Faiths Academy is the central story of her narrative. Like many small secondary schools, the AH role at All Faiths includes a number of responsibilities and for Angela these were Head of Key Stage 3 (HoKS3), and Head of Science (HoS), alongside whole school responsibility for the curriculum. In common with other SLTs, the core work of the AHs, is 'school improvement' activity (Hazel, 2017) to ensure that the Head's standards agenda (2.2.2.1) is being implemented consistently and the day to day work for the AHs included: lesson observations, learning walks, monitoring students' work and regular discussions about students' progress.

5.2.1 Changing schools and the standards agenda

To establish the context for her story, Angela sets out some potent vignettes about teachers' work. Peppered throughout the narrative, the phrase 'y'know' is an appeal to our shared sociocultural background, personal and professional, and a marker to indicate that she expects me to understand what she is communicating and how this must be heard (Riessman, 1993).

The Technology Teacher

This is a vivid cautionary tale about an experienced and long serving teacher who had not changed his teaching practices in line with the school expectations and who had been subject to capability² procedures and had now left the school. This story of one teacher in a particular subject area stands in for many stories about teachers in different curriculum areas that we had both known in our teaching lives. It also

² Where a member of staff fails consistently to perform their duties to a professionally acceptable standard they are said to lack capability.

points up wider narratives about expectations of teachers and how what it means to be a 'good teacher' is a 'variable and shifting concept' (Moore, 2004, p. 33).

Years ago, he would have been absolutely fine
he would have been A1
because that was the standard of teaching years ago

So, technology teacher, the kids love him
y' know "What shall we do today, let's make so and so..." A1
Not really following any sort of scheme A2
certainly not marking anything
not marking things by exam criteria

But years ago, he would have been absolutely fine A1

And a popular teacher, the kids liked him
because they could do what they liked A2
Sharpening pencils on the lathe
y' know the sort of things.

He was on capability because of health and safety A2
Doing bonkers things
but also not marking and not following schemes
y'know all those sorts of things

And that's why he's gone

But probably, when I first started teaching,
that would have just been the norm actually A1
Particularly in that sort of area as well
That would have been the norm

Then, if I think about the teachers who taught me A1
that's probably the kind of thing we did
So they're not surviving
He's not surviving
Certainly he has gone from our place

The telling is a dialogue between two voices; Angela, the experienced teacher who has worked with many teachers over time (A1) and Angela the assistant head (A2) focused on 'school improvement'. Angela moves fluidly between positions, speaking back from one to the other. In the technology teacher's regular lesson opening, 'What shall we make today?', Angela captures the very essence of this classroom, the grind of the lathe and the sawdusty sweat of the workshop, and in this way she lays out the tensions between one teacher's lifelong ways of being in

his subject and the school's current expected standard teaching practices. He is 'on capability' because of some unsafe practice and whilst safety in schools is paramount and breeches rightly demand investigation, through this process all aspects of his work have come under scrutiny. Angela (A1) notes that lessons do not start with learning objectives, there are no schemes of work in place and marking does not meet the required standard and does not refer to 'exam criteria', and she suggests that these are the real issues for the SLT (Stanza 4) noting in her coda, 'and that's why he's gone'.

The point of the story, what makes it 'tellable and newsworthy' (Cortazzi, 1993, p.66), is to communicate that what was 'acceptable' in the past, 'years ago', and even considered the 'norm' is no longer permissible. This is reinforced in Angela's evaluation (final stanza) where her coda underlines that today this is the basis for removal from teaching and that such teachers are 'not surviving'. The language here, 'on capability' and 'not surviving', veil the processes at work and allow Angela to dissociate and distance herself from the import of these and her personal culpability. It also amplifies concerns about the increasing normalisation and acceptance of processes for removing teachers who do not fit with the Headteachers' vision (Courtney & Gunter, 2015).

The DVD

A story about the use of the DVD allowed Angela to again evoke a shared place and time and to highlight wider points about practices, once routine, which have now become 'unacceptable'. Here she describes her experience as a young Head of Department (HoD) observing a colleague's lesson in which the class spent an hour continuing to watch a video, 'a Hollywood film' which was only very 'loosely connected' to their science topic, noting that, "it wasn't acceptable for a lesson

observation, it was never acceptable for a lesson observation, but it was kind of acceptable?”

At the close her voice is quieter and the upturn at the sentence end indicates the unspoken, but implied question ‘wasn’t it?’, suggesting that Angela is checking her memory and understanding of this time with mine. Going further,

in those days, you worked on a DVD and you watched a DVD for two lessons...y’ know, the *thought* of doing that now (my italics) that would not happen now, and I’m sure that that is not just at our place.

Here Angela was neither upholding, nor condemning the practice, rather looking back on this as something viewed through a telescope, as far away and distant from today’s expected practices as could possibility be imagined.

Moving to the present day, Angela introduced a contemporary story about DVDs; this was July, almost the end of the summer term, and the Headteacher had imposed a ban on the use of DVDs in school. He had communicated to staff, students and parents that no DVDs would be shown in classes, even on the last day of term. Whatever their content, it seemed that DVDs now embodied a notion of leisure which was incompatible with school life and here Angela noted, “so we don’t watch DVDs, so there isn’t even that on the last day, you don’t get that break, you never get that break” .

Building on this theme, Angela talked about students working independently in lessons, a routine practice in our early teaching experience which had often created space in which the teacher would have been able to ‘get on with something else’. “It’s not acceptable now for them [the students] to be getting on with something, while you are doing something else”, instead, “if they [the students] are getting on with that, *you* are going round the room, there is an expectation that *you* are going

round the room". Her emphasis (*italics*) here firmly underscoring the expected role of the teacher and what they must be seen to be doing.

Embedded in these stories of expected teaching practices is a notion of the teacher's role which goes beyond what teachers should be doing, to include what they should also *be seen* to be doing. In this way, a checklist of observable behaviours is established, and as an AH Angela was clear about what should be visible to the observer on learning walks, or lesson observations. Students should not be watching DVDs, nor should teachers be seated. Such mundane routines construct the visible face of good teaching in All Faiths and these small vignettes, highlighting particular practices, powerfully point up ways in which the teacher's performance must be 'fabricated' (Ball, 1997).

Drawing on our shared experience and told without 'eduspeak' (Kelly, 2003), these small stories, stand in for the bigger and more fundamental changes taking place across the school and throughout the system. Here students' expected standards of attainment and achievement are brought together with the Head's vision for teachers' work and classroom practices and translated into the school's own 'standards' agenda. In the very grain of these practices, the pervading discourse of standards and school improvement becomes material and visible in the everyday of classroom interaction.

'Our books must be up to scratch'

Angela described how more is being of asked of everyone and everyone is working harder. Students' books are not only a site for their work, but an artefact to reveal the teachers' teaching and assessment practices, and here, the teacher's task becomes one of revealing and making their practices visible for the observer. It is not sufficient to assess students' work and provide formative feedback, through the activity teachers must also demonstrate how they are performing certain practices in

particular ways. This demands a degree of fabrication from teachers, of themselves and their work, to show pedagogic interactions in ways which can, at times, go well beyond the purpose and value of the interaction itself and in this way, can significantly impact upon teachers' workloads (DfE, 2015).

Fabrication performs particular work to present the individual, or the institution, in the way that is required. At any particular time, certain versions will be favoured according to the purposes of the presentation and these will be shaped by the prevailing political climate of the setting. When teachers perform required versions of themselves, or they contribute, as they must, to performing the good school for parents or for inspection, they are submitting to a performative regime. The act of fabrication becomes the standard by which future performances will be measured, and so the efforts of the individual /institution are harnessed to producing an inauthentic performance of self or institution (Ball, 1997, 2000; Perryman, 2009). Sustaining such performances may also demand their emotional labour too. Such practices pervade teachers' psyches and work to remake their identities (Ball, Maguire, et al., 2012).

In sharing these stories, Angela's different voices and subject positions are foregrounded and the oscillation between her two voices, A1 and A2, continues as a dance where each partner takes turns to lead. In this way Angela communicates the ambivalence and doubt that she experiences in the day to day of her role as assistant head.

Data Discussions

Data analysis drives the regular half termly conversations with the HoDs, the meetings have a similar format and here too fabrication is required.

“We have much more data analysis than we used to have, much, much more ”

and “every half term it is those questions - all the time”, here Angela acts out a typical exchange with a HoD:

So [mimes looking at figures] that is so and so's target
[Pause] Well ?
[Aside -yes I know they haven't been in for six weeks]
Why haven't you made progress with them?

This performance may be an ironic parody of her internal voice, or the conversation as conducted with (some) trusted colleagues. The complicity conveyed in her aside, “yes I know they haven't been in for six weeks”, shows her understanding that the activity requires both parties to play their parts and fabricate themselves in particular ways; in stepping outside of the narrative in this way, Angela communicates how such interactions must be interpreted.

Angela's story of school improvement is a positive one. In this culture she suggests that more is expected from everyone, and everyone is working harder. Some teachers are “adapting well to it”, that is, to the Head's standards agenda. Students are also “stepping up” to the demand, “we are expecting so much more of them, so much more, but they are responding to it”. She is firm in her assertion, “absolutely convinced”, that “teaching has never been better”. She links increased accountability and better teaching noting, “there's so much accountability, there's so much pressure about the results for your group. I think that's why you can't take your foot off the gas really”. Everyone is working harder, higher levels of accountability ensure this, and no precious time is wasted. However, she also acknowledges the demands of the regime and its less desirable impacts, particularly for some older teachers who “really are at the end of their career”. For these people, some of whom taught Angela when she was at school, she admits, “they are struggling with it, but they are trying, they are trying, but they are struggling with it, and it is relentless”. The circularity of the phrasing here and repetition of the terms ‘struggling’ and ‘trying’ strongly reinforces the sense of a hopeless endeavour in which they will fail.

Despite the efforts highlighted, on exam results she tentatively offers the seeming fly in the ointment;

but there is not an improvement in results, results are fluctuating. So if I look [back] at St Peters, the results have fluctuated, but from what I have just described you would expect the results to be significantly higher than they were many years ago, and they're not significantly higher, so that's really interesting isn't it? Because they should have been, unless that's just happening nationally..

Her querying tone is (almost) an appeal for confirmation /explanation, which she moves quickly to provide, a form of words about change over time and national pictures, but which feels formulaic and unsatisfactory and tails off, unfinished, with a shrug. Moreover, this hesitant questioning voice is a counterpoint to the polished and fluent delivery of her account of the AH standards work. Is this one of Angela's 'secret stories' (5.2.4) shared here because the research provides a safe space to admit fears and doubts which are inadmissible, or even unspeakable elsewhere? Certainly it provides a glimpse of the ambiguity and tensions inherent in 'driving' the school improvement agenda whilst, at the same time, sustaining continuity and keeping things going, which is ever more important when schools are in transition and responding to demands for educational change (Sugrue, 2005).

5.2.2 Managing people and 'delivering change'

Angela describes her work, the "line management of the HoDs" as the "pastoral side of working with staff" and sees this as the new and real challenge of her role. Her reference to 'pastoral care' expresses the way she understands this work and how she wants to undertake this and is a noteworthy construction because the term is generally used in schools only in relation to students.

On working with the HoDs she communicated her understanding that different people require different, tailored approaches; "some have been experienced, some haven't, so they have been different, but I've really enjoyed working with those and

bringing those people on". Again, she reinforces a key narrative, that she enjoys this work, "it's come with challenges as well, but I've enjoyed the challenges".

Angela used the example of the forthcoming Year six induction visits to talk about how she approaches whole staff change. Although these visits are a regular part of the school's transition programme, and it is usual for the final year primary school children to visit their new secondary school in the summer term, the Head had made a late change to the arrangements and had increased the length of the visit from the usual two days to five. Angela anticipated how the staff were likely to receive this news, whether expressed verbally or not, "you're kidding me! It's nearly the end of term and we've got five days induction !?" Going further she talks through her thinking:

Right, I'm introducing those things and how am I going to introduce it ? And actually what works for that teacher, doesn't work for that [other] teacher at all and I will have to work differently with this department than I do with that department

In this way, she emphasises her understanding that communications are understood differently by each recipient and that these connect to how people feel and are affective responses. "I've really enjoyed thinking about how they might feel and how I am going to get past those barriers because of whatever they're feeling and however they're feeling". The staff, she suggests, are "rare breeds" who "bring their own baggage" and in this way, she acknowledges their idiosyncrasy and the need for individual approaches.

The language and metaphors here signal her ambiguity in relation to this work; although Angela is aware of the individuals and their different needs, the language of standards permeates her talk. For example, she notes that as the senior team they are "delivering change all the time" which involves "dealing with staff all the time" and this is the most demanding aspect of her work, "that's the biggest problem

of the job, you know, the most difficult thing is dealing with staff, the rest of it is dead easy”.

The staff ‘bring their own baggage’ that is, unwieldy and unnecessary stuff that should be disposed of, or left outside of school. There are also ‘barriers’ to progress which are something to get past or ‘overcome’. This language constructs the staff and the work that must be done ‘to get them on board’ in ways which suggest that the staff are the problem.

5.2.3 Support for senior leaders

Angela reflects on her lack of experience, and the lack of support and training for herself and others in managing staff. She is currently undertaking the NPQSL and observes that, even here, there had been very little focus on staff management. She points to leadership interviews and in-tray exercises which focus on development plans, rather than the task of ‘dealing with staff’, and reflects on the underpinning, unfounded belief that successful middle leaders will be able to take on senior leadership roles with ease:

Because you have been a successful middle leader and can manage data and get good results, you will be able to deal with people.... there is just an assumption there that if you can do something reasonably well, you will be able to deal with human beings... the two do not follow

Angela is still drawing upon skills developed through her middle leadership training and experience, and notes that the SL training does not go much beyond this. For ‘dealing’ with whole staff meetings they have been given “silly little strategies ...y’ know...give them a biscuit, so if they have something in their mouths they are not talking”. This is a telling example as it suggests the encouragement of a mode of management where teachers must be silenced.

SLT Support

Angela outlines the general experience within the SLT at All Faiths, where there is little sharing of experience apart from “flippant discussion”, which she describes as “offloading”. “We will sort of offload y’ know... ‘Oh God, I’ve got to go and meet so and so...’ [one might say to another] ‘Brace yourself’ ... and so on”. By contrast she sketches an imagined scenario in which the Head assumes a very different role,

a formal sit down with strategies ‘this is what we will do,
this is what you could try, come back and tell me how it’s gone’
that sort of thing. No, never anything like that

and in this way, she shows how the work and communication within the SLT could be very different. In this unfolding story Angela tacks back, each time with increasing emphasis, to the fact that wherever she looks: the SLT, the national leadership programme, or her own experiences throughout her teaching career, there has never been an adequate focus and emphasis on working with colleagues. This revisiting and circularity works to underscore what she increasingly understands as a glaring disconnect between the school improvement work, the core element of her AH role, and what is really involved here, that is, ‘dealing’ with the staff.

Never is it about staff! And the biggest issues are in dealing with staff, y’know, if you think about the AH role, staff are bonkers, they do silly things, they come with their own baggage, so they are our biggest asset in schools, but there is *nothing* for dealing with them (Angela’s emphasis)

This is play

Drawing lightly on the work of Bateson (1952; 1972), by signalling that what follows is humorous the speaker, Angela, communicates that ‘this is play’ (1972, p.316) and a place where anything is potentially funny (Coates, 2007). The flippant discussion in the SLT, ‘brace yourself’ and ‘staff are bonkers’, provides a means of ‘offloading’ because, within a designated psychological play frame (Watson & Drew, 2017), it is

possible to laugh about things which would otherwise be unspeakable and dangerously disruptive to the norms of communication within the team.

Support from family

Angela's family is her most valuable source of professional and personal support. She talks to her siblings, drawing upon their experiences in similarly responsible roles in other professions, and her partner Tom, who is also a teacher at the school and who listens on long journeys to and from work.

So, I will often talk and talk and talk, on the journey to and from school. Talk and talk and talk. About something that day or coming up or what I might be worried about school. Sometimes he offers advice, but really the support is in just listening and just because I am able to say these things out loud.

The tone of this telling and the repeated 'talk and talk and talk' amplifies her pressing need to share and make sense of her experiences. She also communicates her isolation and loneliness together with the impossibility of speaking out and expressing these thoughts safely.

Angela owns that she doesn't always get things right in her role and offers a light-hearted self-parodying story in which she describes talking with her brother about a difficult situation at work. Here they discuss how she might have handled things differently with a very upset and emotional colleague and Angela describes her brother's joking response, highlighting humorously the points at which she might have considered changing tack:

He really laughed and said , 'y' know, so when you saw him really sweating and struggling and fidgeting and you still carried on with the audit? And he was in tears – those were the warning signs you needed to be looking out for!' and I will think 'Oh yeah' but only afterwards

In this example Angela again communicates that 'this is play'. Humour powerfully deflects from the emotion and seriousness of the content of this story and we are

safely diverted from thinking about how she and her colleague would have felt, both in the moment and later, and what this might mean. The story is also significant because it is one of the rare insights that Angela offers into the emotional challenge of her work.

Angela makes no reference to professional networks as sources of support; the term 'our place' in phrases such as "I'm sure that is not just at our place" expresses her sense of working in isolation, and her uncertainty about what might be going on in other schools. Here, she communicates something of the changing local context and culture in which the old collaborative networks, such as the collegiate middle leaders' meetings, hitherto regularly attended and an important source of friendship and professional support, are no longer operating. Here a new school map, with new alliances and fierce competition for students, together with changes in the Local Authority and their relationships with the academies, mean that old mechanisms and models of working together are no longer possible or appropriate. Such changes evidence the ways that the wider system developments work on and through local relationships, and the tension between competition and collaboration playing out locally (Greany, 2014; Greany & Higham, 2018).

5.2.4 Sharing 'secret' stories

In this culture there are few places to safely 'say things out loud' and Angela has alternative spaces for sharing different stories about school, with teacher friends, over wine and well away from All Faiths. Here talk is about 'the kids' and not about 'numbers'. "Sometimes it's that they are a pain in the bum, but we talk about kids. I've never had a friend ever talk to me about numbers, y'know, and grades and that sort of thing".

Personal beliefs about education are discussed here and Angela communicates that hers have changed little since she started teaching;

I don't think you can teach without having a relationship with the kids and I think without ever being told or thinking about it, we know that we get better results if we have a relationship with the child. ... You do have to get the results so that they can improve their life choices really and that will help with that, but we've also got to, it's about relationships that you build with students and it's about what you model, the relationships that you model for them.

Juxtaposed with her career long understandings of education, the conflation of results and life choices is a much more contemporary construction of teachers' work and purposes, and the seamless ease with which she aligns relationships and results here, reflects her ability to integrate elements of managerialism comfortably (Wilkins, 2011).

Such stories about teachers and teaching have become 'secret stories' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996, p.25) and only shared in safe spaces outside school, whilst the dominant, 'sacred', stories of school which prescribe expected values and practices, for example, 'the right people in the right places doing the right things', squeeze out these softer, less quantifiable aspects of teachers, teaching and school life. The sharing of such stories can provide a welcome counter to the pervading technicist discourses which dominate the talk and culture of school (Moore, 2004). In this way the telling and sharing of these stories is an important source of support for Angela and potentially a valuable means of taking care of herself and keeping her secret stories safe from the pervasive influences of performativity (Ball, 2003; Ball & Olmedo, 2013).

5.2.5 Senior leadership team culture

Building on the discussion of relationships within the SLT (5.1), Angela's account provides further insights into the working culture:

Y'know, we do talk about staff a lot in our leadership meetings and moan about so and so, about what they are doing and how they are always doing it, but I don't think that its ever... (acting out an alternative version) 'well that's what so and so does, how could we work with so and so, so that they do things differently?' That's never been a discussion.

Her suggestions here (and above) for how she thinks things could be done differently, point implicitly to the way that she believes this work should be done, and that the senior leaders need to think (more) about how they approach situations and how to behave in their dealings with their colleagues and with each other. Far from this approach, at times, with some staff, the work is "just a battle". Here Angela paraphrases the head in SLT meetings,

'they want to do it this way, they shouldn't be doing it this way, they should be doing it that way'... so it's just a battle. It's not, how can we get them on board? It's just..... [Trails off]

To show this in practice, Angela shares a story about the line management of the Head of English. Angela had worked with this colleague for some time, but the Head had now assumed responsibility for the line management of the core subjects. This high level monitoring and management is a common practice because of the importance of the subjects and particularly, their relative weighting in the school performance metrics (Perryman, 2009). The story outlined Angela's account of working with the teacher, the Head's approach, a 'battle', and the outcome, that the teacher was now leaving the school; this is set out in numbered stanzas below.

Although I have tried that with that member of staff when I was line manager tried to get them on board it wasn't a case of you've got to do this, y'know, it's my way or no other way	1
So, there was a bit of ... it took a lot of time they've gone now anyway	2
When Andrew came he took over the line management that made sense that was that battle and after a year she's going now	3
I mean I wasn't really getting anywhere, I mean, getting somewhere, but very, very, slowly, nowhere near fast enough, very, very slowly	4
It did take a lot of time; it was exhausting I wasn't really making much progress.	5
The Head has just clashed and there hasn't been any progress but she is leaving which is actually good for the school So that's the progress	6

Sts 1-3 provide the abstract of the story, the problem and the outcome; Angela had been working with this teacher for some time, but the new Head had decided that progress was insufficient and that he would take over the management of the core subjects. Angela communicates the nature of this iterative work which, notwithstanding some gains, was an intensive and time consuming process (Sts 2, 4 & 5) and she weighs the merits of this against the good sense and necessity of the Head's very different approach. The repeated concept of time (Sts 2-5) underscores the importance of this invaluable commodity and this understanding is one which permeates school discourse and fuels a sense of rush and urgency. The main evaluation, and the point of the story (Cortazzi, 1993), is that despite the painful and difficult process, 'a battle', the outcome was good for the school.

Threaded through this telling is the normalisation of coercive practices. Whilst Angela was unhappy about the way this had been achieved, it was imperative to

bring about a good outcome for the school and so in this case, and others similar, the ends must justify the means. Although Angela works to bring her story to a positive conclusion 'that's the progress', there is ambiguity here which raises uncomfortable questions about whose ends and purposes have been best served. The 'battle' with a teacher over their practice may be justified where the teacher's work is deemed to be a barrier to students' progress and, at the same time, a further desired end has also been secured, which is that a teacher who was not conforming with the Heads' standards agenda was now leaving the school.

Are these practices evidence of toxic leadership at All Faiths? This is not always easily recognisable because the espoused approaches and intentions may on the surface, or initially at least, look similar to those associated with strong and effective leadership (Craig, 2017).

In this context it is, perhaps, unsurprising that Angela does not see Andrew as someone that she could approach for support with her day to day concerns in handling aspects of the SLT work. To further illustrate his contrasting management style, she offers a vignette about tissues. In her office, Angela always keeps a ready supply in view and available for anyone who might need them. One day she was looking around for a tissue in the Head's office and was surprised to find that he didn't have any and, significantly, that he did not adopt the same practice. "What does that mean?" she asked rhetorically and answered laughing, "no one is going to cry in his office". By deploying humour in this way, Angela frames the story as play so we can laugh safely at the Head's refusal to provide a tissue and, at same time, share an understanding of the more serious communication about the emotional tone of the SLT and what this might mean for the staff and the school .

Angela contrasted the different leadership practices of Maureen, the previous acting Headteacher and the current Head, Andrew, and commented positively on

Maureen's approach to modelling her leadership and developing the individuals in her team:

You would be in a meeting with her and she would say, 'now the reason I asked them this is because...,the reason I did that was because...,the reason I sat them here is because...

This positive reflection implicitly communicates how Angela believes that things should be done. By celebrating this aspect of Maureen's style favourably she constructs Andrew's leadership style in opposition to this, and through this 'discriminatory work' (MacLure, 1993) Angela is surprised afresh that, here too, the problem is one of 'dealing with people'. The absence of people management from discussions in the SLT and from national leadership programmes like NPQSL, conveys an expectation that school leaders can deal with people, or that the task is straightforward, or that, as work, it simply doesn't exist. All of these possibilities put the responsibility for this work with the individual, rather than the institution, or the community. This implicit expectation, alongside the pressure on women leaders to 'never look like you can't cope' (Sachs & Blackmore, 1998), works to silence these concerns and keep them off the SLT agenda.

5.3 Work, workload and conscientiousness

One of Angela's key narratives is that she is a committed and hardworking teacher (4.4.2). She works harder and longer than most and notes that in her new AH role, "probably my workload has increased, but partly that's because of my own making". Workload is a proxy for assessing and measuring the work of teachers and it is widely discussed in the media and government publications about teachers' work, particularly in relation to recruitment and retention (DfE, 2018). In talking about her approach to her work, Angela's account (below) is threaded with ambiguity and points towards her conflicted feelings in this area (5.3).

- We always like to get to the end of our list
we always want to get those jobs done
but then I kind of get a bit itchy
and then I'll find something 1
- One of my colleagues always says
'You are always finding stuff
Why are you doing that?
Now I've got to do it!' 2
- Or I'll say 'I'm really busy'
and she will say 'that's because you always find work'
'You are always finding work
You don't need to do those things
You are just finding them for yourself' 3
- So, I do always, I am always looking for ...
y'know I am not looking for an easy life,
I do want an easy life and I do want to have some time
y'know I do want to have time
but I don't want to have an easy life really 4
- And I am always looking for... 5
y'know what could I do to make it better
that would involve some sort of challenge?

Set out in this way, the rhythm of the telling is emphasised and the echoes of 'always', 'find'/'finding', 'always looking', 'easy life' reinforce the circularity of her account (Riessman, 2008). The problem is laid out in St1; although Angela wants to finish her work and be freed up from this, she always seems to look for and 'find' more. Lucy's opinion is presented in St2; work is not something which is objectively 'there', but constructed by Angela, who always seeks for and 'finds' this. In this way Angela goes beyond the work required in her role and so it is her own fault that she is so busy and works so hard. In the tensions and disjunctures in Sts 4 & 5, Angela's active working towards a new subject position is made visible, here she pushes back against her colleague's interpretation, searching for the explanation which makes sense to her. Back and forth, modifying and shifting, she repositions herself; although she wants more time she is not looking for an 'easy life', but is striving to both improve things and to be involved in work which is valuable and professionally challenging.

In her account of relationships within the SLT Angela highlighted concerns about workload and the different attitudes and approaches of different team members (5.1) and noted that both Andrew (Head) and Lucy (AH2) are “very good at not working”. Whilst she insisted that this is a good quality and something that she needs to emulate, here she describes her own approach:

You see what I do is work, I get up early and I work then, but I just have to make it fit, work when they are in bed and that sort of thing, but it is something to watch I think

Angela’s interpretation suggests that she feels somehow responsible for the fact that she works so hard and she must deal with this; indeed, it is another area of work for which she now has responsibility, and which must be ‘managed’. She cannot blame the headteacher because he has seemingly directed staff to take the weekends off, but the work still needs to be done. Burdened with a very heavy workload and a conscience which would NEVER (Angela’s emphasis) permit her to come to a meeting unprepared “because I’m doing family stuff at the weekend”, she responds to this conundrum by working ever harder to “make it fit”.

Lucy’s contrasting perspective in the story above, provides evidence for Angela’s discriminatory work (MacLure, 1993) and her self positioning in relation to her colleague (fig.5.1). In Angela’s view, in areas for which Lucy is responsible, things do not run smoothly, and work does not get done. Although the Head may have been disappointed at the start, he now seemed to ‘accept’ this and he “certainly hasn’t challenged it”.

For herself, although Angela cannot imagine that the Head would tell her that she ought to have done something over the weekend (indeed, how could he?) she imagines that he would be ‘disappointed’. Going further she suggests that his reaction would be “fine...but if I kept doing it, I don’t think he would be, and I wouldn’t do it anyway”.

Angela did not try to smooth over the inconsistencies here; she knows that he would respond in line with his stated expectations, that he does not expect the SLs to spend their weekends working, but despite this she feels that he would be quietly disappointed, and this tension is explored further in the next chapter (6.3).

5.3.1 Work and family life

Angela's commitment and approach to her work creates additional pressures in balancing family and work life. Although the Head encourages the staff to take family time, there is work that must be completed and, from Angela's account, he is unwilling to confront this paradox and manage the situation. For Angela, her workload and the way she wants to do this are in tension and she must reconcile the two. This impacts on her family and homelife and in this way, it is a further emotional load that she must manage.

I do have to *manage* home life
I do have to think about managing it
I have to say *right I need to stop doing that*
because I don't spend enough time with the kids

Given the choice,
once I've got my head into something I just go and go and go
It's not a chore
I really enjoy it

So, I do have to say no, you have to stop doing that now
even though you've got a bit of momentum and you are really into it
you have to stop that now
because it's time for the family now

Don't get me wrong I love spending time with the family
It's not that I don't enjoy that
but I do *have to make myself stop to do that* and I've managed it
I don't feel like I've missed out on stuff with the kids

Here slowing the story and chunking this into stanzas, important threads and key ideas become more visible. The language of work applied to home makes home life another area to be managed. The challenge of stopping work is very clear, and I hear Angela's internal voice stepping up in urgency (my italics) as she moves

through the story; *I need to stop, you have to stop, you have to stop that now, I have to make myself stop*. Similarly, the thread of 'time for the family' in the final stanza communicates the pressure and tension here pointing towards, perhaps, a repeated internal discussion, or an ongoing conversation at home.

Angela defends against the suggestion that she is missing out on time with her children. Further on she notes "so the balance is about right, but I do have to be careful and I don't want to get to the end, and do what I thought that Roger had done'. Here she refers again to the 'turning point' story and her conversation with her old Headteacher Roger (4.2.3). This is a touchstone for Angela in moving on in her career because Roger encouraged her in believing that it was possible to successfully combine family life and senior leadership. Although overall Angela has 'managed', this has been very demanding,

there have been times when I just don't know where I am going to have the time to do this. I am going to bed late and getting up early, so there have been times, but I have managed it.

This ambiguous account communicates the conflict and tensions Angela experiences in relation to her work, her approach, and her feelings about this. It suggests that the defended self may be at work (2.4.4) and this possibility is explored more closely further on (6.3).

5.3.2 A changing pastoral role

For the next academic year, an important and welcome change to the school pastoral system was underway which would have a significant impact on Angela's work. This involved splitting the pastoral role into its constituent elements; academic and curriculum and social and emotional, to create two new roles. From September Angela's new role would focus on students' academic and curriculum needs across both key stages 3 & 4 and her colleague Lucy would be responsible for the social and emotional aspects of pastoral care for the students across both key stages.

Angela welcomed this new role where she would no longer be dealing with "little year 7s falling out" and noted how the pastoral role has changed:

Before it would be, y'know, somebody's had a fight, somebody's fallen out, whereas now I see it much more as y'know, 'you are a bright boy, you are underperforming and nobody's noticed because you are getting Bs and you should be getting A*s

In addition to working with the students on their academic progress, Angela will be responsible for designing and implementing a school wide programme for raising attainment . Although she described looking forward to both elements, her uncertainty is visible here:

I don't know whether it is more important
or whether it is just something different, something new
(enhancing their curriculum, rather than those individual fall outs)

I don't know which is more important.
I think it's just because it's different, it's a new challenge.
I think that's why I prefer it

It is understandable that she would have reservations; her deep commitment to the importance of nurturing and supporting the child is threaded across the narrative and this essential work will now be the domain of her less conscientious colleague Lucy. In allocating these roles, Angela suggests that the Head's decision reflects the

individual strengths and capabilities of the two AHs; it could be argued, however, that the most important role has been assigned to the person who will ensure that the work is done, and this increased focus on academic achievement, over emotional and social needs, reflects the changing culture at All Faiths.

Throughout her narrative Angela repeatedly points up her enjoyment of the pastoral aspects of teaching. She talked about her HoY7 post at Appleyard High with great fondness, “I did love it, I really enjoyed it”, and described thinking “this is my passion, this is what I want to do, this is what I’m good at. I would always go down the pastoral route” (4.4.1). On moving to St Peters, accepting the HoP post had been a ‘means to an end’, because this was a curriculum rather than pastoral role, and more ‘about paperwork rather than the kids’. Now, years later, in a multi-faceted role including a substantial pastoral responsibility, she suggests that she no longer enjoys the pastoral work and that it is the part of her role to which she felt least ‘connected’ noting, “the job I am doing now has got everything in it, literally, and the bit that I don’t like is the pastoral bit”.

In my fieldwork notes I have recorded that this statement was reinforced with a vigorous nod, as if to say, ‘yes surprising isn’t it? given everything that I have just said about pastoral work’. In explanation she continues,

I think it’s just because I have done it for so long, it is just that there’s nothing new, y’know? The fallouts between year seven girls are the same as the fallouts between year seven girls fifteen years ago, y’ know, it’s just the same things.

Further on, however, a different view is offered which suggests that the pastoral needs of students are changing, and that all staff are challenged by the responsibility of dealing with the myriad of concerning problems presented by students:

The pastoral needs of kids nowadays compared to then, they are significantly higher nowadays, and whether that's because they just talk about it more, I don't know, but that is a big responsibility for us as teachers, every teacher

The multiple and conflicting meanings arising from Angela's relationship with work, and particularly her changing relationship with pastoral work, have produced a complex and contradictory account. These ambiguous positionings do not demand resolution, rather they point towards alternative and additional interpretations to be seamed alongside initial offerings, and in this way new stories may be imagined and composed.

Chapter 6 Psychosocial readings

The most important part of the story is the piece of it that you don't know

(Kingsolver, 2010, p.652)

6.1 Returning to St Peters

Using a psychosocial approach involves consideration of the unconscious elements of self which are at work in the narrative (2.4.4). Hollway (2006) argues that we are psycho-social (her hyphenation) beings because 'we are products of a unique life history of anxiety and desire-provoking events and the manner in which these have been transformed into internal reality' (p.467). This life history includes the history of our own education and that this is situated in the 'school', has implications for how we continue to think about and connect with aspects of school life. In this way Britzman (2003) suggests 'relationships with authority, knowledge and to school objects and the differences between teacher and student are never neutral' (p.1).

An unhappy experience of school may motivate a novice teacher to embark on a teaching career wanting to make a difference and ensure that others do not suffer similarly (Britzman, 2003). For Angela, happy memories of her Catholic schools shaped her vision of how education and schools should be and Britzman's work, although focused on beginning teachers, resonates with her experience of returning to St Peters as a teacher. She was only a few years older than when she was a student there and some of the same teachers were still working at the school. Who did these teachers 'see' when they met Angela again? Did they see the young professional already established and progressing in her career, or the schoolgirl they had taught a decade earlier? For Angela, what feelings and emotions were evoked as she walked in the footsteps of her younger self in those same corridors? What versions of self were summoned or even possible?

On the challenge of thinking about our own education, Pitt and Britzman (2003) offer Freud's reflections on his school days noting that whilst this was written as a celebration for a school anniversary, it potently highlights that 'school memories do not just invoke relations with authority but also repeat one's own childhood helplessness, dependency, and desire to please' (p.761).

It gives you a queer feeling if, late in life, you are ordered once again to write a school essay. But you obey automatically, like the old soldier who, at the word "Attention!" cannot help dropping whatever he may have had in his hands and who finds his little fingers pressed along the seams of his trousers. It is strange how readily you obey the orders, as though nothing in particular had happened in the last half century.

(Freud, cited in Pitt & Britzman, 2003, p.761)

This re-experiencing of past emotions in the immediate setting was identified by Freud in the clinical context as transference, where the individual 'transfers' their feelings to the analyst. Transference here is the process whereby one individual is replaced by another and their interactions become those between the individual and this imagined other, and so a place where old, unresolved social/emotional conflicts can be replayed. Drawing on the work of Anna Freud, Pitt and Britzman (2003) argue that the classroom invites transference relations because it is such a familiar place for teachers, and one which seems to invite re-enactments of childhood memories. Here conflicts are 'projected onto present experiences, people and events' (p.761) and in this way, the school is a very likely location for transference and repetition and 'new editions of old conflicts' (Freud cited in Britzman & Pitt, 1996, p.117).

Drawing on these ideas, is it possible that on returning to her old school, like Freud, Angela was once again flooded with childhood feelings of 'helplessness, dependency and desire to please', and that her interactions with colleagues involved transference relationships on both sides. For example, in describing her difficulty as a young HoD giving feedback to an older more experienced teacher, Angela noted

that whilst it probably wasn't a problem for her colleague, as she would have heard these things before, "for me, it was telling my teacher". Is it possible that in her construction of the AH role as pastoral work (5.5.2), she is transferring her understandings of the work with her students to her new role with colleagues?

I write from the perspective of someone who also attended a Catholic school; it was a decade earlier, the edge of the era of mantillas and the Latin mass, nice girls did not comb their hair in the street and gymslips were worn three inches above the knee to defeat both the fashionable 'midi' and 'mini' skirt lengths. School was a place of compliance and Angela's happy memories summon a girl who would have been popular, successful and liked by her peers and her teachers, a biddable girl, a 'good girl'.

The tentative voice of the good girl surfaces in the narrative as Angela describes the process of moving to St Peters and her memories of this time communicate her uncertainty and anxiety. She recalls thinking "I am never going to get a job - because I am not very good anyway - and so how am I ever going to get a job in a Catholic school?" In describing her application and appointment to the Head of Physics role, Angela presented an uncertain, reluctant version of herself who needed to be encouraged, even coaxed, through each step. " 'Well, just come and have a look around', they said, and 'Well, you must come for interview' ". Even after the successful interview, she was, seemingly, still very uncertain, "so all the time I wasn't sure and even when I got the job, I wasn't sure". Despite these doubts, on being offered the job, she 'couldn't' refuse this;

I think it was that thing of actually getting the job and thinking 'well I am going to have to' [accept the job], y'know, if somebody offers you something, 'well, I'm going to have to now'.

Although Angela's description reflects the appointment process at this time, where it was usual for the successful candidate to be offered and to accept the job on the

day of the interview, her telling feels to be denying her agency throughout. There is a strong sense of things simply happening which, once events were in train, she was powerless to influence. That Angela 'couldn't say no' together with her uncertainty and reluctance invite further exploration.

Later in the story she describes the opportunity to apply for the Head of Science role (4.4.3) and a similar pattern emerges. Although Angela had already held a position of equivalent responsibility at Appleyard (HoY7), here she seems to reject even the possibility of applying for this middle leader post and again needed to be encouraged and even cajoled into making her application. Here too, there is a strong sense of things 'simply happening' and an apparent denial of her agency, suggesting a 'bad faith' narrative (Craib, 2004) and the defended self (2.4.4).

Both experiences and the tone of the description stand in sharp relief alongside reflections on her first career move at Appleyard High where on learning that a peer colleague intended to apply for the post she had thought "Well, you're rubbish and if you're applying, then so am I!" and further, on the role, 'Well actually, I *could* do this and actually, I *would like* to do this' (4.3.2). Taken together these suggest a confidence and certainty about both her decision and her abilities, which feels to be missing at St Peters, where she offers instead a doubting 'will I ever be good enough for a Catholic School?'

Drawing lightly on psychosocial understandings, is this Angela who 'can't say no', and who only wants to 'be nice', to 'humour people' and to 'keep people happy' (4.4.3) the good girl who craves the approval of her old teachers? Is it possible that back in her old school, within these transference relationships, she struggles to locate the Angela of Appleyard, or any other version of herself, and finds herself once again experiencing her childhood dependency and helplessness?

6.2 The defended self

Understandings of the defended self and the implications for the research and researcher have been considered (see 2.4.4 and 3.4.7). The presence of the 'defended self' where the narrator may be working to hide unbearable aspects of themselves, is sensed in places where the story feels either too smooth or too effortful, or alternatively, too ragged or uneven, for example, where there are contradictions, or where the narrative strains to convince the listener (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). Following this approach, three areas have been highlighted for closer investigation; Angela's extended time 'settled' at St Peters, her apparently changing commitment to Catholic education and her complex and ambiguous construction of work and how she does this, in particular her relationship with pastoral work. For each of these themes I have identified stories which, in juxtaposition, feel dissonant and bringing these stories together is a means of uncovering alternative interpretations: here the tensions and inconsistencies are visible, the stories are conflicting and Angela struggles to sustain the flow and to resmooth the fabric of the narrative. In the following sections I will consider the evidence for identifying these areas and show how they suggest the presence of the defended self. Insights gained in this process were then used to revisit and further examine selected aspects of the narrative.

6.2.1 'Settled' at St Peters

Once Angela is in post as Head of Science she wraps her career story (too) neatly with the coda, "that was me settled at St Peters for some time". This closing down feels abrupt and sits uneasily alongside the story of her early accelerated career trajectory, her evident capability and her early aspirations and success. Some time is a period of about 11 years, in which her telling suggests that nothing 'storyworthy' (Chase, 2005, p.661) had happened in this time; her hitherto steep career trajectory flattens and there are no references to professional development, or additional

responsibilities which could represent a broadening out of her experiences and evidence of progress in her career (Little, 1996). Although Angela does not connect the two, this period maps onto a time of significant change in her personal circumstances: divorce and remarriage, a second family of two and a relocation away from school, church and her family (4.3). Whilst allowing that she may be denying the reality of the experience, Angela does not offer any observations on the disruption and challenge that it might be imagined such changes could bring, nor connect these with her role in the Catholic community and her career. Instead the story she offers here is a happy one; things were 'meant to be', and her determination to construct it in this way, to smooth and tidy the telling and to brush over parts of the story which threaten to unsettle this version, point towards the presence of the defended subject. Certainly, in this close Catholic community where divorce and remarriage were not permitted, there would have been stresses, doubts and unhappiness on the way. It is likely that Angela and her partner would have been subject to significant scrutiny from various quarters and that there would have been questions, disapproval and censure, and perhaps worse. However, Angela makes no reference to such possibilities and this persistently positive story prompts questions about why she is determined to present the story in this way, and what she might be defending herself against here.

6.2.2 A changing relationship with the Catholic Church

Whilst the thread of Catholic education is seamed through Angela's narrative, two key stories are foregrounded: Angela's personal and positive experience of growing up in a Catholic community, which has informed her lifelong values and personal philosophy of education, and the story about choosing a non-Catholic school for her youngest daughter Sophie; to these I add another story about her troubled relationship with the Catholic Church.

For Angela, being a Catholic educator is a defining personal narrative. She foregrounds her Catholic values and beliefs and her unease about bringing this dimension to her teaching life, and particularly her pastoral role, in the secular environment of Appleyard High (4.4.3). This incongruity between her role and her identity contributed to a sense of professional vulnerability (Kelchtermans, 2009) and this, together with memories of her own happy education in which a Christian caring and responsible ethos was woven into the very fabric of school life (Britzman, 2003), led to a move from the school where, in many other respects, she was happy and making very good professional progress.

Angela's account of choosing a primary school for her daughter Sophie (4.3.1). was a current, closer and very different story about Catholic schools. Here I learn that instead of the local Catholic school, currently in Ofsted 'Special Measures', Angela had decided to send Sophie to the Ofsted 'Outstanding' CoE school nearby, and in recounting the story she shared her difficulty in making and explaining (defending) this choice. Although the decision could be fully justified in terms of the relative Ofsted ratings of the two schools, this was a workable cover story and a coherent telling, the 'real reason' is more complex and not at all easy to explain.

Taken together these stories raise further questions about what may have happened here for Angela, and whether the importance of Catholic school values, around which she shaped her story of her early career, has diminished and if so, why?

For Catholic teachers in Catholic schools, the Church pervades all dimensions of the professional identity and that Angela does not talk about what happened following the changes in her personal life, divorce and remarriage, feels to be a significant absence in the narrative. In terms of the doctrine of the Catholic Church, Angela and

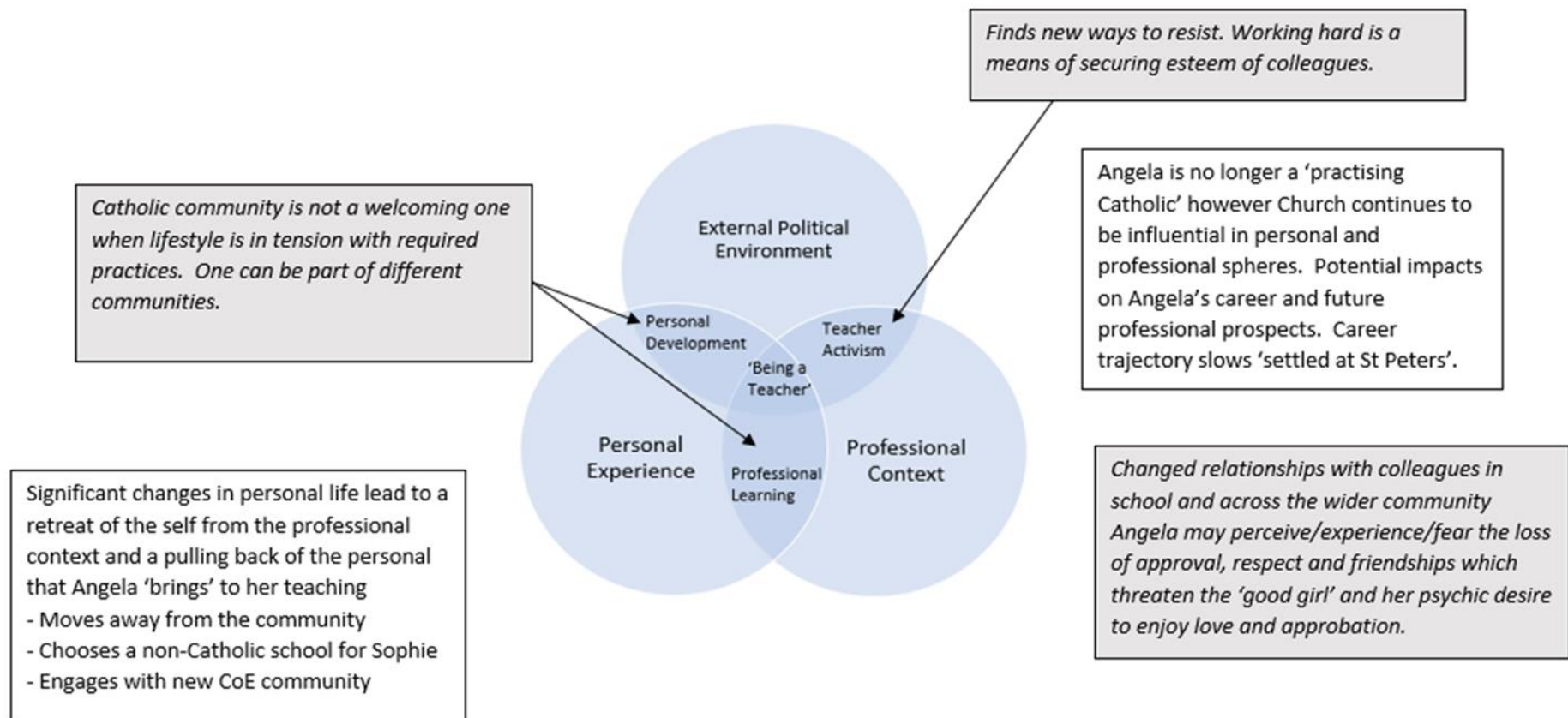
her partner would no longer have been 'practising Catholics'³ and it is to be expected that this would have had implications and ramifications for both her professional career and her role in the wider Catholic community, including the network of extended relationships that this engendered (4.3). Drawing on Mockler's (2011) understandings of teacher professional identity, in Catholic settings the Church is dominant and highly influential in the political dimension (figs. 2.1 & 6.1). Although it is not easy to access definitive information about the 'rules' surrounding this, and their application is likely to vary in different settings, the link between the professional and the personal is taken very seriously (Goodson, 2014b). Catholic schools expect staff to model appropriate lifestyles, ideally as practising Catholics, and recruitment and selection practices reflect this. Faith schools have a legal right to exercise 'regard...in connection with the termination of the employment of any teacher at the school, to any conduct on his [sic] part which is incompatible with the precepts, or with the upholding of the tenets, of the religion' (School Standards and Framework Act, 1998; 60.5.b) and this can be used to justify Catholic school guidance that divorced or gay governors or senior leaders of Catholic schools may be dismissed, or precluded from consideration for senior roles, which might be deemed to be very influential in supporting students' personal development.

For Angela, this changed relationship with the Church and the community would have been a significant rupture, and the ensuing physical and emotional separation from the communities in which she had lived all her life would have presented critical challenges to her personal identity. Although she talked about moving house and expressed regret about seeing less of her family day to day (4.3), she does not talk about the loss of community that she experienced in this change. Nor does she

³ a 'practising Catholic' is defined as someone who has been sacramentally initiated into the Catholic Church, that is they have received Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist and 'who adheres to those substantive life choices which do not impair them from receiving the sacraments of the Church and which will not be in any way detrimental or prejudicial to the religious ethos and character of the school' (Stock, 2009, p.6).

suggest that these personal changes had any repercussions in her professional life. This silence draws attention to the work that Angela is doing in the narrative to defend herself against the pain of this experience and its continuing ramifications in her personal and professional life. In Figure 6.1 Mockler's framework (2011) is used to map the dimensions of Angela's professional identity as a non-practising Catholic in a Catholic setting including potential psychosocial considerations (see shaded text in italics).

These possible interpretations can be brought to bear upon other stories and provide a new position from which to consider them afresh. Did these changes in her personal life affect her career and contribute to the long fallow period ('settled' at St Peters) in which her hitherto accelerated career trajectory slowed? Is a possible explanation for this faltering that, having experienced rejection, censure and disapproval following her divorce, Angela had expected that her personal circumstances would exclude her from applying for senior posts? Whilst she does not comment explicitly on this time, nor suggest that she was actively overlooked for potential career development, or that her career ambitions had been thwarted, is this Angela defending herself against something which is too painful to face? That is, the rupture with the Church and her community and all that this had been in her life thus far and her conflict with the institution of the Catholic Church concerning her status as a divorced woman? Perhaps, even more fundamental and unsettling questions about her Catholic faith?



A non-practising Catholic at St Peters
Adapted from Mockler (2011)

Figure 6.1 A non-practising Catholic at St Peters

6.2.3 The turning point story revisited

In this section I bring the interpretations sketched out above to the account of the restructuring of the SLT at St Peters (4.2.3). Here I reconsider the events from the perspective of Angela the good girl, one who is strongly defended against the pain of the impact of her divorce, her changing relationship with her community and the Catholic Church, and all that this has meant for her.

As outlined above, in both of her early career moves at St Peters, Angela 'recalls' being highlighted and encouraged, even cajoled, into applying for new positions. However, this time, when there were new senior leadership posts on offer for which Angela was a serious contender, she had not received any advance informal encouragement from the Headteacher, and this had been expected. Although the Head did eventually make an informal approach, there had been a period of uncertainty in which it had been difficult for Angela to position herself in relation to the post and her potential application. Her colleagues were encouraging and talked openly about a particular job as 'Angela's role', however, she describes rejecting these speculations firmly, explaining that the work would be incompatible with family life. She questions herself about this time, "Would I have put myself out there if Roger hadn't asked me ? I don't know, I don't know" and further,

had he not asked me I probably wouldn't have applied for it....
whether it's because it was the fear of failure, y'know if he hadn't
asked me, I might not have. I hadn't realised that he wanted me to
have it.

The emotional weight of 'put myself out there' hints at the significant personal threat in doing so, one which goes deeper than not being successful in her application and perhaps one against which she needed to defend herself. A possible interpretation is that Angela harboured fears that her application for a post at this level would be rejected, or maybe not even considered, because she was not a practising Catholic, and if this were to occur, the experience would (again) be shameful and humiliating.

Her response to colleagues and also to the Head on his initial approach work as an artful cover story, or 'bad faith' narrative (Craib, 2004). A mother who apparently makes the choice to not pursue her career is a familiar and acceptable story and provides a strong rationale for the different positions she might assume, with colleagues, family and even herself, in talking and thinking about her intentions. Angela's observations on Roger's situation had enabled her to build her case against pursuing school leadership because, in her view, this was likely to be an unrewarding career. Until approached personally by the Head, she notes that 'I didn't know that he wanted me to have the job' and even then she 'recalls' the conversation where initially she responded to him with the same explanation and rationale offered to colleagues, "I'm not so sure I want that stress and hassle really, you know, with family". Later I learn that a further conversation took place in which Angela and Roger discuss his experiences and where he outlined a new story of an enjoyable, satisfying career in school leadership.

A possible reading of Angela's telling is that she avoided the risky position of 'putting herself out there' and being rejected, because she had a workable cover story which explained her position and reasons for *not* applying for the role. When she changed her mind, she had another viable cover story to explain her apparent volte-face following this personal conversation with Roger.

The feel of this story is of one reworked and embellished through many retellings, a practised narrative . Did this conversation in the Head's office which prompted her change of heart take place in this way? Or was her reason for not applying because she feared risking a painful humiliation and rejection of her application because she was not a practising Catholic? Angela's tidy version is a useful emplotment device, and a narrative linkage which provides both a workable explanation for how things came about and the way things worked out in the end (Chase, 2005). This metaphor of a 'turning point' can also be interpreted in different ways; it was a turning point in

the school's history because the long serving Headteacher was leaving, and it was also a turning point for Angela in the way she thought about moving into leadership and her career. However, it may also have been a turning point, in that the headteacher, as gatekeeper, opened the way to the possibility of a senior role (Kelchtermans, Plot, & Ballet, 2011). Whether this gate was real or imagined and whether it was closed to her, or not, I cannot know, but her account suggests that she pushed at this and it opened. Connecting these different stories in this way lays out an alternative possible telling in which Angela is defended against the pain and shame of what happened for her following her divorce, a period in which her career trajectory slowed and in which she was exiled from her Catholic community. Perhaps this was not the 'settled period' she described, but one in which she experienced seismic upheaval in her professional and personal life, and this disruption would have contributed to a precarious professional identity. Although she suggests that she doesn't remember it as being a difficult time, she does admit that "it is all a bit of a blur" (4.3). Is this the defended self offering the only bearable version of events which can be shared and one which keeps her safe from confronting the 'inner significance' of these experiences? (Walkerdine, Lucey, & Melody, 2001, p.91).

6.3 Revisiting work and workload

6.3.1 Enjoyable work

In Angela's account of her contradictory and ambiguous relationship with work (5.3.1), her insistent sharpening of her enjoyment of her work seems to pre-empt thinking otherwise and points towards the possibility that this is a defence against something which makes her unhappy and about which she is conflicted.

That she 'enjoys' her work provides a justification for the time that she must commit to this; particularly as she sets personally demanding standards in both the volume

of work that she undertakes, and the way that she must do this. Might an alternative reading be that she is actually unhappy about work and the time and energy that it demands and takes away from her personal and family life? Such knowledge might be unbearable and necessitate a defence against the pain of confronting this (Bibby, 2011).

That Angela works hard as an assistant head is unsurprising. In England teachers in all roles work long hours, beyond their European counterparts, and for those in leadership roles, it is to be expected that the demands will be even greater (Busby, 2016). Within the SLT, there are two conscientious AHs, Angela and Anne, and Lucy who 'isn't at all'; work is allocated to those who will get it done and Angela keeps taking on more. (5.1). Why might this be so? Why does Angela persist in working beyond the Head's stated expectations in this way and what might she be trying to achieve here?

In describing the Head's approach to weekend working, Angela suggests that whilst he would be 'fine' if work was not done as a 'one-off', longer term it would not be acceptable. For her, this personal behaviour and the Head's imagined 'disappointment', is not to be countenanced. Is this the good girl with her childish desire to please who imagines that the Head would be disappointed because the work was not done, but more significantly, disappointed in Angela herself? She does not want to disappoint him as she may have disappointed her Headteacher in the past and suffered for this, personally and professionally. In this way, her persistent hard work might be understood as a defence against the threat of this painful possibility, the unbearable memory, pain or shame, of disappointing the Headteacher. If this is so, is it likely that she will persist in doing whatever it takes to protect herself against anything similar happening again? Is it productive to think about Angela's relations with Andrew in Freud's terms as 'a new site for an old conflict'? In imagining Andrew's disappointment, Angela may be transferring past

experiences and feelings in her relationship with Roger (the old Headteacher) to her current relationship here with Andrew (Pitt & Britzman, 2003). In working as she does, Angela acts out her capable, conscientious and worthy self, one which she was never able to show to Roger, and she transfers her desire to be recognised in this way to her relationship with her new Headteacher Andrew.

A further possibility is that her hard work is a defence against aspects of herself in her role as a senior leader which are troubling, and which challenge her self-perceptions. The good girl may want to please and to 'keep people happy', but Angela may have found that it is often very difficult to do so in her AH role; that the work and the way that she must do it is, at times, in tension with her desire to please people, to be liked and even respected. Enjoying the support and approbation of colleagues is one of Angela's key personal narratives (4.4.3) and the origins of this may be traced to her childlike desire to please and to be loved. Her painful experience of 'disappointing' in the past may have led to the loss of her colleagues' esteem and she defends against the personal significance of that experience and the anxieties that it produces (Walkerdine et al., 2001). For Angela, hard work means doing her best and she does so to remain acceptable to herself, and to offset, in some way, whatever charges may be levelled against her by colleagues, or others. In the day to day, working as hard as she can is a means by which she defends against the unbearable possibility of being seen and judged unfavourably.

6.3.2 A new pastoral role

Angela's commitment to the importance of the pastoral aspects of teaching is at the core of her 'unique embodiment' as a teacher (Clandinin et al., 2006) and this is communicated in a number of ways. For example, in constructing her AH role in terms of the 'pastoral care' of staff, Angela underscores her identity and values and that these are embedded and expressed in terms of relationships based on care and

responsibility; in a different context, when sharing 'secret' stories with colleagues (5.2.4), Angela emphasises the importance of this relational work. These examples convey her deep, longstanding commitment to pastoral care, and so her apparent positioning in relation to the changing pastoral system and her new role is discordant, and signals the presence of the defended self.

In discussing the merits of the new pastoral arrangements (5.3.2), Angela offers a messy montage of understandings and feelings which, taken together, suggest that, far from being unchanging and unchallenging, pastoral work is instead, unpredictable and demanding; moreover, it is work for which all staff bear high levels of responsibility. As HoKS3, Angela has been 'responsible' for the pastoral care of 'over half the school' and because she had been doing this work for so long, she has 'exhausted it'. In tune with her technician AH voice, Angela makes no reference to the affective demands of the pastoral role, but expresses this in terms of 'tiring' of the work and its 'responsibilities', a term weighted with anxiety and guilt (Nias, 1997); for this reason, perhaps, she eschews the responsibility invested in the Headteacher role:

There are big things that have happened at school, y'know, when a boy tried to jump off the top floor and things, y'know, big things, where I've just thought, thank God that's not me.

This intimate offering potently expresses the emotional demand of such situations and points up some very challenging aspects of pastoral work. In her prayer, 'thank God that's not me' breathed with closed eyes, as through reliving the moment, I hear the anxiety and the emotional toll of relational work with vulnerable young people, where things could so easily go horribly wrong, with potentially devastating consequences.

Talking further on responsibility and future aspirations she notes,

Whilst I don't very often switch off
I like to think that I can switch off
It's nothing to do with me
I'm not responsible for the whole school
somebody else is responsible for the whole school,
so I don't want to be a head

The rhythmic oscillation between the two positions: one 'switched on' and 'responsible', the other 'switched off' 'and free; together with the unbearable burden of the 'whole school', communicates Angela's strong desire to reject such responsibility.

I don't want to be a Head, definitely not
I love the job that I do
I do do a lot of work at home
I take a lot of work home in my head,
even if I'm not physically doing stuff I think about work a lot

The volume of work is emphasised here, but more significantly the work in her head, never finished and ever present. Pastoral work is responsibility heavy and Angela has 'exhausted it', but could it be that this has, after all, exhausted her?

6.4 Searching and (re)searching

Drawing lightly on psychosocial readings, on returning to her old school Angela may have again experienced feelings of helplessness and dependence in her relationships with her old teachers. In this chapter these understandings are brought alongside interpretations from the perspective of the defended self, and as a further lens through which to (re)visit the material, uncovering alternative tellings.

Chapter 7 Discussion

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I bring together the sociocultural and psychosocial understandings of Angela's narrative developed so far, alongside the themes identified in the literature on teachers' lives and careers including: role, identity and agency, discourses of managerialism and leaderism within NPM, affect and emotional labour. My purpose is to further thicken and theorize Angela's lived experience and, in doing so, to address RQ3: How might insights into Angela's sensemaking illuminate the ways that she responds to tensions between her role and her identity?

Three key transition points have been identified which offer different locations from which to further explore Angela's lived experience. Transition 1 is Angela's move from Appleyard High to St Peters; this is a return to her 'old school' which she attended as a student and a move from teaching in a secular setting into Catholic education. Transition 2 (2013 -15) is the period in which Angela joins the senior leadership team at St Peters and her subsequent appointment to assistant head at the new All Faiths Academy. In Transition 3 (2016 onwards), Angela's reflects on the changes planned for the next academic year and looks forward to her new pastoral role in raising attainment.

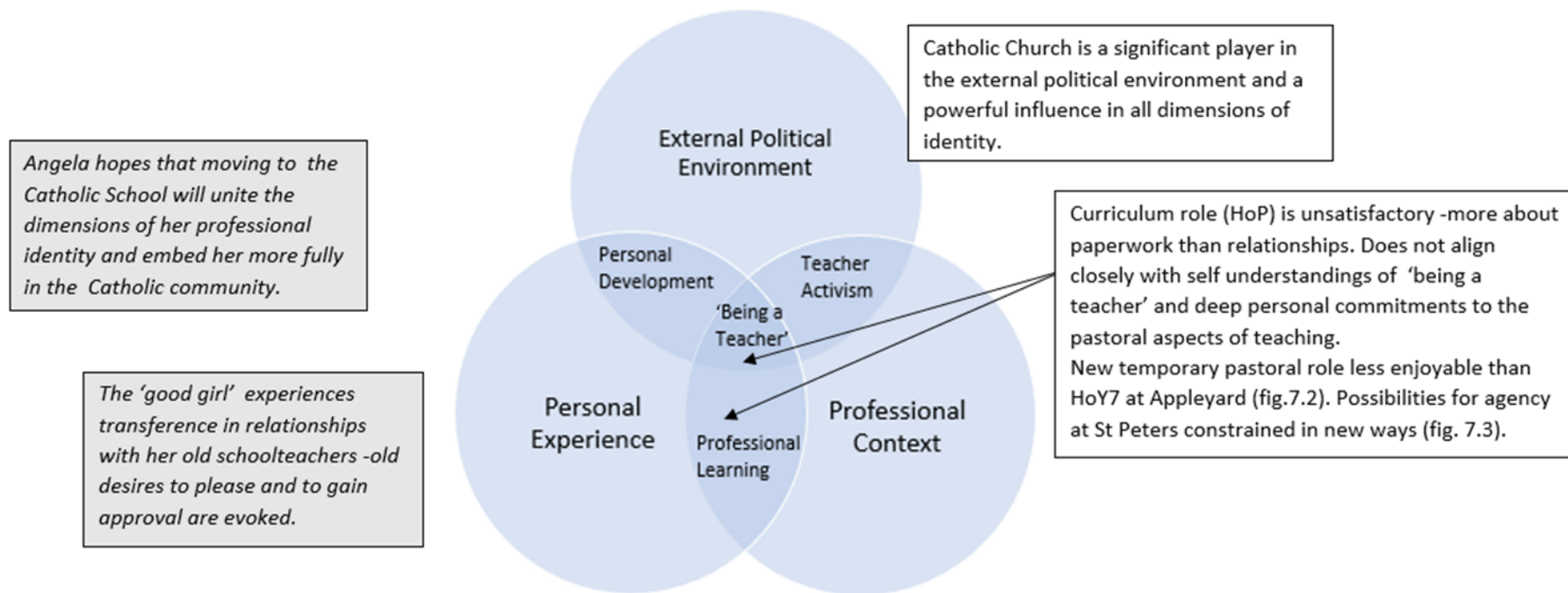
Using the identified models, Mockler (2011) (fig.2.1) and Priestley et al. (2013) (fig.2.2), Angela's changing subjectivity is explored at each transition uncovering further understandings of her moves to align and harmonise her role and identity in her rapidly changing setting.

7.2 Transition 1: Moving to St Peters

7.2.1 A return to Catholic education

More than a practising Catholic and a teacher, Angela is a Catholic educator; in Bourdieu's terms, her socialisation in the Catholic Church and her Catholic 'habitus' is deeply embedded, shaping who she feels she is, where she feels she belongs, and her expectations of her life and her personal ambitions (Moore, 2006). As teachers, we are programmed for school by our personal idiosyncratic school biographies (Britzman, 1991), and Angela's happy memories of her own school life have nurtured her fantasies about how education should be. She points to her own education to explain her reasons for wanting to work in a Catholic setting expressing this desire in terms of the quality of the personal relationships that, in her experience, characterise life in the Catholic community. These relationships shaped by care and responsibility for others, and these understandings and practices, the ways "you support students as they go along and the relationships you model for them", are Angela's ways of living and being in teaching. They reside at the heart of who she is as a teacher, her 'unique embodiment' and why she came into teaching in the first place.

In determining to return to St Peters, "it was the only Catholic school in Orchardshire and so I *knew* I had to get in at some point, it was *always* my intention to get in", and informed by her memories of a happy school life and projecting these into the present (Pitt & Britzman, 2003), Angela had expected that the move would secure and affirm her Catholic teacher identity. That is, it would ease the alignment of the personal and professional, bringing family, church and friends closer, practically and emotionally, and would integrate her more fully in her Catholic community (4.3)



Teacher professional identity on moving to St Peters
Adapted from Mockler (2011)

Figure 7.1 Professional identity on moving to St Peters

Angela's changing professional identity on moving to St Peters is investigated using Mockler's framework (Figure 7.1). Although the move did secure greater congruence between the personal and professional dimensions of her teaching identity, there were fresh tensions. Her new 'curriculum' role as Head of Physics did not align strongly with her envisaged career trajectory and identity as a pastoral lead (5.3.2), and as a counterpoint to this, and to recalibrate her professional identity, Angela undertook an additional, temporary pastoral role to cover an absent colleague: however, this acting HoY10 post was not as satisfactory as her earlier pastoral role at Appleyard:

Somebody was off long term sick and it was head of year 10 and we were very different people ...so y'know, I enjoyed it, but not in the same way ...just because, y'know, it wasn't my own.

in this period of transition, I suggest that the 'good girl' surfaces in the narrative and that, positioned in transferential relationships with her old teachers, Angela may have experienced her childhood sense of reliance and vulnerability and struggled to exercise agency (see italic text alongside the personal experience dimension).

The agency model is used to examine the dimensions of these different pastoral roles, including the psychosocial possibilities (see shaded italic text) and the potential for agency at Appleyard (fig.7.2) and St Peters (fig.7.3). At Appleyard, Angela describes the pastoral role as 'her own' and conveys her sense that she felt free to make it so. She describes 'coming up with all sorts of things' suggesting that she was able to make decisions and choices in carrying out her work and to innovate (4.4.2) and in this way, and at the outset at least, Angela would have experienced a sense of agency. Over time, however, she felt increasingly constrained in her ability to draw upon her values and beliefs (iterative dimension) in carrying out the role and in developing the relationships that she desired with students and colleagues, and this is fundamental to bringing about her vision for the

future (projective dimension). In terms of the model, her facility to bring the iterative and the projective dimensions to bear upon the practical-evaluative dimension was limited, and so too her possibilities for working towards her desired future. These disconnects, or the lack of harmony within the 'chordal triad' (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p.972), meant that, over time, Angela was unable to exercise agency in this setting. In the new ecology of St Peters (fig.7.3) the resources available to Angela in the practical-evaluative dimension were very different. Although it was to be expected that her projective goals would be in closer harmony with the ethos of the school, in the day to day the role was not 'her own', and she was not empowered to make choices, changes, or shape this as she might choose, and so she was constrained and her agency was limited.

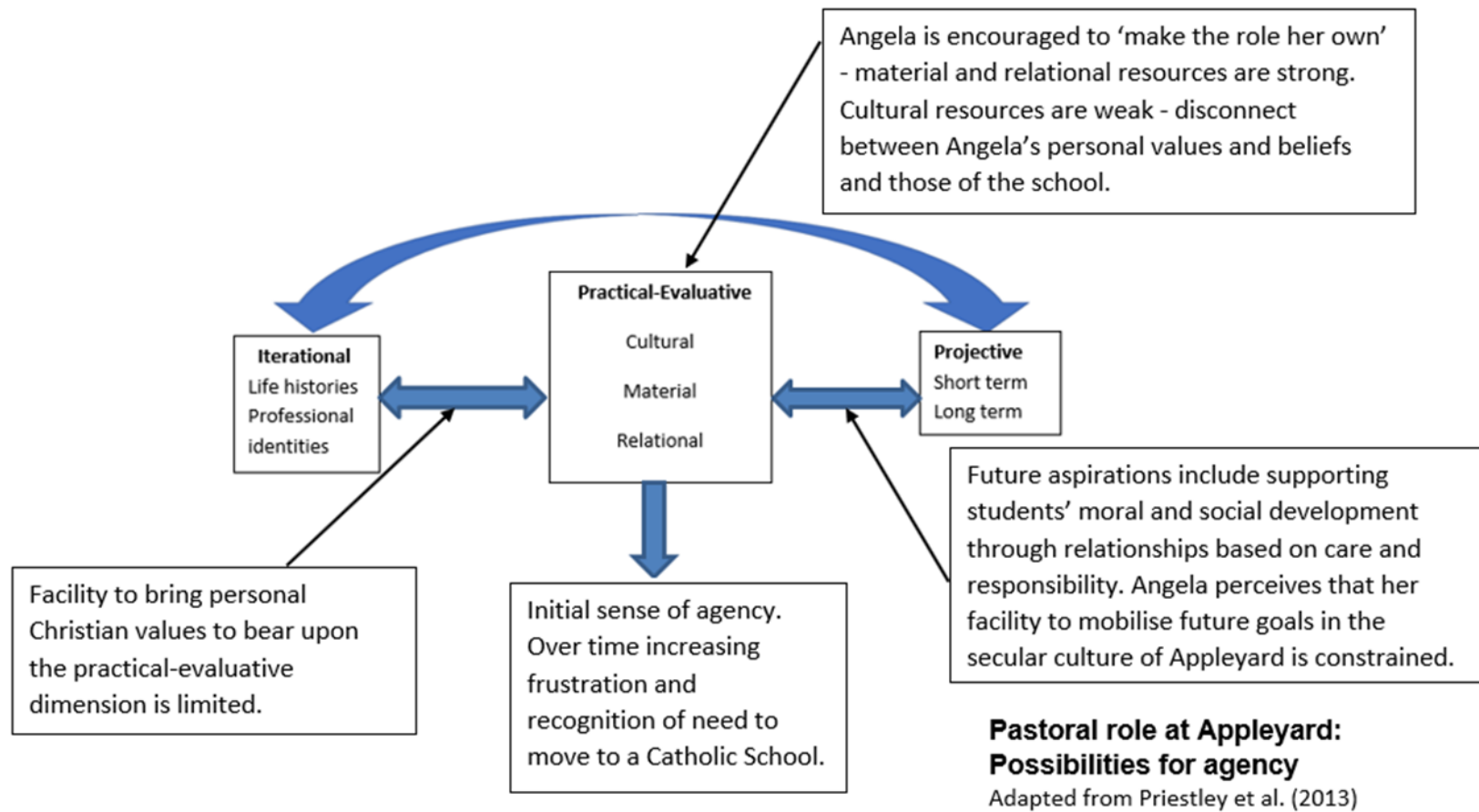


Figure 7.2 Pastoral role at Appleyard

Relational resources here are different. Angela does not feel empowered and trusted as she had felt at Appleyard. Is this the good girl who, on returning to the site of her own education, experiences childhood feelings of dependence in relationships with colleagues who had taught her as a schoolgirl ?

Greater harmony between personal and institutional values. Cultural and material resources strengthened, e.g. daily prayers.

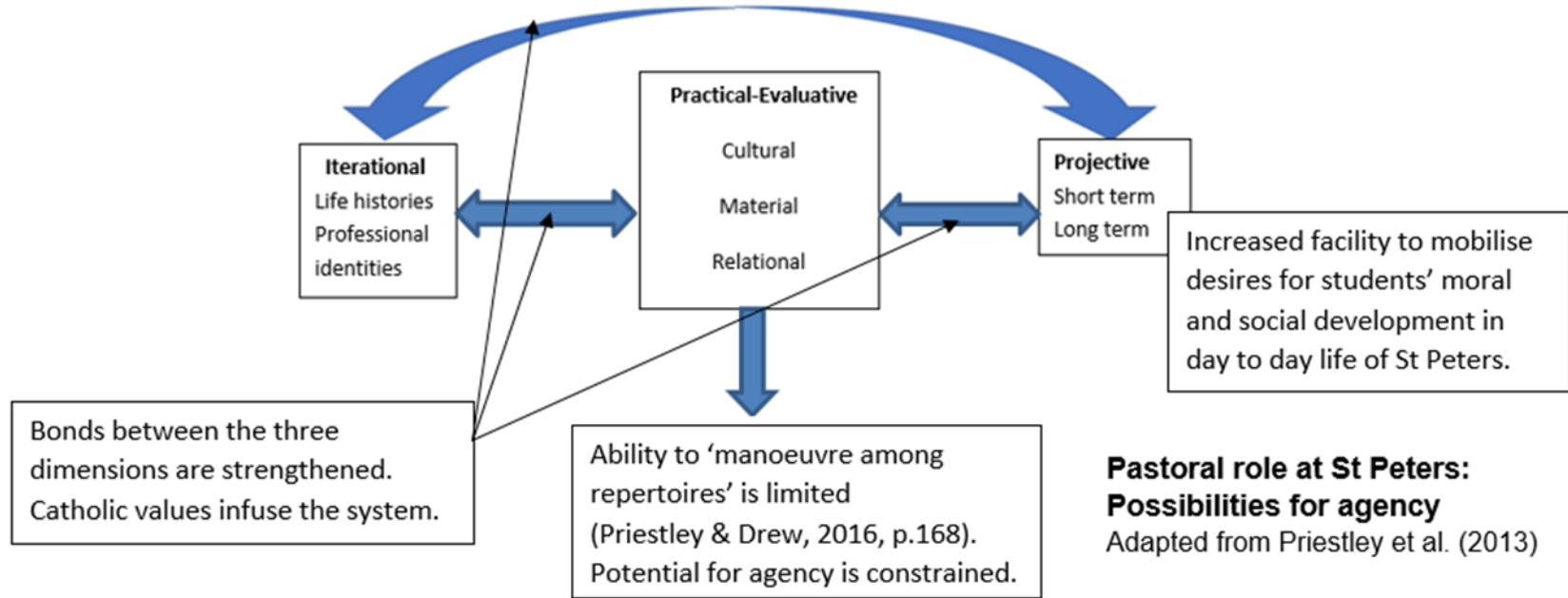


Figure 7.3 Pastoral role at St Peters

7.2.2 'Settled' for some time

The discontinuities and contradictions in Angela's stories about Catholic education and her changing relationship with the Catholic Church suggests the presence of the defended subject (6.2.1), and this is brought into sharp focus in her editing and reworking of her account of choosing Sophie's new school (4.3.1). Here Angela's active construction of the narrative is made visible and she demonstrates how, having weighed up, assessed, and rejected the alternatives, she settled for a version which was most convincing for herself and others (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). In this way she uncovers her recognition that there are different possible truths and tellings of this story, and one version must include the difficulty of managing her feelings about her conflicted relationship with the Church. For Angela not being able to 'take communion' is a proxy for no longer being a practising Catholic; this small story points up the wider, Catholic cultural and societal context, and a more complex story, against which she works hard to defend, about a good girl's fall from grace, personally and professionally.

She doesn't attempt to offer a tidy resolution here and to her daughter's question she responds, 'Yes you're a Catholic'. Further she suggests that she has learned that you can be part of communities other than a Catholic community and, more darkly, that the Catholic community is not a welcoming one when you do not live up to expectations set by the Church for a Catholic life. Tacking back, this understanding resonates and casts fresh light upon her seeming fear that she would never be 'good enough' for a Catholic School (6.1).

Although her account offers little directly about this time, it is a noisy silence. In terms of professional identity, the influence of the Catholic Church would have been pervasive across all three spheres, personal, professional and political. The work to realign these dimensions and assuage the tensions may have been experienced as

a process of 'unbecoming' (Halse, 2010), a letting go of aspects of identity previously core to her subjectivity, even her 'unique embodiment' (Clandinin, 2006).

In terms of agency it is to be expected that the withdrawal of collegiate support, and the loss of face and standing in the community, would have diminished her resources in the practical evaluative dimension. Shaken in her values and beliefs elements of the iterative dimension would have been unmoored and, taken together, this points towards a limited facility for agency at this time, and a fragile and precarious identity for Angela at St Peters (fig.6.1).

If these speculations about this period come close to describing her experiences, it would be understandable that she would be defended against the memory and pain of this and may deny its inner significance. These interpretations lay open possibilities for unearthing the unacceptable realities and the associated psychic longings, desires and needs that these evoke. Gaining insights into what she might be defending against, offers the means to increase understandings of what she is trying to achieve here.

7.3 Transition 2: Assistant Head at All Faiths

7.3.1 Living the values

In Angela's account of her role and her experience of life as an assistant head (5.2), she communicates that the AHs must spearhead the changes demanded in implementing the Head's standards agenda. Although she suggests that she is not wholly unhappy with the required changes to teaching practices and the associated accountability processes; she has had little part in shaping this agenda and, critically, the way these changes are being brought about.

Catholic values and beliefs have shaped Angela's professional and personal life and fuelled her desire to work in a Catholic School, and she expresses her understandings of Catholic communities in terms of the quality of the communication and relationships, underpinned by responsibility and care for others. In thinking about her work with colleagues as 'pastoral care', Angela communicates her values and the way that she wants to do this. However, she must carry out the role as the Head has determined, and in this way her ability to exercise agency in her approach is constrained.

Some stories go beyond the practices themselves and serve to communicate a particular version of the institution and the Headteacher as a leader. Stories about the banning of DVDs (5.2.1) and the Head's 'battle' with a middle leader (5.2.5) demonstrate his intention to secure unquestioning compliance from the staff, including the AHs. For Angela the missing tissues story crystallises the Head's expectations about how interactions with staff should be conducted. In these ways the expected behaviours and emotional stances for the SLs are established and the boundaries are patrolled (Jones, Holmes, Macrae, & Maclure, 2010).

7.3.2 Rewriting identity

This dissonance between the underpinning values in the school discourse, and Angela's personal values and how she wants to work with people, creates friction between all three dimensions, personal, professional and political of her professional identity (Mockler, 2011). Her role is in tension with her personal understandings of the relationships that should be fostered within a Catholic community, and increasingly, she must take responsibility for processes that are in conflict with her values and how she wants to work with her colleagues; for example, the capability procedures which removed the technology teacher, and the coercive practices and culture which led to the English teacher's resignation (5.2.5).

The ecological agency model (Priestley et al., 2015) illuminates Angela's possibilities for agency here (fig.7.4). In the practical-evaluative dimension both her role and her approach has been largely prescribed by the Headteacher and so Angela is constrained in her ability to draw upon her personal values to inform and conduct her work (iterational dimension). Whilst she shares the school's aspirations to raise attainment and secure improved exam results for both school and students, she also nurtures her personal desires about what is important in education. These are communicated in her 'secret stories' (5.2.4) where she sketches a generous teacher who, despite the pressure to get good exam results, understands that relationships are at the heart of this process. Here she communicates her commitment to 'careful' education and relationships (Devine et al., 2011) in which teachers can focus on students' moral and personal development, alongside their academic progress.

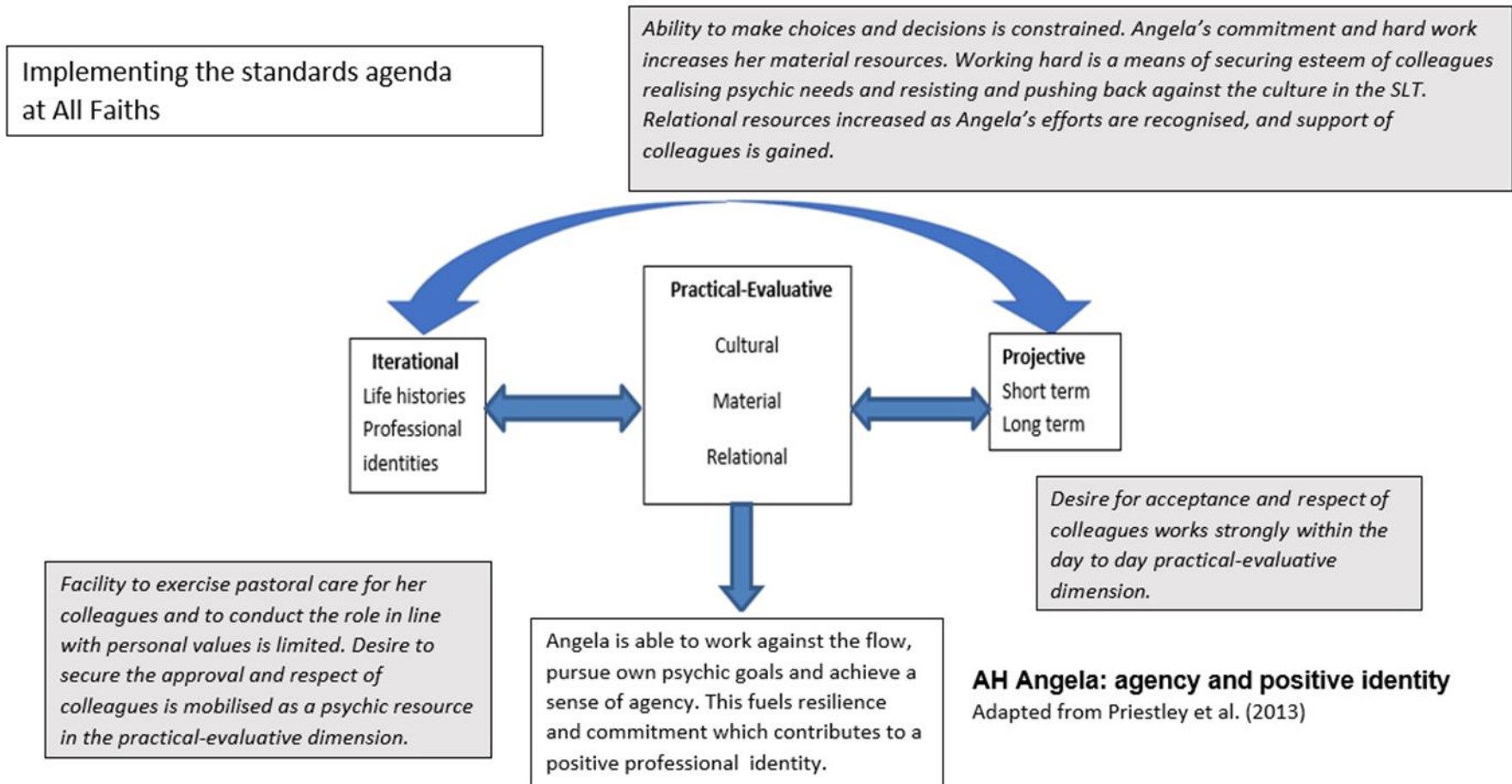


Figure 7.4 AH Angela: Agency and positive identity

For agency to be possible, the iterative and projective dimensions must be enabled to integrate fluidly in the day to day practice. These interpretations suggest a precarious identity with limited potential for agency, yet Angela does not 'implode, explode or walk away' (Nias, 1989, p. 305), and instead finds ways of living, relating and being which enable her to face herself and her colleagues and to go on with things. How does she do so? How does she work to achieve a sense of agency and to sustain a positive identity at this time?

That she is a hardworking, committed and resilient teacher is one of Angela's key narratives. These qualities were recognised by her colleagues and led to her early promotions. Through her key narratives Angela also establishes that she is liked, valued and respected by colleagues. A possible interpretation of her complex and contradictory relationship with work (5.3 and 6.3) suggests that this is a way of securing her colleagues' support, approbation and love, and a means of warding off the threat that they might view her, or her work, unfavourably. By working hard, she defends against this and ensures that nobody can say that she does not work hard and try her best. Is this Angela the good girl who wants to please, and for whom hard work is a defence against the unbearable memory and shame of disappointing her colleagues in the past, and her fear of doing so again? (6.3). These desires are valuable resources in the practical-evaluative dimension enabling her to push back against the Head's constraining agenda and to bring her own psychic agenda into play. In the projective dimension she seeks to sustain the respect of her colleagues, and to achieve this she works ever harder. In doing so she pursues her own goals and exercises her agency.

7.3.3 Affect, emotional labour and fabrication

To live and embody the values of the school, Angela must manage the tensions within her professional identity as she enacts and instantiates the senior leadership role. In doing so she must disguise conflicting feelings and this requires her emotional labour (Hochschild, 2012). There are many areas in which Angela may have to hide personal feelings and effect emotions other than those she is experiencing; for example, in relating the technology teacher's story (5.2.1) she summons the ways in which things were different in teaching 'years ago' and not necessarily worse. Although she maintains firmly that accountability has improved teaching, she places this alongside her knowledge that student attainment has not improved as might be expected, and questions what this might mean. Such feelings are in tension with her AH role and must be suppressed and kept from view, and this work is emotional labour.

Aspects of the school improvement work (5.2.2) involve implementing standardised practices which may require the teacher to perform or fabricate their teacher selves (Ball, 1997) and here Angela must also fabricate a senior leader self. This joint fabrication is evident in her discussions with HoDs about data and students' progress and in her description of learning walks and book trawls. The process of fabrication involves emotional labour; this acts back to produce practices which must be sustained, and so the demand for emotional labour increases further (Ball, 2000).

There is little support for the SLs in their roles (5.2.3) and Angela seems to assume the burden of feeling responsible and acting accordingly. Broaching a discussion within the SLT about peer support would risk the possibility of looking like she could not cope, and in the current fragile context and psychically, this is not an option. For Angela, coping and getting on with things is one of her key personal narratives, and

she must keep this safe and defend against the possibility that she is struggling to manage aspects of her role.

Angela does not talk about emotional work, indeed, her oblique and humorous story about a difficult meeting with a HoD (5.2.3) is a rare insight into the emotional demands of her role. She talks instead about work which is 'time consuming and exhausting', as described in the story about working with the Head of English (5.2.5). Her tone and language here convey the burden of responsibility and the toll of work, which is neither described nor recognised in her role, and does not weigh in her workload.

Work is a contradictory and defended arena for Angela (6.3.1) and she describes her struggle, at times, to reconcile work and family life; to stop work, which she enjoys, to spend time with her family, which of course, she wants to do (5.3.1). Further she connects the 'responsibility' of the work and the way that this is constantly "in her head" (6.3.2), and points to these factors in affirming her current determination to not become a Headteacher. Whilst the volume of work is emphasised, what is curiously absent is Angela's recognition of the toll of working in a regime which denies the emotion and emotional labour involved in her role, which drives anxieties underground and increases her concerns and feelings of guilt about missing out on family life (Sachs & Blackmore, 1998). The ever present 'work in her head' demands her attention and, perhaps worst of all, makes her less emotionally available for her family, and it is this unbearable knowledge and understanding against which she must actively defend herself.

Pastoral work with students or staff is responsibility laden (6.3.2). Has Angela's experience of working with the staff in this way led to a desire to 'pull back', like Little's 'reform enthusiasts' (1996, p. 346)? In embracing the new pastoral role is

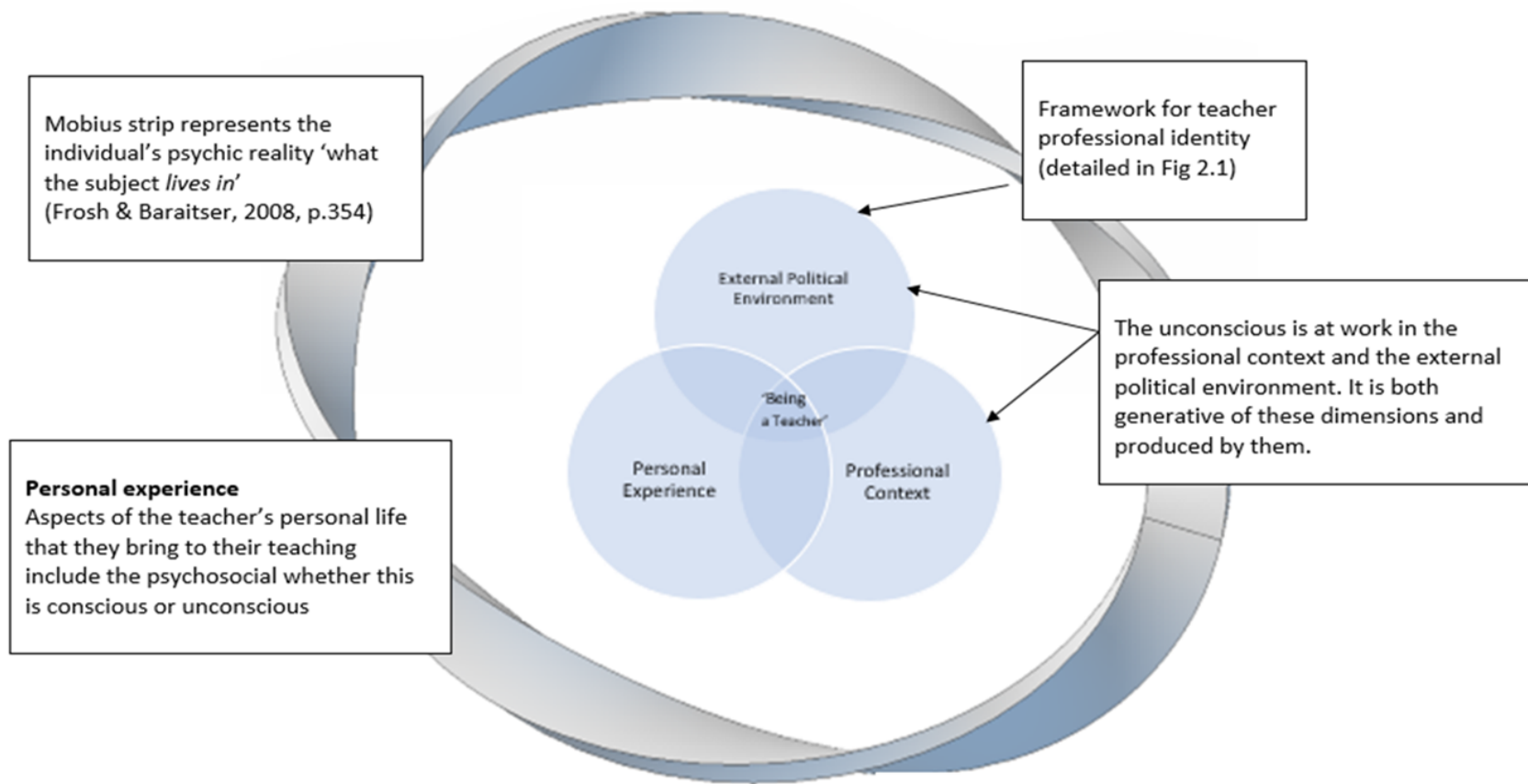
she seeking to relinquish some of this emotional load which may have become an insupportable burden?

7.4 Psychosocial models

The discussion of Angela's changing professional identity and agency highlight the strengths and limitations of the models (figs 7.1-7.4). Although these serve well in describing and mapping the sociocultural dimensions of situations, psychosocial considerations are not drawn into focus. In making sense of Angela's lived experience, different questions have been brought to bear: Why does she make the choices that she does? What is she trying to achieve in doing so? (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008; Frosh et al., 2003). To address such concerns, I propose flexing the models in ways which encourage psychosocial explorations.

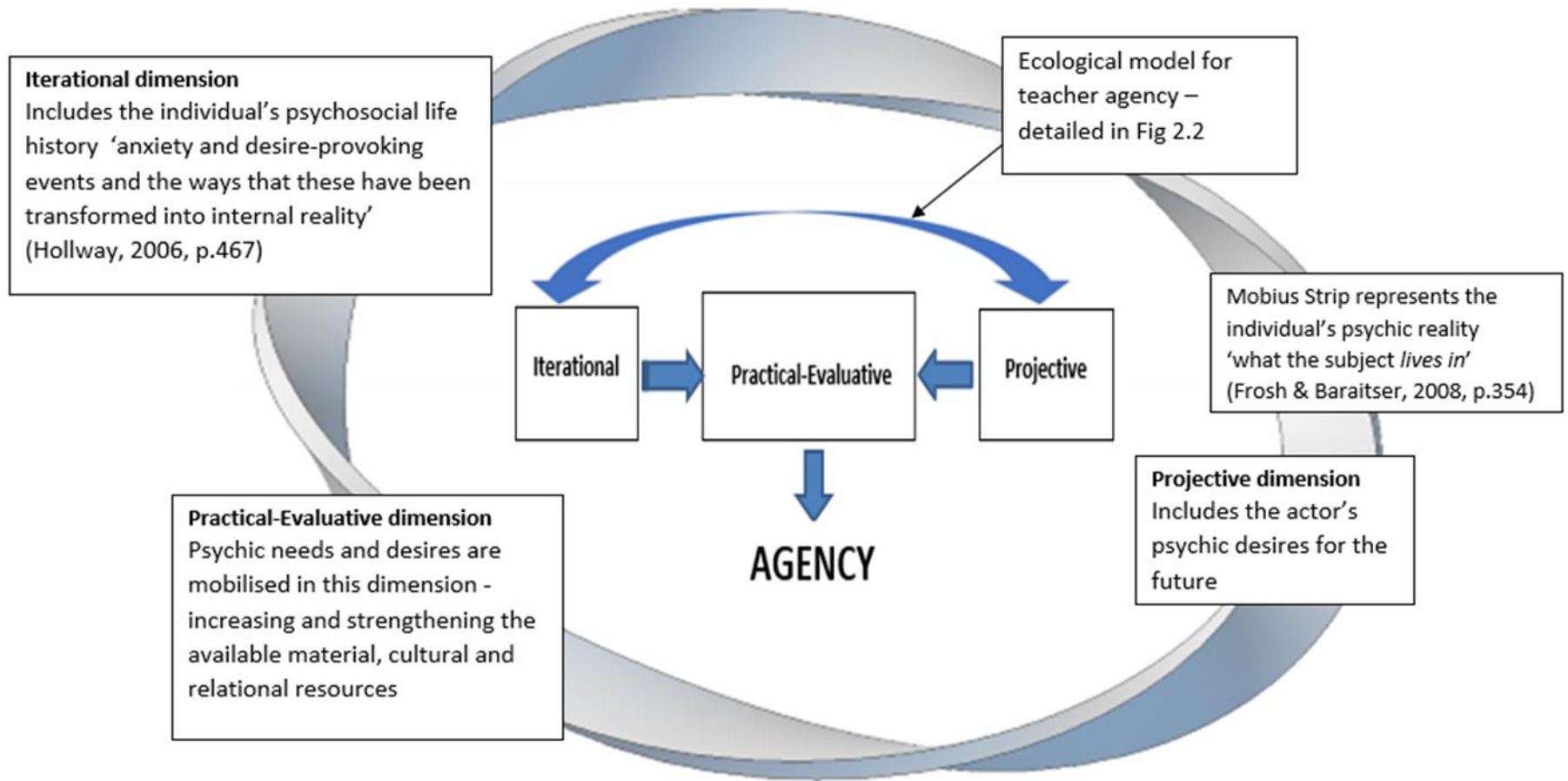
Although both models emphasise the personal, that is, who the teacher is and that of themselves which they bring to teaching, neither explicitly pay attention to what the teacher brings unconsciously to the setting. Readings of Angela's narrative from the perspective of the defended self point towards ways that unconscious processes are at work, alongside the conscious, in the social and cultural realms, and these are both 'generated by these processes and generative of its consequences' (Frosh et al., 2003, p.42). To construct the models more fully, this relationship must be amplified.

Frosh and Barrister (2008) offer the non-orientable Moebius Strip as a metaphor for the individual's 'psychic reality' (2.4.4), 'neither topside nor underside, but flowing' (p.349), it underscores the fluidity of the relationship between the conscious and unconscious. In Figures 7.5 and 7.6 identity and agency are 'nested' within the Moebius Strip to represent the activities as part of the individual's psychic reality and in both models the Moebius strip should be imagined flowing through the sociocultural processes, endlessly interweaving in all dimensions.



Teacher professional identity: a psychosocial model
Adapted from Mockler (2011) and Frosh & Baraitser (2008)

Figure 7.5 Teacher professional identity: a psychosocial model



Teacher agency: a psychosocial model
Adapted from Priestley et al.(2013) and Frosh & Baraitser (2008)

Figure 7.6 Teacher agency: a psychosocial model

Developing the models in this way is a prompt to the research(er) to construct a psychosocial subject; an invitation to avoid the dualism of thinking in terms of either the conscious or unconscious, and to instead allow ideas to flow freely and open up to new ways of seeing.

Positioning agency within the individual's psychic reality is a retreat from the model's ecological and structural focus. It connects more strongly with Ruti's (2009) psychoanalytic perspective, which encourages a move away from a view of agency as 'a function of heroic feats of self-actualisation...to enable us to overcome the constraints of our positionality', to one which emphasises its connection to 'our uniquely human capacity to imaginatively play with (and within) the possibilities presented by the world' (p.7). This perspective highlights the individual's possibility for achieving a sense of agency through engaging creatively with their circumstances and actively shaping these in ways which are meaningful to them. Such agency can help people to live their lives fully and even to know 'what in our daily lives is worth our care and solicitude' (Ruti, 2009, p.7). These psychosocial models prompt thinking about how this spark of agency is ignited for an individual in their setting, and what they are trying to achieve in their lives.

7.5 Transition 3: Looking forward - new opportunities

The planned changes to the pastoral system (5.3.2) offered fresh opportunities and these, combined with the end of year timing of the research interview, created a shift in the tone and telling. An optimistic, agentic voice emerged in the narrative conveying an invigorated Angela looking forward to her new role and its fresh potential opportunities (Chase, 2008).

The reconfiguration of the pastoral roles presented a challenge to Angela's values and beliefs, but also held out a lifeline to offload the weight of pastoral care and to care for herself. Angela's telling suggests that, in embracing these plans, she is 'pushing back' and resisting the responsibility and burden of this wearing work. These (re)positionings and resistances offer a glimpse into Angela's investments and the potential gains to be secured, and these are explored in the following sections.

7.5.1 Predictability versus uncertainty

In summarizing her changed feelings about pastoral work Angela suggests that whilst the 'key stage stuff' is easy, it is 'less predictable' and this 'unpredictability' makes it less rewarding (5.3.2). Being a resilient teacher is a preferred identity for Angela and this is predicated upon predictability. Manageable work is 'predictable', and therefore 'easy', and both manageability and predictability bespeak certainty, which is a highly desirable feature of school life. For Britzman (2009) school life is an encounter with an 'avalanche of certainty' (p.1) and it is so constructed to defend students and teachers against the anxiety of the unknown and the unknowable of the 'pedagogic encounter' (p.xi). The bedrock of the SL's work, that is, the 'delivery' of their school's standards agenda, is underpinned by the assumption that teachers are in control of what goes on in their classrooms, and that this work is predictable

and manageable. Indeed performativity itself, a 'disciplinary technology that uses judgements and comparisons against what is seen as efficient as a means of control' (Perryman, 2009, p.617), requires that the work of schools and teachers is predictable and measurable. It is by these means that a culture of performativity is sustained and for this reason that the very idea of uncertainty poses an unbearable challenge (Bibby, 2011).

Pastoral work is uncertain; it cannot be readily managed and controlled and with the addition of the pastoral care of staff, may have become untenable. In asserting that she is 'not responsible for the whole school', is it this threat of uncertainty against which Angela needs to defend herself?

7.5.2 An agentic self

Angela's new role involves developing a school wide intervention programme to raise attainment; this new programme will identify the student's 'areas of weakness' and map these against a package of activities and resources. Angela's expectations for the programme align strongly with her personal story about work, where she has expressed her approach and motivations in terms of 'always looking for *what I could do to make it better* which would involve *some sort of challenge*' (5.3.1), and feels promising because it holds out possibilities for improving things for both students and teachers, and also for meeting Angela's personal needs and desires.

So, this is what they are weak at
So this is what they need,
We don't need to do any analysis ourselves
We don't need to find the intervention
It's already there
So there are things to support us

Angela's rhythmic, pacey delivery and her energetic emphasis and repetition of 'this is what they...' and 'we don't need to...', links problem with solution, beating out a message which communicates her investment in this work and her anticipation of its

value. Her 'things to support us' encompasses both her desire to support her colleagues, and her personal need to be supported in doing this. Focused on student attainment the work will contribute to helping students to 'improve their life chances'; at the same time, these 'lovely resources' will, Angela believes, help teachers 'to work smarter' and make their lives easier. Ready matched to students' needs, these resources will be something concrete and helpful to bring to those half termly discussions about students' progress. She is committed to believing that they will help students and will also support her work with colleagues, and she imagines future conversations in which, 'why haven't they made progress and what are you doing about it?' will be replaced with 'and here is something you can use'.

The task of designing and implementing this programme is suffused with performativity; the teacher is positioned as the 'deliverer' of a 'teacher proof' (Taylor, 2013) programme, whose systematicity is so constructed to offer an escape from the anxiety arising from the 'unpredictableness' of teaching, not knowing what students' needs are, or how they could be met (Bibby, 2011).

7.5.3 Managerialism, leaderism and agency

The terms in which Angela advocates the merits of her intervention programme are deprofessionalising in their construction of teachers' work and permeated with the 'common sense' of performativity (Ball, 2003), but still, Angela seemed to welcome this new opportunity. Is this the irresistible lure of leadership, with its implicit offer of empowerment and agency, helping to make these managerialist elements palatable? (Hall, 2013a, 2013b). Angela too has autonomy only within the prescribed limits of the Heads' agenda; however, at this time, the new work was motivating and she conveyed the spark of agency vital in promoting a positive professional identity and the associated beneficial elements which flow from this: sustained commitment, resilience and a sense of efficacy (Day et al., 2006).

Across the narrative there are further examples of managerialist language and thinking. Angela described the AH work as 'delivering change' and she expresses her work with colleagues in terms of wanting to 'get the staff on board', which points towards a commitment to bringing people round to a desired way of thinking, rather than recognising the individuals and their positions. Her reference to staff 'bringing their own baggage' summons something unwieldy which needs to be discarded, including outmoded notions about schools and teaching. In the story about the line management of the English HoD (5.2.5), despite some ambivalence and unease, Angela defends the Head's 'battle' because, on balance, it has achieved the best outcome for the school. If she harbours reservations about the Head's coercive leadership and its potentially toxic effects, she still draws on the notion of necessity to normalise a range of managerialist activities, including authoritarian leadership, towards the goal of raising standards.

The new pastoral role seems to hold out the desirable prospect of being more 'manageable', 'predictable' and 'stable'. In sharp relief, Angela's traditional pastoral role involved work with no boundaries and demanded unlimited resources from someone for whom being a caring teacher is a preferred identity (A. Hargreaves, 1998; Nias, 1997). Care itself can neither be readily accounted for or measured, and so it is hidden work where it is difficult to assess and to demonstrate one's success. Angela's new raising attainment role will be more quantifiable and more amenable to measurement and she welcomes this; moreover, she frames her agency within this managerialist context. She accredits the improvements in teaching to increased accountability and standardisation and, in a similar way here, appears to embrace both the new work, and the accompanying sense of control that the delineation of her responsibilities will offer (Stone-Johnson, 2014). Her perspective on what it means to be a successful leader, and therefore her own professional identity, is

shaped by these accountability discourses and this repositioning is the 'imprint of the structure of accountability' (Buchanan, 2015, p.712) on her understanding of her work. Angela is a Generation X teacher whose ideas about professionalism do not necessarily map onto those of older generations like Boomers, upon which much of the early literature on teaching lives and careers is based (Stone-Johnson, 2014). There is some evidence that younger teachers, particularly those entering the profession currently, are more able to positively integrate elements of performativity, for example, standardisation, into their work. Whilst eschewing the demands of accountability in terms of its impact on their students, and the implications for the way that they must work, some teachers are comfortable with using the outputs to measure and affirm their own work (Buchanan, 2015; Wilkins, 2011). Indeed, it is argued that the positive benefit of accountability processes is that they clarify and make expectations more visible and so provide a means of assessing success (Sachs & Mockler, 2012). For some teachers the facility to measure their work can make them feel more confident and efficacious (at least when the outputs are positive and reflect well on their work and efforts), and by these means their sense of agency may be enhanced. For such reasons some teachers, like Angela, may readily integrate aspects of managerialism into their practices and these can make ideas around agency more complicated.

Angela's optimism in looking ahead is underpinned by her anticipation that she will be more agentic in this new role, and this is explored using the psychosocial model for agency (see Figure 7.7).

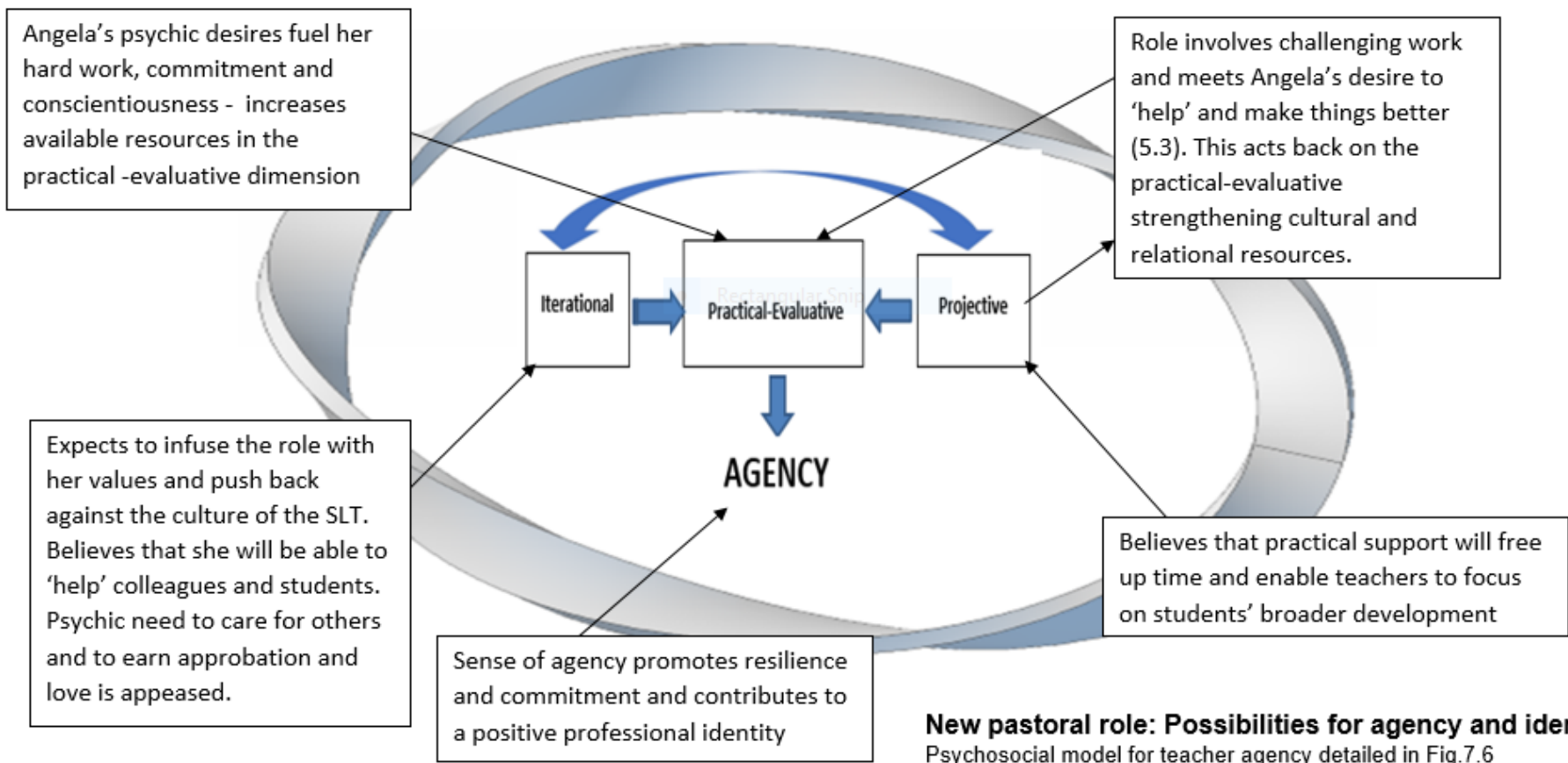


Figure 7.7 New pastoral role: Possibilities for agency and identity

In the day to day setting (practical-evaluative dimension) Angela has a range of 'lovely resources' to use with students and teachers and she also has the support and permission of the Head to take a lead in raising attainment; in this way there feels to be a real possibility of shaping the role and 'making it her own', as she described her experience in her first and most enjoyable HoY7 pastoral role (4.4.2). She anticipates being able to make choices about the work and the way she does this and this potential ability to 'manoeuvre among repertoires' (Priestley & Drew, 2016, p.168) contrasts favourably with her experience of her school improvement work thus far. Working with colleagues in this way, she believes that she will secure their support for her and her efforts, further increasing her resources in the evaluative dimension. In addition, she brings her psychic resources which motivate her desire to work hard to help her colleagues and to sustain their continuing approbation. That her work is underpinned by her guiding beliefs is a preferred identity for Angela, and I suggest that the sense of anticipated agency communicated here arises from her hope and expectation that she will be able to infuse the role with her values. In terms of her desired goals (projective dimension), she draws upon her 'secret stories' of school and imagines teachers, 'freed up' by these new resources, focusing on their relationships with their students. In this way Angela believes that the students' social and emotional development will be supported, alongside the goal of increasing school attainment. Moreover, 'helping' in this way appeases Angela's desire to please and to be valued and appreciated by her colleagues, and in her personal accounting, this somehow offsets times when she, or her work, has caused people to feel disappointed and let down (by her); the threat of which looms ever large in her AH role.

Angela anticipates the integration of this standardised programme positively and imagines an improved future for both the students and the staff. Despite the constraints of working within the Head's prescribed agenda, this energising vision

provides the spark of agency which enables Angela to generate personal meaning and in this way she counters and resists the prevailing, dominant technicist discourses of the school (Moore, 2004; Ruti, 2009).

7.5.4 Resistance and care of self

Peck and Tickle (2002) argue that neoliberalism is both 'out there' and 'in here' (p.383). It permeates people and institutions and, in resisting the flow of events, the individual must push back against this intrusion at the level of their subjectivity.

In Angela's regular affirmation that she doesn't have a plan, professional or personal, she rejects the linear career trope (Munro, 1998) and pushes back against institutional expectations. On a further level, is it possible that she is resisting her Headteacher and the power that she imagines he might exert in terms of her career? Roger may have been the gatekeeper and influential in shaping Angela's career prospects in the past, and so this may be a Freudian 'new edition of an old conflict' (Pitt & Britzman, 2003) in which Angela projects past feelings from her relationship with her old Headteacher Roger, into her present day relationship with Andrew.

Another example of resistance can be seen in Angela's refusal to reserve her weekends for family time. In persistently working over the weekend and ignoring the Head's directive she resists his authority and practices in the SLT and, on a weekly basis, draws attention to the workload situation and his failure to manage this.

From this perspective, I interpret Angela's story about her AH colleague returning to work (5.1) as one offered to communicate that she is gaining influence with Andrew and gently shifting the power relations between them. It is a story of her success in resisting his management approach and demonstrating the potential of her alternative and preferred strategies. Here she shows him that being flexible,

responding to individual's needs and trusting them, is powerful and productive. In this way she gently disrupts Andrew's management and demonstrates her power in assessing and managing the situation well. Although this is a small story, it points up the influence that Angela is beginning to exert and her potential for greater influence in future.

Although Angela accepts and integrates some elements of standardisation and managerialism positively, her narrative also points to ways that she resists practices which impact negatively on how she feels about herself, and how she can be in her role. Such resistances are expressed in feelings and experiences and shared in stories about times when things worked differently, for example, the technology teacher's story and the use of the DVD (5.2.1). In these contexts Angela can position herself safely, and her memories of other times, places and practices disrupt the 'common sense' of current everyday routines.

Such material is the stuff of Angela's 'secret stories' and the reworking of these communally with friends, away from school, is an important source of support (5.2.4). It is also a valuable means of resisting particular ways of thinking and working and nurturing her facility to think, feel and remember differently, and in this way Angela takes care of herself (Ball & Olmedo, 2013).

7.6 Conclusion

Focusing on three key transitions, this chapter interleaves sociocultural and psychosocial perspectives with the literature to address RQ3 and proffers a new story of Angela's lived experience of her teaching life at this time.

RQ3 How might insights into Angela's sensemaking illuminate the ways that she responds to tensions between her role and her identity?

The sociocultural models for identity and agency are further developed to recognise a psychosocial subject and to promote a psychosocial lens in developing understandings. Drawing lightly on such interpretations I propose Angela, the good schoolgirl, who falls in love and falls from grace, and who wrestles with the tensions between her personal guiding beliefs and values, and the institutional values and ideology of the school and the Catholic Church. The lens of the defended self points towards suppressed experiences, conscious and unconscious, which give rise to the psychic desires that Angela strives to realise in the day to day of her teaching life. Taken together, these perspectives offer fresh, unfolding stories of identity, agency and resistance.

In managing the dissonance between her role and her identity, Angela is not simply accommodating, or endlessly adjusting, the personal, political and professional dimensions of her identity to the 'flow of performativities' (Ball, 2000, p.2) in her professional life, rather she works purposefully to bring role and identity together in ways which also appease and satisfy her psychic needs and longings. Striving to manage day to day what she must do, and how she feels about this, Angela brings her 'individualized cocktail of beliefs, behaviours and accounting practices' (Frosh et al., 2003, p.41) to bear in actively positioning herself. In selecting her position, from those available, she fulfils her own purposes and authors the current version of her personal story; she makes sense of her situation in ways which are personally meaningful and finds new locations of comfort (Linde, 1993). This story of one AH working actively in crafting her narrative and identity in ways which enable her to go on with things positively, is a counterpoint to claims that teachers are subject to change, and that teaching identities are being simply (re)written by neoliberalism.

Thinking about Angela's story in this way illuminates the value of raising different questions in new spaces; shifting from a focus on, What is she doing and what is making her behave like this? to one which asks instead, What might she be trying to

accomplish here? (Ochberg, 1994). Although behaviours and responses might appear similar, motivations for individuals are very different because each lives in their own psychic reality created by individual life histories of anxiety and desire provoking life events, and the ways that these have been internalised (Frosh et al., 2003; Hollway, 2006). Recognising this, even if all of it cannot be known, is an important part of understanding who the teacher is and, in so doing, to making sense of their lived experiences.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

8.1 What does the study offer?

Using data from one teacher's narrative, the study offers a story of assistant head Angela and the contradictions and tensions of a teaching life in the senior leadership team of the new All Faiths Academy. Through her professional stories over time, Angela's narrative offers insights into her personal struggle to enact her role as expected and to align this with her ways of living, being and relating as a teacher. This story of her continuing efforts to bring and hold her role and identity together, and the ways that she makes sense of this in her personal and professional life, is her lived experience of teaching.

The study sets out the broad features of the education system since 2010 and the values, contradictions and tensions at work here. These permeate school cultures and individuals and are received and refracted in very different ways, producing a myriad of personal and institutional responses.

Angela's unfolding story invites a consideration of the interplay between social and cultural influences and the personal life history of anxiety provoking experience in making sense of a teaching life. It is an argument for reading teachers' stories as a conduit to unearthing the reasons why a person might take up the subject positions they do. Recognising that choices and behaviours connect to the individual's desires and needs, and that individuals are invested in the choices they make and their positionings, creates an agentic subject who is purposely shaping their life in ways which are personally meaningful (Ruti, 2009).

Much recent writing on educational systems is from a neoliberal perspective in which the critical model is the neoliberal school peopled with faceless teachers, shaped by performative discourses, compliant, controlled and risk averse

(Sachs & Mockler, 2012). This small study is a counterpoint to such essentialising notions of the teachers' experience offering a more complex and provisional story of teachers and their work at this time.

The study proposes the further development of the sociocultural models for teacher identity and agency (Mockler, 2011; Priestley et al., 2013, 2015) to offer psychosocial conceptualisations (7.4). These encourage a psychosocial reading of data and prompt the researcher to be open to alternative possibilities and interpretations.

8.2 Study contribution

8.2.1 Literature and research

Drawing upon insights from one teacher's narrative and from a psychosocial perspective, the study adds a small story to a currently limited collection of work on the lived experiences of contemporary teachers in the current reform context.

It contributes to the literature on the self-improving school-led system, which has thus far been strongly focused on new structures and relationships between organisations in the changing landscape, and in which teachers, if they appear at all, are too often represented as faceless, interchangeable entities.

The study contributes to the wider literature on teachers' careers and teaching lives and teachers' professional identity and agency. It builds on influential work in understanding teachers' responses to reform (Moore, 2006; Moore et al., 2002); in particular the later work, which highlights the importance of recognising that teachers' continuing (re)positionings is in relation to both the contingencies of their day to day work, and 'to the demands of their inner selves' (Moore, 2006, p.501) and the role of desire here. My study takes a similar theoretical starting point but, unlike Moore, my reading of teachers' stories draws upon the perspective of the 'defended

self' and this is a fresh approach. The work also responds to the research agenda set out by Hall and McGinity (2015) in which the authors argue for the importance of probing resistance in places (and times) of apparent compliance.

The study makes a further small contribution to knowledge in drawing together the work of Bateson on humour (1952; 1972) with Watson and Drew (2017) on the use of play frames. Although light touch and preliminary, it points the way to further analysis of play frames as a means of exerting influence and exercising leadership in team meetings, which has potential in exploring the development of novice senior leadership teaching identities. In this way the study works at the join between psychotherapeutic approaches and teacher identity and so draws into focus two areas of scholarship and research that have not generally been connected hitherto.

8.2.2 'Some teachers adapt, others don't: end of'

How might I now respond to my friend John, the ex-primary Head, whose reflections were a stimulus to my early thinking? (1.3) In investigating Angela's lived experience, I work to show the underside of her narrative and offer a story about how and why she might position herself as she does and what she might be trying to achieve in doing so. From this coign of vantage, rather than endlessly 'adapting', accommodating and adjusting to change, Angela is actively relocating and repositioning herself in ways which enable her to go on with things positively. This is a process which is suffused with agency and in which the individual is active in creating meaning and shaping her life in ways that are possible and meaningful.

The work shows that there is value in investigating the experiences of teachers who appeared to be 'adapting', and that insights into the ways that different teachers position themselves, in changing settings and contexts, holds out possibilities for those who 'don't adapt' and how they might be supported in staying in the profession.

8.3 Implications of the work for future practice

8.3.1 Understanding self and understanding others

A teacher's understanding of others can only be as deep as the wisdom he [*sic*] possesses when he looks inward upon himself and the more genuinely he seeks to face the problems of his own life, the more he will be able to realise his kinship with others.

(Jerslid, 1955, p.83)

For each individual the starting point must be the self and a focus on gaining greater understanding of one's own subjectivity and from here, ways can be opened towards fresh possibilities in relationships with colleagues. Moving from work on the self, school leaders have the potential to develop greater compassion, self empathy, and empathy towards their colleagues. This can deepen their appreciation of the complexity of individuals' responses to their circumstances, and their understandings of the implications for the ways they need to work with colleagues, particularly in rapidly changing settings.

How might this be achieved? My proposal here is not that the teacher should undertake psychoanalysis, although a number of authors have argued for the benefits of this in the relational work of teaching (Britzman, 2009; Freud, 1974; Jerslid, 1955; Moore, 2004). Indeed, whilst it is widely acknowledged that more is transferred in the act of teaching than the material taught, there is great reluctance to admit the presence of the teacher's unconscious world (Britzman, 2009). In contemporary school environments where the quest for control and predictability drives much of the day to day business of the teaching life, the notion that something unknown or repressed could be at play is deeply unsettling (Bibby, 2011; Britzman, 2003). The study draws lightly on Freud's ideas; that the setting of the classroom and the school invites transference; and the possibility of 'new editions of old conflicts' in teacher-student and teacher-teacher relations (Britzman & Pitt, 1996; Freud, 1974). In these situations, the greater the individual's

self-understanding and cognisance of what they 'bring', the greater their potential for making sense of themselves and their interactions (Moore, 2004; Moore et al., 2002). For Angela, a recognition, or a deeper appreciation, of the ways that her personal desires, needs and longings are working in the day to day and in her relationships, could sensitise her to these possibilities; strengthening her personal resources and strategies for relational work. Building upon this personal work, she would be better positioned to recognise that her colleagues also have individual agendas impelled by their own psychic needs and desires, and the need to make sense of everyday behaviours and interactions in terms of those personal agendas and what the individual is trying to achieve. This might involve, for example, viewing small resistances not simply as difficulties to 'get past', but in terms of the individual's personal ways of 'refusing the mundane' (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p.94) and expressions of what is at stake for them (Frosh et al., 2003). Whilst this does not obviate the need to change practices and to manage these processes, it offers the possibility of approaching these in ways which are motivated by care and responsibility, for colleagues and the broader social and moral purposes of education: both of which will better serve individuals and school cultures in the long term.

For school leaders, such approaches might involve rethinking the 'teacher's baggage'; moving on from negative conjurings of this as unwieldy and unnecessary stuff from the past and encouraging instead a perspective in which this is material to be productively 'unpacked' in making sense of a changing environment: so enabling more creative responses to the present, and the future, and one's place within it.

8.3.2 Teacher formation and continuing development

In talking about her experiences in school and of professional development for senior leaders, Angela's revelatory "*never is it about the people*", highlights the construction of the SL role in terms which flatten the importance of the relational in this work. Here she underscores both the gaps in the provision, and in her own professional knowledge and understanding, and points up the need for leadership programmes to acknowledge and address this aspect explicitly. This appeal resonates with broader concerns that teachers continue to need tailored CPD approaches, across all PLPs, throughout their teaching careers, which enable them to reflect upon and make sense of their changing subjectivities (Day et al., 2006).

At All Faiths, there are few spaces to talk freely and safely and Angela swaps 'secret stories' with trusted teacher friends, away from school, where she can openly share understandings about the purposes of education beyond the standards agenda, and push back (gently) against her own practices and those of her setting. For different people this work might be undertaken in different ways in different locations; for some, writing may provide a means to express and work through doubts and this could arise in Master's or Doctoral research, or in exchanges with teacher colleagues in blogs and on Twitter; for others, potential spaces might include working in political forums, or engaging in online discussions (Ball & Olmedo, 2013). This work is challenging because it requires that individuals go beyond rejecting what is happening outside and look inwards to confront their own practices and routine ways of being (Ball in Kneyber, 2016). Such work may be undertaken through self-study research in which the teacher's voice is encouraged and their experiences, perspectives and concerns are brought to the fore (Colucci-Gray & Darling-McQuistan, 2018).

The study demonstrates the value of using teacher professional identity in making sense of the teacher's experience and self in her changing contexts, day to day and over a career. Moreover, it strengthens the case for embedding a focus on changing professional identity in ITE and as part of teachers' CPD across teaching careers (Buchanan, 2015; Mockler, 2011). This continued focus on changing professional identity would be a means by which teachers might approach the work of resisting discourses and practices in their settings, and within themselves, which constrain their ways of being in the classroom.

8.3.3 Narrative inquiry and researcher training

I have highlighted my personal gains in undertaking this narrative inquiry in my reflective statement and I believe that the practices developed in narrative research have much to offer researchers in all methodologies working at the interface between policy and practice; for example, the strengthening and attention to listening skills emphasised in narrative research is powerful, necessary and highly transferable (Chase, 2003). The inclusion of narrative research in the training of researchers is a means of broadening understandings of what research can be, the questions it can address and the contribution it can make (Colucci-Gray & Darling-McQuistan, 2018). Moreover, narrative research stimulates the sparking of connections between the individual's story and the lives of others, prompting people to reconsider and reconstruct their own experiences in ways which are personally meaningful. I hope that this research will contribute to demonstrating the value and the potential of such approaches and in this way provide a model for narrative inquiry which offers inspiration to future researchers in narrative methodologies and more widely.

8.3.4 Creating spaces for collaborative work: a potential model

Inspiration for this work and how it might be approached is drawn from research on developing student teachers as critical, questioning and reforming educators (Cochran-Smith, 1991). This work involved regular meetings of university teacher educators and their school based colleagues, alongside the student teachers, to work together on problems arising from their work and practices within their shared setting. The problems were generated from issues in learning and teaching and comprised an approachable question posed 'in search of a solution, or at least action' (Cochran-Smith, 1991, p.299), alongside the wider 'dilemmas of teaching' (p.296) within the current structures, and within which the problem was nested. The intention of the work was to 'intensify' (p.284) the opportunities for the students' learning.

In this collaborative resonance approach agreed expectations and ways of working were established for the workshops; this included a shared understanding that the purpose was to grapple with the problem collaboratively, and not to produce an identified outcome, or consensus; further, that offering views which were both contradictory and critical was permissible here, and even encouraged. The workshop environment was one in which different perspectives were welcome and valued, and in which all parties recognised that their problems may not have a solution. In this way the workshops established a culture of working as co-learners on problems and showed that the possibility for change arose from this collaborative endeavour undertaken in the setting. The process uncovered the work of teaching as a purposeful intellectual, collaborative activity and whilst this was important for student teachers being inducted into the profession, it also brought other participants back, as needed, to seeing their work and themselves in this way.

The distinctive features and underpinnings of collaborative resonance are transferable and could readily be adapted to establish school-based collaboratives. Such groups and spaces could encourage and facilitate the sharing of experience and so support teachers' work in confronting and resisting their practices and taking care of themselves. However, in cultures where teachers have been silenced, where workload is the overriding concern, and unpredictability and uncertainty unwelcome, courage, patience and a taste for risk taking would be needed in establishing such environments. Expectations may need to be tempered and participants prepared for conversations which may not all be 'provocative and deeply intellectual' (Cochran-Smith, 1991, p.304); nevertheless, the workshops would be a space for teachers to share how and why they make the choices they do, and to make sense of what they are trying to accomplish in doing so.

Such talk could open the way to a greater understanding of one's own and others' experiences, including a more nuanced appreciation of complex individual positionings, and the ways that we work to face ourselves and go on with things positively. Such approaches could encourage, inspire and highlight ways forward for colleagues struggling to 'adapt' and continue in teaching; moreover, they offer a means of probing practices, both personal and in the wider political sphere, and working collaboratively to confront and resist these. Far from 'end of', they hold out fresh possibilities for helping teachers to care for themselves, and for each other.

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Appendices

Dear Colleague,

I am undertaking an Educational Doctorate at the Institute of Education, University College London and I am writing to invite you to participate in my thesis research project.

The purpose of the research is to understand more about teachers' careers and teaching lives. I am looking for research participants who have/are continuing to take up new career opportunities and my intention is to encourage teachers to share their personal stories of their teaching careers and teaching lives. This will be a small scale study which will involve 4-6 participants.

I am planning to use the Biographic-Narrative interviewing Method (BNIM). This is a structured approach to conducting narrative interviews and I have attached an outline of the process here. You can see that this involves three sessions; sessions 1 and 2 will take place together on the same day and session 3 will follow, up to 2 to 3 months later. Session 1 encourages the participant to present their own complete account in response to an initial single question known as a Single Question Initiating Narrative (SQUIN). In session 2 the researcher follows up on particular points raised in the participant's story and encourages further exploration of the topics raised. The third session will pick up on topics raised in the first sessions and wider questions arising from the overall project.

I am looking for volunteers who would be interested in being part of this work and this will involve two meetings over a period of 2 -3 months. The timing and location of the meetings would be arranged to suit your availability and the overall time commitment will be about 3.5 - 4 hours. Participation throughout would be entirely voluntary and should you need, or wish to, withdraw at any time you would, of course, be completely free to do so.

Participants and their settings will be anonymised and all material gathered as part of this research will be confidential. The data will be collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998; it will be retained for the duration of the project, expected to be July 2017, and will then be disposed of in a secure manner. The research study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee. To take part in the project, participants will need to obtain their Headteacher's permission to take part and I will provide a similar letter outlining the project and a consent form

We are working in a rapidly changing educational landscape and the most recent White Paper has a sharp emphasis on the recruitment and retention of teachers. The focus in this research is to understand more about teachers' careers from the perspectives of teachers and to highlight the importance of this perspective. In providing a space to reflect and encouraging self-reflection, life history and biographical work, offers the potential for personal and professional development. As educators, we are always looking to develop

our understandings of our work and I hope that findings from this project will inform this and that the process will be a stimulating and valuable for all those involved.

I hope that you are interested in taking part in this project, please contact me by emailand we can arrange a time to talk.

Yours sincerely

Jo Flynn

Dear HT

I am undertaking an Educational Doctorate at the Institute of Education, University College London and your colleagueNAME.....has expressed an interest in participating in my thesis research project.

The purpose of the research is to understand more about teachers' careers and teaching lives. I am looking for research participants who have/are continuing to take up new career opportunities and my intention is to encourage teachers to share their personal stories. We are working in a rapidly changing educational landscape and the most recent White Paper has a sharp emphasis on the recruitment and retention of teachers. The focus in this research is to understand more about teachers' careers from the perspectives of teachers and to highlight the importance of this perspective. This will be a small scale study which will involve 4-6 participants.

I am planning to use the Biographic-Narrative interviewing Method (BNIM). This is a structured approach to conducting narrative interviews and I have attached an outline of the process here. You can see that this involves three sessions; sessions 1 and 2 will take place together on the same day and session 3 will follow, up to 3 months later. Session 1 encourages the participant to present their own complete account in response to an initial single question known as a Single Question Initiating Narrative (SQUIN). In session 2 the researcher follows up on particular points raised in the participant's story and encourages further exploration of the topics raised. The third session may be up to 2/3 months later and will pick up on topics raised in the first sessions and wider questions arising from the overall project.

The participants will be asked to meet twice over a period of 2 -3 months. The timing and location of the meetings would be arranged to suit their availability and the overall time commitment will be about 3.5 - 4 hours. Participant's involvement throughout is, of course, entirely voluntary and should they need, or decide, to withdraw at any time, they are completely free to do so.

Participants and their settings will be anonymised, and all material gathered as part of this research will be confidential. The data will be collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, it will be retained for the duration of the project, expected to be July 2017 and will then be disposed of in a secure manner. The research study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee.

Participants are required to inform their Headteachers of their intended involvement and to obtain their permission and for this purpose I have attached a consent form. Could you please sign this and return it to me either by emailor at the above address. If you have questions or would like to discuss the project further, please contact me by email and we can arrange a time to talk.

Thank you for supporting _____NAME_____ involvement in the project. Providing a space to reflect and encouraging self-reflection, life history and biographical work, offers the potential for personal and professional development. As educators, we are always

looking to develop our understandings of our work and I hope that findings from this project will inform this and that the process will be a stimulating and valuable for all those involved.

Yours sincerely

Jo Flynn

Biographical-Narrative Interview Method

Outline of the BNIM Interview structure

This involves three sessions; sessions 1 and 2 will take place on the same day (~ 1.5 – 2 hours) and session 3 will follow up to 2/3 months later (~1-1.5 hours)

Session 1

The researcher opens the session with a single question, to encourage the participant to tell their own story in their own words, in whatever order feels appropriate. This is called a Single Question to induce Narrative or SQUIN. The researcher does not interrupt but may provide some prompts to encourage the participant if needed. The researcher will take notes during this session.

Researcher and participant have a break

Session 2

Researcher will ask follow up questions arising from the information provided by the participant in Session 1. The purpose is to explore more fully the topics raised in session 1, questions will be posed to elicit more information, or simply more story.

Session 3

This session will take place later, say about 2 months, after the initial interviews. This is an opportunity for the researcher to revisit the participant with further wider questions; these may be directly connected with the material in the first interview or they may be questions which have arisen as part of the wider project or initial analysis of the data.

All sessions will be audio recorded and participants will be asked to provide their consent for the use of the material at the end of each session.

Research Participant Consent Form

EdD Thesis: Teachers' stories about their careers and teaching lives

I have read the information provided about the research. (Please tick)

I agree to be interviewed as outlined in the information tick) (please

I give permission for the interview to be recorded tick) (please

I give permission for the material to be part of the research tick) (please

Participant's Name _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Researcher's name _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Headteacher Consent Form

EdD Thesis: Teachers' stories about their careers and teaching lives

I have read the information provided about the research (please tick)

I give consent for my colleague
to participate in the research (please tick)

Name _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Position _____

Researcher's Name _____

Signed _____ Date _____

The Three Dimensional Space Narrative Structure

<i>Interaction</i>		<i>Continuity</i>			<i>Situation/Place</i>
Personal	Social	Past	Present	Future	
Look inward to internal conditions, feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, moral disposition	Look outward to existential conditions in the environment, with other people and their intentions, purposes, assumptions and points of view	Look backward to remembered experiences , feelings and stories from earlier times	Look to current experiences, feelings, stories relation to action or an event	Look forward to implied and possible experiences and plotlines	Look at context time and place situated in the physical landscape or setting with topological and spatial boundaries with characters' intentions, purposes and different points of view

Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002, p.340)

Adapted from Clandinin & Connolly (2000)

Appendix 6 The three dimensional space narrative structure

The Three-Dimensional Space Narrative Structure Approach - Angela's Turning Point Story

Social		Continuity			Situation/Place
Personal	Social	Past	Present	Future	
Doesn't have a plan She won't apply as it won't work with family life	Colleagues encouraging – ask if she is applying for SL role. Refer to particular posts as 'Angela's role'	Divorced and remarried – not a practising Catholic This may have slowed her career trajectory 'Settled at St Peters for some time'	HT leaving – following a difficult period in Special Measures New SL structure presented including 3 new SL posts. Angela currently Head of Science (in post for 'some time')	New temporary acting HT for 2 years to manage transition St Peters closing - new All Faiths Academy opening - new BSF build on a new site	St Peters
Thinks that the Head will regret missing time with family and has had a disappointing (end of) career	Tells colleagues that she is not thinking of applying for the role - Happy where she is -not sure if it will work with young family	Senior Posts may not be available to non-practising Catholics	Angela currently Head of Science (in post for 'some time')	Temporary HT to be appointed Acting HT will appoint new permanent Head and SLT for new academy	St Peters

<p>Needed to be encouraged as she had been in the past for potential promotions</p>	<p>Tells Head that she is not sure that this will work with family life</p>	<p>HT's office</p>
<p>Doesn't know the head wants her to have the job.</p>	<p>Talks to the Head about SL and family life - learns that he has not found the two incompatible – has enjoyed his career</p>	
<p>Questions whether she would have applied if Head hadn't encouraged her</p>		
<p>Afraid that she will (again) be rejected because she is not a practising Catholic</p>		
<p>Needs approval and approbation of colleagues</p>		
<p>Has experienced rejection and shame in past</p>		

Appendix 7 Three dimensional space narrative structure: The turning point story

The Evaluation Model (Cortazzi,1993)

Managing the Head of English Story	Structure	Question
<p>Although I have tried that with a member of staff when I was line manager and tried to get them on board It wasn't a case of you've got to do this, Y' know, it's my way or no other way, So there was a bit of .. and it took a lot of time and they've gone now anyway.</p> <p>When Andrew came he took over the line management that made sense that was that battle</p> <p>and after a year she's going now</p> <p>I mean I wasn't really getting anywhere, I mean, getting somewhere but very very slowly, nowhere near fast enough, very very slowly and it did take a lot of time, it was exhausting and I wasn't really making much progress.</p> <p>The head has just clashed and hasn't been any progress but she is leaving (and that's the progress)</p> <p>which is actually good for the school</p>	<p>Abstract/ Orientation or Setting</p> <p>Complicating Action</p> <p>Resolution</p> <p>Evaluation</p> <p>Resolution</p> <p>Coda</p>	<p>What was this about? Who/what/where/when/</p> <p>Then what happened?</p> <p>Result</p> <p>So what ?</p> <p>Result</p> <p>Close</p>