The status and safety of teaching:

A longitudinal study of why some young people in England become teachers, and why others do not

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Declaration

I, Emily MacLeod, 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.

Funding

Abstract

There are long-term and severe teacher shortages in England, particularly in the sciences. Current research in this area typically examines the teaching motivations of those already pursuing the profession. The existing literature thus provides insights into why some people teach but fails to tell us why others choose not to teach, or why those who identify as women and White British are most likely to teach. This thesis provides original contributions to understanding teacher shortages by studying the teaching trajectories of young people over a period of 11 years. This qualitatively led study draws upon primary data as well as secondary data from ASPIRES; a national research project tracking young people's career aspirations from age 10/11 to 21/22. The empirical data analysed are:

1) 60,000+ survey responses from young people at six different ages, and

2) 146 interviews with 13 young people (and 17 of their parents) who had expressed an interest in teaching—five of whom specialised in science—and were longitudinally tracked through education and into the world of work.

This study found that young people surveyed at six ages between 10/11 and 21/22 reported being more open to teaching than is reflected in teacher recruitment data. Applying an 'identities in practice' theoretical framework (Holland et al., 1998), the reasons why some participants became teachers, whilst others did not, were found to be influenced by the 'status' of teaching (perceptions of whether teachers are professionals who use their gifts to benefit others), and the 'safety' of teaching (perceptions of whether teaching is a secure, accessible profession which enables a

good lifestyle). How the 'status' and 'safety' of teaching influenced participants' teaching

trajectories was strongly influenced by their intersectional identities as well as the social

and cultural norms surrounding teaching. This thesis ends with recommendations for

improving teacher recruitment.

Impact Statement

In the context of severe and long-term teacher shortages in many countries, this thesis is the first known study of young people's trajectories towards and away from becoming a teacher. It takes a unique approach to understanding teacher supply by tracking the teaching trajectories of young people in England who expressed a prior interest in teaching over a period of 11 years. Such an approach was made possible through the use of secondary data from ASPIRES; a national longitudinal research project following young people's career aspirations in England from age 10/11 to age 21/22. The findings of this work make several original contributions to existing knowledge about why people do, or do not, become teachers; especially in science where teacher shortages are particularly severe.

First, quantitative analyses presented in this thesis suggest that many more young people in England, at all ages between 10/11 and 21/22, are open to teaching than is reflected in teacher recruitment data. Analyses suggest that this openness to teaching is the result of teaching being a common second-choice or 'backup' career aspiration. This finding is somewhat promising for those interested in increasing teacher recruitment, yet data also indicate that (without targeted efforts to change this status quo) the teaching workforce in England will continue to remain dominated by those who identify as women and those who identify as White.

Next, this study illustrates that the choice of whether or not to become a teacher is not a single decision, but an ongoing series of identity negotiations which respond to social influences and individuals' motivations. This finding stems from this thesis's use of an

identities in practice theoretical lens, and provides a more in-depth perspective on teaching choices than is available in the current literature. Using this lens, I found that this study's participants were interested in teaching because they perceived it to be a career that is high in status (i.e., a profession where people use their gifts to benefit others) and high in safety (i.e., a secure and accessible route to a decent lifestyle). These perceptions, however, were relative and transitory, and were strongly shaped by the social and cultural advantages and/or inequalities that each participant experienced. Those who chose to pursue teaching by age 21/22 worked to maintain their identities in line with these figurings of teaching as high in status and safety; whereas for those who 'dropped' their earlier interests in teaching, the profession was no longer high in status and/or high in safety.

This new knowledge can be used to inform further research into why people choose (not) to teach, and could inform efforts to attract more young people into teaching. At the time of submission I have presented findings from this research at seven academic conferences (four international). Outside of academia I have shared findings and recommendations from this research with policy and practice stakeholders via IOE's 'Research for the Real World' podcast, with colleagues at the Royal Society of Chemistry, and with the House of Commons' Education Committee.

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The research presented in this PhD thesis has been supported in many ways by multiple people and organisations, all of whom deserve thanks. I would first like to express my thanks to the research participants of this study. Although they remain anonymous throughout this thesis, I acknowledge that this PhD would not have been possible without the young people and parents who kindly participated in the ASPIRES research project from which this study developed. Particular thanks go to the 13 young people whom I interviewed again specifically for this study, and who generously gave up their time to support this research not only during a period of transition in their own lives but also during the ongoing uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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Glossary of acronyms and abbreviations

A Level	Advanced Level (post-16 qualification)
APA	American Psychological Association (to indicate the referencing style used in this thesis)
ASPIRES	Research project on young people's science and career aspirations, and the source of the secondary data used in this thesis
BA	Bachelor of Arts (undergraduate degree)
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BEd	Bachelor of Education (undergraduate degree)
BERA	British Educational Research Association
BSc	Bachelor of Science (undergraduate degree)
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council (post-16 qualification)
CEIAG	Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
DfE	Department for Education (Government department responsible for education in England)
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ECT	Early Career Teacher
ESERA	European Science Education Research Association
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
FSM	Free School Meals
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education (national academic qualifications typically taken at age 15/16 in England, some of which are compulsory)
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
MA	Masters of Arts, Humanities or Social Sciences (postgraduate degree)
MAC	Migration Advisory Committee
ME	Minoritised Ethnicity
MSc	Masters of Science (postgraduate degree)

NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
NVivo	Qualitative data analysis software produced by QSR International
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (England's schools inspectorate)
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PE	Physical Education
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PGDE	Postgraduate Diploma in Education
PISA	(The OECD's) Programme for International Student Assessment
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
RQ	Research Question
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SCITT	School-Centred Initial Teacher Training
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Quantitative data analysis software produced by IBM)
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TA	Teaching Assistant
TALIS	(The OECD's) Teaching and Learning International Survey
TSM	Teacher Supply Model
TWM	Teacher Workforce Model
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UCL	University College London
UK	United Kingdom
US(A)	United States (of America)

Preface

In 2015 I began work on the ASPIRES research project; a national study following the science and career aspirations of a cohort of young people from 2009/2010 to 2020/2021. Working on ASPIRES helped me to better understand the far-reaching influences of social and educational inequalities, and also led me to question why people do what they do, as well as to reflect upon my own trajectory; from school student, to undergraduate student, to schoolteacher, to education researcher. (Why) did I choose this path? And (how) would it be different if I had different experiences and identities? This PhD has emerged from my experience as a teacher, from my work on the ASPIRES project, from a fascination with why different people pursue different paths, and from a desire to better understand why not enough people become teachers. In the context of severe teacher shortages this study examines why young people aspire to become a teacher, and why some of those who have previously expressed a teaching aspiration pursue teaching, whilst others do not.

The research presented in this thesis spans a period of 11 years. This longitudinal approach was made possible through my use of secondary data from ASPIRES (see Archer, Moote, MacLeod, et al., 2020), as well as primary data collected for the purposes of this study. In this thesis I thus present the first known longitudinal study of young people's teaching trajectories. Importantly, by researching young people's lives from age 10/11 to age 21/22, I here examine the trajectories of those who do not, as well as those who do, become teachers. This approach is in stark contrast to the majority of existing research about why people become teachers, which relies on

retrospective accounts of those already in the profession (e.g., Watt & Richardson, 2007).

This PhD thesis is comprised of eight chapters. In the first of these chapters, **Chapter 1**, 'Introduction: Why study young people's teaching trajectories?', I present the rationale for this study. I first provide evidence of the severe and ongoing teacher shortages experienced in England, where this study is set. I then demonstrate how these teacher shortages are patterned by social inequalities, and are particularly acute in the sciences. Because this thesis is concerned with whether or not (and why) young people enter the teaching profession, I then detail how people can become a qualified teacher in England, before examining some of the policies that have been used to try to improve teacher recruitment. I highlight that policy efforts to date have had little to no impact on increasing and diversifying teacher recruitment. I then provide definitions of four of the key terms used throughout this study (young people, aspirations, trajectories, and teachers), and introduce the three research questions that guide this research.

In **Chapter 2**, 'Trajectories towards and away from teaching: A review of the evidence', I present a review of the current literature about why people do, and do not, become teachers in England. To examine trajectories towards teaching I begin by considering research with young people who express an interest or aspiration in teaching, before highlighting the key findings from the wealth of research on existing teachers' motivations for joining the profession. I then consider trajectories away from teaching by examining findings from research with those who have chosen not to teach, or who have turned away from teaching. Through this review I highlight that the reasons why young people do, and do not, teach are not only impacted by individual motivations but

also wider social, cultural, and contextual influences. For example, I conclude that the (stereo)typical image of a teacher in England as a White British woman may be working to maintain the status quo in teaching.

In **Chapter 3**, 'Theorising young people's teaching trajectories', I outline the theoretical perspectives used in this research. I first outline why I chose to use an identity lens in this research, before introducing the concept of 'identities in practice' as put forward by Holland et al. (1998). I argue that this concept is particularly useful for this longitudinal study because it can help to examine whether, why and how young people do, or do not, come to see themselves as teachers over time; and what individual and structural factors work to influence this. Specifically, I outline the contexts of 'figured worlds', 'positionality' and 'space of authoring' which underpin the qualitative analyses presented in this thesis. I then contextualise how this thesis builds upon the use of identities in practice in existing research with young people and with beginning teachers by presenting previous applications of this theory. Towards the end of Chapter 3 I also detail how I use a narrative approach to apply the concept of identities in practice to young people's trajectories towards and away from what I refer to as 'the figured worlds of teaching'. Finally, I consider possible limitations of this theoretical approach and explain how I use the concept of 'intersectionality' (e.g., Crenshaw, 1989) to apply a framework of identities in practice to this thesis's qualitative dataset.

In **Chapter 4**, 'Methodological approaches and research methods', I outline the philosophical background and research design of this study. I first explain the ontological, epistemological and axiological perspectives that underpin this research, before outlining the 'qualitatively led' approach used in this study. I then introduce how I

have worked to ensure this study's validity and reliability, and how I have reflected upon

my role as researcher throughout this PhD. I also outline the ethical considerations

which have shaped this research. I next introduce this study's datasets, which are

formed of primary and secondary data. To explain how I analysed young people's

teaching trajectories over time I introduce this study's qualitative sample of 13 young

people who were tracked via longitudinal interviews (with themselves and, separately,

their parents) with the ASPIRES project from the age of 10/11 to age 20/21, and whom I

interviewed again for this study at age 21/22. All 13 of these young people expressed

an aspiration or interest in teaching in one of their earlier interviews, and were therefore

considered to be 'potential future teachers' at age 20/21 for the purposes of this

research. Five of these participants also specialised in science and were thus

considered 'potential future *science* teachers' specifically. I detail how these qualitative

data, totalling 146 in-depth interviews, were analysed through thematic analyses

informed by the intersectional identities in practices framework introduced in Chapter 3.

I then explain how I conducted quantitative analyses of young people's teaching

interests using over 60,000 survey responses in order to provide contextual information

about who aspires to become a teacher when they are older.

In Chapters 5, 6 and 7 I discuss the empirical findings of this thesis. These chapters are

organised according to this study's three research questions. In **Chapter 5**, 'Who

aspires to teach, and why?', I seek to answer the first of this study's research questions

(this chapter's title). I first present findings from descriptive statistical analyses of

ASPIRES survey data in order to provide a brief contextual overview of who aspires to

become a teacher in England at six different ages between 10/11 and 21/22. I then

present findings from thematic analyses of this study's qualitative dataset using the context of figured worlds. This allows me to present six 'cultural models' which summarise what this study's aspirant members of the figured worlds of teaching took for granted, or believed to be true, about teachers and teaching. Three of these cultural models construct teaching as 'high in status', and the remaining three construct teaching as 'high in safety'. Using these cultural models, I demonstrate that this study's participants expressed a teaching aspiration or interest because of their figuring of teaching as 'high in status' and 'high in safety'; but that these depictions were strongly influenced by the social inequalities experienced by participants, as well as participants' ages.

In **Chapter 6**, 'Teacher-makers: Why do some people become teachers, when others do not?', I focus on the three young people in my qualitative sample who were pursuing teaching by my final interview with them at age 21/22 (Amy, Millie and Carol). This chapter thus considers this study's second research question; *Why do some young people pursue teaching?*. Using the contexts of positionality and space of authoring introduced in Chapter 3, I consider what factors influenced these three young people to become teachers, when their peers who also expressed earlier interests in teaching did not pursue teaching. Findings suggest that Amy, Millie and Carol all conducted significant identity work, using the cultural models found to construct teaching as high in status and high in safety as outlined in Chapter 5, to maintain or direct their trajectories towards the figured worlds of teaching. In addition, the multiple obstacles that each of these young people encountered and navigated in their teaching trajectories were shown to be strongly shaped by the social inequalities that they experienced. For

instance, findings from this chapter imply that those who do not identify as White British women may have to work harder to cultivate and sustain their teaching trajectories over time.

In **Chapter 7**, 'Teacher-breakers: Why do some young people drop their teaching aspirations?', I consider the third and final research question of this study: *Why do some young people drop their teaching aspirations, especially in science?*. Here I present findings from longitudinal thematic analyses of interviews with this study's 10 participants who were not pursuing teaching at age 21/22, despite previously expressing a teaching aspiration or interest (Buddy, Celina, Hedgehog, Joanne, Kate, Louise, Lucy, Mienie, Samantha, Victor). Again using the identity in practice contexts of positionality and space of authoring, here I consider what influenced these 10 young people to navigate their trajectories away from the figured worlds of teaching. The findings presented suggest that, for those participants from working-class backgrounds, teaching became a less viable trajectory for reasons to do with 'safety', whereas for those from more middle-class backgrounds teaching lost its viability for reasons to do with 'status'. I also highlight how the patterned nature of science participation in England means that those who are best positioned to become future science teachers are particularly unlikely to be positioned as science teachers, or self-author long-term and sustainable teaching identities.

Finally in **Chapter 8**, 'Discussion and conclusion', I summarise and discuss the findings presented in this thesis and outline how this knowledge contributes new understandings of England's teacher shortages. I also underline how this research addresses current methodological and theoretical gaps in the literature, and consider the limitations of this

study. Finally, I reflect upon the findings of this research, and its methods, to put forward

recommendations for future policy, practice and research aimed at understanding and

improving teacher shortages in, and beyond, England.

Chapter 1. Introduction: Why study young people's teaching trajectories?

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a rationale for this thesis by highlighting the context of long-term and severe teacher shortages in England, where this study is set; and evidencing the need to better understand why people do, but especially why they do not, become teachers. In Section 1.2, I present evidence of England's teacher shortages and the three drivers behind these shortages (low teacher recruitment, low teacher retention, and rising student numbers). I then illustrate that these shortages are patterned by multiple factors including social inequalities and teaching specialisms and highlight the impact of these shortages. In Section 1.3 I consider the policy context of teacher recruitment in England; first by introducing the multiple routes to becoming a qualified teacher, and then by looking at some of the steps taken by policymakers to try and increase teacher recruitment in specialisms experiencing acute teacher shortages. I end this chapter by summarising the rationale for this study in Section 1.4, and in Section 1.5 I define four of the key terms used throughout this thesis (young people, aspirations, trajectories, and teachers) and present the three research questions that guide this research.

1.2 England's teacher shortages

Teachers matter. Not only can most people recall the impact of teachers on their own lives, but research has shown that teachers have the potential to influence their

students' academic attainment (Chetty et al., 2014), behaviours (Hamre & Pianta, 2005), and even future earnings (Hanushek, 2011). Many teachers also support and contribute to daily life in their local communities, as was especially evident during the Covid-19 pandemic (e.g., Perryman et al., 2022). Yet in England, there are long-term and severe shortages of teachers.

Although there are many different ways to measure teacher shortages (See & Gorard, 2019) the data inescapably indicate the continuing, and growing, need for more teaching staff in England. For instance, government data show that the ratio of students to qualified teachers has increased from 17.6 in 2010 to 18.5 in 2021 (DfE, 2022d; Long & Danechi, 2022). The UK as a whole now has the fifth highest ratio of students to teachers in primary and secondary schools of all 38 OECD countries[1] (OECD, 2023). Another metric often used to measure teacher shortages is the number of teacher vacancies; in England this number has risen from 452 (0.1% of the workforce) in 2010 to 1,564 (0.3% of the workforce) in 2021 (Long & Danechi, 2022). These teacher shortages, which have been labelled as 'catastrophic' (Adams, 2022), or a 'crisis' (e.g., Pells & Khan, 2017; Worton, 2020), have been a policy, academic and media concern in England for over a decade (DfE, 2019c; Martin, 2022; Matthias, 2014; National Audit Office, 2015; Sibieta, 2018; Smithers & Robinson, 2001). But, in recent years, this situation has worsened. The number of teacher vacancies posted by schools were 93% higher in the academic year to February 2023 than in the academic year to February 2019 (McLean et al., 2023).

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[1] The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an intergovernmental organisation with 38 member countries which includes the United Kingdom (UK).

It should be noted that the Covid-19 pandemic—which began six months after I started this PhD—saw a temporary easing of these teacher shortages. In 2020 and part of 2021 there was a marked reduction in the number of teacher vacancies (e.g., Allen, Hannay, et al., 2020) and more people entered the profession than had done so in previous years (e.g., Worth & Faulkner-Ellis, 2021). The reasons for this easing will be considered in Section 2.2.2.3[2] of this thesis. As highlighted above and as will be explored further in Section 1.3, since Covid-19 restrictions ended teacher shortages have intensified (McLean et al., 2023) and teacher vacancies have returned to pre-pandemic levels (e.g., Howson, 2022). This return to the status quo highlights the sustained and endemic nature of teacher shortages in England.

Of course, teacher shortages are not unique to England and are also a long-term and major policy concern in many, mostly developed, countries (OECD, 2005, 2018; UNESCO, 2016; White & Smith, 2005). Countries experiencing teacher shortages include Australia (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012), parts of Canada (Clandinin et al., 2015), Estonia (Taimalu et al., 2017), Norway (Brandmo & Nesje, 2017), Portugal (Flores, 2023), South Africa (Pitsoe, 2013), and the United States (US) (Garcia & Weiss, 2019; Ingersoll, 2000). Teacher shortages are also evident, though to differing degrees, in Northern Ireland (Madden, 2022), Scotland (Seith, 2022), and Wales (Ghosh & Worth, 2022). Because education policy in the United Kingdom is devolved to the four nations, however, this study focuses on understanding teacher shortages in England rather than in the UK as a whole. Indeed, research shows that the amount of

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[2] Throughout this thesis I cross-reference different chapters or sections (of chapters) where relevant. The first number in a section indicates the corresponding chapter number.

teachers, commonly referred to as 'teacher supply' (e.g., Ingersoll, 2001), varies greatly

between different countries (e.g., OECD, 2005), and it would therefore be difficult to

generalise across different contexts. Nevertheless, some of this study's findings may be

applicable to other contexts facing similar challenges, as will be discussed further in

Section 8.5.

1.2.1 Drivers of England's teacher shortages

There are three driving factors, or 'drivers', of England's teacher shortages. 'Drivers' do

not refer to the individual, social, contextual, political, and/or economic reasons why

there are not enough teachers in England; these will be considered in more detail

throughout the rest of this thesis. Instead, drivers are the factors which directly result in

teacher shortages (and, if mitigated, could ease teacher shortages). These three drivers

are 1) low recruitment rates of new teachers, 2) poor retention of existing teachers, and

3) increasing school student numbers (Sibieta, 2018).

Evidence of each of the three drivers of teacher shortages is widespread. For example,

according to yearly teacher recruitment targets set by the Department for Education[3]

(DfE; the government department responsible for education in England), 29% fewer

teachers than were needed in primary and secondary schools were recruited to

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[3] Since 2021/22, the DfE has set teacher recruitment targets using the 'Teacher Workforce Model' (TWM) (Long & Danechi, 2022). Before 2021/22 the DfE set these targets using the 'Teacher Supply Model' (TSM). This change is illustrative of the frequent policy changes in the policy landscape of teacher supply (See & Gorard, 2019), as will be discussed in more detail in Section 1.3. Whilst a full account of these models is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is worth noting that both the TWM and TSM were designed to consider factors such as pupil projections and estimates of teacher retention when generating teacher recruitment targets. The TWM also takes into account previous under-recruitment in teacher specialisms, meaning that care should be taken when comparing targets set by the TWM with the TSM. See McLean et al. (2023) for more information.

postgraduate teaching courses starting in September 2022 (Long & Danechi, 2022). This marked the ninth year in the last 10 years that the DfE's overall teacher recruitment targets were missed (Belger, 2022). Regarding the driver of retention, close to 10% of the teaching workforce left the profession for reasons other than retirement or death in 2021 (Long & Danechi, 2022). This proportion is particularly high for those near the beginning of their teaching career; more than 40% of those who entered the profession in 2011 had left the profession 10 years later (Long & Danechi, 2022). Finally, with respect to student numbers, there was a 6% increase in the total number of students in state schools in England between 2015 and 2022 (DfE, 2023a). Together, then, the drivers of low recruitment, low retention, and increasing student numbers all contribute to the growing number of teacher vacancies and to high student-teacher ratios. In brief, these three factors drive England's teacher shortages.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, education researchers and policymakers have typically focused on understanding and improving the drivers of recruitment and retention, rather than addressing increases in student numbers (e.g., See et al., 2020). Notably, however, a reduction in England's birth rate in recent years means that student numbers are expected to decrease by up to 12% by 2032 (DfE, 2022b). Although additional factors such as immigration will also influence student numbers, this predicted reduction is likely to reduce the severity of teacher shortages, even if recruitment and retention rates remain the same (Howson, 2022). Yet, despite these predicted decreases in student numbers, some of those researching teacher supply in England anticipate that teachers shortages are due to get even worse in the coming years (e.g., Howson, 2022). For example, McInerney (2022) has argued that changing influences upon the drivers of

recruitment and retention, such as a predicted decrease in the number of soon-to-be graduates and an the increase in the number of British international schools abroad who are likely to want to recruit teachers from England, will continue to aggravate England's already severe teacher shortages.

This research tracks whether or not young people aspire to, and then become, teachers. In this thesis I am therefore principally interested in the driver of low recruitment, rather than low retention. As this thesis will explore, the drivers of recruitment and retention are frequently considered together (e.g., Ovenden-Hope & Passy, 2021; See et al., 2020), but here I do not consider the reasons why people stay in teaching or leave the profession, except where this information might inform recruitment patterns (see Section 2.3).

1.2.2 The patterned nature of England's teacher shortages

Importantly for this study, England's teacher shortages are not evenly distributed; they are uneven and patterned. One example of this unevenness in shortages is that the current teacher workforce is not representative of the wider population (e.g., Callender, 2020; Demie & See, 2023); as has been the case for a long time (e.g., Acker, 1983; Carrington et al., 2000). According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), 51% of the general population in England and Wales identify as women (ONS, 2022), yet DfE data show that over 75% of England's teaching workforce are women (DfE, 2022d). This proportion increases to close to 85% when looking specifically at primary school teachers (Lewis et al., 2022). Despite this overrepresentation of women in the teaching force as a whole, however, women are underrepresented in leadership positions,

especially in secondary schools. In 2016, 66% of secondary classroom teachers in England identified as women, but in the same year only 38% of secondary headteachers identified as women (DfE, 2018c).

Furthermore, although 74% of working age people in England and Wales identify as White British (ONS, 2023b), over 85% of the teaching workforce identify as White British (DfE, 2022d). By contrast, research has shown that people from Minoritised Ethnicities were overrepresented amongst applicants to Initial Teacher Education programmes in 2019/20, but underrepresented amongst those who were accepted onto these programmes in the same year (Worth et al., 2022)[4]. Data also indicate that where there are teachers from Minoritised Ethnicities[5], these teachers are less likely than their White British colleagues to hold leadership positions in either primary or secondary schools (DfE, 2018c), and are more likely to leave the profession (Allen et al., 2016).

Research with existing teachers has also consistently shown that those who go into teaching in the UK are more likely to come from working-class backgrounds (e.g., Chevalier et al., 2007). Looking at these data on who becomes (and stays) a teacher indicates that there are certain groups of people (i.e., men, people from Minoritised Ethnicities, and those from economically advantaged backgrounds) who are less likely to pursue teaching[6]. Similar patterning is also evident in countries including the US (e.g., Ingersoll et al., 2019; Institute of Education Sciences, 2020), and across the EU

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[4] The dataset used in these analyses, and specifically the timing of this dataset with reference to the Covid-19 pandemic, will be discussed further in Section 2.2.1.1.

[5] I use the term 'Minoritised Ethnicities' to refer to those who do not identify as the White ethnic majority in England throughout this thesis. This term has been chosen to reflect the minoritisation of those who do not identify (or pass) as White, and is defined in relation to this study's data in Section 4.3.2.

[6] I recognise that the reasons why many men do not pursue teaching is not an equity issue in the same way as it is for people from Minoritised Ethnicities. These nuances will be explored further in Chapter 2.

(e.g., Eurostat, 2017). Using these data, I suggest that England's teacher shortages are unevenly patterned by the social inequalities of gender, ethnicity and social class[7]. As will be discussed throughout Chapter 2 and explored using this study's data, the reasons for this patterning are complex and include not only individuals' motivations but also wider social obstacles as well as stereotypical assumptions about teachers and teaching.

As a result of these patterned teacher shortages, many have argued for the need for the teaching workforce to be more representative of its students (e.g., Demie & See, 2023; Lewis et al., 2022; Rhodes, 2017). Researchers have demonstrated, however, that some of the arguments for diversifying[8] the teacher workforce, especially by gender and ethnicity, are based upon stereotypical generalisations about, for example, the roles of women (Skelton, 2012) or Black men (Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2010; Pabon, 2016) in schools. In Section 4.2.1 I outline that this thesis primarily takes a social justice approach to these issues; meaning that I attempt to examine the social and systemic barriers which might prevent some people from aspiring to teach and/or pursuing teaching. This approach is taken in part because, whilst there are ongoing policy efforts to increase teacher recruitment, until now there have been relatively few concerted attempts to diversify the teacher workforce in terms of gender, ethnicity or social class (see Section 1.3.2); and even fewer attempts which take an intersectional[9] approach to

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[7] The approach I take to understanding gender, ethnicity and social class throughout this thesis is detailed in Section 3.6. Briefly, I view these characteristics as social constructs rather than fixed or biological identifiers.

[8] I recognise the over- and mis-use of the word 'diverse' as an umbrella term to refer to people of different ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, genders, and/or disabilities (Ravishankar, 2021). Throughout this thesis I therefore use terms such as 'diverse' or 'diversify' with consideration, and with specificity where relevant (e.g., by referring to gender diversity, rather than diversity in general).

[9] See Section 3.6 for an introduction to intersectionality and how this concept is used in this thesis.

diversifying the teacher workforce in these areas (e.g., Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2010) as is recommended in this thesis (see Section 8.5).

Gender, ethnicity and social class are not the only aspects that pattern the uneven distribution of England's teacher shortages. More secondary schools than primary schools report experiencing teacher shortages (Worth & Faulkner-Ellis, 2022b), as do schools serving disadvantaged communities (Allen, Jerrim, et al., 2020), and schools in London and the South East of England (Howson, 2022). Seemingly most worrying for policymakers (see Section 1.3.2) are the shortages faced by different specialisms within teaching. Whilst there are some teaching specialisms which have in the past exceeded teacher recruitment targets[10]—notably primary, secondary Physical Education (PE), and History (e.g., Foster, 2018; McLean et al., 2023)—so-called 'teacher shortage subjects' are those specialisms which face some of the most severe ongoing shortages, and include secondary Modern Foreign Languages, Computer Science, Maths and Physics (Long & Danechi, 2022). These shortages are evidenced by the inclusion of these four specialisms, as well as science teachers more generally[11], on the UK government's Migration Advisory Committee's (MAC) shortage occupation list (MAC, 2020).

Indeed, although in this thesis I am interested in whether or not young people aspire to teach, and become teachers, in all specialisms (i.e., primary as well as all secondary

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[10] For example, postgraduate teacher recruitment was above target for primary, PE and, to a lesser extent, History in 2017/2018, though the overall number of new teachers recruited was still below target that year (Foster, 2018). In 2022/2023 only four of the 18 secondary subject specialism teacher recruitment targets were met; these were Drama, History, PE, and Classics. Recruitment in all other specialisms, including primary teaching, was below target (McLean et al., 2023).
[11] Biology, Chemistry and Physics teachers are frequently referred to as simply 'science teachers' in England, despite the fact that secondary science teachers can specialise in either Biology, Chemistry, or Physics. This is partly because the three sciences tend to be taught together, especially in primary and lower secondary school (Ofsted, 2021), and so science teachers are likely to teach all three sciences.

subjects), I have an additional focus on what can be done to increase science teacher shortages specifically (see RQ3 in Section 1.5). This is because science teacher shortages in England are particularly severe; as is also the case in Australia (Watt et al., 2007), Canada (Tippett & Milford, 2019), the US (Ingersoll & May, 2012), and indeed across most OCED countries (OECD, 2005)[12]. For example, science teachers in England are more likely than other teachers to leave the profession in the first five years (Allen & Sims, 2017; Worth & De Lazzari, 2017). Furthermore, when comparing DfE teacher recruitment targets with data on new entrants into the teaching profession, only 54% of the new science teachers needed joined the profession in 2022/2023 (McLean et al., 2023). According to the data by subject specialisms within science, in 2022/2023 only 86% of the new secondary chemistry-specialist teachers needed joined the profession, only 85% of the new biology-specialist teachers needed joined the profession and, particularly shockingly, only 17% of the new physics-specialist teachers needed joined the profession (DfE, 2022a).

Although the recruitment of new biology teachers has sometimes exceeded past yearly targets (e.g., DfE, 2019b), this trend of severe shortages amongst secondary science teachers is persistent, and appears to have worsened in recent years. For example, compared to 17% of the target amount of physics teachers being recruited in 2022/2023, 47% of the physics teachers needed were recruited in 2019 (DfE, 2018a). The only exception to this worsening was that during the pandemic science teacher

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[12] Here I wish to acknowledge the co-funding of this thesis by the Royal Society of Chemistry, who have a particular interest in science teacher supply and with whom I have shared this study's findings.

recruitment increased slightly along with most specialisms, though still remained below target (Worth & Faulkner-Ellis, 2021).

The DfE does not collect data on the demographic or identity characteristics of teachers by secondary subject specialism[13]. This lack of data means that it is impossible to state whether or not the same social inequalities of gender, ethnicity, and social class which pattern teacher shortages as a whole also pattern science teacher shortages. There are, however, concerns that there may be particularly few people from Black ethnic backgrounds teaching science, along with technology, engineering and mathematics (together, known as STEM subjects) (e.g., Benson, 2021; Morgan & Scarlet, 2021). Indeed, analysis by the National Foundation for Education Research indicates that there are particularly low proportions of teachers who identify as Black, Mixed and from Other ethnic backgrounds amongst those who specialise in science (Worth et al., 2022). Science teacher shortages are therefore not only well-established and worsening (e.g., Allen & Sims, 2017; Worth & Van den Brande, 2019), but appear to be patterned by the same social inequalities which pattern teacher shortages more broadly.

Interestingly, data indicate that the same patterns that can be seen in science participation more widely may in part influence who becomes a science teacher. For example, just as those who pursue post-compulsory science in England have historically tended to be men, and identify as White and Asian (e.g., Joice & Tetlow, 2020; WISE, 2022), the data that do exist on science teacher identity characteristics suggest that science teachers are more likely to be men and identify as White and

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[13] I submitted a Freedom of Information request to the DfE in 2021, which confirmed this.

Asian than teachers in other specialisms (The Royal Society, 2007; Worth et al., 2022). Who does (not) become a science teacher, given that the social inequalities which pattern science participation differ from those which typically pattern who becomes a teacher, is something that this thesis seeks to examine.

1.2.3 The impact of England's patterned teacher shortages

England's teacher shortages have multiple far-reaching and negative impacts. Head teachers in England have reported that teacher shortages negatively impact student learning (Jerrim & Sims, 2019), and analyses suggest that high teacher turnover (the departure of teachers from their teaching jobs [Ingersoll, 2001]) can result in students' gaining lower GCSE[14] grades (Gibbons et al., 2018). There is also evidence to suggest that the attainment of boys and Black students may be particularly negatively affected by teacher turnover (Gibbons et al., 2018; Ronfeldt et al., 2013), and that teacher shortages put additional pressure on the existing teacher workforce (Long & Danechi, 2022; Savill-Smith & Scanlan, 2022).

Of course, the patterned nature of teacher shortages mean that the impact of these shortages is unevenly distributed. With regard to social inequalities, for example, although a teacher's gender does not appear to impact student engagement (e.g., Francis et al., 2008; Sansone, 2017), research from the US highlights the academic and cultural benefits that students from Minoritised Ethnicities or disadvantaged backgrounds receive when they have teachers with whom they share a similar

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[14] General Certificate of Secondary Educations (GCSEs) are national compulsory qualifications sat by young people in England at age 15/16.

background (e.g., Dee, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1992). The impact of disparities between teachers' and students' backgrounds were a particular worry after national examinations were cancelled for two years during the Covid-19 pandemic and students were instead graded using teacher assessments (Weale & Batty, 2020). Indeed, research has outlined how structural inequalities impacted students' experiences during this period (e.g., Bhopal & Myers, 2022), which draws attention to one of the potentially damaging ways that the patterned nature of teacher shortages may impact the experiences of school students as well as the teaching workforce itself.

The fact that teacher shortages are more severe in certain subjects means that teachers are increasingly required to teach outside of their specialisms. For example, in science, in 2015 only 51% of those who taught physics in secondary schools reported having a specialist physics degree or higher qualification (Kirby & Cullinane, 2017), and in 2016 over a quarter of chemistry teachers held no higher than an A Level[15] in the subject (Pells, 2017). In this thesis I propose that the lack of science teachers in England is particularly concerning given the recognised need for more workers in STEM sectors (National Audit Office, 2018; Neave et al., 2018; WISE, 2022), and ongoing efforts to increase the representation of women, people from Minoritised Ethnicities, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds in STEM (National Audit Office, 2018; Universities UK, 2018). Without a sufficient number of qualified science teachers with a wide range of intersectional identities, I argue that increasing and diversifying participation in science and the wider STEM sector is likely to remain a persistent issue

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[15] A Levels are national qualifications in England, typically sat by young people at age 17/18, and in three or four subjects. A Levels are academic qualifications, and are the most common route to university entrance in England.

(Morgan et al., 2016). Understanding why these patterned teacher shortages exist overall and in science, and how they may be improved, is therefore vital for the current lives and future outcomes of young people in England, as well as for those already in the profession and wider society.

1.3   The policy context of teacher recruitment in England

This thesis seeks to contribute new understandings about England's teacher shortages by considering young people's trajectories towards and away from teaching; that is, whether or not young people (want to) become teachers and why. For this reason, I next outline how people can become a qualified teacher in England. I then provide a brief policy context of teacher recruitment policies in England and highlight that, to date, these policies have failed to improve recruitment patterns.

1.3.1   Becoming a teacher in England

To better understand the teacher recruitment policy context it is first important to consider how people can become qualified teachers, which in England means having Qualified Teacher Status (QTS); considered desirable for teachers in the majority of schools in England, and a legal requirement to teach in some schools (DfE, 2023b). At the time of writing there are seven main routes to gaining QTS in England (DfE, n.d.; National Audit Office, 2016), as listed in Table 1. These routes represent a range of university- and school- led courses. One is an undergraduate route (which mostly specialises in primary school teaching), and the remaining six are postgraduate routes. As a result, whichever route to the profession is taken, teaching in England is a graduate career.

In some of the routes into teaching displayed in Table 1 candidates are considered employees and are salaried; whereas in others, candidates are unpaid students and have tuition fees which they can pay for using England's student loans system (see Bolton, 2022). Collectively, these routes are commonly referred to as Initial Teacher Training or, as will be used throughout this thesis, Initial Teacher Education (ITE)[16]. It should be noted that people can also apply for QTS in England if they have a teaching qualification from another country. The number of entrants into teaching via this route is small (around 5% each year), particularly since the UK voted to leave the European Union in 2016 (Belger, 2022; DfE, 2022c), and will not be considered in this thesis.

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[16] Although the DfE and others favour the term 'ITT' (e.g., DfE, 2019b; McLean et al., 2023), in choosing to use the term 'ITE' I wish to emphasise the independent judgement and expertise developed through teacher preparation programmes, rather than portray them as purely practical courses. In this choice I am informed by the work of Chitty (2009) and others.

Table 1 *The seven ITE routes to becoming a qualified teacher in England*

Name of ITE route	Number of ITE entrants 2022/23 (%)	Level of education	Qualification/s	Typical (full-time) length
University-led	10,278 (35%)	PG	QTS and PGCE	1 year*
University-led	5,767 (20%)	UG	BA, BSc or BEd with QTS	3 years
School Direct – Unsalaried	5,862 (20%)	PG	QTS, usually with PGCE	1 year*
School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT)	4,234 (15%)	PG	QTS, usually with PGCE	1 year*
Teach First	1,393 (5%)	PG	QTS and PGDE	2 years
Postgraduate Teaching Apprenticeship	796 (3%)	PG	QTS	1 year*
School Direct – Salaried	661 (2%)	PG	QTS, usually with PGCE	1 year*
Total ITE entrants 2022/23	*28,991*			
PG Postgraduate UG Undergraduate QTS Qualified Teacher Status PGCE Postgraduate Certificate in Education BA Bachelor of Arts BSc Bachelor of Science BEd Bachelor of Education PGDE Postgraduate Diploma in Education * Most 1-year routes run from September-July and include 9 months of study				
This table is based upon the 'Main routes to qualified teacher status (QTS)' table in 'Training new teachers' (National Audit Office, 2016), and uses data from the 'Initial Teacher Training Census: Academic Year 2022/23' (DfE, 2022a)				

There are regular policy changes in the teacher recruitment landscape (See & Gorard, 2019). For example, the last five years have seen the introduction of a Postgraduate Teaching Apprenticeship route (DfE, 2022a), the closure of a QTS route aimed specifically at ex-armed forces personnel (DfE, 2018b), and the closure of a QTS route for PhD graduates (The Brilliant Club, 2023). At the time of writing there are also plans

to overhaul the current 'School Direct' routes (Whittaker, 2022b), and to introduce a teaching apprenticeship for non-graduates (Whittaker, 2023). The latter of these is an example of the growing focus on non-university ITE routes (e.g., George & Maguire, 2019), which has led some to conclude that teaching in England is increasingly seen as a practical craft rather than a research-based profession (e.g., Beauchamp et al., 2015; Ovenden-Hope, 2021). Despite these frequent changes, the most common route into teaching is consistently the university-led Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) (DfE, 2022a; National Audit Office, 2016). The dominance of postgraduate routes into teaching means that, when considering teaching trajectories as this study does, it is worth noting that the vast majority entrants into teaching in England complete an undergraduate degree before they commit to becoming a teacher.

In terms of the characteristics of ITE entrants it is unsurprising, given the patterned nature of teacher shortages (see Section 1.2.2), that the majority of new entrants into teaching regardless of ITE route are women, and identify as White British (e.g., DfE, 2022a). In addition, around 10% of those accepted onto ITE in England every year report having a physical or mental disability (including mental health issues), and roughly 3% live outside of the UK when making their applications (UCAS, 2023). No data are collected on the social class backgrounds of ITE entrants, however. Although entry requirements differ between ITE routes, most postgraduate ITE candidates are required to hold at least a 2:2 undergraduate degree[17] in a subject in (or closely related to) their teaching specialism, hold GCSEs in Maths and English, and pass an interview

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[17] The university grading system in the UK is unique. There are typically four grades which are 1) first-class honours (a 'first'; 70% and above), 2) upper second-class honours (a '2:1'; 60-70%), 3) lower second-class honours (a '2:2'; 50-60%), and 4) third-class honours (a 'third'; 40-50%).

(Get into teaching, n.d.-d). In addition, and particularly important for this study given that its sample was aged 21/22 at the time of final data collection (see Section 4.3), most new teachers in England are under the age of 25 (DfE, 2022a) and would therefore be considered to be young people according to government (e.g., Francis-Devine & Powell, 2023) and OECD definitions (OECD, 2013).

Although a detailed comparison of ITEs routes in different countries is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is worth noting that ITE in England is unusual because of the number and range of different routes into teaching that are available (George & Maguire, 2019). Examples of how England's ITE routes differ from those in other countries include that the majority of entrants into teaching in England pay tuition fees (currently up to £9,250 per year for both undergraduate and postgraduate routes) to gain their professional qualification (Get into teaching, n.d.-c), unlike in countries including Canada and Australia where the majority of costs to become a teacher are paid for by the government (Darling-Hammond, 2017). The decentralised education system in England also means that new (along with experienced) teachers apply directly to schools, or 'trusts' of schools[18], for jobs rather than being allocated roles as happens in countries including France (Cornu, 2015). Furthermore, although teaching in England is a graduate profession, there is no requirement for qualified teachers to have a Masters degree; as there is in countries including Finland and Singapore (Darling-Hammond, 2017). This focus on initial, rather than longer-term, teacher education in England has led some to call England's teacher education system 'front-loaded' (Allen & Sims,

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[18] Most schools in England are now part of multi academy (meaning multiple school) trusts; see Haves (2022).

2018). Since the introduction in 2019 of the mandatory Early Career Framework, however, teachers in England now undertake a two-year induction period after gaining QTS, during which time they are known as Early Career Teachers (ECTs) (DfE, 2019a). This Early Career Framework represents an attempt to expand continuing professional development for teachers in England (Ovenden-Hope, 2022).

1.3.2 Policy efforts to improve teacher recruitment in England

I now consider what has been, and is being, done to increase and diversify teacher recruitment in England. This is because I think it important to foreground this research with a context of past and current policy efforts. I should state, however, that the sustained and recurring nature of England's teacher shortages mean that this research has been undertaken with a view to understanding these shortages outside of, and beyond, the specific policy context within which this thesis is written. In this way, my hope is that this study's findings and recommendations might remain of interest to researchers and stakeholders working in teacher supply as long as patterned teacher shortages remain.

There are multiple policies which aim to improve teacher shortages in England by targeting recruitment and, often concurrently, retention. I argue, however, that these policies appear to have made little difference to teacher recruitment numbers, and especially the patterned nature of this recruitment. Perhaps the most significant recent policy in England aiming to improve teacher recruitment was the government's 2019 Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy (DfE, 2019c). In the context of the teacher shortages outlined above, this strategy identified four 'key barriers' to improving

recruitment and retention of teachers in England; only one of which focused on people who were not (yet) teaching. Specifically, the strategy claimed that "the process to become a teacher is too complicated and burdensome" (DfE, 2019c, p. 7). This claim appears to have been driven by an apparent gap between the number of people who are interested in teaching, and the number of people pursuing teaching. For example, the strategy states that 150,000 people registered on the government's 'Get Into Teaching' information website in 2017/18, but in the same year only 45,000 people applied for postgraduate ITE (DfE, 2019c). According to the Strategy, this discrepancy means that "too many potentially great teachers are put off from pursuing a career in teaching before their training begins" (DfE, 2019c, p. 32).

Although the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy set out a number of ways in which to make it 'easier' to become a teacher, including increasing opportunities for people to experience teaching, and making it easier for Teaching Assistants (TAs) to become qualified teachers (DfE, 2019c), most of these suggestions do not appear to have been acted upon to date (Long & Danechi, 2022). One of the proposals yet to come into place is the proposal to create a more "efficient and effective" ITE system (DfE, 2019c, p. 34). To date, plans to change the ITE system via a 'market review' have been widely criticised, in part because during this process the number of ITE providers has been cut meaning that the geographical spread of ITE provision is now more sparse (Noble-Rogers, 2022).

The biggest change in teacher recruitment which seems to have already come about as a result of the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy at the time of writing is that the DfE has launched its own ITE application system (Long & Danechi, 2022). This

means that since October 2021 people must apply to ITE directly through the DfE,
rather than through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) as was
done previously (DfE, 2021). According to the Strategy, it was hoped that this move
would mean that more people who registered an interest in teaching via the
government's 'Get Into Teaching' information website would go on to apply to ITE (DfE,
2019c). Unfortunately, although this new ITE application system is currently relatively
new, the continued decline in the numbers of people applying to ITE since the
introduction of this system (Long & Danechi, 2022; McLean et al., 2023; Worth &
Faulkner-Ellis, 2022a), suggests that it has not yet had a positive impact upon teacher
recruitment.

Aside from those changes proposed in the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy
(DfE, 2019c), most policies aimed at improving teacher recruitment in England centre
around financial incentives for those who specialise in teacher shortage subjects (See &
Gorard, 2019). For example, whilst some ITE candidates in 2023/24 will not receive
financial support and may pay fees for their ITE course, most who specialise in
Chemistry or Physics will earn an automatic tax free bursary of £27,000 or can apply for
a scholarship of £29,000, and most specialising in Biology will earn a bursary of
£20,000 (Get into teaching, n.d.-a). As this example illustrates, the financial incentives
aimed at improving teacher recruitment are tiered according to need and are only
available for certain shortage specialisms. These incentives are also subject to regular
change. For instance, in response to the increase in ITE applications in 2020/2021
during the Covid-19 pandemic, the DfE reduced or removed bursaries for a large
number of subjects in 2021/2022 (Carr, 2020; Whittaker, 2020). Despite some of these

changes being reversed the following year, teacher recruitment in 2022/2023 was lower than it was before the pandemic for most subjects (Worth & Faulkner-Ellis, 2022a). The return, and worsening, of these specialism shortages indicates that these targeted financial incentives will not (by themselves) resolve England's teacher shortages (see Sections 2.2.1.2 and 2.3.1.2).

Additional policy attempts to improve teacher recruitment include making it easier for qualified teachers from other countries to become qualified teachers in England (Belger, 2022; DfE, 2022c), and 'Get into Teaching' events held in each region of England and advertised to those who register an interest in teaching on the 'Get Into Teaching' information website (Get into teaching, n.d.-b). There was also a 113% increase in spending on advertising for ITE between 2015/16 and 2019/20 (Long & Danechi, 2022), some of which was used to target young people specifically (Crown Commercial Service, 2020). Although these advertising campaigns, which emphasised the impact of teachers on the lives of their students as well as the financial benefits of teaching, had some positive impact on the number of people visiting the government's 'Get into teaching' website (Battiston et al., 2019; Crown Commercial Service, 2020; Lane et al., 2019), teacher recruitment targets continued to be missed throughout most of this period (e.g., DfE, 2018a).

Not only have government policies in recent years failed to recruit more people into teaching, but I also suggest that there is a severe lack of policy focus on the patterned nature of teacher shortages by social inequalities. In other words, although there are initiatives aimed at increasing recruitment to subjects and specialisms facing particularly acute teacher shortages (Get into teaching, n.d.-a), recent government policies do not

explicitly target groups underrepresented in the workforce; such as those from Minoritised Ethnicities who may face additional barriers to applying to ITE according to analyses of acceptance rates by Worth et al. (2022).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly for this study, there has been a sustained lack of evaluation to determine the impact of teacher recruitment (and retention) policies (House of Commons Education Committee, 2017; See & Gorard, 2019). In fact, there is some evidence to suggest that short-term planning and flaws in government policies may contribute to, rather than improve, teacher shortages (See & Gorard, 2019). Indeed, regular leadership changes at the DfE in recent years may mean that this short-sighted approach has been exacerbated (e.g., Whittaker, 2022a). This lack of evaluation and long-term planning indicates that there is little understanding as to whether, and to what extent, the teacher recruitment policies outlined in this section positively (or negatively) influence teacher shortages. For example, there is little data to suggest that providing bursaries to those specialising in shortage subjects will increase teacher recruitment in these specialisms. Furthermore, the continued under-recruitment of teachers points to a wider lack of understanding of why people do, or do not, become teachers; a topic on which this thesis aims to contribute new knowledge.

1.4   A summary of the rationale for this thesis

In this chapter I have presented the rationale for this study. I first highlighted the long-term and severe nature of teacher shortages in England. I then demonstrated how these shortages are disproportionately patterned by social inequalities, and by teaching specialisms. For example, we particularly need more teachers who come from

Minoritised Ethnicities and/or who specialise in science. I also outlined the potential negative impacts of these shortages on children, teachers themselves, and wider society. Because this thesis focuses on the reasons why people do, and do not, become teachers (rather than the reasons why people stay in teaching, or leave the profession), I then outlined how people can become a qualified teacher in England, and what policies currently exist to try to increase teacher recruitment. I argued that efforts to improve teacher recruitment via government policies and increased spending do not seem to have had a positive impact on recruitment rates. Furthermore, there appears to be little focus on working to make the teacher workforce more representative of the wider population.

1.5   The key terms and research questions that guide this study

In the context of England's ongoing and patterned teacher shortages, this thesis seeks to improve understandings of why people do, and do not, become teachers by examining what I call the 'teaching trajectories' of young people into and away from teaching. Although I am interested in trajectories into and away from teaching in all specialisms, for the reasons laid out in this chapter this thesis will focus especially on why and how young people's trajectories are influenced by social inequalities, and on what might be done to improve science teacher shortages specifically. This thesis thus straddles several different fields of research within and relating to education, many of which have different ways of describing and defining key aspects used and explored in this study. Because of the wealth of different fields upon which this research builds, I end this chapter with definitions of four of the key terms used in this thesis, before introducing this study's research questions.

First, I define '**young people**' in this study as anyone up to the age of 25. This wording echoes the broad definition of 'young people', or 'youth', as used by the UK government (e.g., Francis-Devine & Powell, 2023) and the OECD (2013), and reflects the ages of this study's participants.

Second, I refer to young people's career '**aspirations**' to indicate where a young person reports an explicit desire to follow a particular career path (e.g., to become a teacher) when they older (Brannen & Nilsen, 2007). I acknowledge, however, that these aspirations may vary considerably, and that some will be more 'concrete' than others (e.g., Archer & DeWitt, 2017). Where a desire to work in a particular career is more implicit or appears less concrete, I refer instead to young people's career 'interests'. As will be detailed in Chapters 3 and 4, in this thesis I take the view that where a young person expresses an aspiration or interest in becoming a teacher, they indicate a trajectory towards teaching.

Third, by '**trajectories**' I refer throughout this thesis to a young person's, or young people's, journey or journeys towards or away from teaching and/or a different pathway (Wenger, 1998). To have a teaching trajectory does not mean that someone will necessarily become a teacher, but that they are or have been interested in becoming a teacher. As will be further explained in Section 3.4 I conceptualise trajectories using identity theory and do not consider them to be linear pipelines; but multi-directional and continuous pathways (e.g., Archer, MacLeod, et al., 2020).

Fourth, and most importantly, by '**teacher**' I refer throughout this thesis to schoolteachers in state-funded primary, secondary and special schools in England;

unless otherwise stated. Whilst I recognise that teachers exist and work in other sectors (most notably nursery schools, Further Education institutions, and fee-paying schools), the definition of teacher used in this thesis is borrowed from the DfE (e.g., DfE, 2022d) and others researching young people's views of teachers and aspirations towards teaching (e.g., Han, 2018; Han, Borgonovi, & Guerriero, 2018; Park & Byun, 2015), and represents by far the largest group of teachers in England[19]. I am interested in trajectories to any and all teacher specialisms (primary and secondary subjects), and via different ITE routes. As highlighted in this chapter, however, I have an additional focus on whether or not people become science teachers (i.e., specialise in secondary Biology, Chemistry, and/or Physics). Throughout this thesis I have also chosen to refer to teaching as a 'profession' in recognition of the skilled nature of the role (OECD, 2005). I understand, however, that this term is sometimes contested (e.g., Ingersoll & Collins, 2018) as will be discussed in more detail in Section 2.3.1.1. Finally, I recognise preservice teachers (i.e., those in ITE), as well as in-service teachers (i.e., those working in schools), as pursuing teaching. This is because this research is concerned with who chooses to pursue teaching, rather than the working lives of existing teachers. Whilst in most cases I refer to 'being' or 'becoming' a teacher, for ease I refer to being a teacher as a verb ('to teach') in some instances.

This thesis thus examines **young people's teaching trajectories**. As will be explored in the following chapter, this approach responds to calls from multiple scholars researching teacher supply by using longitudinal data (See et al., 2023) to examine

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[19] For example, only roughly 7% of the UK population attend fee-paying schools (The Sutton Trust, 2019), meaning that the vast majority of young people are educated by teachers in state-funded schools.

those who were (or are) not yet teachers (Fray & Gore, 2018; Heinz, 2015), as well as those who turned away from teaching (See et al., 2022), and focusing upon potential teachers' decision making processes (See et al., 2023). This examination of young people's teaching trajectories is conducted through consideration of three research questions, which were informed by the context of this study (as introduced in this chapter), the current literature (see Chapter 2), and this study's datasets (see Chapter 4). These research questions are:

1) Who aspires to become a teacher (RQ1a), and why (RQ1b)?,

2) Why do some young people pursue teaching? (RQ2), and

3) Why do some young people drop their teaching aspirations, especially in science? (RQ3).

Chapter 2. Trajectories towards and away from teaching: A review of the evidence

2.1   Introduction

In the previous chapter I presented the rationale for this study by evidencing the long-term and severe teacher shortages currently experienced in England, and how these shortages are unevenly patterned by social inequalities and by teaching specialisms. In this chapter I review the existing empirical literature that considers why young people do, and do not, teach. The purpose of this chapter is not to provide an exhaustive or systemic review of relevant literature, but to assist me in answering this study's research questions by providing a contextual background to this thesis, and to illustrate the gaps that this thesis aims to address.

Before considering the literature reviewed in this chapter it is important to acknowledge that, as articulated by Lortie (2002) in their[20] landmark 1975 study of teachers in the US, "there is nothing obvious about the ways people are routed into various kinds of work" (p. 25). In other words, it is not easy to identify the reasons why people do, or do not, become teachers. As this chapter will demonstrate, existing research into who becomes a teacher and why has been informed by multiple different academic perspectives drawing upon fields including psychology, economics and sociology. As well as providing contextual information for this thesis and identifying gaps in the current

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[20] Throughout this thesis I have chosen to refer to all cited authors using the pronouns they/them/their. Whilst I acknowledge that this approach is somewhat unusual given that some authors' pronouns are known to be he/his or she/her (APA Style, 2022), this approach is intended to be inclusive and attempts to avoid misgendering authors (according to how they identify at the time of writing, or in the future).

literature, this review thus also serves to justify this study's approach to understanding teacher supply through the consideration of individuals' longitudinal teaching trajectories; as well as this study's use of a sociologically informed identity lens.

In Section 2.2 of this chapter I present research findings on what I have termed 'trajectories towards teaching'. Building upon the definition of trajectories given in Section 1.5, I define research on trajectories towards teaching as research with those who aspire to become a teacher, or have already become a teacher. In Section 2.3 I present research that focuses on 'trajectories away from teaching'; research with those who do not plan to teach or who have decided against teaching. Because this thesis is interested in teaching trajectories rather than teachers themselves, I focus throughout this chapter upon research which tells us about what factors influence whether or not young people become teachers. Thus, for the most part, I do not consider what the research tells us about the daily work or experiences of people who are already teachers.

This review is interested in trajectories to/from teaching in all specialisms (i.e., primary and all secondary subjects), though where available I include findings relevant to science teaching trajectories as this is an additional focus of this thesis (see RQ3 in Section 1.5). Furthermore, although existing reviews of the teacher supply literature tend to combine research from multiple countries (Fray & Gore, 2018; See et al., 2022), because this study is set in England and teaching trajectories have been shown to be influenced by regional contexts (e.g., Low et al., 2017; Watt et al., 2017a), I focus primarily on research from England throughout this chapter. Where applicable, however, I consider the international literature. In brief, this chapter demonstrates that young

people's teaching trajectories are influenced by multiple complex and overlapping reasons which appear to be strongly patterned by individual motivations as well as social, cultural and contextual influences.

2.2 Trajectories towards teaching

In this section I review the research on people's trajectories towards teaching. This section is presented in two parts, because I separate the two dominant sampling methods used in the current literature. First, in Section 2.2.1, I examine findings from research with young people who aspire to become teachers in order to consider what young aspirant teachers can tell us about who is most likely to want to teach when they are older, and why. In Section 2.2.2, I consider findings from research with preservice and in-service teachers; where I examine what retrospective accounts from those who have already decided to pursue teaching can tell us about people's trajectories towards teaching. Whilst research with young people and research with existing teachers have been considered together in other literature reviews (e.g., Gore et al., 2015; Heinz, 2015), here I present the findings of these two bodies of research separately. This separation both recognises these two different evidence bases (i.e., people who have yet to become teachers vs. people who are already teachers), and allows me to acknowledge that not all trajectories towards teaching result in a person becoming a teacher; as this thesis will demonstrate (see Chapter 7).

Historically, teaching has been referred to as a 'calling', including by those within the profession (e.g., Britzman, 1986; Gordon, 1993; Huebner, 1987; Lortie, 2002). Indeed, although the often poorly-defined notion of a 'calling' is rooted in traditional and religious

ideologies, the notion that teaching is a 'calling'; that teachers are 'destined' or well suited to becoming teachers; or that teaching is a 'vocation' that one is drawn towards, remain dominant discourses in modern and secular societies (e.g., Hansen, 2021; Madero, 2020). As will now be illustrated, however, research on trajectories towards teaching tends not to consider whether or not teaching was someone's 'calling' or 'vocation'. Indeed, the research shows that the reasons why people want to, and become, teachers are much messier and more varied than teaching being their calling or vocation. Put simply, who aspires to teach and who becomes a teacher is shaped by an individual's intersecting identity characteristics, what motivates them, and their social and cultural contexts.

2.2.1 Research with young people who aspire to become teachers

Here I consider findings from the literature about young people who aspire to become a teacher but are not yet teachers and, importantly for this study, may never become a teacher. I know of only three research studies from the international literature which track teaching aspirations longitudinally, and these all indicate that a significant majority of those who express a teaching aspiration in childhood do not go on to become a teacher by early adulthood (Croll, 2008; Hanushek & Pace, 1995; Sikora, 2021)[21]. In reviewing research with young people who aspire to teach I am not, therefore, directly interested in whether or not young people who express a teaching aspiration go on to become a teacher. Instead, here I am simply concerned with why some people are drawn to teaching as a child, teenager or young adult. This is because, to examine

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[21] The possible reasons for this will be considered in Section 2.3.

teaching trajectories we must consider those whose trajectories move away from teaching before becoming a teacher, as well as those who realise their teaching aspirations.

The existing research about teaching aspirations amongst young people in England is sparse. My review of the literature found only three studies from England that examined young people who aspire to teach; those of Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000), See (2004) and Gorard et al. (2021). These studies are one-off rather than longitudinal, focus on young people studying at university rather than school-aged young people[22], and rely on quantitative methods. For these reasons I not only review the findings from Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000), See (2004) and Gorard et al. (2021) here, but also research about young people's aspirations in general (where I pull out findings relating to teaching aspirations). This research will now be considered in two interlinking parts which mirror this study's first research question: who aspires to become a teacher? (RQ1a, in Section 2.2.1.1), and why do young people aspire to teach? (RQ1b, in Section 2.2.1.2). These sections are presented separately because, although *who* aspires to teach and the reasons *why* they aspire to teach are interlinked these questions are, for the most part, considered independently in the literature.

2.2.1.1 Who aspires to become a teacher?

First, I present findings from research about who aspires to become a teacher when they are older. Although there are relatively few research studies considering who wants to become a teacher when they are older, and even fewer which examine who aspires

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[22] I class these studies as focussing on young people because the majority of university students in England are under the age of 25 (Universities UK, 2019).

to teach specific specialisms such as science, existing studies do point to several key findings. The first of these findings is that teaching is one of the most popular aspirations amongst young people, especially school-aged children, in England (e.g., Chambers et al., 2018; Croll, 2008; Platt & Parsons, 2018). This finding also appears to be the case in other countries, including Australia (Gore et al., 2017). Perhaps unsurprisingly it has been suggested that the popularity of teaching, especially amongst younger children, may be because of the relative familiarity of the work of teachers to those who spend a lot of their time at school (e.g., Chambers et al., 2018; Lortie, 2002). Yet, a lack of longitudinal or cross-sectional data tracking teaching aspirations over time means that current research does not indicate whether young people are more, or less, likely to aspire to teach at different ages and/or when they are in (different stages of) education. This gap is something which this study seeks to address (see Section 5.2). The second key finding from current research about who aspires to teach is that teaching aspirations are patterned by young people's identities including their gender, ethnicity and social class. Evidence of these influences, including why they might occur and how they might intersect, will now be explored.

By gender

Research with young people consistently shows that girls and young women are more likely to want to teach than boys and young men. This tendency for more girls than boys to aspire to become a teacher appears to start when children are young and continue as they grow older. Although teaching is a relatively common aspiration for boys (e.g., Chambers et al., 2018), more girls than boys reported that teaching was amongst their aspirations in studies set in England with 4 to 11 year olds (Hutchings, 1996), 7 to 11

year olds (Chambers et al., 2018), 15 year olds (Croll, 2008), 17 and 18 year olds (Smithers & Hill, 1989), and university students (Gorard et al., 2021; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; See, 2004). Furthermore, these gender differences are often considerable. For example, See (2004) calculated that, all other things being equal, the young men in their study of undergraduate and postgraduate students were only 10% as likely to want to become a teacher as young women.

Not only are girls and young women more likely to aspire to teach, but they are also more likely to realise their teaching aspirations. Findings from the only two longitudinal studies I know to have tracked teaching aspirations over time and by gender show that, in the US and Australia, young women who aspired to teach whilst they were still in school were much more likely to later become a teacher than young men who had also expressed a teaching aspiration whilst still in school (Hanushek & Pace, 1995; Sikora, 2021).

This gender imbalance in teaching aspirations mirrors the teacher workforce statistics reviewed in Section 1.2.2. For instance, research from England shows that more young women than young men aspire to teach in primary schools specifically (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000), and research from Australia suggests that more young women than young men also want to teach at the secondary school level (Stokes, 2007). Strikingly, given the lack of data on the demographic or identity characteristics of science teachers (see Section 1.2.2) along with the knowledge that more men than women aspire to and pursue non-teaching science careers (e.g., Archer & DeWitt, 2017), research from both the US and the Netherlands suggests that more young women than young men also aspire to teach STEM subjects (Fuchs et al., 2021; van Rooij et al., 2020).

Whilst it is unsurprising that more girls than boys want to become teachers, given that more women than men teach (DfE, 2022d), current research has focussed mainly on identifying these demographic patterns, rather than examining the reasons for these patterns (Gore et al., 2015). Many people simply propose that the reason why more girls than boys want to become a teacher may be precisely because more women teach; meaning that teaching is a "'standard' occupation for women in ways that it is not for men" (Hanushek & Pace, 1995, p. 105), or that girls have more 'role-models' who are teachers (Polavieja & Platt, 2014). Research using data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) may support this view, as it has been found that 15 year old boys are less likely to want to teach where they attend school in a country where fewer men are teachers (Han et al., 2020).

Sociologists both in England and around the world have suggested that teaching is a more common aspiration amongst girls for two additional reasons; both of which rely on stereotypical gender assumptions. The first reason why more girls may aspire to teach according to sociologists is that perceptions of teachers' comparatively short contact time (sometimes referred to as 'working hours') and long holidays mean that people think that teachers are more able than those in other professions to conduct duties traditionally undertaken by women such as caring for children and housework (Acker, 1983; Lortie, 2002; Sabbe & Aelterman, 2007; Trouvé-Finding, 2005).

Research with young people suggests that these gendered assumptions may play a role in influencing teaching aspirations. In their study of the perceptions of primary school teaching amongst 1,049 17 year olds in Ireland, Drudy et al. (2005) found that young men were more likely than young women to express stereotypically gendered

views towards women. Drudy et al. (2005) refer to this finding as evidence of a 'domestic ideology', or a view that men and women have different responsibilities in relation to work, which in turn perpetuates the idea that women are more suited to professions that allow them to undertake traditional domestic roles. Furthermore, because Drudy et al. (2005) found that 10% of young women in their sample, compared with fewer than 1% of young men, aspired to become a primary school teacher they posit that this ideology may work to support or encourage young women's teaching aspirations, and discourage young men from wanting to teach.

The second reason why sociologists posit that teaching may be a more popular aspiration amongst girls is that the work of teachers is seen as more suitable for women because it is perceived as a form of caring for children, which is stereotypically associated with motherhood and femininity (Acker, 1995; Drudy, 2008). For example, according to Lortie (2002), views of teaching as feminine, and thus more suited to women, are likely to lead people to 'label' girls as prospective teachers more than boys;

> one would expect that girls are labelled as teachers more frequently than boys, if only because a wider range of their behaviour will be so channelled. An obviously nurturant girl who enjoys the company of younger children can be so labelled; but so can a somewhat aggressive and dominant girl. Nurturance among boys is probably suspect, whereas aggressiveness can be taken as a token of future prowess in a wide variety of 'masculine' occupations like business, law, or politics. (Lortie, 2002, p. 46)

This differential labelling may go some way to explaining why more girls than boys aspire to teach; because they are so 'labelled', or recognised, by friends and family members. Indeed, as will be discussed later in this chapter (Sections 2.2.2.4 and 2.3.1.6), encouragement and discouragement from others has been found to be a significant influence upon people's trajectories into teaching (e.g., Matthias, 2014). Despite how long ago some of the sociological works on gender and teaching were written (e.g., Acker, 1983), the continued gender imbalance in teaching aspirations suggests that common and far-reaching stereotypical—or (stereo)typical—views about what women do in their home lives, and the work of teaching, may still be a powerful influence on young people's aspirations towards teaching. To this extent, I suggest that boys and young men are not excluded from (aspiring to) teaching. Rather, stubborn social assumptions may work to deter or obstruct young men from aspiring to teach.

By ethnicity

Research shows that young people in England who identify as White British are more likely to aspire to teach than those come from Minoritised Ethnicities. For example, statistical studies in England with primary school students (Chambers et al., 2018), with secondary school students (Platt & Parsons, 2018), and with those studying at undergraduate level (Gorard et al., 2021) have shown that young people who identify as White British are more likely to express a teaching aspiration than their peers who identify as a Minoritised Ethnicity. Although these findings echo patterns in the makeup of the current teaching workforce in England by ethnicity (DfE, 2022d), they remain tentative because of the paucity of research focusing on the ethnicity of young aspirant teachers. Indeed, these findings could be seen as contradicting with analyses by Worth

et al. (2022) who found that people (of all ages) from Asian, Black and other Minoritised Ethnicity backgrounds were overrepresented amongst applicants to postgraduate ITE in 2019/2020. Worth et al. (2022) note, however, that the data they analysed were somewhat atypical because of the temporary increase in ITE applications during 2019/2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (see Section 1.2). It may therefore be the case that young people from Minoritised Ethnicities are more likely to aspire to teaching as they grow older, or that their trajectories were especially impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Current research does provide evidence that the influence of ethnicity upon young people's teaching aspirations intersects with gender. For example, in their study of 11,786 7 to 11 year olds, Chambers et al. (2018) found that teaching was the most popular aspiration amongst girls who identified as White British, White Other, Asian/Asian British and Mixed; whereas for girls who identified as Black (African, Caribbean, or British) teaching was the second most popular aspiration. Chambers et al. (2018) also reported that teaching was not in the top five aspirations for boys of any ethnicity in their sample. Similarly, in a study tracking 19,500 children born in the UK in the year 2000, Platt and Parsons (2018) found that teaching was among the five most popular career aspirations for girls of all ethnicities at ages 7, 11 and 14, apart from those from Black Caribbean backgrounds. In the same study teaching was only the top aspiration for girls who were White, however. The top aspiration for girls whose ethnicities were Mixed, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean or Black African was working as a doctor (Platt & Parsons, 2018). Finally, although teaching was the fifth most popular job aspiration for White boys, teaching did not feature in the top five

preferred jobs for boys of all other ethnicities (Platt & Parsons, 2018). This finding mirrors findings from a qualitative study of 96 secondary school students conducted in England in the early 1990s, which found that twice as many Black young women participants than Black young men participants were interested in becoming a teacher (Dhingra & Dunkwu, 1995). Together, these data indicate that the social inequalities of ethnicity and gender seem to intersect, rather than work discretely, in terms of how they influence young people's teaching aspirations in England.

Why ethnicity influences young people's teaching aspirations, alone or as an intersecting identity, is particularly under-researched. As with gender, one could argue that more young people who are White British in England, especially girls, aspire to become teachers because most teachers in England are White British women. Alternatively, Platt and Parsons (2018) report that young people in England from Minoritised Ethnicity backgrounds tend to aspire to professions with higher than average wages than their peers from White majority backgrounds. The comparatively low pay of teachers compared with other graduate earners (see Section 2.3.1) may therefore play a role in deterring young people from Minoritised Ethnicities from wanting to teach. Nonetheless, in considering the reasons behind findings from the current research it is important to remember that, as Gillborn et al. (2017) write, "quantitative research tends to treat ethnic origin as if it were a causal factor rather than a social identity often associated with discriminatory treatment at the hands of educational institutions" (p. 854). In this way, I do not use data from Chambers et al. (2018) and others to conclude that White British young people are naturally more inclined to want to teach than their peers from Minoritised Ethnicities. Instead, I propose that those least likely to aspire to

teach in terms of ethnicity may not want to teach because of their (experiences of)

minoritisation in education. For example, it is possible that the academic fatigue

experienced by Minoritised Ethnicity students as a result of the White-centric curriculum

(Tyler et al., 2020) could be a deterrent from wanting to return to formal education in

adulthood as teachers.

By social class

Research suggests that young people who aspire to teach are more likely to come from

working-class family backgrounds[23] than their peers who do not aspire to teach.

Although, unlike gender and ethnicity, the DfE does not collect data on the social class

background of teachers, this finding reflects what we know about those who become

teachers from research with preservice teachers (e.g., Heinz, 2013). This research does

not, however, signify that teaching is itself a working-class profession (Apple, 1983);

one reason being that teaching is a graduate profession requiring specialised education

(see Section 1.3.1). Instead, research simply shows that teaching is more popular

amongst young people who come from less advantaged backgrounds.

Despite its relative use to help us to understand differential life chances and choices,

including within education, social class has many different definitions and can therefore

be described as impossible to measure (Crompton, 1999). For this reason, researchers

studying young people's teaching aspirations have identified numerous different proxies

for social class. For example, See (2004) found that low socioeconomic background, as

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[23] As will be discussed in more detail in Section 4.3.2.1, throughout this thesis I refer to social class using the descriptors of 'working-class' or 'middle-class'. Whilst I recognise the disadvantage that these terms can be interpreted very broadly, their use acknowledges the impossibility of pinpointing the construct of social class (Crompton, 1999).

determined by parents' occupations and parental educational qualifications, indicated an increased likelihood of undergraduate and postgraduate students in England and Wales aspiring to teach. Similarly, Gorard et al. (2021) found that undergraduate students in England whose parents did not have a degree (a frequently used measure to identify those from working-class backgrounds [e.g. Grusky & Weeden, 2008]) were more likely to report that they were considering teaching.

Just as attempting to measure social class is complex, considering why social class appears to influence the likelihood of a young person aspiring to become a teacher is especially difficult. As with gender and ethnicity, there is evidence that social perceptions of teachers and teaching are likely to play a role in why young people from working-class backgrounds are more likely to aspire to teach. For example, Lortie (2002) and others (e.g., Maguire, 2005b) have demonstrated that teaching is often seen as a route or 'ladder' towards the middle-classes for those from working-class backgrounds because of its accessibility (see Section 2.2.1.2), combined with its position as a graduate, and arguably therefore middle-class, profession. Indeed, research from the wider career aspirations literature suggests that young people often aspire to work in professions that are 'thinkable' routes to 'success' according to their social backgrounds (Archer, 2010a); meaning that one of the reasons why young people from working-class backgrounds are more likely to want to teach may be because they see teaching as a viable path to increased social mobility. Why those from more middle-class backgrounds are less likely to want to teach, on the other hand, is something explored in this study (see Chapter 7).

By multiple intersecting social inequalities

So far in this section I have considered evidence which shows that the social inequalities of gender, ethnicity and social class are unevenly patterned amongst who aspires to become a teacher in England. I have also shown that it is not a coincidence that those who identify as women, as White British, and who come from working-class backgrounds seem to be most likely to aspire to teach; this patterning appears to be because social and cultural structures and pressures work to shape these aspirations.

I also posit that additional social and cultural inequalities including region, dis/ability, sexuality and religion may all also work to influence who aspires to become a teacher; though research to date has not typically examined these factors. Just as career aspirations in general have been shown to be influenced by multiple factors (e.g., Archer, DeWitt, & Wong, 2013; Croll, 2008; Schoon & Polek, 2011), current research shows that there are multiple influences other than gender, ethnicity and social class upon young people's teaching aspirations. One example of this is that young people are more likely to express an aspiration to become a teacher when they have lower than average attainment than their peers[24] (e.g., Gorard et al., 2021; Gore et al., 2017; Mann et al., 2020). The literature also illustrates that young people who aspire to become a teacher are somewhat more likely to have a parent who is a teacher (e.g., Han, 2018; Unwin, 1990), attend schools that serve a higher proportion of children eligible for Free

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[24] Researchers and policymakers often link the attainment of those who go on to become teachers with teacher quality. For example, it has been suggested that the quality of teaching in schools would be higher were more people with higher educational attainment (e.g., high test scores) to become teachers (e.g., Chevalier et al., 2007; Goldhaber & Liu, 2003; Han & Borgonovi, 2020). Whilst teacher quality is an important issue for education, in this thesis I am primarily focused on who becomes a teacher and why (not), rather than the quality of teaching and how this might be improved.

School Meals (e.g., Chambers et al., 2018), attend state comprehensive schools, rather than fee-paying or selective schools[25] (e.g., Mann et al., 2013), and specialise in humanities and/or social science subjects (e.g., Gorard et al., 2021; Stokes, 2007), or female-dominated subjects (e.g., van Rooij et al., 2020).

Whilst the above factors may not themselves be considered social or cultural inequalities, all are correlated with other factors which include gender, ethnicity and social class (e.g., Polavieja & Platt, 2014; Reay et al., 2005). For example, a young person's attainment at school has been shown to be impacted by the social inequalities that they experience such as their family's economic status, and whether or not they have special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) (e.g., Gorard & Siddiqui, 2019). I thus argue that these additional influences upon teaching aspirations are evidence of the ways in which wider social and cultural inequalities interact to influence teaching aspirations amongst young people. In other words, although the majority of research on teaching aspirations examines inequalities as discrete demographic categories, when the literature is viewed together one can see that these factors appear to intersect and interact with each other. As will be discussed in Section 3.6, this thesis takes an intersectional approach to understanding who does, and does not, (aspire to) become a teacher in order to try to address this gap.

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[25] As first outlined in Section 1.5, only roughly 7% of the UK population attend fee-paying schools. Research has shown that this population is disproportionately over-represented in positions of power and leadership (The Sutton Trust, 2019). Those who attend fee-paying schools tend to come from economically advantaged backgrounds, though scholarships to fee-paying schools are sometimes available for high attaining students.

2.2.1.2 Why do young people aspire to teach?

In addition to demonstrating that young people who aspire to teach seem to be influenced by social and cultural factors, the literature on teaching aspirations also, to a lesser degree, sheds light on the aspects of teaching itself that attract young people to want to teach. Despite the relative lack of research into teaching aspirations, the literature suggests that young people in England are drawn towards wanting to teach for a multiplicity of reasons, or what Lortie (2002) calls 'attractors'. Here, I have chosen to present these attractors under the following four themes, beginning with is the most commonly reported attractor in the literature; 1) wanting to work with others and make a social contribution, 2) positive learning and teaching experiences, 3) the perks of teaching, and 4) the accessibility of teaching. As will be considered in Section 2.2.2, these attractors broadly mirror the reasons that preservice teachers report for having wanted to join the profession.

Wanting to work with others and make a social contribution

First, wanting to work with others (especially children), wanting to help others, and wanting to make a positive contribution to society are regularly amongst the top reasons given by young people for wanting to become a teacher. Whilst these three attractors to teaching are distinct from one another, I group them together here because these reasons are often viewed together as evidence that those who want to teach are influenced by 'altruistic' or charitable interests, as will be considered further in Section 2.2.2.2.

Several studies set in England point to the influence of wanting to work with children and/or wanting to make a social contribution in young people's teaching aspirations. For example, in studies by Smithers and Hill (1989) and Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000) aspirant teachers in their final years of compulsory schooling and those studying for an undergraduate degree respectively reported being drawn to the profession because they wanted to work with children and/or help children to learn. Furthermore, respondents who were classed as 'pro-teaching' in the study by Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000) were found to place relatively greater emphasis on 'a job where I will contribute to society' and 'a job where I can care for others', than those who were undecided or against teaching. Similarly, undergraduate students surveyed by Gorard et al. (2021) who were planning to become teachers reported being more motivated by the chance to 'give something back' than their peers who did not want to teach. Notably, young people who want to teach science appear to share this reasoning. For example, research from the Netherlands suggests that STEM undergraduate and Masters students are more likely to express an interest in secondary school teaching if they report that it is important for them to have 'social contact' in their future job (van Rooij et al., 2020).

Positive experiences of learning and teaching

Second, some young people who aspire to become a teacher report that they want to teach because of their prior teaching and learning experiences. For example, whilst the few research studies from England that focus on teaching aspirations do not investigate these factors, in their study of teenagers' teaching intentions in Australia, Sikora (2021) found that 16 year olds were significantly more likely to plan to become a teacher when they reported that they enjoyed school themselves. It therefore seems to be the case

that positive experiences at school may influence young people to want to become teachers. Whilst this reason for wanting to teach is not particularly surprising, as will be considered in Section 2.3.1, some have argued that it is based upon only a partial view of the work of teachers and thus may mean that those who go on to teach for this reason are worryingly misinformed and unprepared (Borg, 2004; Lortie, 2002).

It is not only positive experiences of learning that can prompt young people to want to teach, but also positive experiences of teaching. For example, one study conducted with 15 and 16 year olds in the Philippines identified experiences that gave young people the opportunity to perform the role of a teacher, such as tutoring younger children, as a common reason for wanting to teach (Mangaoil et al., 2017). Similarly, in the US Schutz et al. (2001) found that undergraduate students who had recently been accepted onto ITE courses were drawn to teaching because they had experienced positive 'teaching-type' experiences such as baby-sitting, sports coaching, or supporting youth clubs. The authors referred to these teaching-type experiences as 'critical incidents' in the development of participants' plans to teach (Schutz et al., 2001). Within science, too, research from the US suggests that teaching science in informal learning settings may help people to become interested in teaching (Refvem et al., 2022). The causality of this relationship is unclear, however, given that those who want to teach may seek out more opportunities such as coaching and tutoring and will thus have more, and likely more positive, teaching-type experiences than others. In this way, one cannot rule out the possibility that teaching-type experiences simply reinforce existing teaching aspirations rather than spark new aspirations to teach amongst those who have not previously considered teaching.

The perks of teaching

Third, there is evidence that school holidays, the job security of teaching, and teacher pay attract some young people to consider teaching in their future. I refer to these non-financial and financial attractors together and as 'perks' because, as will now be discussed, they all appear to be secondary attractors to teaching rather than especially key influences in whether or not young people aspire to teach.

The first 'perk' that may partly attract young people towards teaching is the amount of holiday available to teachers; typically 13 weeks in England, compared with around five weeks for workers in other professions (Hillary et al., 2018)[26]. For example, Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000) found that 72% of all of their undergraduate respondents rated the factor that 'teachers get long holidays' as a potential encouragement for them to consider teaching. Likewise, See (2004) and Gorard et al. (2021) also found that university students who planned to pursue teaching identified the length of holidays offered by a job as a motivating factor for their career plans. Notably, however, holidays were rated as less important than other, more altruistic, factors by aspirant teachers in all three of these studies; suggesting that holidays may be a secondary attractor or 'added bonus', rather than the main reason why people wanted to teach.

A second perk that appears to factor into why some young people aspire to teach is the long-term job security that is typically associated with teaching (e.g., Atfield & Purcell, 2010). Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000), See (2004) and Gorard et al. (2021) all found that university students in England and Wales, seemingly from all backgrounds, valued

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[26] These long holidays are somewhat balanced out by long working hours, as will be considered in Section 2.3.1.3.

job security as an important factor when choosing their future career, and thought that teaching provided this job security. Whilst these studies do not present analyses of whether this influence of job security was patterned by social inequalities, wider research on career aspirations has found that those from working-class backgrounds are more likely to aspire to jobs they view as secure (Archer, 2010a; Roberts & Evans, 2013). As with holidays, however, analysis comparing the ratings of those who planned to teach with those who did not plan to teach suggest that the job security of teaching is not the main reason why people want to teach, but is secondary to other, often altruistic, reasons (e.g., Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000).

The final perk that may be a reason why young people aspire to become a teacher relates to teacher pay, and financial incentives to become a teacher. Findings about whether teacher pay might influence teaching aspirations are mixed, perhaps because young people may not always have an accurate perception of teacher pay (e.g., Dolton et al., 2018). For example, some researchers have used graduate outcomes data to calculate that more graduates in England, including those who have graduated from STEM subjects (Sims, 2018b), would go into teaching if teaching salaries were increased (Chevalier et al., 2007). In support of this finding is analysis of PISA data, which shows that 15 year olds are significantly more likely to report that they expect to become a teacher by the age of 30 in countries where teachers earn more (Han et al., 2018), particularly if they identify as boys rather than girls (Park & Byun, 2015).

Importantly, however, the perk of teacher pay may act in a similar, secondary, way to the perks of holidays and job security. For instance, research with university students in England suggests that increasing financial incentives to teach may only be effective in

attracting those already intending to teach, not those who were not considering teaching anyway (Dolan et al., 2012; Gorard et al., 2022; See, 2004). In other words, (increased) teacher pay appears to be an auxiliary attractor for young people in England who have existing teaching aspirations, but it may not itself attract those who do not already aspire to teach. Indeed, as will be considered in the second half of this chapter (Section 2.3.1), perceptions that teacher pay is low may actually deter some young people from wanting to teach.

The accessibility of teaching

Fourth, and finally, some young people appear to aspire to become a teacher partly because they see it as an accessible job. In other words, teaching is an attractive career aspiration for some young people because it is viewed as easier to access than some other professions. The draw of the accessibility of teaching amongst young people is, I suggest, evident amongst those who express teaching as a 'backup' or second-choice aspiration if their first-choice aspiration does not work out. For example, although not many studies report on children's 'backup' aspirations, primary school teaching was found to be just as popular as a second- or third-choice career than as a first-choice career in a study of 17 year olds in Ireland by Drudy et al. (2005). As was discussed in Section 1.3.2, the fact that 150,000 people registered their interest in becoming a teacher on the government's 'Get Into Teaching' information website in 2017/18, but in the same year only 45,000 people applied for postgraduate ITE, could also point to teaching being a popular backup career should a first-choice career not work out (DfE, 2019c).

Although there appears to be little discussion of the accessibility of teaching in the literature, I suggest that this view of teaching as accessible is informed by what Lortie (2002) calls the 'wide decision range' of teaching, meaning that the routes to becoming a teacher as outlined in Section 1.3.1 are open to all adults with, or willing to pursue, an undergraduate degree. Indeed, in England this wide decision range may be heightened by the short length of ITE courses compared with that of other countries (Allen & Sims, 2018) and the knowledge that many more people are needed in the profession (see Section 1.2). As will be discussed in Section 2.3.1.5, however, the accessibility of teaching may not only act as an attractor to, but also as a deterrent from, becoming a teacher.

2.2.2 Research with people who become teachers

So far in this chapter I have reviewed what research about young people's teaching aspirations tells us about who wants to become a teacher when they are older, and why. In an attempt to address some of the gaps caused by the sparsity of research on young people's teaching aspirations, this section considers findings from the much larger field of research that explores why preservice and in-service teachers[27] joined the profession[28]. Very few studies consider why young people specifically (as opposed to all people) have become teachers, however. A review of 75 international studies investigating teacher supply by Gore et al. (2015) identified only six studies published

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[27] I use the term 'preservice' to refer to those in ITE. In the literature preservice teachers are sometimes referred to using other terms including 'teaching candidates' and 'student teachers'. To distinguish preservice teachers from (both early career and/or experienced) other teachers I sometimes use the terms 'in-service' and 'existing' to refer to those already in the teaching profession.
[28] As outlined in Section 1.5, I consider both preservice and in-service teachers to be teachers for the purposes of this research.

between 2005 and 2015 which explicitly focused upon the reasons people chose teaching as a first career, none of which were from England. One consequence of this approach to current research is therefore that career-changers may be overrepresented in the literature on why people become teachers. Whilst I attempt to pay specific attention to findings relevant to why young people become teachers because of this study's particular focus and research questions, I consider research with teachers of all ages in this section of this literature review.

Findings from this research are presented below as four types of influence upon becoming a teacher; 1) intersecting social and cultural influences, 2) motivational influences, 3) teaching as a backup career, and 3) the influence of others. Findings from the first three of these influences mirror many of the findings about why young people aspire to teach considered earlier in this section. In other words, the factors that influence why young people aspire to teach seem to broadly echo the factors that influence why teachers report having pursued the profession. Importantly, however, the distinction between these samples should be borne in mind. Whilst the findings presented in Section 2.2.1 came from studies with people who had yet to pursue a career (in teaching or not), the findings presented in this section come from studies with teachers. In particular, and informed by research using identity theory, I suggest that findings from those already in teaching will be influenced by the perspective of being a teacher. According to Holmegaard, Madsen, et al. (2014a), how people talk about their lives and choices can be compared to "driving down a winding road. As the road turns, new images and landscapes become visible through the windscreen, but additionally the road behind the car appears at a different angle through the rear-view mirror" (p.

767). In this way, those who have already entered teaching will necessarily view why they became a teacher from the view-point of now being a teacher; meaning that their retrospective viewpoint may (inadvertently and unknowingly) shape how they see and describe their trajectories into teaching.

2.2.2.1 Intersecting social and cultural influences

Evidence shows that who becomes a teacher is patterned by many of the same inequalities that were found to pattern teaching aspirations in Section 2.2.1.1. In particular, and as noted in Section 1.2.2, we know that people who become teachers in England are more likely to be women than men[29], and are more likely to are likely to identity as White British than any other ethnicity (DfE, 2022d). As in Section 2.2.1.1, I here refer to gender and ethnicity specifically as a social 'inequalities' because of the differential treatment of these identity characteristics in wider society. I recognise however, that the ways in which these inequalities influence teaching trajectories differs. For example, within the teacher workforce, those who identify as men and/or as White are more likely to be promoted to leadership positions (DfE, 2018c); whilst teachers from Minoritised Ethnicities report experiencing implicit and explicit discrimination in the form of racism and differential expectations from colleagues, students and parents (Cunningham & Hargreaves, 2007; Education Support, 2023; Haque & Elliott, 2019; Tereshchenko et al., 2020), and are more likely to leave the profession (Allen et al., 2016).

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[29] DfE data classify teacher gender as either 'male', 'female', or 'gender unclassified' (DfE, 2022d). As will be discussed in Section 4.3 I do not consider gender to be a binary construct, but understand some of the reasons for treating it as such in quantitative research.

Existing literature reviews suggest that the social inequalities of gender and ethnicity not only pattern the teaching workforce, but strongly influence who becomes a teacher (Fray & Gore, 2018; Gore et al., 2015; Heinz, 2015; See et al., 2022); both when considered individually and intersectionally. For instance, research with existing teachers suggests that how and why gender influences people's decisions to enter teaching is complex and multifaceted. In a qualitative study of six women teachers in the US, Olsen (2008) concluded that the women in their study were influenced by gender in their teaching trajectories in three indirect ways; 1) because women in their families had worked in education and enjoyed it, 2) because as girls they had grown up playing teachers and this reinforced gendered perceptions of the work of teaching, and 3) because the work/life balance associated with teaching was seen to be compatible with motherhood. Interestingly, the latter two of these findings echo the sociological considerations behind the reasons why more girls than boys aspire to teach examined in Section 2.2.1.1, which suggested that young girls are more likely to aspire to teach because of stereotypically gendered views about the work of teachers, along with social expectations of women. As Lortie (2002) first argued in 1975, then, the high proportion of women teachers is not simply because more women want to be teachers, but is likely to be a consequence of social and cultural constraints, structures and expectations.

Gendered perceptions of the work of teachers have also been shown to intersect with ethnicity to influence teaching trajectories. For example, in their research focusing on teacher gender and ethnicity in England, Butt et al. (2010) studied 18 British South Asian preservice women teachers. The authors found that their participants had pursued teaching primarily because of the flexibility of the job, perceptions about how

teaching would 'fit' with their current and future family lives, and how well teaching was accepted as a career for British South Asian women by their own communities (Butt et al., 2010). Notably, however, teaching was not considered to be as acceptable a career for British South Asian men (Butt et al., 2010). In this way, this study not only bolsters the findings from Olsen (2008) in the English context, but also shows that perceptions of teachers and teaching are influenced by intersecting social inequalities; not singularly those that are gendered.

Similarly, a study by Bergey (2021) in the US found that 12 Asian American preservice men teachers had become teachers despite considerable discouragement from friends and family members framed around traditional social and cultural perceptions of teaching; for example the homogenising discourse that teaching is 'White women's work' because the vast majority of teachers in the US are White women (e.g., Hancock & Warren, 2017). Specifically, Bergey (2021) found that the work of teaching did not align with social and cultural expectations that Asian American men would work in highly-paid careers, and that their participants therefore developed professional identities linked to their non-conformity to the stereotypical 'image' of a teacher as a White woman. In other words, although these Asian American men became teachers they were exceptional in doing so, and their identities as teachers explicitly acknowledged and developed from this exceptionality.

This example from Bergey (2021) of exceptions to the norm that most teachers in the US, as in England, are White women illustrates that (stereo)typical perceptions of teachers work to influence who becomes a teacher. This study also demonstrates, however, that wider social perceptions of what people who identify as different genders

and ethnicities are, or are not, well 'suited to' also impacts teaching trajectories. Indeed more recent research from the US, this time focusing on who becomes a STEM teacher (Basile & Ginsberg, 2022), found that teaching entrants sometimes experienced introductory courses that were inadvertently designed to 'weed out' rather than support students from Minoritised Ethnicities to become teachers as a result of the dominance of White-centric ideologies and epistemologies with the education system (e.g., Hancock & Warren, 2017).

Current research, mainly from the US, therefore indicates that persistent and often stereotypical perspectives about teachers and teaching, and wider society, can influence who becomes a teacher. Even where those whose identities are exceptions to the norm of White women do join the teaching profession, they may fail to fit into the (expected) role of a schoolteacher (Bergey, 2021; Callender, 2020; Hancock & Warren, 2017). I argue that these findings raise questions about whether access to the teaching profession is equitable or whether, and why, some people are discouraged or barred from entering the profession[30]. Specifically, the research reviewed here implies that men and people from Minoritised Ethnicities are not underrepresented in the teaching profession simply because of personal choice, but are in effect often prevented from teaching because of wider social and cultural expectations and pressures.

Of course, gender and ethnicity are not the only social inequalities which appear to influence who becomes a teacher. As stated in Section 1.2.2, teachers in England are more likely to come from working-class backgrounds than middle-class backgrounds

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[30] In Section 4.2.1 I define how I view the concept of 'equity' and outline what I refer to as the social justice axiology that guides this thesis as a result of this seemingly inequitable access to teaching.

(Chevalier et al., 2007). In addition, research shows that teachers tend to have lower than average attainment (Chevalier et al., 2007), come from families who teach (Sims, 2018a), have attended state schools (Chevalier et al., 2007), and have studied 'generic' or broad subjects, rather than specialised subjects, at university (Gorard et al., 2022). Understandings of how and why these factors work to (intersect and) impact people's trajectories towards teaching remain "patchy", however (Gore et al., 2015, p. 16). Just as researchers have called for research with existing teachers to use intersectional approaches (Maguire, 2005a; Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2010), I therefore suggest that research on who becomes a teacher and why should use frameworks that recognise the multiplicity and intersectionality of the social and cultural influences upon people's trajectories towards teaching. To date, however, there has been a lack of research taking an intersectional approach to considering who becomes a teacher and why (Fray & Gore, 2018; Gore et al., 2015), including in England; a gap which this thesis hopes to address.

2.2.2.2 Motivational influences

Most research which investigates why people have become teachers focuses on motivational influences. As will now be discussed, findings from this body of research show that preservice and established teachers report numerous overlapping motivations for teaching; many of which mirror the reasons why young people want to teach discussed in Section 2.2.1.2.

Perhaps as a result of the many reasons why people teach, there have been multiple attempts to categorise the different types of teaching motivations in the international

literature (e.g., Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012; Javornik Krečič & Ivanuš Grmek, 2005; Thomson et al., 2012). Probably the most well-known and widely-used attempt to categorise teaching motivations, along with some other influences, is the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) model, first developed by Watt and Richardson (2007) in their research with preservice teachers in Australia. The empirically-validated FIT-Choice model is a mainly-quantitative survey drawing upon expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation (Parsons et al., 1984), on which preservice teacher respondents rate their reasons for pursuing teaching from a list of predetermined influences. The scale has been criticised, however, for not taking into account many of the social and cultural influences briefly considered in Section 2.2.2.1 (Gore et al., 2015; Klassen et al., 2011). Applications of the model typically illustrate that preservice teachers, including those specialising in science teaching (Madden et al., 2022; Watt et al., 2012; Watt et al., 2007), are motivated to teach by a desire to help children and benefit society, and a belief that they will be good at teaching; but are not highly motivated by the salary or social status of teaching, and do not pursue teaching as a 'fallback' career when other plans fail (e.g., Watt et al., 2017b). Despite its wide-spread use in many countries (Watt et al., 2017a), however, there are currently no known applications of the FIT-Choice scale in England. As a result, I here focus mainly upon findings from research taking different approaches to the subject of 'teacher motivations'.

Research with preservice teachers often summarises the ways in which people have been drawn to teaching through a typology of motivations comprising altruistic, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (See et al., 2022). The first of these, altruistic teaching

motivations, are commonly defined as including the desire to work with and help children and the desire to improve society (e.g., Struyven et al., 2013). These reasons are regularly perceived to be amongst the strongest motivations for becoming a teacher (e.g., Fray & Gore, 2018), which echoes findings that young people want to teach because they want to help others and society as highlighted in Section 2.2.1.2. Indeed preservice teachers in England, including those specialising in science, have regularly reported that they became teachers primarily because they wanted to work with children, and/or because they wanted to improve, or 'make a difference' to, others and society (e.g., Barker & Reyes, 2001; Fuchs et al., 2021; Hobson et al., 2009; Kyriacou et al., 1999; Perryman & Calvert, 2020; Thornton et al., 2002).

Intrinsic motivations, when applied to teaching, are often defined as including people's passion for teaching or their personal interests or aspirations (Struyven et al., 2013). These types of motivations are typically found to be the second most commonly reported reason for teaching after altruistic motivations. This finding builds upon conclusions from the teaching aspirations literature highlighted in Section 2.2.1.2, which showed that positive experiences of learning and teaching can influence young people to want to become a teacher. Preservice and in-service teachers from all specialisms in England have reported that they became a teacher for intrinsic motivations including that they thought that teaching would be satisfying or rewarding (e.g., Jarvis & Woodrow, 2005; Reid & Caudwell, 1997), they had a belief that they were good at teaching (e.g., Hagger & Malmberg, 2011; Menzies et al., 2015), because they wanted to be creative (e.g., Perryman & Calvert, 2020), they enjoyed previous teaching-type experiences (e.g., Dawes & Wheeldon, 2022; Hillier et al., 2013), and/or because they

wanted to continue to work in a subject in which they had previously specialised (e.g., for their undergraduate degree) (e.g., Andrews & Hatch, 2002; Kyriacou et al., 1999; Younger et al., 2004). Relatedly, and seeming to span both altruistic and intrinsic teacher motivations, a desire to share one's specialist subject with young people is a commonly-reported motivation for teaching amongst those who go to become secondary school teachers (e.g., O'Sullivan et al., 2009), including in science (e.g., Barker & Reyes, 2001; Fuchs et al., 2021).

Extrinsic teacher motivations are often defined as having wanted to teach because of aspects of the job which are not directly related to teaching itself; such as holidays, level of pay, status and working conditions (Struyven et al., 2013). These motivations are therefore similar to the 'perks' of teaching which were found to be secondary attractors to teaching amongst young people in Section 2.2.1.2. For example preservice teachers in England, especially those specialising in primary school teaching, have reported that they value that teaching allows time for family (Malderez et al., 2007; Reid & Caudwell, 1997; Thornton et al., 2002), and that they were motivated by the job security of teaching (Jarvis & Woodrow, 2005). Teachers in England have also, though to a lesser extent, reported that they were attracted to teaching by financial incentives (Matthias, 2014) or the reliable pay of teaching (Jerrim & Sims, 2019). As with the 'perks' considered in Section 2.2.1.2, however, researchers have typically found that teachers report that extrinsic motivations were less influential in their decision to become a teacher than altruistic and intrinsic motivations (e.g., Malderez et al., 2007).

Importantly, altruistic, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations seem to work together to influence teaching trajectories (Struyven et al., 2013). In other words, and as was

observed with the reasons behind young people's teaching aspirations (Section 2.2.1.2), preservice and in-service teachers report being motivated by a combination of altruistic influences, intrinsic and/or extrinsic influences. Furthermore, how these motivations interact is likely to be influenced by social, cultural and contextual influences. For example, evidence suggests that financial incentives may attract more men than women to become teachers (Worth & Hollis, 2021). Furthermore, as will be considered in more detail in Section 2.2.2.3, financial motivations may be particularly strong during periods where other professions appear less financially reliable (e.g., Chevalier et al., 2007). Indeed, a review of international research in this area found that women teachers tend to report having been driven by more altruistic and intrinsic motivations, along with family-orientated extrinsic motivations, whereas men teachers tend to report having been driven by more extrinsic motivations such as pay (See et al., 2022).

Despite the ongoing use of altruistic, intrinsic and extrinsic categorisations to explain teaching motivations (e.g., Giersch, 2021), however, researchers do not consistently agree on the definitions of these terms. For example, and as previously highlighted by Watt and Richardson (2007), the desire to work with children has both been categorised as an altruistic motivation (e.g., Yong, 1995) and as an intrinsic motivation (e.g., Young, 1995). More concerning than this confusion, however, is that, like the FIT-Choice scale, current uses of these three categories fail to adequately take into account the social and cultural influences upon people's decision to teach (Gore et al., 2015). Thus, although altruistic, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are useful terms to summarise what teachers report as having been their motivations for teaching, concluding that people

teach for these three reasons, as many existing studies do (Fray & Gore, 2018; Heinz, 2015), may provide only a partial description of why people become teachers.

2.2.2.3 Teaching as a backup career

Another reason why people became teachers appears to be because other, more preferred, choices did not work out. This echoes the finding that some young people are attracted to teaching because of its relative accessibility and 'wide decision range' (Lortie, 2002), as was discussed in Section 2.2.1.2. Here, I focus mostly on research specifically with young people who report having considered or applied for another career before turning to teaching, still at a young age. This approach is taken because I recognise that the reasons why young people pursue teaching as a backup career may be different from the reasons that career changers give for becoming teachers later in life (e.g., Matthias, 2014; Raggl & Troman, 2008).

There are a number of findings from the research which suggest that, for many teachers, teaching was a backup career. For example, roughly one third of women teachers in England who were surveyed for the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018, along with almost half of male teachers, reported that teaching had not been their first choice of career (OECD, 2019b). Similarly, a finding from the daily survey app for teachers in England, 'Teacher Tapp', showed that up to one third of respondents reported that they became a teacher because they did not know what else they could to do (Allen, 2022).

Qualitative research with preservice teachers in England suggests that those who specialise in science may be especially likely to pursue teaching after other careers did

not work out (Dawes & Wheeldon, 2022). This finding is echoed by findings from science teachers who took part in TALIS 2018 (OECD, 2019b). Dawes and Wheeldon (2022) suggest that this correlation may be in part because some undergraduate science students have their initial plans for postgraduate study in science thwarted by fears that they lack the academic skills required for a career as a scientist. On one hand, I argue that this suggestion aligns with research which has shown that young people (even those who have specialised in science) perceive scientists as 'effortlessly clever', or as having a natural ability in science, which can deter even the highest attaining students from continuing with the subject (Archer, Moote, & MacLeod, 2020a). On the other hand, findings from Dawes and Wheeldon (2022) also hint that young people may view teaching as less intellectually stimulating than other professions, as has been demonstrated by others (Gorard et al., 2021) and will be considered in more detail in Section 2.3.1.

More generally, one of the reasons why young people especially may pursue teaching as a backup career is economic and labour market uncertainties. For example, analyses of UK graduate cohort data indicate that more people become teachers immediately after leaving university when the economy is weak, when graduate unemployment is high, and/or when graduate earnings are low (e.g., Chevalier et al., 2007; Dolton et al., 2003). Chevalier et al. (2007) suggest that the reason behind this pattern is that teaching is seen as a 'recession-free profession' with high job security. Indeed, and as highlighted in Section 1.2, during the writing of this thesis the economic uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent national lockdowns (e.g., Gustafsson, 2020) saw a temporary surge in the number of people, including young

people, applying to become a teacher in England (UCAS, 2023; Worth & Faulkner-Ellis, 2021).

Given the apparent popularity of teaching as a backup career it is somewhat surprising that international applications of the FIT-Choice scale have typically found that the majority of teachers do not report that teaching was a 'fallback' career for them (e.g., Watt et al., 2017b). This low proportion of teachers who report that teaching was their fallback career may be a result of the different perspective with which teachers view their decision to pursue teaching once they are in the profession, as discussed in Section 2.2.2 (e.g., Holmegaard, Ulriksen, et al., 2014). In this way, even if (many) teachers entered teaching after first failing at something else they may retrospectively overlook this when they describe why they became a teacher; perhaps to align with popular discourses of teaching as a 'calling' (e.g., Madero, 2020), rather than teaching as a backup career.

2.2.2.4 The influence of others

Unlike social and cultural influences, motivational influences, and teaching as a backup career (all of which also feature amongst the reasons young people give for wanting to become a teacher as reviewed in Section 2.2.12.2.1.2), the influence of others was not a strong finding from research with young people who aspire to teach. For example, whilst being encouraged by others to teach has been found to be influential upon young people's teaching aspirations in the US (Christensen et al., 2019), research has also suggested that encouragement is one of the least influential factors upon teaching aspirations amongst young people in Hong Kong (Lai et al., 2005). Research with

existing teachers, however, shows that some of those who become teachers report doing so because they were directly and/or indirectly encouraged to do so by others. This additional finding, I argue, demonstrates the value in looking at research with existing teachers as well as research with young people who aspire to teach.

Most research findings pertaining to the influence of others on people's teaching trajectories suggest that teachers have often been directly encouraged to become teachers by their family members and friends. For example, in studies by Hammond (2002) and Matthias (2014) preservice teachers in England reported that their loved ones had encouraged them to pursue teaching, and that this had played a significant role in their decision to teach. As highlighted in Section 2.2.1.1, however, this encouragement or 'labelling' can itself be shaped by social influences such as ethnicity and gender (e.g., Butt et al., 2010; Lortie, 2002) and, as will be discussed in the second half of this chapter (Section 2.3.1.6), discouragement from teaching is also common.

The influence of others upon trajectories towards teaching may also be indirect. Research by Ewing (2021), for example, shows how teaching can become a *de facto* 'family business' which could itself implicitly encourage family members into teaching. Also implicitly influential, however, are a person's experiences of school. For instance, multiple studies have found that preservice teachers were drawn towards teaching by a desire to be like their own teachers (e.g., Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Younger et al., 2004). This indirect 'encouragement' from teachers can work the other way, however; preservice teachers in England and Ireland have also reported that they were motivated to become teachers because they wanted to provide a better education to future

generations than they received from their own teachers (Keane et al., 2018; Malderez et al., 2007).

2.2.3 Summary

This section has reviewed literature on trajectories into teaching; first by focusing upon research with young people who aspire to become teachers, and then by examining the much larger pool of research with people who have already become teachers. This review has shown that the influences upon young people's teaching aspirations are roughly similar to the motivations and reasons that teachers report for having joined the profession. Seen together, the existing literature on trajectories towards teaching demonstrates that people seem to want to, and become, teachers in all specialisms not because it is their 'vocation', but for multiple reasons which include their desire to work with children and benefit society, their positive experiences of teaching-type activities, and because they are attracted by the perks of teaching. Some people, seemingly especially those who specialise in science, also (want to) become teachers because they have failed in their first-choice non-teaching aspiration and teaching is perceived to be a relatively accessible alternative career. Teachers also report that they chose to teach because they were encouraged to do so by others.

Perhaps most strikingly, the research reviewed has illustrated that young people who want to, and become, teachers in England tend to be girls and women and identify as White British, as well as come from working-class backgrounds. Understandings of how these social influences work to shape teaching trajectories are poor (Gore et al., 2015), however, especially in England. This lack of understanding is partly a consequence of

the dominance of quantitative methods in the current literature (Heinz, 2015), but is also because most current research samples people who have (already) become teachers rather than those who have not (Fray & Gore, 2018; Heinz, 2015). Nevertheless, the existing research which does explore social and cultural factors indicates that teaching aspirations and choices are shaped by multiple intersecting influences which are informed by stereotypical and/or traditional views about teachers and teaching. In an attempt to better understand these issues, I will now consider research about trajectories away from teaching.

2.3   Trajectories away from teaching

In this, shorter, second half of my literature review I present key findings from research about people's 'trajectories away from teaching'. I consider trajectories away, as well as trajectories towards, teaching because this thesis is not only interested in young people who aspire to teach and/or become teachers. I am also interested in those who aspire to teach but do not become teachers and, importantly, why this is the case.

There is a dearth of research that considers why people who were once interested in teaching no longer wish to pursue teaching. My review of the literature found only three international studies (Croll, 2008; Hanushek & Pace, 1995; Sikora, 2021) which tracked young people's trajectories from aspiring to teach in childhood, to working in a non-teaching profession in adulthood. One of the key findings that all three of these quantitative studies share is that having a teaching aspiration in school is not predictive of becoming a teacher in early adulthood. In their analysis of general careers aspirations data from the British Household Panel Survey, Croll (2008) found that only

around 4% of respondents who were working when they were interviewed between the ages of 20 and 25 were teachers, even though 8% of respondents had expressed an aspiration to teach when they were aged 15. Similarly, in their teaching-specific study of 4,509 young people in the US, Hanushek and Pace (1995) found that only 22% of those who aspired to teach in their final year of high school had become teachers by early adulthood. More recent research by Sikora (2021) illustrates a similar pattern, and that this pattern is gendered. Amongst their sample of 3,343 young people in Australia, Sikora (2021) found that only about one third of young women, and one fifth of young men, who said that they wanted to teach at age 16 had become a teacher by their early twenties.

These three longitudinal studies of teaching aspirations suggest that many young people, especially young men, drop their teaching aspirations as they grow older; and that the majority of young people who do become teachers may not have aspired to teach when they were younger. In other words, a relatively high proportion of teachers may only have become interested in teaching shorty before they applied to ITE; thus bolstering the notion that many join the teaching profession as a 'backup' and/or second-choice career (see Section 2.2.2.3). This finding is particularly interesting given that it appears to contradict research which suggests that other aspirations in childhood may be indicative of future careers (e.g., Croll, 2008, 2009). Why, then, are teaching aspirations prone to being 'dropped'?

Due to the significant lack of research focusing on those who drop, or lose, their aspirations in teaching I here use findings from a range of research to try and understand why (so many) young people drop their teaching aspirations. Below I

primarily review findings from research with 1) young people who do not aspire to teach, 2) preservice and in-service teachers who plan to leave the profession, and 3) those who have left the teaching profession. Whilst none of these three groups of people is the direct focus of this thesis, I suggest that the perceptions and experiences of these people who do not, or no longer, want to teach may shed light upon why young people drop their teaching aspirations. As will now be discussed, although teacher recruitment and retention challenges are often considered together in policy and literature (e.g., Long & Danechi, 2022), findings from this research show that the factors which are often considered to be the greatest challenges for current teachers are not the same factors that appear to be most influential in stopping people from wanting to teach. In other words, the reasons why ex-teachers report leaving the profession may not be the same reasons why people do not teach in the first place.

2.3.1 Obstacles to and deterrents from becoming a teacher

The research reviewed in this section suggests that there are numerous possible reasons why people do not teach. In recognition of the potential for social and cultural influences, as well as people's personal motivations, to shape teaching trajectories I refer to these possible reasons as obstacles to as well as deterrents from teaching. The obstacles and deterrents which will now be discussed are; 1) the status of teaching, 2) teacher pay, 3) workload and accountability pressures, 4) a lack of intellectual stimulation, 5) the accessibility of teaching, and 6) dissuasion from others. These obstacles and deterrents are not exhaustive, and are not listed in order of strength or influence because it is impossible to state from the evidence available what are the most, or least, common reasons why people do not teach. Instead, these obstacles and

deterrents are roughly presented in order of what, anecdotally and from my reading of the literature, are commonly thought to be the main factors that discourage people from teaching.

2.3.1.1 The status of teaching

First to be considered is what is often called the 'status' of teachers and teaching, which also incorporates notions of 'prestige', 'respect' and 'esteem' of/for the teaching profession (Hoyle, 2001). When considering what is meant by the term 'status' in relation to teaching it is worth noting that many have tried to define and/or pinpoint what is meant by the status of teaching. Recent attempts to conceptualise and measure status by Dolton et al. (2018) and Ingersoll and Collins (2018), for example, take into account teacher pay, levels of teacher professionalisation (e.g., the level of education required to become a teacher), and to what degree people who are not teachers value the profession. According to such frameworks, the status of teaching relative to that of other professions is often thought to be somewhere between the most (e.g., doctor) and least (e.g., factory worker) respected jobs (e.g., Dolton et al., 2018; Hall & Langton, 2006). Of course, within teaching there are also differences in status; with Head Teachers considered to have a higher status role than classroom teachers, for example (Dolton et al., 2018).

Other conceptualisations propose that the status of teaching is lowered or challenged by factors including the view of teaching as a technical skill rather than an evidence-based profession (e.g., Ovenden-Hope, 2021; Sachs, 2016), associations of teaching with care and the dominance of women in the profession (e.g., Acker, 1983, 1995),

popular perceptions that teaching is a calling or a vocation (e.g., Buijs, 2005), and a lack of an agreed-upon definition of what constitutes a 'teacher' (e.g., Bray, 2022). Indeed, whilst I refer to teaching as a 'profession' throughout this thesis some have argued that factors such as these mean that it is in effect a 'semi-profession' (Acker, 1983; Ingersoll & Collins, 2018).

Whilst status and the notions associated with it are difficult to define because of the many factors which inform how we view these ideas, many conclude that although the social contribution of teachers is valued, the status of teaching is 'low' compared with many other graduate professions (e.g., Lankford et al., 2014). As Lortie (2002) put it, teaching is 'special but shadowed';

> The services performed by teachers have usually been seen as above the run of everyday work, and the occupation has had the aura of a special mission honored by society […] but those occupying it do not receive the level or types of deference reserved for those working in the learned professions, occupying high government office, or demonstrating success in business. (p. 10)

PISA data have been used to shown that, in OECD countries where respect for teachers is low (as measured by TALIS 2013 [OECD, 2014]), fewer young people want to become teachers (Han et al., 2018). Such findings have led some to hypothesise that the 'shadowed' or 'low' status of teaching can be a deterrent from teaching (e.g., Ingersoll & Collins, 2018; la Velle & Kendall, 2020; Price & Weatherby, 2018), especially for those who specialise in subjects which are seen as leading to high status non-teaching jobs, such as those in science (e.g., Hall & Langton, 2006; Watt et al., 2012).

Analysis of undergraduates' ratings of what they see as important for their future careers, however, suggests that status may not be a critical factor in people's career decisions (Gorard et al., 2021; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000). For example, only 10% of those not intending to pursue teaching questioned by Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000) included 'a job that is respected' as an important factor when choosing a career. Similar findings from research by Gorard et al. (2021) led the authors to posit that improving the status of teaching is unlikely to significantly increase teacher recruitment rates, if at all. Status has also been found to be of little influence in the career decisions of young people who specialise in STEM. In a study of 905 STEM undergraduate and Masters students from three universities in the Netherlands, van Rooij et al. (2020) found that all students, whether interested in teaching or not, rated status as one of the lowest factors of importance when choosing a future career. According to the authors, this finding suggests that "it may not be as likely as often thought that STEM students refrain from choosing the teacher profession due to its low status" (van Rooij et al., 2020, p. 571).

It therefore seems that status may not be a significant deterrent from teaching, contrary to popular belief. I suggest that this lack of understanding about the role of teacher status in the choice to become a teacher may be because teacher status is often treated as a general societal categorisation in the literature. In other words, the status of teaching is often used to refer to the wider social standing of teaching rather than something that may differ between people. Indeed, descriptions of the status of teaching as 'low' (e.g., Lankford et al., 2014) imply that status is a fixed state across a context. Although researchers acknowledge that teacher status can change (e.g., Ingersoll & Collins, 2018), I argue that the tendency for current research to label the status of

teaching country-wide neglects to take into account the micro-level influences such as gender that were shown to influence individuals' perceptions of teaching in the first half of this chapter (see Sections 2.2.1.1 and 2.2.2.1). Thus, whilst status is relative to other professions it may also be relative to a young person's background and/or the social and cultural inequalities that they experience; whilst teaching may be considered low in status by some, it will not be by others. I therefore suggest that teacher status may more helpfully be viewed as a subjective trait that might fluctuate amongst and between individuals, rather than a blanket descriptor that is fixed across a given context or society, as will be outlined further in Section 5.3.1.

2.3.1.2 Teacher pay

Possibly the most common assumption about why young people in England do not teach is that they can earn more money by working in other professions (e.g., Chevalier et al., 2007), especially in science (e.g., Sims, 2018b). At the time of writing, the starting salary for teachers in England is £28,000 (Get into teaching, 2022); a figure which is below the OECD average for starting teachers' salaries (OECD, 2019a), and which has led to industrial action in the workforce (Booth, 2023). Indeed, although levels of teacher pay change in line with government policy and can depend upon a teacher's specialism, analysis of the earnings of PGCE graduates in England by Britton et al. (2020) demonstrates that, on average, those qualified in teaching earn less than people with only an undergraduate degree. This discrepancy has led educational economists to argue that if teaching salaries were higher, more people would pursue teaching (e.g., Sims, 2018b). For example, research consistently estimates that for every £1,000 of additional bursary, ITE applications will increase by just under 3% (National Audit

Office, 2016; Worth & Hollis, 2021). Whilst pay increases have been shown to attract career changers into teaching (Matthias, 2014), and to increase retention rates amongst existing teachers (Hendricks, 2014; Sims & Benhenda, 2022), however, research considering the impact of teacher pay on young people's teaching plans is less definitive.

In a qualitative study of teenagers from mostly Minoritised Ethnicities in Ireland, Naughton (2020) found that pay was one of the biggest reasons young people reported for not wanting to teach. Whilst similar research with school-aged people in the English setting is lacking, university students in England and Wales who were considering teaching surveyed by See (2004) reported that they might be more attracted towards teaching by increased financial incentives. Indeed, this finding would appear to be supported by findings from a qualitative study by Matthias (2014), where preservice teachers in shortage subjects said that they would not have become a teacher without the bursaries that were available to them. Furthermore, we know that some preservice teachers in England struggle financially during their ITE year (Carrington et al., 2000; Matthias, 2014), which could itself be a deterrent from teaching for others even if pay for qualified teachers is not.

Another finding that is often assumed to imply that teacher pay is a deterrent from teaching is that young people who do not want to teach value their future salaries more importantly than aspirants teachers do (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000). As with status, however, Gorard et al. (2022) found that there was no difference between those intending to be teachers and those not intending to be teachers in terms of the extent to which prospective pay was a factor in their decision. As outlined in Section 2.2.1.2,

analyses have indicated that financial incentives aiming to improve teacher recruitment act mainly as an added bonus for those already planning to teach, rather than something that attracts those how were previously against teaching towards the profession (Dolan et al., 2012; Gorard et al., 2021; See, 2004). In other words, increasing teacher pay has not been shown to change people's career plans towards teaching (See et al., 2020). I therefore suggest that although pay may be taken into consideration by those deciding whether or not to teach, pay does not itself appear to stop young people from teaching (Worth, 2023). As with status, however, the impact of pay may differ depending upon an individual's circumstances and identities; a possibility which this thesis aims to consider.

2.3.1.3 Workload and accountability pressures

Another possible deterrent from teaching is teacher workload and, relatedly, accountability culture in schools. Teachers in England are known to work long hours[31] (Hillary et al., 2018) and have reported being dissatisfied with their workloads (Adams et al., 2023; Jerrim & Sims, 2019). This heavy workload, alongside policies which often demand that teachers focus on assessment and inspections rather than teaching, are regularly included in the most common reasons why people leave the teaching profession (Adams et al., 2023; Perryman, 2022; Perryman & Calvert, 2020). Workload and accountability culture are particularly difficult to measure, however. This difficulty is partly because of the 'hidden' workloads that exist for some, particularly Minoritised

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[31] Hillary et al. (2018) found that teachers in England worked an average of 50 hours per week in term time. Even after taking account of school holidays, full-time teachers were found to work the equivalent of 45 hours per week.

Ethnicity, teachers (e.g., Tereshchenko et al., 2020; Wood, 2019), as well as the fact that some heavy workloads may be considered manageable because they are 'meaningful' (e.g., Brady & Wilson, 2021).

The impact of teacher workload and accountability culture upon the choice to become a teacher is particularly difficult to identify. Nevertheless, some research findings do suggest that workload and accountability pressures could be deterring young people from teaching. For example, analysis of PISA data has shown that 15 year olds are less likely to want to teach when they attend school in OECD countries where teachers report working longer hours (Han et al., 2018), and where there is a high accountability culture within their education system (Han, 2018). These findings seem to be supported by a study conducted by Kraft et al. (2020) in the US which found that fewer people applied to become a teacher during periods where high-stakes evaluation reforms for teachers were implemented. Also in the US, Pop and Turner (2009) interviewed ITE students who had chosen not to pursue teaching and concluded that preservice undergraduate students were sometimes deterred from teaching by their perception of it being a "demanding, challenging, and overwhelming job" (Pop & Turner, 2009, p. 695).

In contrast, Gorard et al. (2022) has shown that undergraduate students in England who are not planning to become teachers are much less concerned by teacher workload than those who go into teaching. The authors suggest that this finding means that workload is not a deterrent from teaching (Gorard et al., 2022). This suggestion is supported by findings from research with ITE students and graduates; a high proportion of whom report that they were concerned about teacher workload before they entered teaching but went into teaching anyway (Hobson et al., 2009; Perryman & Calvert,

2020). Whilst workload and accountability culture may act as a deterrent for some, then, these factors may not be a particularly important factor in young people's choice of whether or not to teach.

2.3.1.4 A lack of intellectual stimulation

A further possible deterrent from joining the teaching profession is the perception that the work of teaching is not intellectually stimulating. For example, in their study of undergraduate and ITE students in England, Gorard et al. (2022) found that those who had decided not to become a teacher ranked teaching as less intellectually stimulating than both those who were intending to teach and those who were pursuing teaching. Although it is unclear to what degree perceptions that teaching is not intellectually stimulating may be a deterrent from teaching, I suggest that this notion may linked with negative portrayals of the work of teaching in media (e.g., Beyerbach, 2005; Ewing et al., 2021), along with ideas from popular culture that 'those who can't do, teach', and that 'anybody can teach', which have been shown to be a partial deterrent from teaching for people who had previously been interested in becoming a teacher in the US (Thomson, 2013).

According to Lortie (2002) this idea that teaching is 'easy' stems from the historic lack of investment in pedagogical studies; unlike in professions such as medicine where people have studied how to improve their practice for centuries, the study of how to educate well is relatively new. Furthermore, the 'apprenticeship of observation', the phenomenon that describes the significant amount of time that people spend observing and evaluating the work of teachers as school children also put forward by Lortie (2002), is

likely to give a simplified view of the work of teachers. This view neglects to consider the significant 'backstage' aspects of teaching which could mean that many are left assuming that teaching is simply, or indeed easily, the 'frontstage' classroom-facing behaviours (Borg, 2004; Lortie, 2002).

2.3.1.5 The accessibility of teaching

The lack of research into trajectories away from teaching means that it is especially difficult to know whether, or why, some young people do not become teachers for the reason that they can (easily) do so at a later date. Yet the findings from Croll (2008), Hanushek and Pace (1995) and Sikora (2021) highlighted in Section 2.3, which showed that the majority of those who aspire to teach in childhood do not become teachers, suggest there is a significant proportion of adults who once had an interest in teaching; some of whom may feasibly become interested in teaching again. This notion is supported by some of the participants who had decided against teaching in the study by Pop and Turner (2009), who claimed not to have turned away from teaching completely, but to be not 'currently' interested in pursuing teaching.

Indeed, the evidence considered in Sections 2.2.1.2 and 2.2.2.3 which demonstrated the influence of teaching's 'wide decision range' (Lortie, 2002) and its relative popularity as a backup career hint that some young people may plan to become a teacher, but only after first trying an alternative career. In other words, a further possible deterrent from teaching—or more specifically in this case a reason to defer becoming a teacher— is the accessibility of teaching.

2.3.1.6 Dissuasion from others

The final possible deterrent from teaching to be considered here is discouragement or dissuasion from others against becoming a teacher, which mirrors the 'influence of others' as a motivation towards teaching in Section 2.2.2.4. There is more research to indicate that dissuasion, which can be explicit or implicit and from a range of sources, shapes trajectories away from teaching than the other deterrents considered in this section. Furthermore, although we know that discouragement from others does not stop everyone from teaching because preservice teachers report experiencing social dissuasion (e.g., Watt & Richardson, 2007; Younger et al., 2004), this is also possibly the most relevant deterrent for the focus of this thesis because 'dissuasion' implies that a person may have previously been interested in teaching.

In particular, research suggests that dissuasion from teaching is gendered, classed and racialised; as was seen in the studies by Butt et al. (2010) and Bergey (2021) considered in Section 2.2.2.1. For instance, in the study of school leavers in Ireland by Drudy et al. (2005), teenage boys reported that they would expect to receive far more negative reactions from others than girls did, when asked what would happen if they were to express an ambition to become a primary school teacher. Also in Ireland, Naughton (2020) coded the 'influence of family members' and 'encouragement from others to consider alternative careers' as two of the biggest reasons why young people from Minoritised Ethnicities, especially those from middle-class and/or immigrant families, did not want to become teachers. This patterning of dissuasion by social inequalities not only mirrors patterns in teacher recruitment, but also mirrors findings from the first section of this chapter (see Section 2.2.1.1); such as that girls are often

labelled as teachers for behaviour that would lead to boys being labelled as future lawyers, business or politicians (Lortie, 2002). It therefore seems possible that some young people do not become teachers because they are discouraged from doing so by friends and family members. Furthermore, the patterned nature of discouragement reported in current research implies that dissuasion from others may not only be a deterrent from teaching, but an obstacle to teaching.

2.3.2 Summary

This section has reviewed research findings which shed light upon young people's trajectories away from teaching. I first presented evidence that most young people who aspire to teach in childhood, especially boys, do not realise this aspiration by early adulthood, and instead appear to turn to different professions (Hanushek & Pace, 1995; Sikora, 2021). Despite the significant lack of research longitudinally tracking young people who have dropped their teaching aspirations, research from people who are not, or are no longer, interested in teaching provides some important findings as to why people may drop their teaching aspirations as they grow older.

Although sparse and thus not definitive, the research suggests that the reasons why many young people drop their teaching aspirations in all specialisms are different from the reasons that teachers report for leaving the profession. Whilst those who have left teaching report doing so because of a high workload and/or accountability pressures, there is little evidence to suggest that these reasons deter or stop young people in England from becoming a teacher. Furthermore, pay and/or status do not seem to be the main deterrents from teaching that some assume them to be, including in science.

The deterrent from teaching for which there appears to be most evidence is dissuasion from others. In other words, a key reason why many young people seem to drop their teaching aspirations is that they are discouraged from teaching by family and friends. There is further evidence that this dissuasion is often patterned by the some of the same social inequalities which pattern the teaching workforce; which could go some way to explaining for example why those who become a teacher in England are so much more likely to be White British women. In this way, it is possible that dissuasion may not simply deter young people from teaching but could prevent them from becoming a teacher.

2.4   Chapter summary

This chapter has attempted to draw together research on trajectories towards teaching and trajectories away from teaching in England in a way that has not been done before. The overarching findings from the current literature are that there are many interlinking influences upon young people's choice to become, or not become, a teacher. These factors include both individuals' motivations as well social, cultural and contextual influences, and include the dominant (stereo)typical image of a teacher as a White (British) woman. Current research also illustrates that the reasons why young people aspire to teach mirror the reasons why people become teachers; but that the reasons why people seem to drop teaching aspirations are not the same as the reasons people give for having left the teaching profession.

One finding from this chapter worth noting is that there is a particular lack of research examining science teaching trajectories specifically. Nevertheless, the studies reviewed

here suggest that the reasons why people do, and do not, (want to) teach science are very similar to the reasons why people do, and do not, (want to) teach in other specialisms. There is some evidence, however, to suggest that those who become science teachers are more likely to do so as a backup, or second-choice, career when alternative routes do not work out.

Overall, I suggest that the research reviewed here has highlighted three clear gaps in the current literature; all of which this thesis attempts to address. First, the vast majority of research into teacher supply almost exclusively considers preservice or in-service teachers' motivations for choosing the profession. Whilst this body of research provides insight into why some people teach, as others have pointed out (e.g., Heinz, 2015; See et al., 2022), its focus on those who have already chosen to become teachers fails to tell us why others choose not to teach. Furthermore, as Gore et al. (2015) found, very few studies consider the choice of teaching specifically as a first career. This means that the teaching motivations of career-changers may be over-represented in the current literature. This thesis aims to assist in offering new insights into the experiences and motivations of those who have not, as well as those who have, chosen to pursue teaching as a first career (see Section 4.3.2.1).

The second limitation of current research is the dominance of quantitative research methods. For example, research with preservice and in-service teachers tends to rely upon surveys requiring respondents to rate their teaching motivations from a predetermined list (Fray & Gore, 2018; Heinz, 2015). Although findings from this research are helpful in developing further understandings of why people are motivated to teach, and in some cases not to teach, the lack of qualitative studies on this topic

means that we do not have detailed insights into the reasons behind these motivations. A significant consequence of this reliance on quantitative methods means that it is difficult to understand how different social and cultural influences impact upon teacher motivations in different contexts (Gore et al., 2015; Heinz, 2015; Klassen et al., 2011; See et al., 2022). In this thesis I work to contribute new knowledge in this area by taking a qualitatively led approach to considering young people's teaching trajectories (see Section 4.2.2).

The third limitation of existing literature is that, bar three known exceptions (Croll, 2008; Hanushek & Pace, 1995; Sikora, 2021), most research into teacher supply is made up of one-off studies which have focused upon individual cohorts at one point in time. Current research therefore relies on participants pinpointing or summarising, often retrospectively, the reasons why they do, or did, (not) want to teach at a specific point in time. I suggest that this approach implicitly signifies that the choice to become a teacher is, or can be, a one-off or distinct decision. In other words, existing methods fail to consider how current or potential teachers make, or made, their decision to (not) pursue teaching over time. As others have argued (e.g., Heinz, 2015; See et al., 2023), I propose that the reliance on one-off studies thus presents a potential gap in helping us to better understand the factors influencing the teacher shortages in England that were outlined in Section 1.2. This thesis attempts to address this gap by considering young people's teaching trajectories over a period of 11 years (see Section 4.3). With these gaps in the current literature mind, in the following chapter I present the theoretical perspectives that I use in this thesis to understand the many influences upon young people's longitudinal teaching trajectories.

Chapter 3. Theorising young people's teaching trajectories

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2 I outlined the multiplicity of complex influences upon young people's trajectories into, and away from, teaching. I illustrated that who chooses to pursue teaching in England, and why, appears to be influenced by individuals' motivations, as well as wider social, cultural and contextual structures and pressures. A clear way of understanding these influences collectively, however, has yet to be developed. Informed by the idea that applying social theory to research can offer "new associations and meanings to be formed from data" (Dressman, 2008, p. 64), in this chapter I will detail how this study aims to address this gap in the current research. Here I present the theoretical resources which have informed my understandings of why some people (aspire to) become teachers, as well as why others do not.

As demonstrated throughout Chapter 2, the vast majority of current studies into teacher supply are one-off, and conducted with those already within teaching (Heinz, 2015). To help me interrogate this study's longitudinal data I have therefore turned to research beyond that on teacher supply, towards research which examines young people's trajectories over time in other areas. No doubt informed by my experience on the ASPIRES project[32], which has a focus on science identities and science career aspirations, I have been particularly inspired by theoretical approaches used in science education. Fuelled by a desire to understand the inequalities in access to science that

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[32] In Section 4.2.4 I reflect more upon how my own experiences and identities may have shaped this research.

were briefly highlighted in Section 1.2.2, and to promote equitable participation in science, researchers in science education have increasingly employed an identity lens to understand whether and how (young) people see themselves as 'sciencey', and/or whether or not they view science (or specialisms within science) as 'for' them (e.g., Archer, 2010b; Avraamidou, 2022; Carlone & Johnson, 2007; Danielsson, 2009; Gonsalves, 2018; Holmegaard, Madsen, et al., 2014b; Rahm & Moore, 2016; Wade-Jaimes & Schwartz, 2019). Whilst a review of this literature is beyond the scope of this thesis, much of this research points to inequitable practices and structures within science that in effect hinder or exclude certain groups of people (typically women and people from many Minoritised Ethnicities) from participating in science. Of particular relevance for this study, however, is the way in which this literature has used the concept of identity to track young people's views towards, experiences of, and participation in, science over time; an approach that has not yet been used in relation to teaching.

There are many different approaches to conceptualising identity (Côté, 2006), and I have been most informed by understandings of identity which acknowledge both social (re)production and individual agency. In other words, I wish to recognise that whether and why young people see themselves as (and become) future teachers is informed by imposed structural norms and expectations within society, as well as young people's own ability to shape themselves and the world around them. I take this approach because the research reviewed in Chapter 2 illustrated that the influences upon young people's teaching aspirations and choices include both wider sociocultural structures (e.g., See et al., 2022) and individuals' motivations (e.g., Struyven et al., 2013). Thus, in

an attempt to recognise both of these 'types' of influences upon young people's teaching trajectories, analyses in this thesis are informed by the concept of identity in practice (Holland et al., 1998). As will discussed in Section 3.2, this concept acknowledges that a person's sense of who they 'are' stems from both the structures that surround them and their own agentic practice(s) (Holland et al., 1998).

This chapter outlines how this theoretical perspective forms a framework for understanding how young people develop, and then realise or drop, aspirations to become a schoolteacher. Section 3.2 of this chapter introduces the concept of identity in practice and its contexts. Section 3.3 of this chapter then considers how this theory and its contexts have been applied and developed in research with young people, and research with beginning teachers, to date. Towards the end of this chapter, I then introduce how I use the concept of 'trajectories' with identities in practice (Section 3.4), and outline the possible limitations of this theory (Section 3.5) as well as how I expand the theory using the lens of intersectionality (Section 3.6).

3.2 Identity in practice

The concept of identity (or identities) in practice was first developed by US scholars Dorothy Holland, William Lachicotte Jr., Debra Skinner and Carole Cain in their book *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds* (1998). The sociocultural concept draws upon theories of identity, agency and structure from multiple schools of thought including psychology, anthropology and sociology. Specifically, the authors use their ethnographic research with several different groups of people including young women in Nepal, members of Alcoholics Anonymous, clients and staff members of mental health

institutions, and university students in the US to consider how people make sense of who they are using the resources available to them (Holland et al., 1998).

The theoretical concept of identity in practice incorporates and builds upon the work of multiple scholars. For example, a key aspect of identities in practice is that identities are not fixed, but are always "unfinished and in process" (Holland et al., 1998, p. vii), which mirrors previous sociological understandings of identity as constantly in development (e.g., Hall, 1996). Also central to the concept of identity in practice is that identities are "improvised—in the flow of activity with specific social situations—from the cultural resources at hand" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 4). In this way, identities in practice can be considered not as 'things' that we have or are, but as 'work' that we conduct or negotiate in order to become who we want to be (e.g., Watson, 2008). Therefore, as the name suggests, identities in practice unfold through social practice and cannot be separated from the contexts within which they develop. Indeed, in their conceptualisation of situated learning in 'communities of practice'[33], Lave and Wenger (1991) briefly use the term 'identities in practice' to illustrate that identity is not something that one brings to learning, but processes that are informed by the practices of the community in which one learns.

Primarily, the concept of identity in practice builds upon the work of Soviet scholars Mikhail Bakhtin and Lev Vygotsky. In brief, both Bakhtin's work on human expression (e.g., 1984), and Vygotsky's work on cultural symbols (e.g., 1971) sought to understand

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[33] The concept of 'communities of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) is not used in this thesis and so is not discussed in detail. Because the concept of 'identities in practices' develops partly from the concept of 'communities of practice', however, I refer throughout this chapter to the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) where it applies to the concept of 'identities in practices'.

how people make meaning of their social worlds. Whilst Bakhtin considered the ability of people to make sense of things through internal dialogues, Vygotsky considered how people use the different resources available to them to understand their surroundings. Holland et al. (1998) draw upon these ideas to conceptualise how people interpret the social and cultural worlds around them and, relatedly, how people see themselves in these worlds.

Holland et al. (1998) state that combining ideas from Bakhtin and Vygotsky allow them to develop an understanding of "humans as social and cultural creatures and therefore bounded", whilst also recognising "the processes whereby human collectives and individuals often move themselves" (pp. 6-7). According to Urrieta (2007), in their introduction to a special issue of papers applying the work of Holland et al. (1998) in *The Urban Review*, this approach enables the concept of identity in practice to "move us away (but not completely) from cultural determinism and situational totalitarianism to make (some) way for the importance of improvisation and innovation (agency)" (pp. 107-108). In this way, the concept of identities in practice could be interpreted as a response to sociological debates on the relationship between structure (i.e., notions of predeterminism), and agency (i.e., individuals' free choice) in identity (e.g., Sewell, 1992)[34]. Some of the specific ways in which Bakhtin, Vygotsky, and others informed the work of Holland et al. (1998) will be considered in Section 3.2.1.

Applied to this study, the concept of identities in practice enables the examination of how young people improvise their identities in relation to how they understand what it is

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[34] See Shanahan (2009) for an introduction to this debate.

to 'be' a teacher, and how these identities shape the choices they make. I consider this theory to be especially useful in this longitudinal research as it enables me to examine how, at different points in their lives, young people are viewed by others and view themselves (or not) as (potential future) teachers and how they respond to these 'views'. The work of Holland et al. (1998) therefore provides a useful lens for examining trajectories into, and away from, teaching. Specifically, Holland et al. (1998) propose four contexts of identity in practice; three of which will be used to operationalise this theoretical concept in this research.

3.2.1 The four contexts of identity in practice

In *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*, Holland et al. (1998) propose that people practice their identities through four 'contexts of activity'; 1) figured worlds, 2) negotiations of positionality, 3) space of authoring, and 4) making worlds. These contexts are not separate from one another but are understood as overlapping figurations of people's identity work. As will now be discussed, I use the first three of these contexts in this thesis.

3.2.1.1 Figured worlds

The first of the contexts for the production of identities, and a key part of what distinguishes identities in practice from other theorisations of identity as a process (e.g., Hall, 1996), is 'figured worlds'. Figured worlds are real or imaginary "frames of meaning in which interpretations of human actions are negotiated" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 271). Holland et al. (1998) state that when we act or speak in a certain way, we therefore work to place ourselves within or outside of specific figured worlds. Although probably

the most well-known aspect of the work of Holland et al. (1998), figured worlds is therefore not a separate concept from identity in practice, but just one important part of how identity work is understood to take place (Urrieta, 2007).

The notion of figured worlds builds upon prior concepts including the 'frames' of meaning in which we interpret actions as proposed by Fillmore (1975), and the 'cultural models' or taken-for-granted scenarios in which we act, as developed by Quinn and Holland (1987). More than these previous iterations, however, figured worlds highlight identity formation and negotiation rather than simply the beliefs or practices that happen within them (Holland et al., 1998; Varghese, 2018). The context of figured worlds thus allows us to focus upon "how actors conceptually come to construct identities by placing themselves and their actions in relation to the socially produced and culturally constituted activities" within which they act (Vågan, 2011, p. 49). Figured worlds can therefore be likened to what Gee (2000) calls the 'interpretive system' in which all identities happen. In this way, the rules or norms of the 'system', or figured world, in which someone performs a certain (type of) identity will influence whether, how, and/or to what extent this identity work is valued and recognised (Gee, 2000).

Figured worlds are "spaces of practice wherein actors form as well as perform" (Bartlett, 2007, p. 56) which are constructed by, and continually responsive to, the cultural artifacts (or resources), discourses (or ways of being and doing [Gee, 2000]), and actions (or performances) within them (Holland et al., 1998). Figured worlds are thus culturally responsive contexts of meaning (Holland et al., 1998), though this concept has been applied inconsistently by different researchers (Urrieta, 2007). For example, some scholars have summarised what 'makes up' a figured world using the term 'cultural

models' (e.g., Carlone et al., 2014; Jackson & Seiler, 2013), as put forward by Quinn and Holland (1987). In *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*, Holland et al. (1998) state that "cultural models are stereotypical distillates, generalizations from past experience that people make" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 55). According to an interpretation by Jackson and Seiler (2013), then, these cultural models, along with "the storylines and subject positions that they make available, serve as resources that construct a wide or narrow range of possibilities for participation in a figured world" (pp. 828-829). People therefore 'figure' who they are in relation to a figured world through the perceived cultural models, storylines, and/or norms of that world. Using findings from the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, then, the notions that teaching is a 'calling' (e.g., Madero, 2020), and that teaching is work for White women (e.g., Hancock & Warren, 2017), may be seen as cultural models that shape how people figure themselves in relation to the worlds of teaching.

Regarding participation, figured worlds are considered to be pre-existing realms into which we enter, or we are recruited into, so that we become members or inhabitants of these worlds. We are all members of multiple figured worlds simultaneously. These 'memberships' are fluid and changeable, and may flow into, inform, or even conflict with one another because figured worlds themselves can overlap with, sit within, or be separate from one another (e.g., Hatt, 2007). In addition, some of our figured world memberships may be the result of choice and deliberate identity work, whereas other memberships may be forced upon us. In *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*, Holland et al. (1998) give the example of people who have chosen to be members of the figured world of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), and who thus constantly work to

establish themselves as such by taking on the accepted practices of that world. These practices include developing, reflecting upon, and regularly sharing an 'AA story' about one's past experiences with alcohol, and the collection of tokens to mark the period of time one has remained sober. In contrast, Holland et al. (1998) also exemplify how some university students in their previous ethnographic research did not wish to become members of the figured world of (heterosexual) romance, but had no choice in this because of how others treated them or expected them to behave. As a result, these students were "propelled into the activities [of heterosexual romance] by the urging of others" and thus felt obliged to, for example, attend parties or dress like others (Holland et al., 1998, p. 122).

Becoming a member of, or actor within, a figured world is not always necessarily a complete or easy process; whilst our membership of a figured world may be permanent it may also be fleeting. Similarly, as with communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), we may hold positions of power within some figured worlds but only peripheral membership of others (Urrieta, 2007). There are also some worlds into which our entry may be barred because of, for example, our gender, ethnicity or social class; aspects of our identities which can strengthen or limit our power in different worlds. These aspects of our identities are what Holland et al. (1998) refer to as our 'social positions' and are considered to exist beyond figured worlds rather than being unique to only one, or some, of the worlds in which we exist. In this way, whilst membership or belonging in one figured world will be viable for one person, it may not be viable for another. What form, if any, our membership takes in these worlds, and how this may change over time,

is the result of our identity work; in this thesis conceptualised through the contexts of positionality (Section 3.2.1.2) and space of authoring (Section 3.2.1.3).

Applied to this study, then, teaching can be considered to be a figured world within which there exist multiple smaller worlds representing different teaching specialisms (e.g., the figured world of science teaching). These 'figured worlds of teaching', as I refer to them throughout this thesis, are repeatedly (re)constructed through the dominant cultural models and storylines that make up what it is to 'be' a member of these worlds; a teacher. How young people who express an interest in becoming a teacher construct the figured worlds of teaching will be considered in detail in Section 5.3. Young aspirant members of the figured worlds of teaching thus work to align their identity with the dominant constructions which shape the figured worlds of teaching; for example, by using the behaviour, attitudes and ways of being and doing of the teachers they know as frames of reference. Importantly, however, the work of Holland et al. (1998) suggests that a young person's membership of other figured worlds and/or the social positions which they hold may prevent them from achieving or maintaining membership of the figured worlds of teaching. In this way, just as Archer et al. (2012) suggest that science aspirations may more 'thinkable' for young people from middle-class backgrounds because most people in science are middle-class, future membership of the figured worlds of teaching may be more 'thinkable' for young people who share social positions with existing teachers.

3.2.1.2 Negotiations of positionality

Next, Holland et al. (1998) put forward the context of 'positionality'. Urrieta (2007) describes positionality as referring "to the positions 'offered' to people in different figured worlds" (p. 111). Through the positions offered or available to them, a person then develops a positional identity, or a 'sense' of their position within a figured world relative to others (Holland et al., 1998). In a chapter on positional identities published after their original work, Holland et al. (2008) set out how the positioning of people, and whether and how people 'take up' these positional identities, is a long process that uses the dominant 'storylines' of a figured world to imagine someone in relation to that world. In this way, as Holland and Leander (2004) state, positioning "involves socially producing particular individuals and groups as culturally imagined types such that others and, even the person herself, at least temporarily, treat her as though she were such a person" (p. 130).

The above quote from Holland and Leander (2004) illustrates that the positions we are offered and take up influence how we are 'treated' by others. Positionality can thus be linked with the concept of 'recognition' of oneself and by others, often used in relation to identity theory (e.g., Carlone & Johnson, 2007; Sfard & Prusak, 2005). Scholars using recognition suggest that our identity work is informed by how others recognise us as a particular 'kind of person' depending upon how we look and/or act in given time and place (e.g., Gee, 2000). For example, we may be recognised as a smart person, a feminist, or indeed as a teacher because our actions and interactions align with how these 'kinds of people' are expected to look or act. Similarly, the positional identities offered to people are informed by the dominant ways of being in a figured world. In this

way, I suggest that how we are recognised by others can inform the positional identities available to us (e.g., Rahm et al., 2022).

As also implied by the above quote from Holland and Leander (2004), however, the positions we are offered and take up also influence how we perform ourselves. Our positional identities therefore have the potential to become dispositions with which "to voice opinions or silence oneself, to enter into activities or to refrain and self-censor, depending on the social situation" (Holland et al., 2008, p. 155). In this way, positional identities inform how we navigate our identities in practice.

What positions, or positional identities, are offered or available to people within a figured world are necessarily influenced by the cultural models and storylines that make up that figured world. Some people may have certain positions available to them which others do not because of what is privileged or not within a particular world. For instance, the positions available to an individual may result from their overarching social positions and/or their available resources, which Holland et al. (1998) at times refer to as 'capital'[35] (e.g., Bourdieu, 1977). In this way, positionality is "inextricably linked to power, status, and rank" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 271); the social positions that we hold and the capital that we have influence the positions into which we are 'cast' by others in different figured worlds. I therefore suggest that, just as Avraamidou (2020b, 2022) has argued that recognition in science is political because who is recognised as a 'sciencey' person is tied to socially and culturally dependent norms, the context of positioning also has the

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[35] Briefly, Bourdieu's concepts of cultural, social and economic capital refer to the resources that an individual possesses, and is able to leverage in order to benefit their cultural, social or economic situation; see Bourdieu (1986) or Grenfell (2013).

potential to be political. This is because I argue that recognition can inform the positions that are available to an individual within a figured world (e.g., Rahm et al., 2022). As a result, positioning may work to maintain the status quo in a figured world by only, or chiefly, recognising those who conform with existing patterns of participation (Avraamidou, 2020b, 2022; Carlone & Johnson, 2007).

In relation to this study, for example, a position within the figured worlds of teaching (e.g., the role of 'teacher', or maybe that of 'future teacher') may be available or offered to a young person as a result of being recognised for aligning with the norms of teaching, such as working (well) with children (e.g., Thornton et al., 2002). Whether, how, and when young people are positioned as teachers, however, is inextricably linked to the social positions which they hold. In other words, and as will be explored through longitudinal analyses presented in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, some people will be offered the positional identity of 'future teacher' more readily than others.

3.2.1.3 Space of authoring

Following on from positionality, the third context of identity in practice is 'space of authoring', also referred to as self-authoring, which describes people's identity work in response to the positions offered to them by others (Section 3.2.1.2). Holland et al. (1998) frame this context as the "focus" of their work, because the agency exercised through a person's space of authoring is what sets apart the concept of identities in practice from a more deterministic or structural understanding of identity (p. 271).

The concept of space of authoring is founded upon Bakhtin's notions of 'self-fashioning' and dialogism (e.g., 1981) which, put simply, posit that people author themselves or

make sense of who they are through their multiple internal dialogues. According to Holland et al. (1998);

> Bakhtin's concepts allow us to put words to [a] vision, organized around the conflictual, continuing dialogic of an inner speech where active identities are ever forming. […] Sentient beings always exist in a state of being 'addressed' and in the process of 'answering' (p. 169).

It is the 'answering' in this quote which is central to one's space of authoring. This is because self-authorship or self-making "is not a choice"; a position always requires a response (Holland et al., 1998, p. 272). As Urrieta (2007) states, however, a person's response to a position is "limited to varying degrees of accepting, rejecting, or negotiating the identities being offered to them" (Urrieta, 2007, p. 111). Individuals have some say, therefore, in how they answer the positions available to them. Our self-authoring could thus be compared with what Gee (2000) and others have referred to as a 'bid' to be recognised as a certain kind of person. Inescapably, whether and how one chooses to accept, reject, negotiate, or indeed completely ignore, a position is not the result of "independent or autonomous creativity", (Holland et al., 1998, p. 272), but is necessarily bound by the social practices and structures which position us.

According to Holland et al. (1998), our authored selves become aspects of our 'history-in-person', a concept later further developed by Holland and Lave (2001) which refers to "the sediment from past experiences upon which one improvises, using the cultural resources available" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 18). In other words, our past lives can inform how we will author our identities in the present; as was highlighted through the

work of Holmegaard, Madsen, et al. (2014a) in Section 2.2.2 in relation to how teachers report why they became teachers. This process may be as simple as using our experiences to repeat or cease a previous behaviour or way of being. For example, if a person's self-authoring consistently fails to be recognised by others they are likely to abandon attempts to author themselves in this way (e.g., Johnson et al., 2011). Alternatively, self-authoring may involve what Holland et al. (1998) call a 'reinterpretation of the past' in order to reinvent our present or future identities using a new perspective on past experiences.

Space of authoring can thus be considered a messy and complex journey of 'wayfaring', rather than a straightforward negotiation of positions (Rahm et al., 2022). In this way I suggest that the concept of space of authoring can be compared with narrative approaches to identity, which state that our identities are produced through the changing narratives that we tell (e.g., Lawler, 2002; Somers, 1994). For example, just as we can change how we narrate our choices according to the past experiences visible to us at a particular time through our 'rear-view mirror' (Holmegaard, Madsen, et al., 2014a; Holmegaard et al., 2015), we constantly choose how we author ourselves with reference to (some of) our past experiences.

In this study, space of authoring therefore relates to young people's responses to the positions that they are offered within, around, or in relation to, the figured worlds of teaching. I will thus consider how young people choose to author their identities in relation to these worlds not simply as an individual process, but within the context of the positions presented to them as they progress through education and into the world of work. Specifically, in Chapters 6 and 7 I take a narrative approach to understanding how

young people author their identities in practice in relation to the figured worlds of teaching. This approach, along with how it forms a framework with figured worlds and positionality, will be outlined in more detail in Section 3.4 of this chapter, and in Section 4.3.2.4.

3.2.1.4 Making worlds

The fourth and final context for the production of identities is that of 'world making' (Holland et al., 1998); the possibility that people can create new figured worlds. These worlds can be brand new, or related to existing figured worlds (Urrieta, 2007). The ability to create new figured worlds builds upon Vygotsky's studies of how children's play can create new environments which allow the ability to rehearse adult social norms (e.g., Vygotsky, 1987). In this way; "just as children's play is instrumental in building their symbolic competences, upon which adult life depends, so too social play […] develops new social competencies in newly imagined communities" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 272). Through 'social play' we therefore not only develop new identities, but also new realms in which to practice these identities; new figured worlds into which others may enter and which offer new ways of being and doing.

Holland et al. (1998) state that this final context for identities in practice brings us back to the first context; figured worlds. Specifically, the ability to make worlds demonstrates the capacity of figured worlds to adapt in response to people's identity work. In other words, whilst figured worlds may be defined by the norms or storylines within them, people also have a capacity to change, or shift, these norms upon which figured worlds are built.

Although not used directly in this thesis, this context serves as an important reminder that the figured worlds of teaching upon which this study focuses are not permanent, and themselves have the capacity for change. Together, then, the four contexts of identity in practice (figured worlds, positionality, space of authoring, and making worlds) demonstrate people's ability to negotiate their own identities, but also the way in which people are to some extent bounded by the structures within which they conduct these identities. Because this study is interested in young people's identity negotiations in relation to the existing figured worlds of teaching, the context of 'world making' is not utilised in this research. This thesis instead uses 'figured worlds', 'positionality' and 'space of authoring' (Holland et al., 1998). As will be set out in Section 3.4 of this chapter and Section 4.3.2.4, these contexts are used as tools to consider how young people who aspire to teach figure the worlds of teaching; how these young people are positioned in relation to these worlds; and how young people author themselves in response to these positionings over time.

3.3   Applying identity in practice to research with young people and teachers

Since the publication of *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*, many researchers have used the work of Holland et al. (1998) as a conceptual toolkit for understanding how identity work is constructed within, and informed by, educational contexts (Urrieta & Hatt, 2019). In this section I consider some of the existing applications and expansions of the theory of identity in practice within two key areas of research specific to this study; research with young people, and research with beginning teachers. Because this study considers whether, how and why young see themselves as teachers over time, considering applications of identity in practice theory in both of these sub-fields of

education research provides a useful foundation for its application in this thesis. Here, I consider examples of research from both of these sub-fields, and specifically how the three contexts of identities in practice put forward by Holland et al. (1998) that will be used in this study (figured worlds, positionality and space of authoring) have been used, adapted and expanded upon by others in these areas.

3.3.1 Young people's identities in practice

Seemingly the most common tool from the work of Holland et al. (1998) to be used in examining the identities in practice of young people is the context of figured worlds. Applications of the context of figured worlds are wide-ranging and demonstrate the flexibility and adaptability of this tool for examining young people's identities in practice. For example, researchers have studied young people's identity work in the figured worlds of a specific school (e.g., Michael et al., 2007), of a classroom (Langer-Osuna, 2015), of a school project (e.g., Jurow, 2005), and of an after school club (e.g., Calabrese Barton & Tan, 2010); as well as in the worlds of smartness (Hatt, 2007), and of overcoming barriers to college (Allexsaht-Snider et al., 2020). These applications thus illustrate that both the real and imaginary spaces that young people inhabit are not only sites for learning new knowledge, or playing; but can be sites for 'becoming' (Nasir & Cooks, 2009).

A common thread throughout much of the research applying the context of figured worlds to young people's identity work is the inflexibility and traditional nature of the worlds which young people inhabit, especially in the context of formal education. As highlighted by Rubin (2007) the "conventional" learning environment identified in many

studies, in which knowledge is "constructed through didactic teaching practices", restricts young people's identities as learners and can have negative consequences for their attainment (Rubin, 2007, p. 224). This is because learning is considered to be a social phenomenon informed, and thus enabled or restrained, by the world in which it happens (Lave & Wenger, 1991). For example, Boaler and Greeno (2000) suggested that the reason why many young people in the US did not choose to pursue mathematics beyond school at the time of writing was because of the didactic teaching used in many American maths classrooms which positioned students as passive receivers of knowledge rather than active learners. The authors argued that because "students do not just learn mathematics in school classrooms, they learn to *be*", it was likely that a lot of young people who had the potential to become leading mathematicians left the subject because they did not "want to author their identities as passive receivers of knowledge" (Boaler & Greeno, 2000, pp. 188-189, emphasis in original). This application of identities in practice therefore demonstrates that the structures within a figured world can be so established and exert such power that they work to position young people in ways that are difficult to negotiate.

In a more recent example, research by Christie (2019) with 21-25 year old university graduates in England demonstrated that neoliberal discourses within the figured world of university about what counts as 'success' after graduation often conflicted with participants' own resources and experiences, resulting in the need for young graduates to self-author new forms of 'success' for themselves. This application of the work of Holland et al. (1998) again highlights the constraints upon young people's identities in

practice within formal learning environments, but also the potential capacity of young people to modify or even reject the traditional positionings offered to them.

Especially relevant to this thesis are scholars' extensions of the contexts of identities in practice to analyse young people's identity work over time; their education and work identity trajectories. There are no known examples of studies examining identities in practice over a period as long as this study examines (11 years; see Section 4.3). As was highlighted at the beginning of this chapter (Section 3.1), however, some examples of longitudinal identities in practice research can be found in the science education literature and thus consider the specific concept of identities in science, or 'science identities'[36]. For example, in their three-year longitudinal study of three US students' identity work from elementary to middle school, Carlone et al. (2014) found that the figured world of school science worked to exclude racially minoritised students by the time they were in sixth-grade (age 11/12) because science was "often configured too narrowly", leaving "little room to celebrate and productively leverage different kinds of students' science-related interests and identity work" (Carlone et al., 2014, p. 863). These difficulties were seen to be exacerbated because the study examined students' transitions from elementary to middle school; a time in which identity work was particularly precarious. Expanding upon earlier theorisations of the concept of 'science identity' (e.g., Carlone & Johnson, 2007), then, Carlone et al. (2014) developed the term

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[36] Broadly, science identity research considers who is, and is not, supported to develop identities (in practice) which belong to and/or are recognised within science. It is widely acknowledged that one of the first key papers in the field of science identities was that of Carlone and Johnson (2007). Since then, and as hinted at in Section 3.1, the study of science identities has become a sub-field of research within science education (Archer et al., 2022), as will be demonstrated through the studies examining science identities in practice referenced in this section and in Section 3.4.

'celebrated subject positions' to refer to the identity performances and behaviours that are praised or welcomed in the figured world of school science.

The findings of this longitudinal research by Carlone et al. (2014) mirror those of Boaler and Greeno (2000) and Christie (2019) regarding the rigid and traditional nature of figured worlds in formal education. It demonstrates the power of the 'cultural models' that construct a figured world to restrict young people's (science) identities in practice over time, as has also been found in other studies of science classrooms (e.g., Wade-Jaimes & Schwartz, 2019). Importantly, however, the examination of identities in practice over time by Carlone et al. (2014) allowed the authors to illustrate that the figured world of school science at fourth-grade (age 9/10) could be refigured to make science more accessible for longer through inclusive teaching practices (Carlone et al., 2014). This finding underlines the capacity for figured worlds to adapt and alter the cultural models which define them over time; which in turn could change the positions typically available to young people in (relation to) them.

Similarly, work by Gonsalves et al. (2019) traced the identity trajectories of three final year construction engineering students in Sweden[37]. By expanding the context of figured worlds, positionality and space of authoring to identity trajectories, Gonsalves et al. (2019) found that students were positioned, and authored themselves, in relation to the 'dominant subject positions' first in their engineering program and then in their engineering workplaces. The authors found, however, that differences between these

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[37] One of the three participants in the study by Gonsalves et al. (2019) was a mature student and thus not a 'young person', as is the focus of this thesis. The paper's focus on students' transitions into the workplace, however, echoes aspects of the trajectories of participants in this thesis and is therefore considered to be a relevant study for examination in this chapter.

two worlds resulted in inconsistencies in how participants navigated, or 'vectored', their identities as insiders to the figured world of engineering over time. As with the work of Carlone et al. (2014), this study thus illustrates that when young people transition between figured worlds their identity work is unlikely to be linear, but may be precarious or uncertain.

In these examples we can see that the theory of identity in practice and its contexts provide what Urrieta and Hatt (2019) call "a valuable conceptual tool for understanding the cultural construction of identity in educational contexts" (p. 10). These applications and extensions of the work of Holland et al. (1998) in research with young people demonstrate three key findings particularly beneficial for this thesis. First, the literature demonstrates the sometimes restrictive power of (traditional or established) figured worlds upon young people's identity work. Second, this research illustrates that young people's identity work can be particularly complex at times when they move between figured worlds; such as will be considered in this study. Third, and particularly important for this thesis, this work also serves as a reminder that young people's identities in practice are constantly in process over time. Thus, when considering a young person's identity in practice at multiple points in time (such as in longitudinal interviews as are used in this study; see Section 4.3.2), it is important to remember that these representations are not points that can be plotted as a linear journey, but a continuous (re)figuring akin to wayfaring (Rahm et al., 2022) which can be especially precarious for those new to, or on the peripheries of, particular figured worlds (Gonsalves et al., 2019).

3.3.2 Beginning teachers' identities in practice

Also relevant to this thesis is the literature studying the identity work of people who are new to teaching. The concept of 'teacher identity' has been widely used as a tool with which to understand how those who are already teachers (including those new to teaching) see themselves, how they are seen by others, and how this informs their professional work (e.g., Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004). Yet, as was outlined in Section 1.5, this thesis is not directly concerned with the lives or work of those already in teaching; but why young people do or do not join the profession. Currently, however, all known research on teacher identities—whether using the lens of 'identities in pratice' or not—considers those who are already in the profession rather than those who have not (yet) become teachers. In the absense of research examining the identity work of young people who (do not) become teachers, I have here chosen to consider findings from research on beginning teachers' idenities in practice. Although the number of studies examining beginning teachers' identities in practice is small, findings from this literature shed some light upon how those who are new to teaching negotiated their identities in practice in relation to the figured worlds of teaching prior to becoming (or as they became) teachers.

Before considering applications of identities in practice with beginning teachers, it should first be noted that findings from the wider research examining existing teachers' identities more generally can help to inform us about the identity work conducted *in relation to* the figured worlds of teaching (just as this study aims to do); as well as simply 'teacher identity' itself (which might be understood as identity work *within* the figured worlds of teaching). For example, as discussed in Section 2.2.2.1, findings from

studies by Olsen (2008) and Bergey (2021) in the US indicate that, for women and Asian American men teachers specifically, a teacher's gender and/or ethnicity can inform the reasons why they became teachers. Analysis by Bergey (2021) in particular shows that those whose identities do not align with the existing dominant norms of teaching as for, or by, White women work hard to author themselves a legitimate and recognised identity in practice in relation to the figured worlds of teaching.

Research which has applied the work of Holland et al. (1998) to beginner teacher identities indicates that developing an identity in practice in relation to the figured worlds of teaching is not a smooth or simple process (Avraamidou, 2019; Kasun & Saavedra, 2016), and that new teachers' identities in practice are shaped by the multiple figured worlds which they inhabit. For example, in a study based in southern Europe, Avraamidou (2019) concluded that the science teacher identities of their four newly qualified elementary teacher participants were processes that were "complex, multifaceted, situated, continuous and always in the making", and were informed by "sundry kinds of experiences, events, and interactions" (p. 53). Specifically, Avraamidou (2019) studied what they called 'critical events' in their participants' identity constructions; experiences which "impacted the development of [participants'] science identities or how the participants viewed themselves and their roles as science teachers" (p. 35). This use of 'critical events' to conceptualise moments of heightened identity negotiation can, I argue, be likened to the notion of 'critical incidents' used by Schutz et al. (2001) to describe the moments which impacted their participants' decisions to teach (see Section 2.2.1.2).

Through their analyses Avraamidou (2019) found that the beginning teachers' existing identity work in the figured worlds of family, school, leisure, university, professional environments and science all informed their identity work as new teachers. This suggests that whether and how young people construct their identities in relation to the figured worlds of teaching cannot be separated from their identity work in relation to other figured worlds. Of additional relevance to this thesis, the focus of the study by Avraamidou (2019) on science teacher identities provides evidence that young people who specialise in science teaching lean heavily on their earlier (pre-teaching) experiences of, and beliefs about, science to construct their identities in practice.

Research has also shown us that beginning teachers' intersecting social positions can inform the development of their identities in practice. For example, a study by Varghese and Snyder (2018) illustrates how four pre-service dual language teachers in the US authored their emerging teacher identities using their personal linguistic, racial, and cultural backgrounds; which included navigating conflicts between the figured world of dual language teaching and the worlds that they already inhabited. Similar to the study by Bergey (2021), then, these teachers encountered difficulties in aligning their identities in practice with the figured worlds of teaching because their identities did not closely align with the existing norms of teaching (Varghese & Snyder, 2018). In other words, these teachers all faced obstacles in terms of how they were positioned by others, but worked hard to author themselves a new position within the figured worlds of teaching.

Although realtively sparse, the literature on beginning teachers' identities in practice implies three key findings about young people's identities in practice in relation to

teaching that are useful for this thesis. First, perhaps unsurprisingly, these studies hint

that the identity work that young people do when choosing to become (or not become) a

teacher builds heavily upon their existing identities and experiences. Second, what this

literature also suggests is that some young people have to conduct significant identity

work to align their identities in practice with the figured worlds of teaching where they

are not already positioned in this way. Third, and finally, these applications of the work

of Holland et al. (1998) all emphasise that identities in practice in relation to teaching

are a continuous process; even for those already within the figured worlds of teaching. I

suggest that this provides evidence that the choice to become a teacher may not be

single decision as is implictly represented in many of the one-off studies on teacher

supply seen in Chapter 2; but a process of ongoing identity negotiation, as has been

shown to be the case with young people's educational choices (Holmegaard et al.,

2015).

3.4   Using narrative trajectories to examine identities in practice over time

In order to understand how young people navigate their identities in practice in relation

to the figured worlds of teaching over time (and thus 'make the choice' of whether or not

to become a teacher), in this thesis I employ the concept of 'teaching trajectories'. As

discussed in Section 1.5, I use the term 'teaching trajectories' to refer to young people's

longitudinal paths, or journeys, towards or away from teaching. In using the term

'trajectories' as opposed to an alternative descriptor such as 'pathways', I acknowledge

the uniqueness of an individual's teaching journey (e.g., Gee, 2000), the non-linear

process of these journeys (e.g., Pallas, 2003) and, more importantly, the possibility for

movement away from as well as towards teaching (e.g., Wenger, 1998). Whilst

numerous studies have used the concept of trajectories to aid the understanding of young people's identities in practice, particularly within science education research (e.g., Calabrese Barton et al., 2013; Carlone et al., 2014; Gonsalves et al., 2021; Günter et al., 2021; Jackson & Seiler, 2013; Zuckerman & Lo, 2021), this is the first known study to examine the trajectories of young people into or away from teaching.

In my application of trajectories I am particularly inspired by the work of Jackson and Seiler (2013) who analysed the trajectories of 'latecomers to science' (i.e., those who entered science through routes other than those directly from school) using data from interviews, online journal entries and discussion forums. In most other studies of young people's identities in practice researchers examine individuals' ongoing participation in a figured world (e.g., Boaler & Greeno, 2000; Carlone et al., 2014); whereas Jackson and Seiler (2013) trace the identity work of people from outside, and towards or away from, the figured world of science; just as this study attempts to do in relation to teaching. Importantly, Jackson and Seiler (2013) point out that trajectories towards and away from figured worlds are shaped by individual, social and cultural forces. These forces can be exerted by the 'cultural models' which construct a figured world, and which make available different storylines within a figured world (highlighted in Section 3.2.1.1). As articulated by Carlone et al. (2014), the approach taken by Jackson and Seiler (2013) focuses upon "the *participants' narratives* in reflective writing and interviews, which [makes] visible students' ongoing ideas about themselves and the cultural models that shaped their ideas" (p. 840, emphasis in original). Inspired by this work, I also take a narrative approach when considering young people's trajectories in relation to the figured worlds of teaching. Whilst there are multiple ways in which to take a narrative

approach to research (Holmegaard et al., 2015), here I use 'narrative approach' to refer to my focus on how participants make sense of, or meaning from, their identity work in relation to teaching through the stories that they tell in this study's data (e.g., Lawler, 2002; Somers, 1994).

In addition, and adapting terms first developed by Wenger (1998) to describe trajectories in relation to 'communities of practice', Jackson and Seiler (2013) typify latecomers' trajectories to the figured world of science as 'inbound', 'outbound', and/or 'peripheral'. Respectively, these trajectory types represent increasing identification with a figured world, decreasing identification with a figured world, or mixed identification and disidentification with a figured world (Jackson & Seiler, 2013). Whilst these types of trajectories are not directly used in this thesis (see Section 4.3.2.4), they are an important reminder that identities are both temporal and multidirectional (Wenger, 1998). When trajectories are applied to the concept of figured worlds, we can therefore see that one's identity in practice can move and shift over time in order to align with, or dissociate from, a figured world (Jackson & Seiler, 2013).

As will be detailed in Section 4.3.2.1, the 13 participants represented in this study's qualitative data are young people who expressed an aspiration or interest in becoming a teacher at least once between the ages of 10/11 and 20/21, and whom I interviewed again at age 21/22. In line with Quaglia and Cobb (1996), who propose that expressing a career aspiration indicates that a young people is involved in 'activities' related to these future goals, I interpret these 13 young people's expressions of interest in teaching as evidence of (some) identity alignment with the figured worlds of teaching, and thus a teaching trajectory (see Section 1.5). I acknowledge, however, that some

participants' teaching trajectories are, and remain, more distant from the figured worlds of teaching than others (e.g., Jackson & Seiler, 2013). To trace these 13 young people's teaching trajectories over time, and thus consider why and how young people made the choice to become teachers or not, I use the cultural models of teaching (Section 3.2.1.1) to map how young people navigate their identities in practice in relation to the figured worlds of teaching over time. In this 'mapping', I use the contexts of positioning and space of authoring (as introduced in Sections 3.2.1.2 and 3.2.1.3). To use these contexts I employ a narrative approach to examining how young people have navigated the positions available to them, and how they have authored themselves in response to these positions at different ages. See Section 4.3.2.4 for more detail about these analyses.

Figure 1 provides a simplified representation of two example teaching trajectories, and is partly inspired by trajectories representations by both Jackson and Seiler (2013) and Rahm et al. (2022). In the centre are the overlapping worlds which together encompass what I refer to as 'the figured worlds of teaching'. Examples of the individual realms which collectively make up these worlds might include the figured world of primary teaching, the figured world of science teaching, or the figured world of school headship. Entry into these worlds may be thus marked by becoming a schoolteacher, or in some cases something less concrete such as applying to, or seriously considering, ITE. The two arrows in Figure 1 represent two possible trajectories in relation to these worlds. Neither of these trajectories are linear, and both have moved towards and away from teaching at different times. The trajectory on the left is a trajectory towards teaching because it enters the figured worlds, whilst the trajectory on the right is a trajectory

away from teaching because it is directed away from the figured worlds of teaching. The

righthand trajectory appears to have skirted the worlds of teaching at one time,

however; indicating that this individual closely authored their identity in practice in line

with teaching for a time, before working to distance themselves from teaching.

Figure 1 *A representation of two teaching trajectories*
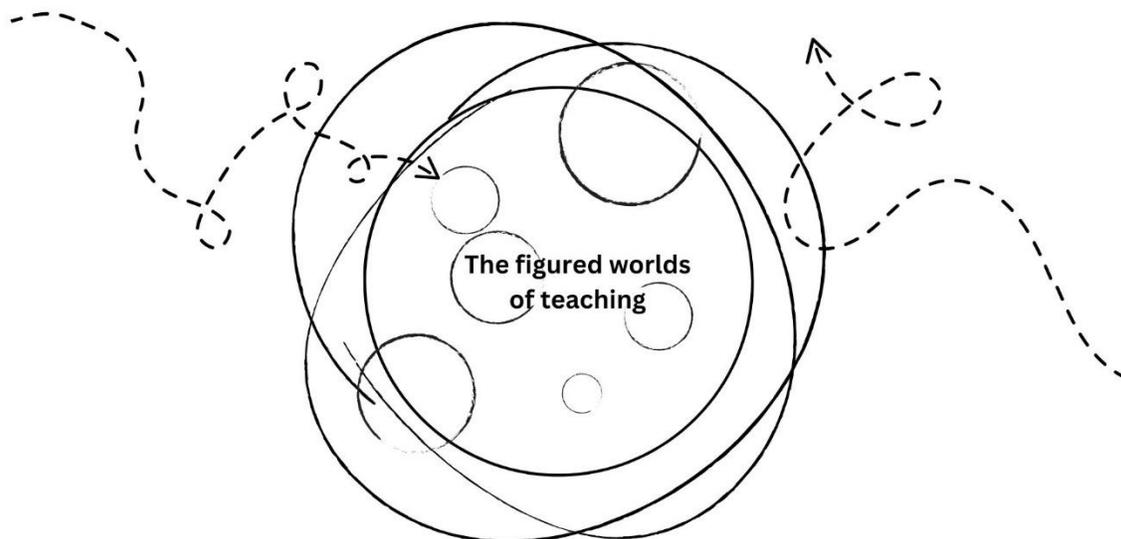
The trajectories in Figure 1 are represented by arrows which are dotted because of the

uncertain, as well as the ongoing, nature of teaching trajectories. The loops and twists

in these trajectories signify heightened moments of identity negotiation; 'critical

incidents' (Schutz et al., 2001) or 'cross-roads' where, for example, a young person

encountered an obstacle in becoming a teacher and turned away from teaching either

momentarily or in the long-term. Notably, this interpretation sees a young person's

teaching trajectory as distinct from their other possible trajectories. In line with the

notion that we are members of multiple figured worlds simultaneously (Holland et al.,

1998), I acknowledge that people may have numerous concurrent trajectories in relation to multiple figured worlds. This thesis focuses only upon young people's teaching trajectories, however, whilst being mindful that an individual's other possible identities and trajectories may inform their identity work in relation to teaching (Avraamidou, 2019; Varghese & Snyder, 2018). How I analysed this study's data using this framework is outlined in more detail in Section 4.3.2.4, and findings are presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

3.5 Possible limitations of an identity in practice framework in this thesis

Despite the potential value of the theory of identity in practice for understanding young people's identity work in relation to the figured world of teaching, it is important to also consider the possible limitations of this approach. In this section I discuss some of the ways in which an identity in practice lens may shape this research in a way which could be argued to neglect certain perspectives, as well as considering critiques of the theory. I include this discussion in order to acknowledge that the theoretical framework applied in this thesis is just one possible approach with which to consider why young people do, and do not, become teachers (Dressman, 2008).

There are countless theoretical lenses, interpretations and perspectives, especially within the field of identities (Gee, 2000), which could provide alternative possibilities for this research. Specifically, there are three growing areas of identity theory which are not of central concern in this thesis because of my application of identity in practice, but which could also provide a lens with which to analyse why people (do not) teach. First, whilst I argue that the discursive focus of the concept of identity in practice lends itself

well to examining my primarily qualitative and longitudinal dataset, I recognise that one consequence of this is that little focus is given to the role of the body and actions in shaping identities. Therefore, whilst I acknowledge that identity can be viewed as an embodied event by recognising that our physical body and its actions can shape our mental experiences (e.g., Sullivan, 2018), perhaps especially so for young people (e.g., Budgeon, 2003), in this thesis I do not explicitly consider how participants' teaching trajectories are, or may be, embodied.

Second, my application of the theory of identity in practice does not expressly consider the role of emotions in identity work. Thus, although the approach taken in this thesis shares some significant similarities with poststructuralist views of affective (teacher) identity, such as an interpretation of identity as a constant process of becoming informed by both power and agency (e.g., Zembylas, 2003), this thesis does not focus its investigation upon the emotional components of young people's identity work. Third, and finally, I take a deconstructionist approach to identity in practice; meaning that I do not consider material aspects of identity performance. In other words, my focus on the spoken dimensions of identity as represented in interviews (as will detailed in Section 4.3.2) may not account for the relationship between discursive practices and material phenomena that can exist in identity work (e.g., Barad, 2006). Whilst I acknowledge these different identity lens and approaches as possible alternative ways in which to consider identity, they will not be central to this thesis.

In addition to these broad considerations, there are also limitations specific to the concept of identities in practice. For example, I feel that it is important to acknowledge that Holland et al. (1998) did not explicitly reflect upon their positions as White and/or

socially privileged researchers in their use of ethnographic research to develop the concept of identities in practice. Whilst this is not currently a common critique of the work of Holland et al. (1998), a reflection upon past ethnographic studies by Pennington and Prater (2016) highlights that researchers' privileged positional identities, and specifically their Whiteness, can act as a 'professional veil of silence' shaping all aspects of research. In this way, it seems inescapable that the contexts of identity in practice which form the theoretical framework for this thesis are the product of social and institutional structures of power including racism and sexism (Pennington & Prater, 2016). Whilst it is impossible to separate theory from the context within which it was developed (Dressman, 2008), I seek to respond to this limitation by taking an intersectional approach to identities in practice (see Section 3.6), and by reflecting upon how my own privileges and positions have influenced my application and interpretation of this theory (see Section 4.2.4).

A more common critique of the work of Holland et al. (1998) posited by other scholars is the lack of precise definitions or a clear analytical framework (e.g., Sfard & Prusak, 2005) which, as Urrieta (2007) points out, results in its sometimes fleeting and often inconsistent application in empirical research. In other words, the concept of identities in practice can be difficult to operationalise. I suggest that this difficulty is exemplified by the sporadic applications of the contexts of positionality, space of authoring and making worlds in existing research; versus the more extensive use of the better-known and perhaps more specific context of figured worlds. I agree with Urrieta (2007), however, who states that, unless viewed from a positivist perspective, the absence of concrete definitions within the framework of identity in practice is precisely why the theory lends

itself so well to analyses of the complex social and cultural worlds in which we live[38]. I argue that this is especially relevant given the depth of the longitudinal data used in this thesis, as will be discussed in Section 4.3.2.

In addition to the critique that identity in practice is difficult to operationalise, I suggest that there are two further possible limitations of this theory to consider with reference to this thesis; both of which stem from its acknowledgement of both structural and agentic influences upon people's identity work. As noted by Shanahan (2009), identity researchers who recognise both structure and agency "must constantly make choices within this acknowledged dialectic to attend to particular aspects and focus their gaze on a specific part of a larger process" (Shanahan, 2009, p. 46). First, therefore, I suggest that the "focus" of identity in practice upon the context of space of authoring (Holland et al., 1998, p. 271) could mean that attention to the influence of structural processes is limited in this thesis. In other words, whilst Holland et al. (1998) argue that self-authoring is "not a choice", their claim that this authoring is "not predetermined" may (over)emphasise the power of the individual to improvise their actions vs. the power of social (re)production (p. 272).

Second, the agency at the centre of identity in practice theory refers to individual, rather than collective, agency. In this way, applying an identity in practice framework is unlikely to be sufficient for examining shared subjectivities relevant to the figured worlds of teaching (Shteynberg et al., 2022). Again paying attention to the contextual background of identities in practice (Dressman, 2008; Pennington & Prater, 2016), I suggest that the

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[38] In this thesis I view knowledge through an interpretivist lens, as is discussed in Section 4.2.1.

individualistic and agentic focus of this theory reflects the White, western, and patriarchal culture of US academia in which this theory was developed. In an attempt to minimise both of these possible limitations concerning agency, I take an intersectional approach to identities in practice, as will now be discussed.

3.6   An intersectional approach to identity in practice

The final aspect of the theoretical framework used in this thesis is intersectionality. The concept of intersectionality was first developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), a leading critical race theorist in the US, to illustrate the interlocking nature of major systems of oppression including class, race, and gender. The concept was aimed at supporting understandings of how different social axes combine to erase or minimise different aspects of discrimination, especially in the case of Black women (e.g., Combahee River Collective, 1977). Put simply, an intersectional approach therefore understands that the oppressions experienced by, for example, Black women differ from the oppressions experienced by Black men, Asian women, or White women (Crenshaw, 1989; Nash, 2008). Thus, whilst research on teacher supply to date has typically focused on individual demographics to provide evidence that young people who pursue teaching are more likely to identify as White, identify as women, and come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (e.g., See, 2004); taking an intersectional approach in this thesis enables me to consider whether or not, and why, young people are more (or less) likely to become teacher when these, or other, identities intersect.

In this way, intersectionality supports the identification of structural and political forces upon the choice to become a teacher (e.g., Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016) and aids this

thesis's social justice axiology (see Section 4.2.1). Therefore, although Hancock (2016) and others (e.g., Davis, 2008) have argued that some attempted applications of intersectionality use this lens merely as a "buzzword", I strive to use intersectionality as an analytical tool to consider how "categories of difference" relate to one another and inform teaching trajectories (Hancock, 2016, p. 34). In response to the possible limitations of identities in practice considered in Section 3.5, then, I propose that this approach allows this research to consider the influence of both social structures and collective agency upon young people's teaching trajectories.

Several other researchers have also applied analytical frameworks that combine the theoretical concepts of identities in practice and intersectionality (e.g., Günter et al., 2022; Wade-Jaimes et al., 2021). Indeed, although Holland et al. do not explicitly refer to intersectionality in *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds* (1998), this lens seems to complement Holland and colleagues' own notions of identity. Whilst I acknowledge that Holland et al. (1998) did not take an especially critical approach in this regard, the authors claim that the social positions that we inhabit, such as our gender and social class; "cut and cut again across one another" to influence our identity negotiations (p. 286). In other words, the authors appear to recognise that the social positions that we hold do not influence our identity work in isolation, but work together to inform our actions and trajectories. In this way, I argue that intersectionality does not form a distinct theoretical framework in this thesis but is threaded through my existing identity in practice framework.

I suggest that using intersectionality to augment this study's identity in practice framework lends itself to this thesis for two key reasons. First, and as highlighted

through the studies reviewed throughout Chapter 2, existing research shows that trajectories into teaching are patterned by multiple social and cultural influences; meaning that the reasons for a young person's (desired) participation in the world of teaching is shaped by their intersecting identities. In other words, taking an intersectional approach will allow this thesis to examine why teaching trajectories seem to be partly influenced by the interaction of social positions. Second, applying an intersectional lens to this study enables me to consider the possibility that how young people's multiple intersecting social positions inform their identity work in relation to teaching changes over time. This approach is particularly important to this research which follows the trajectories of young people from age 10/11 to age 21/22; tracking them from childhood and into adulthood, during which time their identities may change, and/or may have differing influences upon their teaching trajectory.

Whilst I recognise the embodiment of intersectional identities (e.g., Somers, 1994), in applying an intersectional lens to this research I adopt the perspective that (aspects of our) identities are socially constructed. How this study's participants identify is thus not considered a consequence their biological bodies, but is an aspect produced through discursive acts or narratives (e.g., Burr, 2003; Gee, 2000; Somers, 1994); and the language that I use to refer to different intersections of identity (e.g., 'gender', not 'sex') has been chosen to reflect this perspective. This approach aligns with the social constructionism approach I take in this thesis (outlined in Section 4.2.1).

Finally, I understand that applying intersectionality can raise methodological difficulties. Specifically, as articulated by Gillborn et al. (2017), using intersectionality can risk "becoming trapped in an endless pursuit of more and more interlocking categories and

forms of analysis" (p. 851). For this reason, the way in which I employ the lens of intersectionality in this thesis is informed by findings from Chapter 2. In this way, I acknowledge that it would impossible to consider the totality of participants' intersectional identities, and I pay particular attention to the social positions which have been shown to influence teaching trajectories in the existing literature. In Section 4.3.2.4 I provide more detail about how I employ an intersectional analytical lens in this thesis.

3.7 Chapter summary

In response to Chapter 2, which suggested that young people's trajectories into teaching are complex and are influenced by individual motivations and by social and cultural inequalities, this chapter has sought to introduce and critically examine the theoretical framework that is used in this thesis to understand young people's teaching trajectories. I have shown that applying an identity in practice lens to this research enables me to acknowledge the structural influences and individual agency which influence young people's changing trajectories into and away from teaching over time. Specifically, I introduced the identity contexts of figured worlds, positionality and space of authoring used in this study's analytical framework as set out by Holland et al. (1998), and as applied and extended by others. Applications of this theory in research with young people indicate that figured worlds in education can be constructed by traditional and inflexible norms, and that identities in practice require constant negotiation; especially where an individual's positional identities and/or social positions do not closely align with the norms of a figured world. Although the identities in practice of young people who are not (yet) teachers have not previously been examined, research examining the identities in practice of beginning teachers indicates that young people

must conduct significant and sometimes challenging identity work in order to become teachers.

In this chapter I also demonstrated how extensions of identity in practice to longitudinal education and work trajectories are particularly useful for this study, and outlined how I use the concept of 'trajectories' to understand identities in practice in relation to (i.e., towards or away from, not *in*) the figured worlds of teaching. Finally, I reflected upon the possible limitations of taking the theoretical approach used in this thesis, and explained that I take an intersectional approach to identity in practice, so that I can examine how my participants' multifaceted positional identities might influence their teaching trajectories over time. How I operationalise this framework will be presented in the next chapter, where I introduce the methodology and methods used in this thesis.

Chapter 4. Methodological approaches and research methods

4.1   Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the methodological approaches and research methods used to address this study's research questions, which are aimed at developing understandings of young people's teaching trajectories during a period of severe and patterned teacher shortages in England. These questions, again, are:

1) Who aspires to become a teacher (RQ1a), and why (RQ1b)?

2) Why do some young people pursue teaching? (RQ2)

3) Why do some young people drop their teaching aspirations, especially in science? (RQ3)

In Section 4.2 of this chapter I outline the methodological approaches (that is, the philosophies, practices and considerations) that inform this study. In Section 4.3 I then introduce this study's research methods (that is, the research design, data collection processes and data analyses used). Section 4.3 includes a discussion of this study's qualitative and quantitative datasets and an introduction to the ASPIRES research project, from which the secondary data used in this study originate. This thesis's qualitative dataset (discussed in detail in Section 4.3.2) consists of 146 secondary and primary interviews which longitudinally track 13 young people from age 10/11 to age 21/22; three of whom were teachers by age 21/22 and 10 of whom had dropped earlier teaching aspirations by this age. This thesis's quantitative dataset (discussed in Section 4.3.3) is made up of over 60,000 survey responses from six national surveys conducted by the ASPIRES project with a cohort of young people at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18, and 21/22.

4.2   Methodological approaches

4.2.1   Ontology, epistemology and axiology

As is widely accepted to be best practice in the social sciences (e.g., Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Cohen et al., 2017), I begin this chapter by outlining the philosophical underpinnings of this study; the ontological, epistemological, and axiological principles which guided all aspects of this thesis from planning and data collection, to data analyses and reporting of findings. By 'ontology' I refer to how I view the 'truth' or reality of the social world(s) researched in this study (e.g., Bryman, 2016), by 'epistemology' I refer to the nature of the knowledge developed including how this is produced (e.g., Ormston et al., 2014), and by 'axiology' I refer to the values and principles which have guided this research (e.g., Cohen et al., 2017).

The overarching research paradigm which informed how I undertook this research is social constructionism; a paradigm commonly applied to sociologically informed and qualitatively led studies such as this one (Burr, 2003). Being informed by social constructionism means that my ontological approach was guided by a view of reality as "only knowable through the human mind and through socially constructed meanings" (Ormston et al., 2014, p. 5), rather than as an objective truth that one can 'discover' (Burr, 2003). Epistemologically, I take an interpretivist view which understands knowledge as dependent upon, and rooted within, social contexts; and which means that the findings of this study are "culturally relative and historically specific" (Weinberg, 2014, p. 4). This study's research questions are concerned with the perspectives and individual experiences of young people who are deciding, or have decided, whether or not to become a teacher and the data collected is understood to be generated by myself and the research participants, and shaped by

our intentions (see Sections 4.2.4, 4.3.2.3 and 4.3.2.4 for reflections of how this approach shaped the study). My aim throughout this research has thus been to interpret my research participants' individual experiences (Ormston et al., 2014), rather than seeking to make general claims about why all young people do, or do not, become teachers (Hammersley, 2013).

My choice to take a social constructionism approach in this thesis was guided in part by this study's theoretical framework. Both the paradigm of social constructionism and the theory of identities in practice (see Section 3.2) share a view of social world(s) as continually (re)constructed by people through their social interactions (Bryman, 2016; Holland et al., 1998). In this study, the figured worlds of teaching[39] are therefore understood to be constructed differently by different people, depending on how they identify (their social positions) and their social, cultural, and historical contexts. I thus argue that social constructionism's epistemological stance of knowledge as derived through people and their experiences rather than through nature (Burr, 2003), allows me to trace my research participants' agentic trajectory navigations in relation to the figured worlds of teaching, as well as the wider structural influences which may work to influence how they relate to these worlds over time.

I acknowledge that common criticisms aimed at those using a social constructionism approach include that they do not accept the 'real existence' of phenomena, and that they treat all claims as equally meaningful because they see nothing as 'true'

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[39] Informed by this study's theoretical framework of identities in practice (introduced in Chapter 3 and operationalised in Section 4.3.2.4 of this chapter), I employ the term 'the figured worlds of teaching' to refer to the profession of teaching throughout this thesis. I refer to teaching as constructed by plural worlds in order to acknowledge the many specialisms within teaching that form the overall profession. See Section 3.2.1.1 for an introduction to the concept of figured worlds.

(Burningham & Cooper, 1999; Burr, 2003; Pawluch, 2019; Weinberg, 2014). I consider these objections to be founded upon a false dichotomy between realism and constructionism (Burningham & Cooper, 1999; Fuss, 1990; Pawluch, 2019), to which I respond through my use of what is sometimes referred to as a 'weak', as opposed to a 'strict', social constructionism approach (Best, 2017).

Social constructionism research approaches can take multiple forms (Burningham & Cooper, 1999), including within the research field of education where I consider this thesis to be situated (Wortham & Jackson, 2008). In contrast to forms of social constructionism seen as antithetical to realism, the methodology used in this thesis is informed by what Best (2017, 2019) calls 'contextual constructionism', otherwise known as a 'weak', as opposed to a 'strong', approach to social constructionism. According to Best (2019), whereas a strong approach to constructionism indicates "that analysts should examine only claims, while making no effort to locate them within their social context", a weak approach to constructionism "invites sociologists to study the processes by which social issues come to public attention" (p. 222). I therefore argue that using a weak, or contextual, approach to constructionism allows me to critically focus on what this study's research participants claim about their experiences and why, rather than being preoccupied with whether or not these things are 'true' or 'accurate' (Burningham & Cooper, 1999; Pawluch, 2019). I chose to apply social constructionism in this way because I do not question the reality of the patterned teacher shortages which form the context of this study; but view these shortages as a social phenomenon.

Finally, against this backdrop of patterned teacher shortages, and informed by findings from Chapter 2—which raised questions about whether access to teaching

is 'equitable' or whether, and why, some are discouraged or barred from the profession—values of social justice inform the axiology of this research. I refer to this study's axiology in relation to social justice because this concept is often defined in relation to whether or not practices are equitable. In contrast to 'equality', which refers to the notion that everyone should be treated in the same way and given the same resources, 'equity' is based on the principle that different people will need different resources and support to succeed (e.g., Fraser & Honneth, 2003). Where a practice is *in*equitable then, as I argued in Section 2.2.2.1 that access to teaching may be, different people may not have the allocation of resources that enable or support them to participate in that practice.

In this social justice axiological approach I am inspired by the work of Fraser (2010), who states that "justice requires social arrangements that permit all to participate as peers in social life", and that "obstacles that prevent some people from participating on a par with others" must thus be dismantled (p. 16). Indeed, some of the possible obstacles and deterrents to teaching introduced in Section 2.3.1 were shown to be patterned by social inequalities, which suggests that some people may be (knowingly or unknowingly) prevented from teaching due to what Holland et al. (1998) would call their 'social positions' (see Section 3.2.1.1). I argue that examining the reasons why teaching trajectories are patterned by social inequalities and subject specialisms thus offers the opportunity to disrupt existing social obstacles to, and/or social deterrents from, teaching (Fraser & Honneth, 2003). In summary, then, this study was conducted with the hope that examining reasons contributing to England's patterned teacher shortages may increase current understandings of, and thus potentially improve, these shortages.

4.2.2 A qualitatively led approach to research

Whilst I recognise that this study's use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods mean that some would consider this to be a mixed methods, or multi-methods thesis, I have chosen to refer to my approach in this research as 'qualitatively led'. Being qualitatively led means that this study's findings are primarily informed by qualitative analyses, whilst the quantitative analyses presented in this thesis are intended to provide relevant contextual information. Specifically, in this thesis quantitative analyses are used to answer RQ1a (*who aspires to teach?*), whereas qualitative analyses are used to answer RQ1b, in addition to RQ2 and RQ3.

As will be explained in more detail in Section 4.3 of this chapter, this study's datasets include secondary data from, and extend, the ASPIRES research project; a national mixed-methods project studying the science and career aspirations of a cohort of young people living in England. Given the longitudinal nature of the qualitative data used in this thesis and extending from ASPIRES (see Section 4.3.2), I first considered taking a 'qualitative dominant mixed methods approach' in this research (e.g., Cara, 2017). Whilst there are multiple definitions of 'mixed methods' research (Cara, 2017), I consider such an approach to mean that I would have fully integrated, or linked, the qualitative and quantitative strands of this study (Creamer, 2018; Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007). Integration of qualitative and quantitative data and analyses, however, poses multiple methodological and ethical difficulties for researchers (Bryman, 2007). In particular, I recognise the specific difficulty of using a social constructionism lens with the integration of qualitative with quantitative data due to the differing ontological stances (i.e., interpretivist vs. realist) which typically guide the collection and analyses of these two research methods (Bryman, 2007).

As I chose to carry out this research with a social constructionism lens, and specifically because of the way in which this lens complements this study's theoretical framework of intersectional identities in practice, I decided against attempting to fully integrate the quantitative and qualitative data used in this thesis. This decision was also made because, as demonstrated by this study's research questions, I am predominantly concerned with *why* young people do, and do not, become teachers, and I consider qualitative research to be more suited to examining such questions due to its ability to provide holistic insights into research participants' views and actions (Ormston et al., 2014). Whilst this study's main findings are not, therefore, generalisable to the wider population they do offer in-depth understandings of young people's teaching trajectories (Cohen et al., 2017).

Despite my choice to take a qualitatively led approach to this work, I acknowledge that quantitative methods can help to expand people's broad understandings of social issues, as demonstrated by much of the research reviewed in Chapter 2 (e.g., Gorard et al., 2021; Sikora, 2021). This is because quantitative data can be large-scale and representative of a larger population (Cohen et al., 2017). Indeed, whilst reviewing existing literature on teaching trajectories in the first year of this PhD I recognised that my access to large-scale secondary quantitative data from the ASPIRES project gave me a unique opportunity to contribute new contextual information about who aspires to become a teacher in England, and specifically whether and how teaching aspirations differ at different ages. I have therefore included quantitative analyses in this study, in an attempt to 'set the scene' for the qualitative analyses and findings upon which this thesis focuses. These quantitative analyses are not directly informed by this study's theoretical framework because they are intended to provide a context of teaching aspirations across England at different

ages, and act as a background to my more in-depth considerations of participants'
longitudinal teaching trajectories using qualitative data. My social constructionism
lens, however, extends to these quantitative analyses in that I consider these data to
be socially constructed and culturally relative rather than an absolute truth.

4.2.3   Validity and reliability of research

Traditionally, researchers have demonstrated what can be termed the
'trustworthiness' and 'robustness' of their research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) using
the concepts of validity and reliability. Research validity and research reliability were
originally developed in positivist research paradigms and with quantitative research
methods (Cohen et al., 2017). As a result, scholars from qualitative-leaning
epistemological traditions have put forward numerous alternatives to these concepts
(Cohen et al., 2017). Some of the alternative concepts and approaches that I
considered applying to this research are research 'quality' (Tracy, 2010), and
research credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba, 1981). I
acknowledge, however, that the use of these alternative (but somewhat similar)
measures to effectively replace validity and reliability can in fact distance and
devalue qualitative methods in relation to quantitative methods (Hammersley, 2013).
As outlined in Section 4.2.1, I hope that findings from this study might help to inform
future teacher supply policy and practice and thus, in an attempt to position this
qualitatively led thesis as methodologically robust (Lewis et al., 2014), I have chosen
to apply the concepts of validity and reliability. This approach has the additional
benefit of being relevant for, and adaptable to, both this study's qualitative dataset
and its quantitative dataset.

In this study, then, I use the term 'validity' to refer to whether or not, and to what extent, my research methods investigate what I intend them to investigate (e.g., Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). I use 'reliability' to refer to whether or not this study's analyses are rigorous, and thus whether its interpretations are grounded in its data (e.g., Lewis et al., 2014). These definitions of validity and reliability derive from scholars who have sought to adapt these concepts to constructionism paradigms and qualitative(ly led) research methods (Cohen et al., 2017).

In terms of research validity, in this study I have sought to ensure the appropriateness of my research methods in relation to my research aims in numerous ways. Section 4.3 especially is intended as a form of 'audit trail' of the methods used in this study (Robson & McCartan, 2016), so as to demonstrate the thoroughness with which this research has been undertaken, and explain the various choices I made throughout this PhD. Particular ways in which I addressed issues of validity in this study include continued self-reflection in order to understand how my own biases and motivations have impacted this research (see Section 4.2.4); a commitment to minimise harm, both in line with and extending beyond my university's ethical guidelines (see Section 4.2.5); and taking an evidence-informed and theoretically-driven approach to data collection, management, and analyses (for example, see Section 4.3.2.4).

Concerning reliability, one important way in which I addressed the reliability of this overall study was through my use of secondary data which had already been collected using robust methodological and ethical approaches by researchers on the ASPIRES project. Aided by this use of secondary data, in this study I use multiple different research methods and datasets (see Section 4.3). Although this approach

to research is often referred to as 'triangulation' of data through different sources

(e.g., Lewis et al., 2014), in this study I prefer the term 'crystallisation' of data

(Ellingson, 2009). Here I refer to data crystallisation because, as with a multi-faceted

three-dimensional crystal but unlike a three-sided two-dimensional triangle, I

consider my use of multiple datasets and sources, collected at different stages and

over a period of 11 years, to offer countless perspectives from which to consider this

study's research questions, as well as multiple points of connection through differing

viewpoints and experiences (Ellingson, 2009). Furthermore, whilst 'triangulation' can

imply the quest for a single truth, 'crystallisation' hints at the possibility for myriad

interpretations of data, as fits with my contextual constructionism paradigm.

Finally, I recognise the reliability value in seeking different research interpretations

and perspectives from others (Cohen et al., 2017). The methods and analyses

conducted for this study were thus discussed and presented at different points

throughout this PhD at UCL and at McGill University, as well as at seven research

conferences, including four international conferences. In addition to my regular

supervisory meetings these experiences provided me with the opportunity to receive

academic critique of my (planned) methods and (emerging) findings. Regarding

quantitative data, my analyses were also saved on SPSS software[40] and were re-run

and checked by a member of the ASPIRES research team with expertise in

quantitative methods and familiarity with the dataset (Cohen et al., 2017). And in

terms of qualitative data, I invited research participants to reflect or feedback on the

primary data collected for this study (see Sections 4.3.2.2 and 8.4), and during

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[40] SPSS is a quantitative data analysis software whose initials stand for Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

qualitative data analyses I also frequently reviewed and refined codes and shared these with my supervisors (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

4.2.4 Reflexivity

I acknowledge that all researchers "bring their own biographies and values to the research situation" (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 302), meaning that my own life history has inevitably informed how I conducted this study (Denscombe, 2014), including how I have interpretated participants' teaching trajectories. I thus here reflect upon how my own experiences and social positions have influenced this research; a practice often referred to as reflexivity (e.g., Reay, 1996).

As outlined in Section 3.4 and detailed below in Section 4.3.2.4, I take a narrative approach to understanding young people's teaching trajectories (e.g., Holmegaard et al., 2015), informed by my intersectional identities in practice theoretical framework. This approach means that I understand that how this study's participants narrate, or describe, their teaching trajectories is informed not only by the participants themselves but also by myself as interviewer and researcher (Lawler, 2002). Therefore, although I recognise my influence upon all aspects of this research, I consider reflexivity to be especially important in relation to this thesis's qualitative dataset, and particularly this study's primary qualitative interviews (Cohen et al., 2017).

In discussions of reflexivity researchers often position themselves as 'insiders' or 'outsiders' to their research (Finlay, 2002; Nast, 1994), which first requires a consideration of 'who' is being researched. The main commonalities amongst the 13 young people in this study's qualitative sample is that they had all previously expressed an interest in becoming a teacher, they all lived in England and had been

mostly educated in England, and had all been participants in the ASPIRES research project since the age of 10/11 (and were thus 21/22 when I interviewed them). All participants had also completed, or were studying for, an undergraduate degree (though this was not a prerequisite of sampling; see Section 4.3.2.1). As far as I am aware these participants did not know each other, however, and there were multiple differences between them; including in relation to the intersecting social positions that they held (for example their gender, ethnicity and social class), the regions of England in which they lived, their family lives, their experiences of education, their degree specialisms, and their future plans (see Section 4.3.2.1).

In terms of being an 'insider' or 'outsider' to this research, then, when considering this sample as a whole perhaps my position as researcher can best be described as one of 'betweenness' (Nast, 1994). As someone who was educated in England (at school and for most of my undergraduate degree), and lives in England, I share some characteristics and experiences with each of this study's participants. I am a decade older than my participants, however, which (although not a particularly large age-gap) means that one significant difference between the sample and myself is my extended experience of the world of work. For example, whilst all of this study's participants had recently entered or were soon to enter the workforce as university graduates at the time of my interviews with them at age 21/22, by this time I had worked for 10 years; first as a secondary school French teacher and later in education research at a university. One example of a way in which my work and/or life experiences have informed my approach to this research is through my experience-informed view of teaching as an expertise that can be developed with specialist education and with experience over time; rather than a 'calling' to which some people are well suited or even born to pursue (e.g., see Section 5.3.1.2).

Another example is how my prior knowledge and understanding of 'identities' in science education research (from my work on the ASPIRES research project) has informed the theoretical approach taken in this thesis (see Section 3.1).

I also identify as a White British woman and come from a middle-class background; meaning that I share some identity intersections with each of this study's participants. I especially recognise that the White privilege I experience and, relatedly, my position within a research institution will have shaped how I conducted this research (Bailey, 2015; Pennington & Prater, 2016). Informed by ongoing learning throughout this PhD, for example through a 'STEM Education and Accountability' reading group, and tutoring on a 'Sociology of Race and Education' Masters module, I have taken time to reflect upon my positions and privileges in relation to my participants and how these have shaped this research. Qualitative feminist scholars have noted that observed similarities and differences between an interviewee and an interviewer, as well as those which go unobserved, can operate on multiple levels and in particularly complex ways (e.g., Archer, 2002; Oakley, 2016). In order to grapple with these complexities my reflections included asking and answering questions such as those recommended by Pennington and Prater (2016), who suggest ways in which to 'unveil' White privilege in research, such as; 'why do I want to do this study?', 'who will benefit from this research?', and 'how are the participants positioned and discussed?'. The answers to these questions, and how my positionalities shaped these answers, are threaded throughout this thesis (e.g., see Sections 4.3.2.4 and Chapter 8).

I particularly recognise the power imbalance that exists between participants and interviewers in all research interviews (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018), and that in this

study the imbalance is likely to have been heightened where I interviewed

participants facing racialised and classed inequalities (Pennington & Prater, 2016). In

an attempt to minimise the impact of this power imbalance during this study's

primary interviews[41] I worked to identify some 'common ground' shared between

participants and myself (e.g., Archer, 2002). For instance, I identified myself as a

former teacher with the intention of establishing a shared experience with the three

young people in my sample who were pursuing teaching at the time of my interview

with them. Especially amongst the remaining 10 participants, I also explained that I

had decided to pursue teaching during my final year of university, and that I left

teaching to begin a new career whilst still in my twenties. In addition, as someone

who speaks French as a second language and who has lived and studied outside of

England, I was able to empathise (to some extent) with some of the difficulties

expressed by the two participants in this sample who self-identified as having EAL

(English as an additional language) and who had immigrated to England as children.

Finally, I often outlined my position as a (PhD) university student (rather than, for

example, a university researcher) during primary interviews given that all participants

were, or had recently been, university students.

Because this study's participants had all been participants in the ASPIRES research

project since the age of 10/11, one of the most significant factors to consider in terms

of my influence upon this research is my prior experience of working on the

ASPIRES project. I began this thesis in September 2019 (when the project cohort

was 20/21 and before the project's sixth data collection phase, see Section 4.3.1),

having previously worked on the project as Research Officer and Administrator since

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[41] This study's primary interviews, and how they differ from this study's secondary interviews, is detailed in Section 4.3.2.2.

November 2015 (when its cohort was 16/17). Whilst this experience does not in itself increase the experiences or social positions that I share with this study's participants, it means that before my interviews with them at age 21/22 I already 'knew' these participants via their existing longitudinal data. In addition, I had interviewed 10 of the 13 participants previously, some more than once (see Appendix 1). This in effect meant that I had a prior professional but friendly relationship with most participants, which I suggest helped to put them at ease during interviews. Even for the three participants whom I had not met or interviewed previously, I was able to ask them questions with reference to what they had reported in prior interviews as well as mention my colleagues whom I knew had previously interviewed them, in order to position myself within the research team with which they were familiar. Already knowing some information about participants' backgrounds and (past) lives and identities through transcripts of their past ASPIRES interviews, however, also means that I may have brought prior thoughts, feelings and presumptions into my data collection and analyses; which further fuelled the need for constant reflection throughout this research. In Section 4.3.2.4 I include reflections upon how my analyses may have been influenced by aspects of my positionality.

Finally, as will be detailed in Section 4.3, in addition to using primary qualitative data in this study I also analyse secondary qualitative and quantitative data from the ASPIRES project, meaning that not all of the data analysed in this study were originally collected by myself (see Section 4.3.1). Informed by the reflections of other secondary qualitative data researchers (e.g., Hammersley, 2010; Moore, 2006), however, I consider the secondary data used in this thesis as re-contextualised, or re-generated, within this study; meaning that my focus is upon my own influence on,

and use and analyses of, these data rather than the influence of others upon the data.

4.2.5 Ethical considerations

My commitment to minimising harm to this study's participants and to ensuring the validity of this study included making sure that this research followed, and was continually informed by, ethical guidelines. Specifically, this study followed the ethical research guidelines set out by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018), and the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), implemented in UK law (UK Government, n.d.-a). This study gained institutional ethical approval from UCL in December 2019 (UCL Data Protection Registration Number Z6364106/2019/12/03; see Appendix 2), which also formally granted my access to, and use of, secondary data from the ASPIRES project. My access to ASPIRES project data included permission to use its already-anonymised quantitative data, in addition to confidential data linked to the ASPIRES project's qualitative data such the pseudonymisation key and contact details for the project's qualitative data participants so that I could contact this study's qualitative sample. My access to and use of these data was predicated upon the informed consent of all participants of the ASPIRES project, who agreed that their data could be used in other research in line with the project's own funder and ethical guidelines; see Archer, DeWitt, Osborne, et al. (2013), Archer, Moote, MacLeod, et al. (2020) and Archer et al. (2022). My use and storage of all secondary data thus complies with the ASPIRES project's past and ongoing ethical approvals.

BERA's ethical guidelines and GDPR also informed the collection, management, and storage of this study's primary data (13 teaching-focused interviews, see Section

4.3). For example, in an attempt to minimise harm to this study's 13 primary research participants I obtained informed consent for my primary research interviews via an information sheet and accompanying consent form (see Appendix 2) created with reference to the GDPR guidance on consent (Information Commissioner's Office, n.d.). This information sheet outlined the purpose of my research, stated why the participant had been chosen for the research and that their participation was confidential and voluntary, and informed them of the procedures that they could follow should they believe that they had been harmed by participating in the research. This information sheet also described how I would manage the data collected via these interviews, both during this PhD and after its completion. I emailed this information sheet to participants and encouraged them to read it before our interview, though even where they had done so I began each interview by talking participants through the information sheet and inviting them to ask me any questions about the research process in order to ensure understanding, and minimise the possibility of complacency.

During this process I made sure to advise all participants that there was no obligation to take part in this research even though they had previously been a participant on the associated ASPIRES project. Each participant's informed consent was thus not only recorded via signature, but verbal consent was also audio-recorded (see Section 4.3.2.3). In line with GDPR guidance all data (primary and secondary), in addition to participant contact information, were password-protected and stored on my own password-protected laptop and on my remote password-protected institutional desktop.

Maintaining the confidentiality of my research participants has also underpinned the writing up of this thesis and all research dissemination efforts (Lahman et al., 2015). Whilst all of the secondary quantitative data used in this study was already anonymous, the main tools I used to ensure confidentiality of qualitative data were anonymisation and pseudonymisation. I employed pseudonyms to replace participants' (and their parents') names, and stored the pseudonymisation key separately from all data in a password-protected document[42]. In this study's primary qualitative interview transcripts I also anonymised all information which could lead to participants becoming identifiable; such as the names of schools and universities they had attended[43].

Finally, after merging my primary and secondary qualitative data (see Section 4.3.2.3), I was aware of the heightened need for ethical awareness when using longitudinal research. This need is because the risk of disclosing identifiable information can increase over time, and with more data (Neale, 2013). I therefore took additional steps to maintain my participants' confidentiality, for example by referring to participants' home areas using only the names of the nine different regions of England (ONS, 2023a), using generalised names for participants' degree or subject specialisms (e.g., 'Biology' or 'Dance' rather than specifying the exact course title), and using broad geographic descriptors to refer to countries outside of the British Isles where participants and/or their parents had lived.

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[42] All secondary qualitative data had already been pseudonymised when I first accessed it. At the start of all primary interviews I asked all participants if they would like to keep or change their pseudonym from ASPIRES (see Appendix 3), which were chosen by participants themselves in their first interview at age 10/11 (see Section 4.3.2.3). All participants chose to keep their ASPIRES pseudonym, and so this process of pseudonymisation of transcripts refers only to my primary qualitative data.

[43] Again, this process was already complete for secondary qualitative data transcripts.

4.3   Research methods

In this section I present the qualitative and quantitative research methods used to conduct this study. Here I introduce the data used, explain why these data were used and how they were collected, and how they were analysed. Throughout this section I also explain how the methodological approaches introduced in Section 4.2 informed these research methods.

This thesis has two datasets; one qualitative dataset, and one quantitative dataset. The two datasets used in this study are both made up of two data sources[44], and both include secondary data from the ASPIRES research project. These four data sources are presented in Table 2. In the remainder of this section, I first introduce the ASPIRES project upon which this research builds (Section 4.3.1). In Section 4.2.2 I then present this study's qualitative dataset in detail. Finally, I outline this study's quantitative dataset in Section 4.3.3. In each of these sub-sections I describe how each dataset was collected and analysed in order to answer this study's research questions.

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[44] What I refer to as 'data sources' in this thesis identify where and how the data were produced, e.g. an interview or survey (Creswell, 2014). What I refer to as 'datasets' are the larger collections of data of a similar type, e.g., qualitative or quantitative.

Table 2 *Overview of datasets used in this thesis*

	Data source	Data	Description of data	Relevant RQ
Qualitative dataset	Longitudinal interviews (secondary data)	133 interview transcripts	In-depth longitudinal interviews with 13 ASPIRES participants at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 and 20/21, in addition to interviews with some of their parents when participants were aged 10/11, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18, and 20/21 or 21/22	RQ1b, RQ2, RQ3
	Teaching-focused interviews (primary data)	13 interview transcripts	Additional in-depth interviews with the 13 young people tracked using ASPIRES longitudinal interviews at age 21/22, which focused on the topic of teaching	RQ1b, RQ2, RQ3
	Total	*146 interviews*		
Quantitative dataset	Free-text survey data about future career aspirations (secondary data)	30,559 survey responses	Free-text responses to a question about future career aspirations asked in all six ASPIRES surveys (when the cohort was aged 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 and 21/22)	RQ1a
	Likert scale survey data about openness to teaching (secondary data)	32,139 survey responses	Likert scale responses to the statement 'I would like to be a teacher or work with children' asked in the four most recent ASPIRES surveys (when the cohort was aged 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 and 21/22)	RQ1a
	Total	*62,698 survey responses*		

4.3.1 Building upon the ASPIRES project

Before introducing this study's datasets in more detail, I first introduce the APIRES

project. This is because the research design of this study builds upon that of

ASPIRES, from which the secondary data used in this study originate. The ASPIRES

project is a national mixed-methods project studying the science and career

aspirations of a cohort of young people living in England from 2009/2010 to

2020/2021, who were born between September 1998 and August 1999. Thus far, the project has been funded by the ESRC in three phases (2009-2014, 2014-2019, and 2020-2023) and has sought to understand what influences young people's career aspirations, how young people make their educational and career choices, whether and how young people's previous aspirations shape or inform their early career trajectories, and why participation in STEM subjects and sectors (particularly science) is strongly patterned by multiple social inequalities. Since the project began in 2009 the project team has produced over 30 publications (ASPIRES, 2023), and the project's findings have had wide-ranging and significant impact across science and education policy and practice (e.g., Archer, Moote, MacLeod, et al., 2020). To date, however, research from the ASPIRES project has not been used to consider teaching trajectories and/or teacher supply.

An overview of the qualitative and quantitative datasets of the ASPIRES project is presented in Table 3. The project has tracked the career aspirations and life experiences of its cohort through the English education system[45] from the final year of primary school (age 10/11), through secondary school (ages 12/13, 13/14 and 15/16), and sixth form or college[46] (age 17/18), and into Higher Education and/or work (age 20-22). This tracking was conducted over six data collection phases via 742 in-depth longitudinal interviews with young people and, separately, their parents (its qualitative dataset); and large-scale national cross-sectional surveys sampling more than 47,000 young people (its quantitative dataset). This thesis uses some

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[45] In England, full-time education is compulsory between the ages of 5 and 18 and consists of three stages; Primary School (ages 4/5 to 10/11; School Years 1 to 6), Secondary School (ages 11/12 to 15/16; School Years 7 to 11), and Further Education (ages 15/16 to 17/18; School Years 12 and 13). An additional optional stage is Higher Education (or university; from age 18/19 or older).

[46] In this study, I refer to Further Education as 'sixth form or college' after the institutions in which young people typically study during this period. Sixth forms (which can be individual institutions or linked to a secondary school) typically offer more academic qualifications than colleges (which are often individual institutions), though this is not always the case.

secondary data from both the ASPIRES project's qualitative and quantitative

datasets. For full descriptions of the methods used in each of the three phases of the

ASPIRES project see Archer and DeWitt (2017), Archer, Moote, MacLeod, et al.

(2020) and Archer et al. (2022).

Table 3 *Overview of ASPIRES project methods and data*

		Data collection phase					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Key Information	Year	2009/ 2010	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2014/ 2015	2016/ 2017	2019 - 2021*
	Cohort age	10/11	12/13	13/14	15/16	17/18	20/21 & 21/22*
	Education stage	Primary school (School Year 6)	Secondary school (data collection took place in School Years 8, 9 and 11)			Sixth form or college	Higher Education and/or work
Qualitative dataset	Participants interviewed**	92 young people & 84 parents	85 young people	83 young people & 73 parents	70 young people & 67 parents	61 young people & 65 parents	50 young people & 32 parents
Quantitative dataset	Respondents surveyed	9,319 (from 279 schools)	5,634 (from 69 schools)	4,600 (from 147 schools)	13,421 (from 340 schools)	7,013 (from 265 schools & colleges)	7,635 (sampled via the Open Electoral Register)

*   Due to delays as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic the project's sixth data collection phase took place over two years. Interviews with young people were conducted when participants were age 20/21 (2019/2020), interviews with parents were conducted in both 2019/2020 and 2020/2021, and surveys were conducted when respondents were 21/22 (2020/2021).

** Young people and their parents were interviewed separately at each data collection phase of ASPIRES, though no parents were interviewed when the cohort was 12/13. In most instances one parent was interviewed but in some instances two of a young person's parents were interviewed together, or individually.

Adapting a term from Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) used to describe how

research methods can link together, I refer to this thesis's research design as

'building upon' the ASPIRES project. I consider this study to build upon the

ASPIRES project in two ways. First, as will be detailed in Section 4.3.2, this study's

primary data develop from and extend secondary data from ASPIRES. Second, as

will be discussed throughout Sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.3, this study uses existing ASPIRES qualitative and quantitative data in new ways and to answer new questions. The ASPIRES project could therefore be considered the foundation of this study.

As has already been made clear, I consider the data which are used in this thesis but which originate from the ASPIRES project to be 'secondary' data. This is because these data were already collected before this study began (Dale et al., 1988), and/or were collected for a different reason than for use in this study (Hammersley, 2010). Unlike most users of secondary data (Hammersley, 1997), however, before beginning this study I was already familiar with how these data were collected and stored, and had even collected some of the project's qualitative data myself, because I had previously worked on the ASPIRES project.

I acknowledge that this thesis has substantially benefitted from its use of secondary data from the ASPIRES project in numerous ways. Chiefly, my use of secondary data has enabled this study to examine large-scale quantitative and qualitative data, and thus consider teaching trajectories over a significant period of time (11 years); which would not have otherwise been possible. I also recognise that longitudinal researchers can face considerable logistical challenges including team inconsistencies (Thomson & Holland, 2003), participant attrition (Derrington, 2019) and significant financial costs (Miller, 2000). Furthermore, both longitudinal qualitative data and national survey data are labour intensive to collect, maintain and organise (Thomson & Holland, 2003). This study has thus greatly benefitted from the efforts of those who have worked, or are working, on the ASPIRES project and I am incredibly grateful to these colleagues. Furthermore, using secondary data allowed

me to begin working with some of my data early on in my PhD, which was particularly useful for time management and planning in this study. Finally, working with a larger research project enabled me to discuss my analyses and findings with project team members who were familiar with aspects of the data, which was especially helpful in the final stages of writing up this thesis.

Despite its advantages, however, using secondary data is known to pose difficulties for researchers. These difficulties include an increased risk of misinterpreting the data through a lack of understanding about the context within which the data were collected (Smith, 2008), and an unavailability of detailed information about how data were collected (Hammersley, 2010). I suggest, however, that my familiarity and proximity with the ASPIRES project's methods and data storage lessens these potential problems in this study.

Perhaps the most notable disadvantage of using secondary data in this study is that the ASPIRES project data were originally collected for the purpose of understanding patterns in, and influences upon, science (rather than teaching) career aspirations and trajectories. The difference in research aims between the ASPIRES project and this study thus means that some of the secondary data used here do not focus explicitly on teaching as much as would have been the case were all data collected primarily for this thesis. For example, as will be discussed in Section 4.3.3.1, ASPIRES survey respondents were not explicitly asked about their teaching aspirations until age 13/14. I propose that this study's use of primary data (in the form of 13 in-depth teaching-focussed interviews), in addition to secondary data, means that the disadvantages resulting from this difference in research aims are minimised.

4.3.2 Qualitative dataset

All of the qualitative data used in this thesis were generated via interviews with 13 young people (whom I term 'participants') or their parents. These data are longitudinal in design, meaning that all 13 participants were tracked via multiple interviews with the ASPIRES project from the age of 10/11 (Elliott et al., 2008). As was introduced in Table 2, two data sources contribute to this qualitative dataset; 1) transcripts of in-depth secondary longitudinal interviews with 13 young people at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 and 20/21, in addition to transcripts of interviews with some of their parents when participants were aged 10/11, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18, and 20/21 or 21/22[47], and 2) transcripts of in-depth teaching-focused primary interviews with these 13 young people at age 21/22. Taking both data sources together, this dataset is made up of 146 interviews. I refer to my primary interviews with participants as 'teaching-focused' in recognition of the fact that the secondary data used are not specifically focused on teaching. As these primary interviews build upon the existing secondary longitudinal data for each participant from the ASPIRES project (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), I view these two data sources as one qualitative dataset.

All 146 interviews which form this study's qualitative dataset were semi-structured (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). In other words, all qualitative data used in this thesis were generated using interviews that were informed by key themes identified in advance, and which mainly consisted of open questions that aimed to invite

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[47] Although the secondary interviews with young people and their parents were conducted separately, parental interview transcripts were analysed with participants' interview transcripts in order to inform my analyses of participants' trajectories (see Section 4.3.2.3). I therefore consider interviews with young people and parents as one data source, and do not consider participants' parents to be separate or individual 'participants' of this study.

interviewees to detail their experiences in their own words (Roulston, 2010), whilst also allowing for the interviewer to ask additional clarifying questions. I consider these semi-structured interviews to be what Holstein and Gubrium (1995) refer to as 'active' interviews because of their emphasis on the mutually-developed narrative between interviewer and interviewee. In this way, and informed by the epistemological approach I take in this thesis as outlined in Section 4.2.1, I view the purpose of the interviews used in this study not to tap into the 'reality' of participants' views and experiences, but to craft a representation of participants' lives using the resources available at the time to both participant and interviewer (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995).

A particularly important aspect of this study's qualitative dataset is its longitudinal nature, meaning that I am able to trace the teaching trajectories of this study's participants over time (Elliott et al., 2008). In what some may interpret as an issue of reliability, I recognise the potential for the narratives generated through interviews to have been impacted by my participants' participation in a longitudinal study (Thomson & Holland, 2003). Therefore, instead of viewing these longitudinal data as a chance to 'solve' inconsistences in my participants' trajectories and identities over time (Plumridge & Thomson, 2003), I consider these data as representing the multiple narratives and changing identities in practice of my participants as they grew up and progressed through education.

4.3.2.1 Identifying potential future (science) teachers from the ASPIRES project sample

This study's qualitative sample consists of 13 young people whom I categorised as 'potential future teachers'. Five of these participants specialised in science and were

thus categorised as 'potential future science teachers'. All 13 of these young people were selected from the ASPIRES project's wider qualitative sample, and all were originally recruited to the ASPIRES project at age 10/11 via nested sampling of the primary schools whose students had participated in the first ASPIRES survey (Creamer, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). See Archer and DeWitt (2017) for a more detailed description of qualitative sampling in the ASPIRES project.

In this study I define a 'potential future teacher' as a young person who expressed an aspiration or interest in teaching in at least one of their ASPIRES project interviews between the ages of 10/11 and 20/21[48]. Importantly, and following the findings of Sikora (2021), I understand that teaching aspirations can be later dropped, as well as realised. I do not, therefore, consider teaching aspirations to be predicative of someone becoming a teacher in later life; but simply an indication that they may pursue teaching (with differing degrees of likelihood). In other words, as introduced in Section 3.4, an expression of a teaching aspiration or interest suggests that teaching is one of a young person's (many possible simultaneous) trajectories. The term 'potential future teacher' is thus not intended to be a precise definition, as I also recognise that some people who become teachers may not have expressed teaching aspirations whilst they were young; but as a useful tool for identifying and referring to this study's qualitative sample.

In order to identify potential future teachers from the wider ASPIRES sample, I began with an existing ASPIRES project data table stored on Microsoft Excel software which summarised all career aspirations and interests expressed by its 50 qualitative participants (see Table 3) at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18, and

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[48] See Section 1.5 for definitions of 'aspirations', 'interests' and 'teacher'.

20/21. This table listed all career interests and/or aspirations that each ASPIRES participant had expressed in each of their project interviews, and thus included 'first-choice' as well as 'backup' career aspirations. I then added a column to this table which recorded participants' responses to the question 'have you ever considered becoming a teacher?'. To aid this thesis, this question was included in all ASPIRES qualitative interviews which took place between May and July 2020, when the cohort was 20/21 (the project's sixth data collection phase).

This process enabled me to identify the ASPIRES participants who had expressed a teaching aspiration or interest in one or more of their interviews between the ages of 10/11 and 20/21 (potential future teachers) and who; 1) were pursuing teaching (i.e., those actively planning to become a teacher at age 20/21), 2) were open to teaching (i.e., those not actively planning to become a teacher at age 20/21, but who expressed an interest in becoming a teacher in the future), or 3) had decided against teaching (i.e., those not pursuing teaching at age 20/21, and not planning to pursue teaching in the future). Within each of these three categories I also categorised participants as either a) 'not a science specialist' (those not working in or studying science), or b) 'a science specialist' (those who had completed, or were pursuing, an undergraduate degree in the natural or physical sciences or were working within an occupation that is closely aligned to science; see Archer et al. [2020])[49]. The number of participants who fitted into each of these categorisations is presented in Table 4. These categorisations were not intended to be exact labels, especially as I knew that participants may have changed their interests and/or intentions before I began my primary data collection; but a way in which to identify a potential sample for this

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[49] As discussed in Section 1.2.2, because there is a general science teacher shortage in England (MAC, 2020), this thesis is not concerned with participants' specialisms within science.

study which would represent a range of different trajectories towards and away from

teaching.

Table 4 *Categorisation of ASPIRES participants' teaching aspirations and interests using project's longitudinal data*

Category		ASPIRES participants	
		Total ASPIRES participants	Total potential future teachers*
Pursuing teaching	Not science specialists	3	3
	Science specialists	0	0
Open to teaching	Not science specialists	13	9
	Science specialists	6	3
Decided against teaching	Not science specialists	18	4
	Science specialists	10	6
Total		50	25
* Potential future teachers are those who included teaching amongst their career aspirations or interests in at least one of their interviews at age 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 or 20/21			

As outlined in Table 4, there were 25 ASPIRES participants whom I identified as

potential future teachers, 9 of whom were potential future science teachers. Given

the wealth of longitudinal interview data available for each of these young people, a

study of all 25 of these young people was beyond the scope of this thesis, and I

instead aimed to sample between 10 and 15 of these 25 young people, via whom I

hoped to represent a range of different teaching trajectories as well as experiences

and identities or social positions.

Instead of narrowing down participants myself, I invited all 25 potential future

teachers to interview via email. A certain level of non-response was anticipated given

the busy time in participants' lives, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, and the fact that all had recently participated in an interview for the ASPIRES project. I made this decision gradually, however, by observing how many positive responses I received per category. I first invited all three of those pursuing teaching to interview, followed by those open to teaching, and finally those who had decided against teaching. In total, 13 participants agreed to be interviewed for this study, and thus form this study's qualitative sample.

An overview of the 13 participants who make up this study's qualitative sample is presented in Table 5. A more detailed description of each participant and their longitudinal data is available in Appendix 1. As encountered by other qualitative researchers (e.g., Thomson & Holland, 2003) including the ASPIRES project team, I found that participants appeared to be less likely to agree to participate in this research if they experienced multiple social inequalities. This study's qualitative sample is thus not representative of all young people in England at age 21/22. As reflects my sampling technique and the interests of this study this sample overrepresents those who are more likely to express teaching aspirations; namely young women (e.g., Chambers et al., 2018), young people who identify as White British (e.g., Platt & Parsons, 2018), and young people from working-class backgrounds (e.g., Gorard et al., 2021) .

Table 5 *Qualitative sample of this study*

(Not) science?	Participant	Self-identification (gender & ethnicity)	Social class	Home region	Under-graduate degree	Post-graduate study?
Not science specialists	Amy	White British woman	MC	South East	Sociology	QTS (Primary)*
	Buddy	White mixed man	MC	London	History	N/A
	Carol	Mixed woman	WC	London	Media	PGCE (Secondary media)
	Celina	White British woman	WC	London	Psychology	N/A
	Hedgehog	White British man	WC	Eastern England	Film	N/A
	Louise	White British woman	WC	Eastern England	Dance	MA
	Lucy	White British woman	WC	East Midlands	Game Design	N/A
	Millie	White British woman	WC	Eastern England	Physical Education (PE)	QTS (Secondary PE)
Science specialists	Joanne	White British woman	MC	London	Natural Sciences	MSc
	Kate	White mixed woman	MC	South East	Natural Sciences	MSc
	Mienie	Asian woman	MC	Eastern England	Chemistry	N/A
	Samantha	Mixed woman	MC	South East	Biology	MSc
	Victor	White British man	MC	London	Physics	N/A

WC	Working-class
MC	Middle-class
*	Amy had not yet started ITE at the time of her interview at age 21/22
MA	Masters of Arts, Humanities or Social Sciences
MSc	Masters of Science

As will be detailed in the following chapters, the 13 participants in this study's qualitative sample represent a range of teaching trajectories. Whilst all had previously expressed a teaching aspiration or interest, and are thus referred to collectively as 'aspirant teachers', the apparent strength and consistency of these aspirations differed greatly between participants[50]. I therefore recognise that some participants were more likely to pursue teaching than others. Using data from my teaching-focused interview with participants at age 21/22, three of the 13 participants (Amy, Carol and Millie) were categorised as 'pursuing' teaching; Carol and Millie were in ITE and Amy had accepted a place on an ITE course starting the following academic year[51]. The remaining 10 participants were not pursuing teaching by age 21/22. Of these 10 participants, all expressed differing degrees of openness to and/or interest in teaching. For example, three of the non-teaching participants (Joanne, Victor, and Kate; all science specialists) reported at age 21/22 that they had previously applied to ITE.

As also highlighted in Table 5, according to their self-reported identities in my teaching-focused interviews with them at age 21/22, 10 of this study's 13 participants identify as women and three as men[52]. In terms of ethnicity eight participants identify as White British, two as White Mixed, two as Mixed and one as Asian. What I call the 'home regions' of these participants (where they and their parent/s lived for the

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[50] Table 11, in Chapter 5, presents an overview of participants' teaching aspirations and interests across different interviews. Appendix 1 provides a more detailed overview of each participant's longitudinal data, including their family background, education and work experiences, and career aspirations.

[51] As detailed in Chapter 1, Table 1, there are multiple ITE routes in England. Because this thesis is concerned with whether or not young people become teachers in any/all specialisms, I do not explicitly examine why participants chose specific ITE routes. Whilst I recognise that different ITE routes offer different approaches and could therefore influence the decision to teach (e.g., George & Maguire, 2019), such consideration is beyond the scope of this study.

[52] Throughout this thesis when referring to participants I use their preferred pronouns, which I checked in my teaching-focused interview with them at age 21/22 (see Appendix 3). When referring to participants' parents I use the pronouns used by participants when speaking about their parents.

majority of the ASPIRES project) represent four of the nine different regions of England (ONS, 2023a). All participants were studying for, or had graduated from, an undergraduate degree, and seven were studying, or were due to study, for a postgraduate qualification.

Six of the 13 participants of this study are considered to be from working-class backgrounds, and seven are considered to be from middle-class backgrounds. As briefly discussed in Section 2.2.1.1, however, I recognise that social class as a construct has no set definition and has been described as impossible to measure (e.g., Crompton, 1999). Those researching teacher supply have previously used a variety of measures including parental occupation and parental education as proxies for social class (e.g., Gorard et al., 2021; See, 2004). The difficulty in articulating social class is further heightened in this longitudinal study which tracks young people into adulthood; during which time participants developed some independence from their family backgrounds and thus became socially mobile (to differing extents). Despite this difficulty I thought it important to consider the social class of this study's participants because the extant literature reviewed in Chapter 2 pointed to the relevance of young people's social class in their teaching trajectories (e.g., Gorard et al., 2021), and because social class is known to strongly pattern future outcomes in the English context (e.g., Archer et al., 2007).

In recognition of the fragile and changeable nature of class, I refer throughout this thesis to the social class 'backgrounds' of this study's participants, as opposed to labelling participants themselves as 'being' a specific social class. To identify these backgrounds, I apply the categorisations of participants' social class backgrounds used in the ASPIRES project (see Archer & DeWitt, 2017). The measure of social

class employed on the ASPIRES project is informed by notions of cultural capital (e.g., Bourdieu, 1977) and cultural class (e.g., Savage, 2000) and understands that many people may not consciously identify themselves in terms of class, but that class may still have an impact upon their lives and behaviours. Participants interviewed for ASPIRES were thus classified as having 'very low', 'low', 'medium', 'high' or 'very high' cultural capital according to their responses to questions about parental education, approximate number of books in the home, and frequency of museum visitation. Also using the ONS's socioeconomic classifications of occupations (ONS, 2020) to classify parental occupations (which were updated following each data collection phase), all ASPIRES participants were then grouped as coming from either working-class or middle-class backgrounds (for more information see Archer and DeWitt [2017], and Archer et al. [2020]).

Although the descriptors of 'working-class' and 'middle-class' to describe participants' social class backgrounds are very broad, I have chosen to maintain these classifications in this study because they avoid precise labelling of a complex construct, and because they are widely used in the literature on teachers and teacher supply in England (e.g., Keane et al., 2018; Maguire, 2005a). I suggest that the broadness of these classifications is also offset by the in-depth nature of this study's longitudinal data and analyses, and my use of an intersectional (rather than class-specific) analytical lens (as detailed in Section 3.6).

4.3.2.2 Qualitative data collection

This study's qualitative dataset totals 146 interviews, 13 of which were conducted as primary interviews for this study. The 133 secondary interviews that contribute to this study's qualitative dataset were conducted with the study's 13 participants when they

were 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18, and 20/21, and with their parents when participants were 10/11, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18, and 20/21 or 21/22. These secondary interviews focused on young people's identity (how they saw themselves inside and outside of school/education/work); their experiences of education and/or work; their experiences of school and out-of-school science, their views towards scientists and working in science, and their occupational aspirations. The ASPIRES interview schedule did not include questions on teaching until participants were 20/21 (as mentioned in Section 4.3.2.1). Interviews with young people were conducted separately from interviews with their parents to allow participants to speak freely and not be unduly influenced by their parents' responses (Denscombe, 2014). Most of the 133 interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 2 hours, and the majority were conducted in person, either at the participant's school or home. As the cohort grew older, however, more of these interviews were conducted over the telephone. All interviews conducted when participants were 20/21 were conducted over the telephone or using video software, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

All of the 13 participants' ASPIRES interviews were conducted by one of seven staff or student members of the ASPIRES research team (including myself, see Appendix 1), and all of their parents' interviews were conducted with one of 10 members of the wider research team (again including myself). All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by a professional external transcriber. Transcripts were then pseudonymised using pseudonyms selected by participants and their parents in their first ASPIRES project interview (Lahman et al., 2015), and anything considered to be identifying information (e.g., name of places, institutions) were anonymised. This anonymisation included the names of parents and family members who were not interviewed, and who are thus referred to throughout this thesis using their

relationship to participants. In most cases the interviewer wrote fieldnotes shortly after the interview to record non-verbal observations and key reflections, which were stored with these transcripts to aid analyses (Hammersley, 1997). For a more detailed description of qualitative data collection throughout the ASPIRES project see Archer and DeWitt (2017), Archer, Moote, MacLeod, et al. (2020) and Archer et al. (2022).

In terms of the primary qualitative data collection for this study, I first designed a semi-structured interview schedule to guide my interviews with the study's 13 participants. Informed by this study's theoretical framework (see Chapter 3) and methodology (see Section 4.2), I viewed these primary interviews as sites at which participants could produce and develop narratives about, and thus make sense of, their teaching trajectories (Andrews et al., 2008; Holmegaard et al., 2015; Lawler, 2002). Taking a semi-structured approach, I designed this schedule as a guide to help me activate and direct narrative production during interviews (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). This interview schedule aimed to understand participants' views and experiences of teachers and teaching, and identify whether and why participants were pursuing teaching, open to teaching, or had decided against teaching. One of the ways in which I attempted to encourage narrative production was by including questions in this interview schedule which invited participants to detail specific experiences in their lives as opposed to describing wider time-frames (Elliott, 2005). This schedule was made up of four sections of questions (one of which was only used in interviews with science specialists); each of which fed into, and anticipated, the next section (Hermanowicz, 2002). The schedule is presented in Appendix 3.

After developing this primary interview schedule, I used it to conduct three individual pilot interviews in October 2020 with young people whom I knew and who had recently graduated from university. The data collected from these interviews does not form any part of the data for this study, but I used this process to help me identify whether or not my interview schedule elicited data to help me answer my research questions. Piloting my interview schedule in this way was also a method of familiarising myself with the schedule (Hermanowicz, 2002). In addition, this piloting enabled me to practice my active interviewing technique; where my role as interviewer was to identify the position from which my interviewee spoke and support the development of narrative from this position (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). As a result of these interviews I slightly changed the order of questions in Part 1 of the schedule, to aid the flow from one question to another, and I made some adjustments to the wording of the questions posed to those who were open to becoming a teacher in the future or were not pursuing teaching. Using these pilot interviews I was also able to confirm that my interviews were likely to last between sixty and ninety minutes, which I hoped would be sufficient to develop richly detailed narrative without tiring my interviewees (Hermanowicz, 2002).

I conducted this study's primary research interviews between November 2020 and March 2021, and all lasted between one and two hours. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic all interviews took place remotely; 10 interviews were conducted via Zoom software and three interviews were conducted over the telephone at the request of the participant. I began each interview by thanking the participant for their continued involvement in the ASPIRES research project and informing them that the structure of our conversation would be similar to what they had previously experienced as a participant on the project (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). Despite participants' relative

familiarity with qualitative research interviews, I began each interview by introducing them to my study and what the interview process would involve, and invited participants to ask me any questions (Elliott, 2005; Hermanowicz, 2002).

One of the ways that I supported the development of narrative throughout primary interviews was by attempting to understand the potentially fluctuating positions, or identities in practice, from which interviewees spoke (Holland et al., 1998). For example, I used probing questions to seek clarification from participants about their positions in relation to the figured worlds of teaching (e.g., pursuing teaching, open to teaching, or decided against teaching) at various points during the interviews (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995), whilst also recognising the recurring potential for participants to reposition themselves and their narratives. Throughout these interviews I was also able to use my familiarity with participants' prior educational experiences and career aspirations to prompt them about their teaching trajectories, as was highlighted in Section 4.2.4. I ended each interview by thanking participants and inviting them to ask me any further questions or contact me in the future if they so wished. To reiterate this I thanked each participant again shortly after our conversation via email (Hermanowicz, 2002) and I also shared the typed-up transcript of our interview with each participant (see Appendix 3 and Section 8.4).

4.3.2.3 Initial qualitative data analysis

Although aspects of the qualitative analyses presented in this thesis ran concurrently and throughout the course of this PhD, I here present these analyses in three stages. In this section I detail 1) the recording and transcription of the primary interviews, and 2) my familiarisation with the qualitative dataset and initial coding of

this dataset. In Section 4.3.2.4 I present how I analysed participants' teaching

trajectories using the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3.

Recording and transcription of primary interviews

The recording and transcription of this study's primary interviews closely mirrors how

this study's secondary qualitative data were recorded and transcribed as briefly

outlined in Section 4.3.2.2. All 13 primary interviews were audio-recorded using a

password-protected voice recorder in line with this study's ethical considerations

(see Section 4.2.5). In the case of the 10 interviews which took place over Zoom, an

additional audio and video backup recording was made using Zoom software and

saved onto my remote password-protected institutional desktop, though these did

not end up being used. These recordings minimised the need for me to take notes

during interviews (Hermanowicz, 2002). Unlike the ASPIRES project, due to funding

constraints I transcribed these primary interviews myself as opposed to using a

professional transcriber. I consider this transcription to have been an initial stage of

analysis (Creswell, 2014).

In line with the approach used throughout the ASPIRES project I transcribed

interview recordings verbatim including some non-verbal data such as laughter

(signified as [laughs]), long pauses (signified as [pause]), and emphasis (signified by

the use of italics). This approach was taken in order to best reflect how the interview

was enacted (e.g., Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018), and aligns with suggested techniques

for transcription when conducting thematic analyses (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2013) as

is used in this study (see Section 4.3.2.4). I then proofread each transcript while

listening to the recording in order to enhance the validity of the transcripts. During

this process I pseudonymised transcripts (with the pseudonyms used throughout the

ASPIRES project, which were once again agreed upon by each participant at the beginning of each primary interview), and anonymised any information which could lead to participants being identifiable. In the coming chapters of this thesis I use both verbatim quotes from transcripts and summaries of participants' quotes to present data (Cohen et al., 2017). When using verbatim quotes from transcripts these are presented in speech marks (e.g., "…") or, in line with APA referencing guidelines[53], a block quotation for quotes of longer than 40 words. I use ellipses in square brackets (e.g., […]) to indicate that a section of a quote has not been included because it was not relevant and/or was too long, and insert additional words using square brackets (e.g., [like this]) to aid understanding or give context.

Familiarisation with the datasets and initial coding

The second stage of data analysis in this thesis was familiarisation with this study's datasets and initial coding (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Regarding this study's secondary data, I began this stage early on in my thesis, after my access to the existing ASPIRES research data had been granted through my ethics approval (see Appendix 2). Regarding this study's primary data, this familiarisation stage began immediately after each interview, when I typed up fieldnotes to record a summary of the key ideas and possible themes which arose throughout the interview (Hermanowicz, 2002; Saldaña, 2003), and which were later added to the start of each interview transcript.

After transcriptions from my primary data collection were complete, I uploaded all 144 transcripts into NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software used to organise and

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[53] APA stands for 'American Psychological Association', and refers to the style of referencing used in this thesis.

code data. All data from one participant and their parent(s) were then grouped together as a single 'case' in NVivo; in effect 'merging' each participants' primary and secondary longitudinal qualitative data for analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; McLeod, 2003) and re-contextualising the secondary data in this study (Hammersley, 2010). Each participants' 'case' included between 10 and 12 interviews; see Appendix 1.

A significant step in my familiarisation with this study's complete qualitative dataset was to write an in-depth pseudonymised profile of each of participant (e.g., Cohen et al., 2017), which summarised all of their longitudinal interviews or 'case'. Due to the amount of interview data used in this study, writing participant profiles was a lengthy process (between 2 to 5 days per participant) which produced detailed documents ranging in length from 7,377 words to 23,625 words. Inspired by shorter profiles or 'cases' published in science education research (e.g., Avraamidou, 2020a; Carlone et al., 2015; Carlone et al., 2014), I wrote these profiles using a combination of description and verbatim quotes.

Following discussions with my supervisors, profiles were structured chronologically and with separate sections to summarise each age at which participants (and, sometimes, their parents) were interviewed. Each profile thus had a maximum of seven sections. Informed by the structure of the interview schedules used on the ASPIRES project, the first six sections of each profile were grouped by three sub-sections; 1) education (which included a section on science education for the five participants who specialised in science), 2) career aspirations, and 3) spare time/friends and family. The seventh section of all profiles summarised my teaching-focused interviews with participants at age 21/22. These profiles were thus detailed

summaries of each participants' longitudinal data, rather than simply overviews of their teaching trajectories. Once completed, all profiles[54] were uploaded to each participant's 'case' in NVivo. I then read through each profile and conducted come initial thematic coding of them, in addition to noting down some of my reflections about possible emerging themes.

4.3.2.4 Theoretically driven analyses of participants' teaching trajectories

The third stage of data analyses was my theoretically driven analyses. Whilst presented here as a third, separate, stage of analysis this was a reflexive and ongoing process throughout this PhD (Braun & Clarke, 2013). These analyses were inductive, and thus directed by the data, but with elements of deduction; for example, where I developed codes and themes with reference to existing research findings and concepts.

The analyses conducted to explicate meaning from this study's qualitative dataset were informed by a process of reflexive thematic analysis (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2013). I did consider using discourse analysis because this is sometimes used with an identities in practice lens (e.g., Wade-Jaimes et al., 2021), but decided instead on taking a thematic analytic approach because I recognise the transcripts which form this study's qualitative dataset as products which interpret (some of) the attitudes, values and experiences of participants at the moment of the interview (e.g., Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Kitzinger, 2004), rather than representations of the discourses available to participants as a result of the structures around them (e.g., Edley, 2001; Perryman, 2012). I note, however, that my use of 'cultural models' (see

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[54] Although I took care not to include any identifiable information in these profiles, their length and detail mean that they could lead to participants becoming identifiable, and are thus not included in this study's appendices for ethical reasons; see Section 4.2.5 and Neale (2013).

Section 3.2.1.1) could be compared with the concept of 'discourses', which means that there are similarities in the approach taken in this thesis and aspects of some types of discourse analysis.

The process of thematic analysis used in this thesis included (along with the familiarisation of data as outlined in Section 4.3.2.3) coding; generating initial themes; developing and reviewing themes; refining, defining and naming themes; and writing up (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Despite first being developed within the field of psychology (Braun & Clarke, 2006), this approach is now widely used in educational research, including that which focuses on young people's trajectories (e.g., Holmegaard, Madsen, et al., 2014a) and people's reasons for teaching (e.g., Dawes & Wheeldon, 2022). Thus, whilst I take a narrative approach to understanding my participants' identities and trajectories as outlined in Section 3.4, I did not undertake narrative analyses (e.g., Riessman, 1994) of this study's qualitative data.

To represent the different processes in these theoretically driven analyses, this section is presented in three sub-sections; 1) identifying the cultural models which construct the figured worlds of teaching, 2) the construction of teaching as 'high in status' and 'high in safety', and 3) analysing participants' longitudinal identity work in relation to the figured worlds of teaching.

Identifying the cultural models which construct the figured worlds of teaching

To begin analysing participants' teaching trajectories I first sought to answer RQ1b; *why do young people aspire to become a teacher?*[55]. Given the difficulty in

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[55] RQ1a (*who aspires to become a teacher?*) is answered using quantitative analyses, see Section 4.3.3.

determining the influences that shape young people's teaching aspirations highlighted in Section 2.2.1, I took a narrative approach to these data, and used the context of figured worlds to help me in answering this question (discussed in Sections 3.2.1.1 and 3.4). Specifically, I worked to identify how young people who express a teaching aspiration or interest appeared to construct the multiple connected figured worlds of teaching. This is because, informed by the work of Jackson and Seiler (2013), I understand figured worlds as composed of and reliant upon cultural models which in turn enable "a wide or narrow range of possibilities for participation" within them (p. 829). I therefore suggest that considering how aspirant teachers 'figure' the worlds of teaching allowed me to move beyond participants' explicit reported reasons for their teaching aspirations or interests, towards understanding how the cultural models of teaching might influence these aspirations or interests.

To code participants' figurings of teaching, I used the 'figured worlds tool' put forward by Gee (2010), and as utilised by others using the context of figured worlds to research young people's trajectories (e.g., Gonsalves et al., 2019). Gee (2010) helpfully states that figured worlds can be viewed as "models or pictures that people hold about how things work in the world when they are 'typical' or 'normal'" (p. 173). Thus, in order to identify how a person constructs a figured world, Gee (2010) suggests that researchers must "ask the following question: what must this speaker assume about the world—take to be normal or typical—in order to have spoken this way, to have said these things in the way they were said?" (p. 173). Although perhaps overly simplified given the complexity of identities in practice theory (Holland et al., 1998; Urrieta, 2007), I consider Gee's figured worlds tool to be a useful and practical way in which to understand how participants figured teaching, and thus a

valuable approach with which to examine some of the influences upon why young people aspire to teach.

This coding process was conducted on NVivo and began using the profiles of participants that I had previously prepared (see Section 4.3.2.3). Instead of the profiles acting as data themselves, however, the structure of these profiles served to direct me to the relevant transcripts and/or sections of participants' longitudinal data. Throughout this coding, I therefore went back and forth between participants' longitudinal data and my profile summaries of these data. Because, for RQ1b, I was interested in what participants assumed about the figured worlds of teaching (Gee, 2010) when they aspired to teach, I paid particular attention to interviews in which participants expressed an aspiration or interest in teaching, in addition to how participants narrated their aspirations retrospectively in their interviews at age 21/22. Using these transcripts, I generated 105 open codes about the figured worlds of teaching as a result of this first step in coding. These included seemingly contradictory codes such as 'teaching is a vocation', and 'teaching is a skill you have to learn'; as well as more general codes such as 'teachers know their students well', and 'teachers have good holidays'.

Following open coding, I looked for patterns in the data so that I could group my initial codes into overarching categories and sub-categories. Through this process I developed six main categories and, within them, 13 sub-categories which summarised how my participants figured teaching when they aspired to teach. I regularly reviewed and refined these categories (Braun & Clarke, 2013), including with others (see Section 4.2.3). Guided by the work of Wade-Jaimes and Schwartz (2019), I also refined these codes with reference to my ongoing reading of the

literature on teachers and teaching. This process was complex and involved multiple rounds; taking place over the course of about two years. The six main categories that I generated through this process and which summarise what participants took to be normal about teaching when they aspired to teach are; 1) 'teachers make a difference', 2) 'teachers are gifted', 3) 'teaching is a profession', 4) 'teaching is accessible', 5) 'teaching enables a good lifestyle', and 6) 'teaching is a secure job'. These categorisations shape the findings of all three of this thesis's analysis chapters (Chapters 5, 6, and 7).

Table 6 presents a section of the resulting coding framework, from which data is presented in Section 5.3. A detailed version of Table 6 reflecting all six cultural models generated is available in Appendix 4 (Table 18). Again informed by Jackson and Seiler (2013), I interpret the six overarching categories generated through coding as 'cultural models' that construct the figured worlds of teaching, and the 13 sub-categories as 'storylines' about teaching made available through these cultural models (see Section 3.4).

Table 6 *Example sections from this study's 'figured worlds' coding framework*

High in status/high in safety?	Example cultural model	Literature	Example storyline	Example data
High in status	Teachers make a difference	Gorard et al. (2021) Perryman and Calvert (2020) van Rooij et al. (2020)	Teachers shape lives	"certain teachers have inspired me, I'd like to do the same thing for other people" (Lucy, 13/14) "teachers definitely very much changed my education in which way I went in terms of education - that makes [teaching] appeal to me" (Samantha, 20/21)
High in safety	Teaching is accessible	Chevalier et al. (2007) Dawes and Wheeldon (2022) Lortie (2002) See (2004)	Teaching is familiar	"we come to school like every day so you, you meet different teachers and then you see like they have teaching styles and techniques […] so then [teaching is] a bit like it's the easy option" (Mienie, 13/14)
			Teaching is a backup career	"if you just do a subject, go down that field then you can always just train to be a teacher in it" (Louise, 15/16) "I think I would try [working in media] and if not I'd fall back to teaching" (Carol, 15/16)

The construction of teaching as 'high in status' and 'high in safety'

As is indicated in the first column of Table 6, as a result of sharing my emerging findings on the six cultural models which I found to construct the figured worlds of teaching with my supervisors, I noted two further overarching categorisations; themes that I refer to as constructing teaching as 'high in status' and 'high in safety'.

I developed these themes after noting patterns between the cultural models that imply teaching to be what could briefly be described 'a good job' (high in status) and 'a reliable job' (high in safety). Specifically, I interpret three of the cultural models identified ('teachers make a difference', 'teachers are gifted', and 'teaching is a profession') as constructing teaching as high in status, and the remaining three cultural models ('teaching is accessible', 'teaching enables a good lifestyle', and 'teaching is a secure job') as constructing teaching as 'high in safety'. I consider this additional layer of analysis as enabling me to understand the six identified cultural norms of teaching as 'global structures' that continually shape the figured worlds of teaching, as opposed to social views which may be fleeting (Carlone et al., 2014). Analyses (presented in Section 5.3) indicated that all young people in this study constructed teaching as both high in status and high in safety during interviews when they expressed an interest or aspiration in teaching.

The status and safety of teaching are thus key themes running throughout the findings of this study, as denoted by the title of this thesis. I therefore feel that it is important to here conceptualise these themes. In terms of status, I acknowledge the multitude of existing, sometimes conflicting, definitions and theorisations of status in relation to teaching (see Section 2.3.1.1). To my knowledge, however, no scholars have previously used the concept of safety to refer to the teaching profession. In this thesis I have therefore chosen to (re)define these terms using this study's empirical evidence.

Throughout the remainder of this thesis, I use the theme that teaching is 'high in status' to refer to this study's finding that participants who expressed a teaching aspiration or interest figured teachers as *professionals who use their gifts to benefit*

others. I thus conceptualise 'status' not as a general societal categorisation of the teaching profession's prestige (e.g., Hoyle, 2001) or rank (e.g., Dolton et al., 2018) as discussed in Section 2.3.1.1; but as the respect accorded to teachers and teaching by individual potential future teachers. In this conceptualisation I am influenced by the work of Sennett (2003), whose 'inquest on respect' claimed that one can gain respect 1) by using and developing one's natural talents, 2) by looking after oneself in a self-sufficient manner, and 3) by helping others, or giving back to one's community. The three aspects of respect as outlined by Sennett (2003) neatly reflect the three cultural models identified as characterising the high status of teaching. First, the concept of self-development, or use of one's talent, maps onto the cultural model that 'teachers are (naturally) gifted', and use their natural skills or talents in their teaching. Second, Sennett's argument that self-sufficiency generates respect is linked with the cultural model that 'teaching is a (highly educated and highly skilled) profession'. And third, Sennett's suggestion that giving back to others confers respect closely aligns with the cultural model that 'teachers make a difference'. Unlike respect, however, this conceptualisation of teaching as high in status does not mean that status has been earnt; but is the result of dominant social stereotypical generalisations about teaching (Holland et al., 1998). And, as will be explored in detail in the following chapters, whether or not (or for how long) this study's participants positioned teaching as high in status was strongly influenced by their intersecting social positions. In this way, just like respect has been found to be (Skeggs, 1997), this understanding of status is classed, gendered and racialised.

Whilst Sennett (2003) works to draw a distinction between his conceptualisation of respect and traditional understandings of status I choose to retain the label of 'status' in this thesis, whilst incorporating Sennett's understanding of respect. The reason for

this approach is because this thesis has not considered the status of individual teachers (which closely links with the concept of 'respect'), but of teaching as a whole; the status of the figured worlds of teaching. In other words, this research demonstrates that the high status of teaching, as defined here, is conferred on all teachers as a result of their membership to the figured worlds of teaching.

Next, I use the theme that teaching is 'high in safety' to acknowledge this study's finding that participants figured teaching *as an accessible and secure route to a decent lifestyle.* When referring to the 'safety' of teaching throughout this thesis I do not, therefore, refer to the physical safety of existing teachers; but to the figuring of teaching as a low-risk path to success by individual potential future teachers, especially those who experience multiple intersecting social inequalities. In this conceptualisation I am informed by research that has highlighted how some young people are encouraged to pursue 'safe routes' (as opposed to 'risky routes') as a result of what is assumed to be safe for someone with their intersecting identities and/or social and cultural background (Archer & Francis, 2006).

In my understanding of teaching as high in safety I am inspired by the theorisation of Higher Education "as a form of *insurance* to guarantee an acceptable standard of living, rather than as an *investment* to maximise their lifetime income" (Harrison, 2019, p. 753). Here, Harrison (2019) builds upon Beck's principle of the 'risk society' (1992) to develop the idea that globalisation and advances in technology mean that individuals in England are now "more likely to be held to account (e.g., through unemployment) for their personal decisions and 'failures'" than they may have been in previous generations (Harrison, 2019, p. 755). Harrison (2019) thus argues that young people in England, particularly those from working-class backgrounds,

increasingly choose Higher Education in order to insure against possible future 'failures'. In this study I apply this principle to teaching; in conceptualising teaching as high in safety I use empirical evidence to suggest that some young people construct teaching as a secure career choice that will be interpreted by others as achieving success when compared with other graduate jobs.

More detail about the data that contribute the conceptualisations of teaching as 'high in status' and 'high in safety' are presented in Section 5.3. Finally, however, it should be noted that in identifying the high status and high safety of teaching I necessarily recognise that some (young people) may construct teaching using cultural models which position teaching as low in status and low in safety. Because this thesis is concerned with those who, at least once, expressed a teaching aspiration or interest, I focus on how participants first identified (and then over time increasingly or decreasingly identified) with the cultural models that first drew them to teaching. In other words, I am interested in why young people realise or drop their previous teaching aspirations. I thus consider whether or not, and why, this study's participants maintained or dropped their positionings of teaching as *high* in status and *high* in safety; not whether or not they came to construct teaching as *low* in status and/or safety.

Analysing participants' longitudinal identity work in relation to the figured worlds of teaching

I next sought to interrogate why some of the participants in this study went on to pursue teaching, whilst others did not (RQ2 and RQ3). As detailed in Sections 3.4 and 3.6, I did this by mapping young people's identity work in relation to the figured worlds of teaching over time (their teaching trajectories) using an intersectional lens.

To do this, I used the contexts of positionality and space of authoring as introduced in Sections 3.2.1.2 and 3.2.1.3 (Holland et al., 1998) to examine whether and why participants worked to align with, and/or distance themselves from, the figured worlds of teaching. Importantly, these analyses use the six cultural models identified as constructing the figured worlds of teaching (introduced earlier in this section) to understand young people's navigations towards and away from teaching. These analyses thus allow me to do what Carlone et al. (2014) refer to as 'toggle' between the macro cultural norms that contribute to how young people figure teaching, and the micro level of how participants negotiate their teaching trajectories using identity work and positioning by others. This process ran alongside my coding of the cultural models of teaching and, similarly, was a lengthy and complex process which involved regularly refining codes and contextualising coding through the (re)writing of this thesis's analysis chapters (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The process of coding young people's positionality and space of authoring in relation to the figured worlds of teaching used the whole of this study's qualitative dataset and began with the longitudinal profiles that I wrote for each participant (see Section 4.3.2.3). Again, I used these profiles as a way to direct my more in-depth coding of the relevant transcript data. This coding process included four rounds of analyses; 1) coding the data for positionality, 2) coding the data for space of authoring, 3) coding the data for evidence of participants' intersectional identities, and 4) analysing data longitudinally across each participants' case. The results of these analyses are presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

As might be expected, data coded for 'positionality' was most often from parental transcripts, but did also include participants' own narrations of how their parents and

others described or recognised them. Specifically, I coded data for positionality where participants were positioned (implicitly or explicitly) in alignment with (towards), or distanced from (away from) the storylines which supported the six cultural models coded as constructing the figured worlds of teaching. To do this I first conducted open coding of participants being positioned in relation to teaching, and then identified the cultural models to which this positioning related. For example, one initial code was 'teaching is an attainable career for my child', which was later coded as positioning in alignment with the cultural model that 'teaching is accessible'. For some storylines, no data were coded as positioning participants away from the figured worlds of teaching, and this was interpreted as indicating the strength of a cultural model. As will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, I interpret the positions offered to participants in alignment with teaching as participants being 'recognised' as a potential teachers (e.g., Gee, 2000). An example section from this study's coding of positionality is presented in Table 7, and a more detailed version of this is available in Appendix 4 (Table 19).

Table 7 *Example section from this study's 'positionality' coding framework*

High in status/high in safety?	Example cultural model	Example storyline	Example positioning *towards* teaching	Example positioning *away from* teaching
High in status	Teaching is a profession	Teachers are highly educated	Celina, about her mum Leah's response to her teaching aspiration: "I've talked about it with my mum and she thinks it's really good that I want to do it, and I want to go to university. She thinks that I'll be really good cos apparently I'm intelligent" (Celina, 13/14)	Joanne, about her parents' anticipated response to her interest in teaching: "I think my, like, my parents would think that I'm 'better' than that, um, and that I could probably do better" (Joanne, 21/22)

Next, data coded as 'space of authoring' mainly came from participant (rather than parent) transcripts, and included instances where participants narrated themselves in alignment with, or distanced from, the six cultural models coded as constructing the figured worlds of teaching. As with positioning, this was first done with open coding which was then categorised according to the six cultural models. For example, where participants indicated their interest in teaching because it would enable them to buy their own home, this was eventually coded as authoring in alignment with the cultural model that 'teaching enables a good lifestyle'. In contrast, where participants appeared to question whether teaching was highly skilled, this was coded as authoring in opposition to the cultural model that 'teaching is a profession', because this cultural model included the storyline that 'teachers are highly skilled'. In some cases, and reflecting the shifting and sometimes contradictory nature of identity work (McLeod, 2003), participants were found to both align themselves with, and distance themselves from, a cultural model within the same interview. In addition, and as with positionality, there were some storylines for which no data were coded as

participants authoring away from the figured worlds of teaching. For example, no participants appeared to author themselves against the cultural model that 'teachers make a difference', which suggests the relative strength of this cultural model. An example section from this study's coding of space of authoring is presented in Table 8, and a more detailed version of this is available in Appendix 4 (

Table 20).

Table 8 *Example section from this study's 'space of authoring' coding framework*

High in status/high in safety?	Example cultural model	Example storyline	Example space of authoring *towards* teaching	Example space of authoring *away from* teaching
High in safety	Teaching enables a good lifestyle	Teaching is decently paid	Millie, when comparing teaching with her other aspirations: "with the teaching […] obviously I think about, like, will I enjoy this job, will I get a good amount of money […] it's mostly teacher" (Millie, 13/14)	Samantha, on why she did not want to pursue teaching at the time: "I mean part of it is because [of the] money, you're very capped as a teacher with how much you can earn" (Samantha, 20/21)

The third phase of this theoretically driven analysis was coding for participants'

intersectional identities, which I also consider to be participants' 'social positions'

(see Chapter 3, Section 3.6). Here, I coded data from both participant and parent

interviews to help me develop a detailed picture of each participants' multiple

intersecting identities, as well as how these identities interacted with participants'

identity work in relation to teaching. Whilst I recognise that there are limitless

possibilities for identity intersections, I coded data specifically for identity

intersections and negotiations that participants encountered or experienced in

relation to teachers and teaching and, as discussed in Section 3.6, I paid particular

attention to any social positions which were shown to influence teaching trajectories

in Chapter 2[56]. For this study's five science-specialist participants, I also coded for

identity intersections in relation to science; in order to determine whether and why

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[56] This approach means that identities such as dis/ability, sexual orientation, and religion are not considered in this study; as will be discussed in relation to the limitations of this research (see Section 8.4).

their science identities may have played a part in their identity work in relation to teaching.

This coding was informed by similar coding by Avraamidou (2022) who analysed three women's physics trajectories and reported using intersectionality codes such as "gender, single motherhood, and physics identity" (p. 72). In total I used 21 intersectionality codes. Examples of the identity intersections coded in this study include 'teaching, gender, ethnicity', 'teacher, gender, ethnicity, future parenthood', and 'science, ethnicity, gender'. Unlike the coding for positionality or space of authoring, this intersectionality coding did not map directly on to the cultural models of teaching. This was in recognition of the potential for an individuals' social positions to cut across, or exist beyond, figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998). An example section from this study's coding for aspects of intersectionality is presented in Table 9, and a more detailed version of this is available in Appendix 4 (Table 21).

During this coding for intersectionality I found that it was especially difficult to identify the influence of participants' White British identities upon their identity work in relation to teaching. I acknowledge that this difficulty is a consequence of my own White privilege (see Section 4.2.4), the stereotypical 'image' of a teacher as White (British) (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.1), and this study's predominantly White sample (see Section 4.3.2.1). All of these influences have the potential to render Whiteness invisible in this study; a possibility recognised and discussed by other education researchers (e.g., Bhopal, 2018; Robertson & Hairston, 2022). Following discussions with my supervisors, one tool I used to overcome this difficulty was to ask myself whether or not participants might have narrated their identities in same way had they identified as a different ethnicity. Although imperfect, this was a useful

strategy for attempting to make Whiteness more visible in this coding process, and therefore this research.

Table 9 *Example section from this study's 'intersectionality' coding framework*

Example intersectionality code	Example data
Teaching, gender, ethnicity, future parenthood	Carol, explaining what she wanted to be doing in five years' time: "definitely already been a teacher for 4 of them – proper qualified teacher. Preferably already moved out. I'm really… I'm one of those people that I really want to get married and have kids really soon, because I think that's part of my East European in me that my mum's always like drilling into me, but probably moved out, married, working as a teacher already" (Carol, 20/21)
Teaching, social class	Joanne's mother Judy: "I can't see her teaching, no, no, no [laughs] she has no patience […] she was like supervising [younger children] last year, which, I don't think she enjoyed that whatsoever […] personally, I could see her doing a degree and then a Masters degree and then the PhD being probably the research area" (Judy, when Joanne was 13/14)

The final stage of analysing participants' teaching trajectories was to apply a longitudinal analytical lens to these data. In contrast to explicitly coding data, this process involved 'plotting' participants' narrations of their identity work in each of their interviews over time, mostly through the process of writing. This means that I viewed the data coded under positionality, space of authoring, and intersectionality across each 'case' or participant, and then represented this identity work in the form of a chronological teaching trajectory. These narrative trajectories, some of which are presented in Chapters 6 and 7, are therefore the culmination, or 'crystallisation' (Ellingson, 2009) of all of the qualitative coding and analyses undertaken in this study.

Inspired by the work of Avraamidou (2020a), I suggest that analysing and presenting data as written participant trajectories, as opposed to thematically, was particularly

useful for reflecting the shifting, rather than linear, ways in which identities in practice are negotiated (McLeod, 2003), and narratives develop over time (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). I acknowledge, however, that these teaching trajectories are inevitably a work-in-progress; both because of the young age of participants and thus the possibility that they may still turn towards (or away from) teaching in the future, and because my subjective and abridged interpretations of these trajectories will inevitably at times over- or under-emphasise aspects of these young peoples' lives and choices.

During the process of analysing and interpreting participant's longitudinal teaching trajectories, I sought to identify key moments, or sites, of heightened identity work in relation to the figured worlds of teaching. These moments can be compared with what others considering identity work in relation to teaching have called 'critical events' or 'critical incidents' (e.g., Avraamidou, 2019; Schutz et al., 2001), and were experiences after, or as a result of, which participants appeared to navigate towards or away from the figured worlds of teaching. These instances and experiences sometimes developed over a period of time, and sometimes appeared to happen instantaneously. Whilst versions of these moments were dotted throughout all participants' trajectories I paid particular attention to moments from which participants appeared to realise or drop their teaching trajectories.

I then looked across the data for similarities and differences in these critical moments between participants. I also did this separately for the five science-specialist participants, in order to see whether they chose not to pursue teaching for similar and/or specific reasons. Through this process I generated six key influences upon participants' teaching trajectories, which I developed with reference to the

cultural models found to construct the figured worlds of teaching (identified at the start of this section). Influenced by the notion of 'deal-makers' and 'deal-breakers' often used to describe everyday decision making, I identity these critical moments as 'teacher-makers' for those who became teachers, and 'teacher-breakers' for those who did not become teachers by the age of 21/22. As will be presented in Chapters 6 and 7, each participant had either one or two key 'teacher-makers' or 'teacher-breakers'.

Finally, in order to better make sense of participants' emerging teaching trajectories, and informed by the work of Jackson and Seiler (2013), I attempted to create a typology of teaching trajectories using the types of trajectory put forward by Wenger (1998) (i.e., peripheral, inbound, outbound, insider and boundary). Although these trajectory types were somewhat useful in helping me to understand that this study's participants took multidirectional journeys towards and away from teaching, I found that these categorisations did not aid in the answering of this study's research questions. One key reason for this was that, whether or not they became teachers, all participants could be interpreted as having sometimes inbound and sometimes outbound teaching trajectories. In other words, because all participants vectored towards and away from teaching, the distinction between those who became a teacher, and those who did not, was not in the shape or 'type' of their trajectories. For these reasons this thesis does not focus in detail upon each participants' type of teaching trajectory but, where necessary, describes the 'seriousness' with which participants considered teaching and/or the length of their teaching aspirations.

4.3.3   Quantitative dataset

Analysis of this study's quantitative dataset is used to answer RQ1a (*who aspires to become a teacher?*), and uses secondary data from online surveys administered to young people in England by the ASPIRES project at six different time points (when its cohort was 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18, and 21/22; see Table 2). Importantly, this dataset comes from a cohort study that is cross-sectional in design, meaning that these six surveys tracked a cohort of young people all born in the same year over time, but that each survey sampled a different group of respondents (Cohen et al., 2017). In this study I specifically use two sources of data from the ASPIRES surveys. I refer to these data sources as 1) free-text responses about young people's future career aspirations, and 2) Likert scale responses about openness to teaching. Although I use two different data 'sources', both of these sources come from ASPIRES project surveys, and I therefore consider them as one dataset for the purposes of this study. I mostly refer to these data as 'responses', rather than 'young people' or 'respondents'[57], because these two data sources are from the same surveys and thus may represent the same individuals, but are not matched (see Section 4.3.3.1). In other words, although these data sources are analysed and presented separately in this thesis, the individuals represented by the Likert scale data may be (some of) the same individuals as those represented by the free-text data.

The free-text data used in this study come from 30,559 responses to a survey question about future career aspirations asked in all six ASPIRES surveys. The wording of this open-ended question for the first three surveys (when respondents

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[57] Apart from where I refer to the gender or ethnicity of a respondent (see Section 4.3.3.1).

were aged 10/11, 12/13, and 13/14) was 'what would you like to be when you grow up?'. The equivalent question in later surveys was 'what would you like to be as an adult?' when the cohort was age 15/16, 'what job would you like in the future?' when the cohort was age 17/18, and 'what job/career would you like in the future?' when the cohort was age 21/22. Despite these differences in specific wording, I consider these data to be comparable given the similarity of the questions posed. The free-text nature of these questions allowed respondents to type their career aspiration(s) in their own words into the online survey form. Some of these responses were one word (e.g., 'teacher'), whilst others were a short sentence (e.g., 'I would like to be a teacher'), and some young people responded to these questions with lists of multiple career aspirations (e.g., 'teacher, doctor, or footballer'). Although free-text survey responses can be long or detailed, and thus treated as qualitative data (Garcia et al., 2004), the short responses to these questions mean that these data are treated as quantitative data in this thesis. Changes to data management processes throughout the course of the ASPIRES project[58], however, mean that although these data provide information about respondents' explicit career aspirations it was not possible to match these data to respondents' other survey responses and/or demographic information. For this reason, I also use an additional data type from the ASPIRES surveys.

The second type of data which forms this study's quantitative dataset are 32,139 survey responses to a Likert scale question asked in the four most recent ASPIRES surveys. Young people surveyed at ages 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 and 21/22 were invited to rank their response to the statement 'I would like to be a teacher or work with

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[58] Such changes were influenced by external contractors who facilitated these surveys, and serve to demonstrate some of the difficulties in conducting long-term cross-sectional research with a cohort over time.

children' on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'I strongly agree' to 'I strongly

disagree'. This question was not included, however, in the ASPIRES project's first

two surveys. This question was asked alongside other Likert scale questions about

working in other professions including business, hair and beauty, law, medicine,

science, and sport. Young people's responses to these Likert scale questions were

not mutually exclusive, meaning for example that respondents could report that they

strongly agreed that they would like to be a teacher or work with children, and

strongly agree that they would like to work in business. Because these responses

indicate an agreement to wanting to become a teacher *or* work with children, and

because the surveys allowed respondents to also agree that that they would like to

work in other professions, I consider these results to represent a general interest in

or 'openness' towards teaching, rather than an explicit aspiration to become a

teacher as is shown in the free-text data. In contrast to the free-text data, however,

these data are considered to be more robust as they can be linked to respondents'

other survey responses including their demographic details, as will be considered

below.

4.3.3.1 Quantitative sample and data collection

This study's two quantitative data sources mean that this thesis uses data from a

total of over 60,000 responses to ASPIRES survey questions. The large-scale

surveys which generated this study's quantitative dataset sampled a cohort of young

people from different schools, sixth forms and colleges and, most recently, using

postal surveying of the Open Electoral Register (UK Government, n.d.-b). See

Archer and DeWitt (2017), Moote and Archer (2018), Moote et al. (2020b), and

Archer et al. (2022) for more detailed information about survey sampling and data collection from the different phases of the ASPIRES project.

The frequencies of free-text data on teaching are taken from the total number of respondents of each survey (see Table 3). In other words, the free-text responses coded as a teaching aspirations are presented in this thesis as a proportion of the total number of people who responded to the relevant ASPIRES survey. As not all free-text data from each survey was legible or codable, I first attempted using the totals of only those respondents who answered this question with a legible answer. This proved difficult, however, given the tendency for responses to this question to include spelling errors (especially in earlier surveys, when respondents were younger); some of which could have been interpreted multiple different ways. Therefore, in order to reduce the possibility for inconsistencies and/or human error, I chose to calculate the proportion of teaching aspirations from the total number of respondents of each survey.

An overview of responses to the Likert scale question about openness to teaching asked in the four most recent ASPIRES surveys is presented in Table 10. It should first be noted that the totals presented in Table 10 are different from those in Table 3; even though both of these tables present data about responses to the same surveys. This is because Table 10 presents responses to one specific question asked in the ASPIRES surveys, and not all young people surveyed at each data collection phase responded to all survey questions[59].

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[59] For example, by comparing Table 3 with Table 10 one can see that 4,600 13/14 year olds were surveyed for the ASPIRES project in 2012/13, but only 4,560 of these responded to the Likert scale question about openness to teaching.

Table 10 *Overview of responses to the Likert scale question about openness to teaching asked in the four most recent ASPIRES surveys, and respondents' self-reported genders and ethncities*

Age of respondents	Total number of Likert scale responses to the statement '*I would like to be a teacher or work with children*'	Gender of respondents to Likert scale question Young man or boy / Young woman or girl	Ethnicity of respondents to Likert scale question White / Minoritised Ethnicities
	N	*n* *(%)*	*n* *(%)*
Age 13/14 (2012/2013)	4,560	2,019 / 2,533* (44% / 56%)	3,271 / 1,289 (72% / 28%)
Age 15/16 (2014/2015)	13,317	6,201 / 7,111* (47% / 53%)	10,155 / 3,161* (76% / 24%)
Age 17/18 (2016/2017)	6,632	2,554 / 4,078 (39% / 61%)	5,102 / 1,530 (77% / 23%)
Age 21/22 (2020/2021)	7,630	2,737 / 4,528** (38% / 62%)**	5,971 / 1,545** (78% / 20%)**
Total	*32,139*		

*	Not all gender and ethnicity totals equate to the total number of question responses for each survey. This is due to missing values (Pallant, 2020) which were thus not included in analyses or gender and ethnicity breakdowns
**	Totals and percentages of gender and ethnicity of respondents at age 21/22 do not total 100% because in this survey respondents had the choice of reporting their gender as 'non-binary', 'other', or 'prefer not to say', and their ethnicity as 'prefer not to say'. These totals were small and are not included in gender and ethnicity analyses to allow for comparison with other survey cohorts

Table 10 goes beyond considering the Likert scale as purely responses and provides a breakdown of the self-reported gender and ethnicity of the respondents to this question in each survey. I chose to consider the gender and ethnicity breakdowns of this sample because the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.2.1.1) showed that these social inequalities can strongly pattern young people's teaching aspirations. Because this study uses quantitative data only to provide contextual information about who aspires to become a teacher, I decided to use a simplified construction of both gender and ethnicity when considering this Likert-scale data

about openness to teaching. Although I recognise neither gender nor ethnicity as binaries, a more detailed statistical examination of these data was beyond the scope of this study, given the data available and the qualitatively led approach taken to this study's research questions.

Thus, for the purposes of analysis I considered the responses to the ASPIRES Likert scale question about openness to teaching from those who identified as a 'girl' (or young woman), alongside those who identified as a 'boy' (or young man). Respondents who reported their gender as 'non-binary', 'other', or 'prefer not to say' were not included in analyses because such data were only collected from respondents at age 21/22. Therefore, although this research would have been interested in whether or not the proportion of, for example, people who identify as non-binary and are open to teaching changes at different ages, such analyses were not possible using the data available[60]. In addition, I compared the responses of those who identified their ethnicity as White with those identified their ethnicity as Black, South Asian, East Asian, Other and Mixed[61]. I collectively refer to these respondents as from 'Minoritised Ethnicities'. Although arguably over-simplified, I suggest that this nominal treatment of the data allowed me to conduct the descriptive statistical analyses required to answer RQ1a, and which provide an important

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[60] As indicated in Table 10, ASPIRES survey respondents had the opportunity to report their gender as 'non-binary', 'other', or 'prefer not to say' at age 21/22 but not at ages 13/14, 15/16, or 17/18. This difference is an example of how the ASPIRES project team adapted the project's research methods in response to changing societal understandings of gender over time. A consequence of my use of secondary quantitative data in this thesis is therefore that this research takes a cis-normative approach to quantitative analyses. This limitation is further acknowledged in Section 8.4.
[61] These were the six ethnicity categories provided to respondents of the ASPIRES surveys. Respondents who self-identified as 'White' may therefore include those who identified as White British alongside those who identified as White and non-British (e.g., White European); just as 'Black' may include those who identified as Black British as well as, for example, Black Caribbean.

context for the more complex intersectional qualitative analyses upon which this thesis focuses as detailed in Section 4.3.2.4.

Although the gender and ethnicity breakdowns of each survey cohort differs, each of the samples of the first five ASPIRES surveys was broadly nationally representative. In other words, the gender and ethnicity breakdowns of the survey samples at ages 13/14, 15/16, and 17/18[62] presented in Table 10 were roughly proportional to government gender and ethnicity estimates of the general population in England for their age group. For more information see Archer and DeWitt (2017), Moote and Archer (2018) and Moote et al. (2020b). I suggest that this broad national representation means that findings resulting from my quantitative analyses of these data may also be present in the wider cohort population (Cohen et al., 2017).

The literature on teaching aspirations (as reviewed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1) also highlights patterns of inequalities other than gender and ethnicity in young people's teaching aspirations, including social class. The ASPIRES project, however, used several different methods to collect and categorise respondents' social class across the different ASPIRES project surveys, in order to reflect the potential for young people to become socially mobile as they grow older. This variation in social class categorisation across different age groups in the ASPIRES quantitative data makes comparison of the influence of social class upon teaching interests over time extremely difficult. Therefore, although I recognise that a young person's gender and ethnicity are unlikely to work in isolation to influence their teaching interests, only

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[62] When the ASPIRES cohort was aged 21/22, the project attempted to purposely oversample populations who are typically underrepresented in STEM fields (including women and those from Minoritised Ethnicities) (e.g., Gorard & See, 2008; Moote et al., 2020b; Smith, 2011), in order to align with the wider ongoing aims of the ASPIRES project (see Archer et al., 2022). The resulting breakdowns as used in this thesis, however, are similar to previous surveys.

these inequalities are considered using this thesis's quantitative dataset. As outlined in Section 4.3.2.4, however, this thesis's theoretically driven qualitative analyses attempt to explore these and other inequalities further by using an intersectional lens.

4.3.3.2 Quantitative data analysis

Here I present how I analysed data from the free-text and Likert scale ASPIRES survey questions in order to answer RQ1a of this study; *who aspires to teach?*. As outlined in Section 4.2.2, these analyses are not directly informed by this study's theoretical framework. I do consider these analyses to align with the study's social constructionism approach, however, because the data produced aids understanding of the social influences which contribute to England's teacher shortages. Specifically, these analyses represent an attempt to contribute new contextual information about who aspires to become a teacher in England, and specifically whether and how teaching aspirations differ at different ages. Following the approach used in some existing analyses of ASPIRES survey data (e.g., Moote et al., 2021), and due to the size of the ASPIRES survey samples, analyses were conducted on unweighted data[63].

First, I analysed responses to the free-text question about future career aspirations asked in all six ASPIRES surveys. I did this by coding responses to this question in Microsoft Excel software, using codes from the International Standard Classification of Occupations (2008) edition (ISCO-08) (International Labour Office, 2012). I chose to use this classification system because it has been used to code young people's

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[63] On the ASPIRES project, the decision to report (most) analyses using unweighted data was made because analyses of weighted data did not differ significantly from analyses of unweighted data. See Moote et al. (2021) for a more detailed explanation.

teaching aspirations in other large datasets of short-response free-text aspirations (e.g., Han, 2018; Han et al., 2018; Park & Byun, 2015). Specifically, aided by alphabetical sorting, I coded teaching aspirations amongst young people's free-text responses. I coded as teaching aspirations responses which reported an aspiration to become 1) a teacher in general (code 2300), 2) a primary school teacher (code 2341), 3) a secondary school teacher (code 2330), or 4) a special educational needs teacher (code 2352) (International Labour Office, 2012). This approach follows the coding of teaching aspirations used by Han (2018), and excludes other teaching-related aspirations such as wanting to be a teaching assistant, a nursery or pre-school teacher, a Further Education teacher, a university lecturer, or a specialist non-school teacher of a specific sport or exercise. These exclusions allowed the data coded to fit with the definition of teacher used throughout this thesis (see Chapter 1, Section 1.5). Respondents who specified that they wanted to be a Head Teacher were coded as having a general teaching aspiration (code 2300), because of the traditional requirement within the English education system to be a classroom teacher before becoming a Head Teacher (National Careers Service, n.d.). In addition, those who expressed an aspiration to teach a specific subject taught individually at secondary level (e.g., Art, or PE) were coded as having a secondary teaching aspiration (code 2330) unless they specified otherwise.

As well as using codes from the International Labour Office (2012), and because this study has an additional interest in science teacher shortages, I also coded responses within those already coded as secondary school teacher (code 2330) as 'science teacher' if the respondent specified that they would like to teach science in general, Biology, Chemistry, or Physics. I then ran frequencies of each code (and, separately, responses coded as 'science teacher') in order to report what proportion

of responses to the free-text question about future career aspirations included an aspiration to become a teacher. The results of these analyses are presented in Chapter 5 (Section 5.2.1) and detailed in Appendix 5.

Next, I conducted descriptive analyses of data from the Likert scale question about openness to teaching asked in the four most recent ASPIRES surveys. I first used SPSS software to calculate the frequencies of those who strongly agreed or agreed that they would like to be a teacher or work with children when they were older in the four different surveys. Next, in order to understand how responses to this Likert scale question were patterned by respondents' gender and ethnicity I conducted cross-tabulation analyses, also using SPSS software. This was made possible by generating a binary variable for responses to each survey's Likert scale teaching question which grouped together the responses 'strongly agree' with 'agree' (labelled as 'yes'), and 'neutral' with 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' (labelled as 'no'). Because both gender and ethnicity were also treated as binaries for these analyses, the crosstabulation analyses produced were therefore 2 x 2 associations, which allowed for significance testing.

Informed by analyses undertaken by Moote and Archer (2018), who also used survey data from the ASPIRES project, tests for the statistical significance of respondents' self-reported gender and ethnicity upon their openness to teaching were conducted using Chi-square tests for independence. For these analyses I used Pearson Chi-Square value and Yates' Continuity Correction value, which compensates for the overestimate of the Chi-square value when used with a 2 x 2 table (Pallant, 2020). In addition, because the tables produced through these crosstabulation analyses were 2 x 2, I also considered the *phi* coefficient to

determine the effect size of results pertaining to respondents' gender and ethnicity, and interpreted these results according to the criteria outlined by Cohen (1988) (.1 for small effect, .3 for medium effect and .5 for large effect). For reliability checks (as outlined in Section 4.2.3), these analyses were saved via SPSS syntax and were re-run and checked by a colleague (Cohen et al., 2017). The results of these analyses are presented in Chapter 5 (Section 5.2.2) and are further detailed in Appendix 5.

4.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have presented and discussed the methodological approaches and research methods that I used to address this study's three research questions. First, I outlined how this study was informed by a (contextual) social constructionism research paradigm and a social justice axiology. I contended that these approaches helped this study to examine reasons contributing to England's patterned teacher shortages with the aim of generating understandings that can be used to improve these shortages. I then outlined the qualitatively led approach taken in this study and detailed how I sought to ensure the validity and reliability of this research. I also reflected upon how my own experiences and identities have shaped this research, and discussed the ethical considerations applied throughout this research.

I then outlined the research methods used in this thesis. I first illustrated how this study builds upon the research design of the ASPIRES project; a national mixed-methods research project studying the science and career aspirations of a cohort of young people living in England, upon which I worked before beginning this PhD. I then introduced this study's qualitative dataset, which consists of 146 interviews longitudinally tracking 13 young people, all of whom were interviewed up to six times (along with, separately, their parents) between the ages of 10/11 and 20/21 for the

ASPIRES project, and all of whom were then interviewed again for the purposes of this study at age 21/22. All 13 of these young people had expressed an aspiration or interest in teaching in at least one of their ASPIRES project interviews, and were therefore considered to be 'potential future teachers'. Five of these participants also specialised in science and were thus considered to be 'potential future science teachers'.

I outlined how these participants' longitudinal data were thematically analysed using an intersectional identities in practice framework; first examining participants' constructions of the figured worlds of teaching in order to consider why they aspired to teach (RQ1b; presented in Chapter 5, Section 5.3), and then focusing upon participants' identity work in relation to the figured worlds of teaching using the contexts of positionality and space of authoring (Holland et al., 1998). This analytical framework was organised around the overarching themes of the status and safety of teaching. To help me unpick the reasons why this study's participants were (not) pursuing teaching (RQ2 and RQ3), I applied an intersectional lens to interpreting participants' longitudinal teaching trajectories. Together, these analyses enabled me to identify what I call 'teacher makers' and 'teacher breakers' for each participant, as will be presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

Finally, I presented this study's quantitative dataset which is made up of over 60,000 survey responses from six ASPIRES surveys conducted with a cohort of young people at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18, and 21/22. I outlined how, in order to answer RQ1a, these free-text and Likert-scale data were analysed in order to provide contextual information about young people's teaching aspirations, and

openness to becoming a teacher, at different ages. These analyses are the first

findings presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 5. Who aspires to teach, and why?

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I examine both this study's quantitative and qualitative datasets in order to consider my first research question: *who aspires to teach, and why?* Here I examine young people between the ages of 10/11 and 21/22 who report an interest in teaching, and consider what appears to attract them towards teaching. As outlined in Sections 1.5 and 3.4, this thesis takes the view that teaching aspirations are indicative of a young person's identity work (however slight) in relation to teaching. I therefore suggest that this chapter's empirically grounded exploration of who aspires to become a teacher, and why, is vital to my later exploration of young people's longitudinal trajectories into, and away from, teaching. Although this chapter is not primarily concerned with whether or not participants went on to pursue teaching, then, these analyses lay the foundation for examining why people did (not) become teachers in Chapters 6 and 7.

This chapter is presented in two main sections, reflecting parts a) and b) of RQ1—who aspires to become a teacher when they grow up?, and why do young people aspire to teach?—and the two different datasets used to answer these question parts. First, in Section 5.2 of this chapter, I present findings from descriptive and inferential statistical analyses of data from over 60,000 ASPIRES survey responses in order to examine who aspires to teach. Then, in Section 5.3 of this chapter, I present findings from thematic qualitative analyses of data from 146 interviews which track 13 young people who wanted to become a teacher in order to better understand the reasons why young people aspire to teach. The findings presented in this chapter, and summarised in Section 5.4, extend results from previous research

about who aspires to teach, and why, by considering data which spans young people

at six ages over 11 years (10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18, 20/21 and/or 21/22)

rather than focusing on only one age group[64]. These analyses therefore aim to

consider the influence of individual motivations upon young people's teaching

aspirations, as well as the social and cultural influences upon young people's

teaching aspirations which are frequently ignored in current research (Gore et al.,

2015); and whether who aspires to teach, and why, changes at different ages

through childhood and into early adulthood.

5.2   Who aspires to become a teacher when they grow up?

Here I examine who wants to become a teacher by considering secondary cross-

sectional data from six different ASPIRES project surveys that took place between

2009/2010 and 2020/2021. In Section 2.2.1 I illustrated that the existing research

about who aspires to teach in England comes mainly from three one-off studies, all

of which sampled university students (Gorard et al., 2021; Kyriacou & Coulthard,

2000; See, 2004). Even when including research which considers school-aged

children's career aspirations, what we know about who aspires to teach comes from

one-off and often outdated research (e.g., Hutchings, 1996; Smithers & Hill, 1989).

This means that we do not know whether young people are more, or less, likely to

want to become a teacher at different ages and/or stages of education; or, for

example, whether the social inequalities that pattern who aspires to teach differ

between age groups. Even amongst the three known studies that were found to have

tracked teaching aspirations longitudinally (Croll, 2008; Hanushek & Pace, 1995;

Sikora, 2021), one of which was conducted in England, all focussed upon aspirations

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[64] See Section 4.3 for a reminder of this study's research methods and datasets.

at only one time-point during childhood. The descriptive statistical analyses presented here are therefore intended to provide a contextual overview about who aspires to teach in England at six different ages, before I present the more in-depth qualitative analyses upon which this thesis focuses.

As detailed in Section 4.3.3, the ASPIRES project surveyed the same cohort of young people at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18, and 21/22. This research can be considered cross-sectional, in that it tracks the same age group over time; but not longitudinal, because each survey sampled different respondents. The findings presented here stem from two different datasets from the ASPIRES project's surveys; 1) responses to a free-text survey question about future career plans asked in all six ASPIRES surveys, and 2) five-point[65] Likert scale responses to a survey question about how much respondents agreed with the statement 'I would like to be a teacher or work with children' asked in the four most recent ASPIRES surveys. The first dataset allows me to consider whether and how the proportion of young people who reported a specific aspiration to teach differs at different ages. The second dataset enables me to consider young people's openness to teach at different ages (i.e., they may have agreed that they would like to be a teacher, but this was not necessarily their main aspiration; see Section 4.3.3), and whether this openness to teach was patterned by gender or ethnicity at different ages. My analyses of these two datasets are presented separately in Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2.

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[65] Respondents were able to give an answer on a scale from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'; see Section 4.3.3.

5.2.1 Free-text data: Teaching aspirations in the ASPIRES data

First, I present results from analyses of free-text responses to a survey question about future career aspirations asked in all six ASPIRES surveys. Each survey asked respondents to write in their own words what job they would like to work in as an adult. As described in Section 4.3.3.2, I then coded these responses using the ISCO-08 (International Labour Office, 2012) in order to calculate what proportion of respondents expressed a teaching aspiration in each different survey. The results of this coding are presented in Figure 2, and a more detailed breakdown of these data can be found in Appendix 5 (Table 22). As outlined in Appendix 5, aspirations to teach in general were the most popular teaching aspiration, followed by aspirations to teach at secondary school level. Strikingly, when rounded to the nearest whole percentage, Figure 2 shows that exactly the same proportion of ASPIRES survey respondents at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16 and 17/18 (6%) wrote that they would like to work as a teacher when they were older. This proportion decreased to 2% of respondents at age 21/22. On average across all ages, then, 5% of ASPIRES survey respondents reported a teaching aspiration.

Figure 2 *Proportion of ASPIRES survey respondents who reported a teaching aspiration in response to the free-text question 'What job would you like in the future?'[66]*
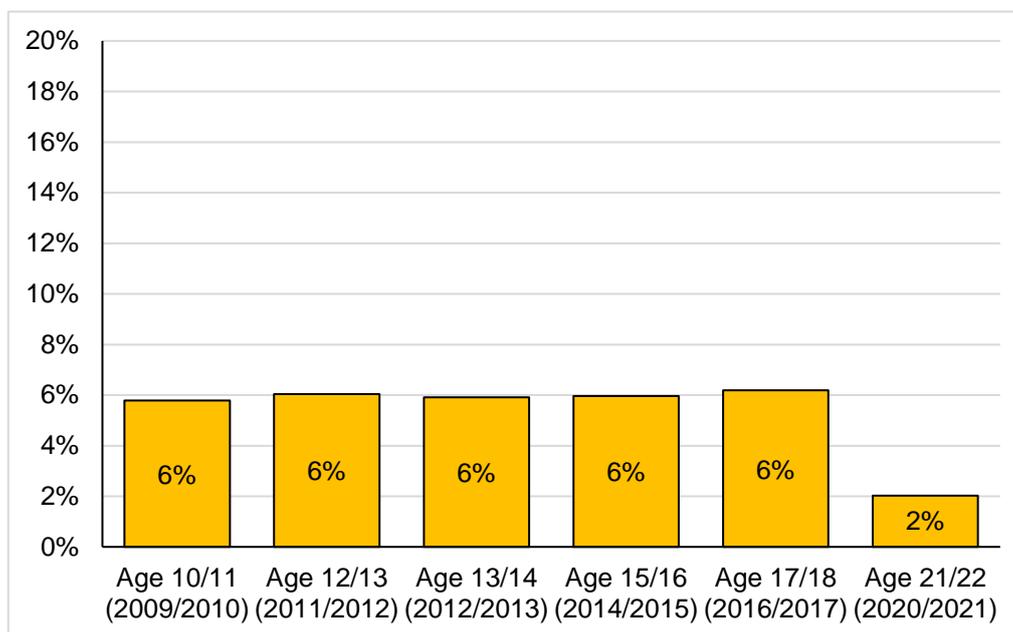
Whilst these analyses are the first known quantitative exploration of young people's teaching aspirations in England over time, the proportion of respondents to the first five ASPIRES surveys who reported a teaching aspiration is similar to, though a little lower than, the proportion of young people who reported a teaching aspiration in the previous one-off studies reviewed in Chapter 2. For example, Chambers et al. (2018) found that just under 11% of 7 to 11 year olds in the UK drew a teacher when asked to draw what they wanted to be when they were older, whereas Croll (2008) found that roughly 8% of 15 year olds in the British Household Panel Survey reported having a teaching aspiration.

Given that I consider teaching aspirations to indicate a trajectory towards teaching, the data in Figure 2 paint a potentially promising picture for teacher supply. This is because, according to the most recent estimates available (Santiago, 2004), only

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[66] As highlighted in Section 4.3.3, the exact wording of this question changed slightly between surveys.

around 2% of the wider workforce in England are teachers, yet on average across all ages around 5% of ASPIRES survey respondents reported a teaching aspiration. It should be borne in mind, however, that these data include those who reported teaching alongside other aspirations. Some of this 5% may therefore include those who considered teaching to be a backup or second-choice career aspiration. Furthermore, as highlighted in Section 2.3, existing research indicates that most young people drop their teaching aspirations before they enter the workforce (Croll, 2008; Hanushek & Pace, 1995; Sikora, 2021). In other words, the initially encouraging nature of these results should not be overestimated in terms of their potential for translating into teacher recruitment.

The data in Figure 2 could also be interpreted as indicating a consistency of teaching aspirations as young people grow older. Data from Hanushek and Pace (1995) and Sikora (2021), however, indicate that the consistency in the proportion of teaching aspirations between different age groups should not be interpreted as stability of teaching aspirations. For example, Sikora (2021) found that, in Australia, most teenagers dropped their earlier teaching aspirations by young adulthood, but that these were 'replaced' in the statistics by other people who had developed a teaching aspiration in early adulthood. Especially due to the cross-sectional nature of these data (i.e., each data collection phase surveyed different young people), I therefore suggest that the results in Figure 2 should not be considered as evidence that most young people in England maintain their teaching aspirations over time, but simply that a similar proportion of young people aspire to teach at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 and, to a slightly lesser extent, at 21/22.

The drop in the proportion of respondents reporting a teaching aspiration at age 21/22 is particularly noticeable given the consistency in the proportion of those reporting a teaching aspiration at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, and 17/18. Although this may indicate that fewer young people aspire to teach as they grow older, one important factor which is likely to have influenced this drop was the age of participants. Whilst the five surveys could more accurately be understood as representing future career aspirations, by age 21/22 many respondents are likely to already be pursuing (or soon planning to pursue) a first career. Viewed with this age difference in mind, then, the finding that only 2% of 21/22 year old respondents reported an aspiration to teach could be reflective of wider teacher supply patterns (e.g., Santiago, 2004).

In addition to the results presented Figure 2, I also ran frequencies for how many respondents used this free-text survey question to report a science teaching aspiration specifically (see Section 4.3.3.2). These analyses are not presented in Figure 2, however, because they revealed that fewer than 1% of responses in each survey indicated that a respondent wanted to become a science teacher (see Table 22 in Appendix 5 for specific breakdowns). These analyses suggest that young people are much less likely to aspire to teach science than aspire to teach more generally. I do not rule out the possibility, however, that some of those who reported a more general teaching aspiration simply did not specify their desire to specialise in science.

Importantly, there are two key limitations to this free-text dataset. First, the self-selecting nature of free-text responses means that such data are often unrepresentative of a survey's total respondents. For example, research shows that

certain groups are more likely to respond to free-text survey questions than others (Garcia et al., 2004). For instance, ongoing coding by the ASPIRES project team indicate that only around 19% of respondents to the survey at age 21/22 responded to this question by typing a response that could be coded using the ISCO-08 (International Labour Office, 2012). This is one of the reasons why the frequencies presented in Figure 2 are a proportion of the total number of people who responded to the relevant ASPIRES survey[67]. Therefore although the ASPIRES project surveyed a roughly nationally representative cohort of young people in each age group (Archer, Moote, MacLeod, et al., 2020), one cannot rule out the possibility that those who aspire to teach may be under-, or over-, represented and these data should therefore be read with caution. Second, and as highlighted in Section 4.3.3, changes to data management processes throughout the course of the ASPIRES project mean these data could not be matched to respondents' other survey responses and/or demographic information. I therefore turn to the second dataset, which pertains to respondents' openness to teaching, in order to consider whether the influence of the social inequalities that were shown to pattern teaching aspirations through Chapter 2 varies across the different ages surveyed.

5.2.2 Likert scale data: Openness to teaching in the ASPIRES data

Next, I consider data from responses to a Likert scale question asked on the four most recent ASPIRES surveys. As detailed in Section 4.3.3.2 I used SPSS software to analyse who reported an openness to teaching at ages 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 and 21/22. The first results of these analyses are presented in Figure 3.

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[67] Additional reasons why I took this approach with the data are discussed in Section 4.3.3.1.

Figure 3 *Proportion of ASPIRES survey respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to be a teacher or work with children*
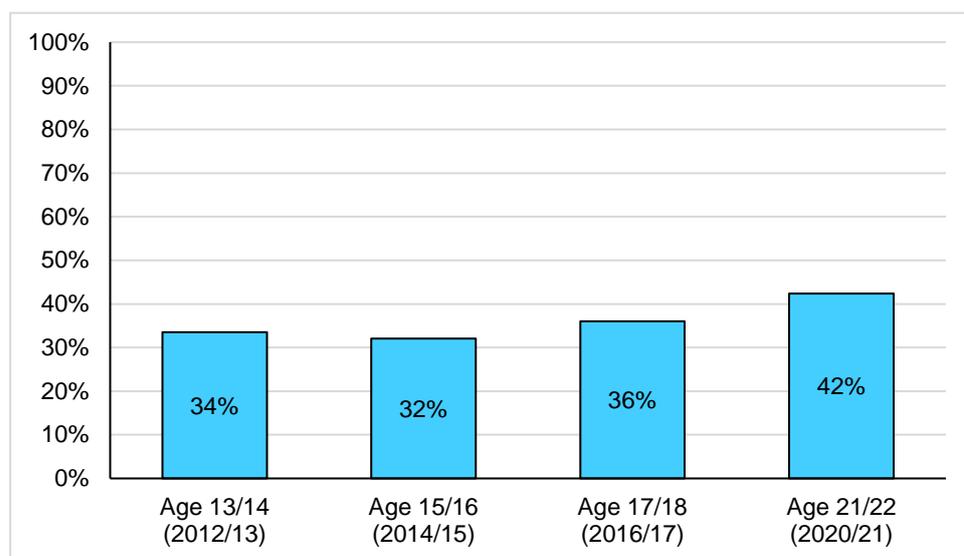
Figure 3 shows that 34% of ASPIRES survey respondents at age 13/14 agreed that they would like to be a teacher or work with children, compared with 32% at age 15/16, 36% at age 17/18 and 42% at age 21/22. As was discussed in Section 4.3.3, I consider these results to represent a general interest in or 'openness' towards teaching, rather than an explicit aspiration to become a teacher as was shown in the free-text data considered in Section 5.2.1. Thus, the proportions presented in Figure 3 are larger than those presented in Figure 2. Nevertheless, the increased robustness of these data compared with the free-text data means that this dataset is a useful tool in helping me to develop a deeper understanding of young people's interest in teaching at different ages.

The main finding indicated by the data presented in Figure 3 is that the proportion of respondents who reported that they were open to teaching is high. On average more than one third (36%) of young people across the four ages groups responded positively to the question of whether or not they wanted to be a teacher or work with children. Indeed, this proportion remains high when viewed against responses to

Likert scale questions about working in other professions in the ASPIRES surveys.

For example, previous analyses of ASPIRES data show that only 16% of the same

cohort (between ages 10/11 and 17/18) agreed or strongly agreed that they wanted

to become a scientist (Archer, Moote, MacLeod, et al., 2020). Indeed, the same

analyses indicate that the only profession which, on average across all ages, more

respondents reported being open to than teaching was business (Archer, Moote,

MacLeod, et al., 2020). This increased openness to business is perhaps a result of

the popularity of 'business gurus' or 'business celebrities' in the 2010s (Mendick et

al., 2018), or the breath of occupations that could fall under the umbrella term of

'business'. Teaching was therefore on average more popular than work in the fields

of art and design, celebrity, law, inventing, sports, medicine, engineering, science,

manual trades, and hair and beauty (Archer, Moote, MacLeod, et al., 2020). I thus

argue that these data suggest an openness to teaching amongst many young people

in England. This openness to teaching is important as it could mean that there is an

untapped pool of potential future teachers; most of whom seem not to pursue

teaching at present given the ongoing teacher shortages highlighted in Section 1.2.

As with the free-text data analysis, the results presented in Figure 3 also illustrate

that a similar proportion of young people are open to teaching at different ages.

Again, however, I suggest that this should be interpreted as a consistency in the

proportion of young people open to teaching at different ages, rather than at a

stability of young people's teaching aspirations over time. Despite this relative

consistency there is a slight upward trend in the proportion of young people open to

teaching at age 21/22 (42%) compared with other age groups (34%, 32% and 36%).

This increase could reflect the ongoing economic uncertainty caused by the Covid-

19 pandemic at the time of this final survey, which we know saw a temporary

increase in the number of young people applying to become a teacher in England (UCAS, 2023; Worth & Faulkner-Ellis, 2021). In other words, this finding is perhaps illustrative of the contextual influences upon teaching aspirations, as were shown to impact teaching trajectories in Section 2.2.2.3 (e.g., Chevalier et al., 2007), rather than simply the impact of individuals' motivations. I will now examine two additional influences indicated as shaping teacher trajectories in Chapter 2; gender and ethnicity.

5.2.2.1 Openness to teaching by gender and ethnicity

The existing literature reviewed in Section 2.2.1.1 suggested that multiple social inequalities intersect to influence young people's teaching aspirations (e.g., Platt & Parsons, 2018), but that less is known about how this influence might differ at different ages. Analysing ASPIRES data has enabled me to contribute to addressing this gap by examining the gender and ethnicity of who reports being open to teaching at different ages[68].

The first crosstabulation analyses I conducted explored to what extent young people's self-reported gender identity patterned whether or not they agreed that they wanted to teach or work with children at different ages. As detailed in Section 4.3.3.1, gender is here defined as either 'Girl or young women' or 'Boy or young man'[69]. These results are presented in Figure 4. Table 23 in Appendix 5 provides a detailed breakdown of these data.

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[68] Other inequalities that were found to pattern teaching aspirations in Section 2.2.1.1, including social class, are not considered using this study's quantitative dataset. The reasons for this approach are detailed in Section 4.3.3.1.

[69] As detailed in Section 4.3.3.1, this binary treatment of gender does not align with the way in which I understand and analyse gender in this study's qualitative analyses. Gender is here treated as a binary following the approach taken in the first five ASPIRES surveys, which allows me to compare data across different age groups.

Figure 4 *Proportion of ASPIRES survey respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to be a teacher or work with children, by gender*
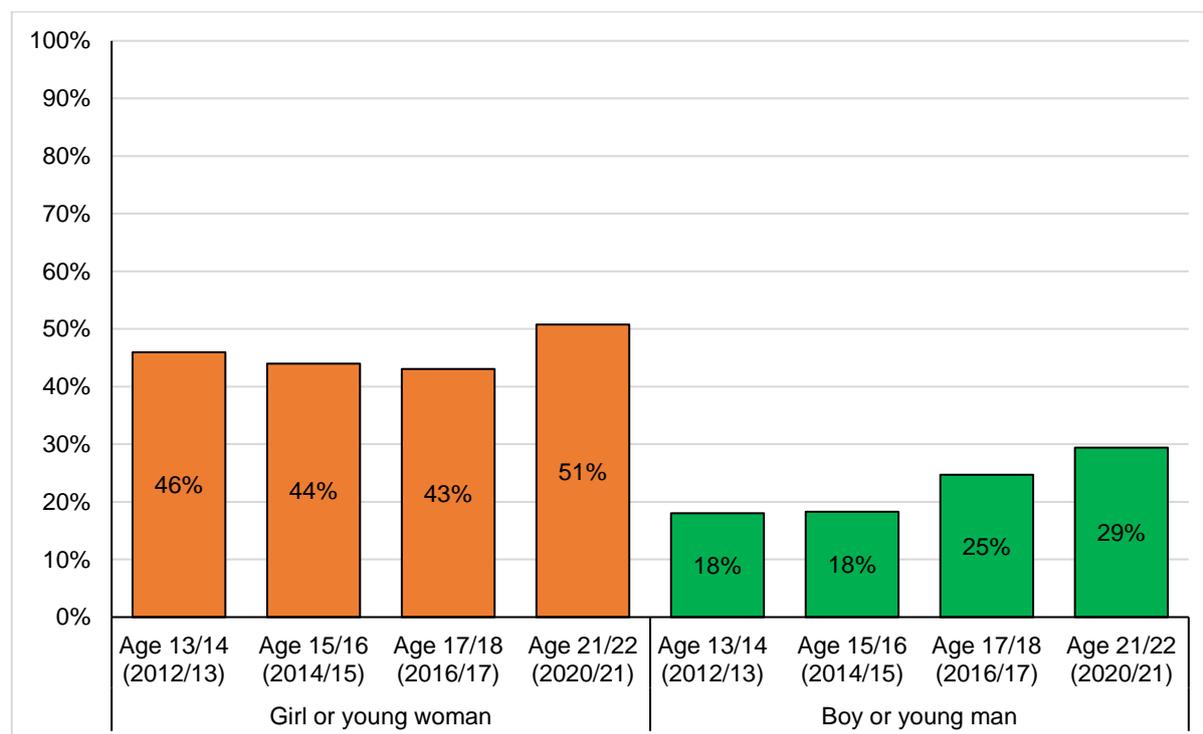

Figure 4 shows that more girls or young women, than boys or young men, agreed that they would like to be a teacher or work with children at all four ages surveyed on the ASPIRES project between 13/14 and 21/22. For example, 46% of girls or young women compared with only 18% of boys or young men at age 13/14 agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to be a teacher or work with children. In addition, the slight increase in the proportion of young people who report an openness to teach at age 20/21 seems to be evident across both genders. This suggests that, although we know that boys who aspire to teach are more likely to drop their aspirations (Sikora, 2021), more boys or young men, as well as girls or young women, seemed to become open to teaching as they grew older.

Importantly, a Chi-square test for independence indicated a statistically significant association between respondents' gender and whether or not they agreed that they would like to be a teacher or work with children across all four age groups surveyed.

Furthermore, the *phi* coefficient value indicated a small to medium effect for all four age groups. For example, for the 21/22 year old sample the results of chi-square test for independence were: x^2 (1, *n* = 7265) = 317.217, *p* = 0.000), *phi* = 0.209[70]. This finding contributes to existing research which has shown that more girls and young women, than boys and young men, aspire to teach at specific ages (e.g., Chambers et al., 2018; Gorard et al., 2021); by demonstrating that girls and young women surveyed for the ASPIRES project were significantly more likely to report that they were open to teaching at ages 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 and 21/22 than boys and young men surveyed at the same ages.

Next, I conducted crosstabulation analyses to consider to what extent young people's ethnicity patterned their openness to teach at different ages. As discussed in Section 4.3.3.1, ethnicity is here defined either 'White' or 'Minoritised Ethnicities'[71]. The results are presented in Figure 5. A detailed table of these data are presented in Appendix 5 (Table 24).

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[70] Results for all surveys are presented in Appendix 5 (Table 23).

[71] 'Minoritised Ethnicities' refers to all respondents who identified as Black, South Asian, East Asian, Other and Mixed. As outlined in Section 4.3.3.1, whilst I do not consider ethnicity to be a dichotomy between White and Minoritised Ethnicities, this categorical treatment of the data allows for a statistical investigation to respond to the question of 'who aspires to teach?', before I consider the more complex and intersectional identities of participants using qualitative data in the remainder of this thesis.

Figure 5 *Proportion of ASPIRES survey respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to be a teacher or work with children, by ethnicity*
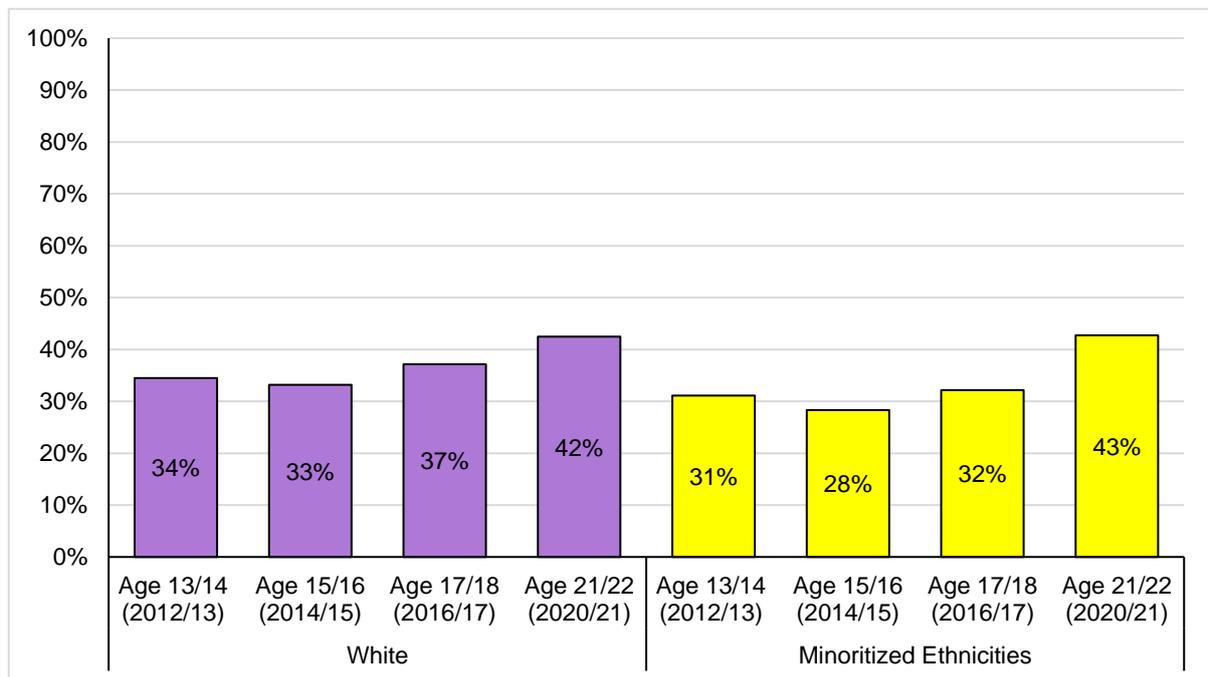
The data presented in Figure 5 suggest that more young people who identified as White expressed an openness to teach than those who identified as Minoritised Ethnicities at ages 13/14, 15/16, 17/18. This pattern was not the case at age 21/22, however, where a very similar amount of young people who identified as Minoritised Ethnicities (43%), than those who identified as White (42%), reported that they were open to teaching. These data show that the slight increase in openness to teaching seen at age 21/22 is observed amongst both respondents who identified as White, and those who identified as Minoritised Ethnicities, as was also indicated by research from Worth et al. (2022).

A Chi-square test for independence indicated a significant statistical association between respondents' ethnicities, when categorised as either White or Minoritised Ethnicities, and whether or not they (strongly) agreed that they would like to be a teacher or work with children at ages 13/14, 15/16 and 17/18. The *phi* coefficient

value indicated a very small effect in these first three surveys. For example, amongst 13/14 year olds the results were: $x2$ $(1, n = 4560) = 4.577, p = 0.032), phi = -0.032$[72]. This finding extends previous research findings which have shown that young people who identify as White are more likely to aspire to become a teacher up to the age of 14 (Chambers et al., 2018; Platt & Parsons, 2018); to show that ASPIRES survey respondents who identified as White were significantly more likely than those who identified as Minoritised Ethnicities to report they were open to teaching at ages 13/14, 15/16 and 17/18.

In contrast, the lack of statistical significance between the association of respondents' ethnicities and their openness to teach at age 21/22 could be another consequence of the economic uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 pandemic at the time of this final survey, and the resulting increase in the number of young people applying to become a teacher (UCAS, 2023; Worth & Faulkner-Ellis, 2021). Whilst a more detailed statistical analysis of the influence of ethnicity upon teaching trajectories is beyond the scope of this qualitatively led thesis, and was not considered necessary to answer its research questions, the influence of young people's intersectional identities upon their teaching trajectories is a focus of the rest of this thesis.

5.2.3 Summary

The statistical analyses presented in the first half of this chapter point to three key findings. First, analyses of free-text data on teaching aspirations suggest that a relatively high proportion (on average 5%) of young people aspire to teach across the ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 and 21/22; and that this proportion

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[72] Detailed results for all age groups are presented in Appendix 5 (Table 24).

remains fairly stable across these different age groups. Despite limitations in the free-text data, these findings were echoed in analysis of Likert scale data on young people's openness to teach, which also showed a slight increase in this openness to teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic. Taken together, I argue that these findings extend current knowledge that teaching is a relatively popular career aspiration amongst young people (e.g., Croll, 2008), to suggest that more young people in England between the ages of 10/11 and 21/22 may be open to becoming a teacher than is reflected in the current teacher recruitment data. Additionally, free-text analyses of science teaching aspirations demonstrated that very few ASPIRES respondents at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 or 21/22 reported a specific aspiration to teach science.

Second, crosstabulation analyses of ASPIRES survey respondents' self-reported genders illustrate that girls or young women were significantly more likely than boys or young men to be open to teaching at ages 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 and 21/22. This builds upon similar findings from previous one-off studies which have focused upon only one age group (e.g., Gorard et al., 2021). Third, simplified analyses of respondents' self-reported ethnicities show that young people who took part in the ASPIRES surveys at ages 13/14, 15/16 and 17/18 and identified as White were significantly more likely than respondents who identified as Minoritised Ethnicities to be open to teaching. This finding broadens analysis from previous research reported in Section 2.2.1.1 which has found similar up to the age of 14 (e.g., Platt & Parsons, 2018). Taken together these findings indicate that a large proportion of young people are open to teaching but that, just as Lortie (2002) first claimed, why people become teachers may be influenced by social constraints as well as individuals' motivations.

In presenting these analyses I do not, however, assume that respondents' gender and ethnicity fully explain the variation in their likelihood of agreeing or disagreeing with the statement 'I would like to be a teacher or work with children' at different ages, especially as gender and ethnicity are here treated as binaries. In other words, and as highlighted in Chapter 2, quantitative research such as this can only highlight patterns in who aspires to teach, and not why these patterns exist. Informed by findings from Chapter 2, which indicated that young people's teaching trajectories are influenced by multiple and intersecting social and cultural inequalities (e.g., Platt & Parsons, 2018), I acknowledge that additional factors are likely to influence whether or not a young person reports an interest in teaching or openness towards teaching; as is explored using this study's qualitative dataset. It is for this reasons that I use statistical analyses to provide only a context of who aspires to teach (RQ1a), and that overall this study is qualitatively led.

5.3   Why do young people aspire to teach?

In this second half of the chapter, I turn to this study's qualitative dataset to consider *why* young people aspire to teach (RQ1b). Here I present analyses of data from 146 qualitative interviews with 13 participants and their parents. As was detailed in Section 4.3.2.1, I consider all of these 13 participants to have been potential future teachers after their interview at age 20/21 (though to differing degrees of likelihood) because all of them included teaching amongst their career aspirations or interests in at least one of their interviews between the ages of 10/11 and 20/11. Not all analyses here are longitudinal, however, because in order to understand why young people aspire to teach I focus specifically upon those interviews where participants

expressed a teaching aspiration or interest, which in some cases included only one interview.

In this chapter I primarily use the context of figured worlds (see Section 3.2.1.1), to consider how young people who aspire to become a teacher construct the figured worlds of teaching. As outlined in Section 4.3.2.4, I do this by employing the figured worlds tool put forward by Gee (2010), which allows me to consider what aspirant members of the figured worlds of teaching take for granted, or believe to be true, about teachers and teaching, as well as what cultural, social, and contextual influences may inform these depictions. Through these analyses I identified what I refer to as 'cultural models' which construct the figured worlds of teaching, and which represent participants' stereotypical generalisations about teachers and teaching (Holland et al., 1998). Therefore, instead of focusing solely on what young people explicitly reported to be the reasons behind their interests or aspirations in teaching, the analytical approach used in this chapter allows me to also consider how participants' figurings of teachers and teaching shaped their teaching interests and aspirations. I suggest that the findings from these analyses present a fuller picture of what attracts young people towards teaching compared with the current research on teaching aspirations reviewed in Section 2.2.1, which relies primarily upon one-off quantitative studies with university students.

As discussed in Section 4.3.2.4, through analyses I coded six dominant 'cultural models' used by the aspirant teachers in this study to construct the figured worlds of teaching; each of which made available various 'storylines' about teaching. These analyses represent the first known attempt to collectively categorise the reasons why young people aspire to become teachers. The first three of these cultural models

were coded as constructing teaching as 'high in status' and the final three were

coded as constructing teaching as 'high in safety'. These six cultural models are not

completely separate, or distinct, from one another. As will be illustrated in the

remainder of this chapter these cultural models overlap with one another, and are at

times contradictory to one another. These cultural models are:

1. Teachers make a difference,
2. Teachers are gifted,
3. Teaching is a profession,
4. Teaching is accessible,
5. Teaching enables a good lifestyle, and
6. Teaching is a secure job[73]

Importantly, these six cultural models identified as constructing the figured worlds of

teaching do not only help us to understand why young people aspire to teach

(RQ1b). As I illustrate throughout Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, these cultural models

can also be considered as 'orientation points' from which participants align or

distance their identities in practice in relation to teaching.

Through the rest of this section I present empirical evidence of the significance of

these six cultural models of teaching in young people's teaching aspirations. Instead

of presenting snippets of coding, I present most of the qualitative data in this chapter

in the form of vignettes of each participant. This approach is taken so that the data

can be viewed in the context of each young person's longitudinal teaching trajectory,

which are presented in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7. Notably, although each

vignette in this section focuses on only one 'storyline' within a cultural model, during

the interview(s) where they expressed an aspiration or interest in teaching, each

participant figured teaching using multiple cultural models which constructed

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[73] To aid with identification, these six cultural models are presented in single quotations marks (i.e., '') throughout the rest of this thesis.

teaching as both high in status and high in safety. These multiple figurings indicate

one of the findings of this chapter; that the young people in this study were attracted

towards becoming a teacher because they depicted teaching as both high in status

and high in safety. Table 11 presents evidence of this finding by mapping which

cultural models were present in interviews where participants expressed a teaching

aspiration or interest.

Table 11 *A 'map' of which cultural models were coded as present in interviews where participants expressed a (present or recent) teaching aspiration or interest*

Participant	ASPIRES interviews at different ages					
	10/11	12/13	13/14	15/16	17/18	20/21[74]
Amy	1 2 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	Y+	1 2 4	1 2 3 4 5 6
Buddy	N	N	N	N	X	1 2 4
Carol	1 2 4	1 2 3 4 6	N	2 4	N	2 3 4 5 6
Celina	1 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2	N	N
Hedgehog	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 4	1 3 4	N	N	N
Joanne	N	1 2	N	N	N	1 3 6
Kate	1 3	N	N	N	N	2 4
Louise	N	3 4	N	1 3 4 6	1 3 4 6	1 4 6
Lucy	1 2	3	1 2 4	N	N	1 2 4 6
Mienie	1 2 3	1 3 4 6	3 4 5	N	N	N
Millie	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4	X	1 2 3 4 5 6
Samantha	N	N	N	N	N	1 4 5 6
Victor	N	1 2 3 5	1 2 3 4	N	N	1 2 3 4 6

Cultural models
1 Teachers make a difference
2 Teachers are gifted
3 Teaching is a profession
4 Teaching is accessible
5 Teaching enables a good lifestyle
6 Teaching is a secure job

Y+ interviewed and expressed a teaching aspiration but participant had lost their voice, so very little data
N did not aspire to teach, or have an interest in teaching
X not interviewed

For each interview where a participant expressed a teaching aspiration or interest

the cultural model(s) they used are noted using a numeric key in Table 11. The

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[74] Some data from participants at age 21/22 is included in this section in order to exemplify different cultural models. This final interview is not included in Table 11, however, because in this interview I

cultural models which construct teaching as high in status (1, 2, and 3) are presented on a different line from the cultural models which construct teaching as high in safety (4, 5, and 6) in order to illustrate that almost all participants used cultural models which constructed teaching as both high in status and high in safety every time they expressed a teaching aspiration or interest. This 'mapping' is not intended to be an exact or statistical representation of each participant's teaching aspiration(s), but to highlight how both the 'status' and 'safety' of teaching patterned aspirant teachers' figurings of teaching as is indicated in the title of this thesis. Data evidencing the cultural models in Table 11 are presented in Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2. See Appendix 1 for a more detailed overview of each participant's longitudinal data, including their family background, education and work experiences, and career aspirations. See Appendix 4 (Table 18) for a section of the coding table used to generate these data.

5.3.1 The construction of teaching as high in status

In this section I examine three of the four most common cultural models (see Table 11) that participants used to construct the figured worlds of teaching when they aspired towards teaching; 1) 'teachers make a difference', 2) 'teachers are gifted', and 3) 'teaching is a profession'. Each of these cultural models is constructed by two storylines (see Table 12). As discussed in Section 4.3.2.4, I define 'high in status' not in relation to the wider social standing of teaching against other professions (as others have done, see Section 2.3.1.1), but by considering the respect accorded to teachers by individual potential future teachers (e.g., Sennett, 2003; Skeggs, 1997). Informed by the cultural models within this theme, I use the theme that teaching is

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was primarily interested in whether or not participants were pursuing teaching at this age, and why; rather than their aspirations at the time.

'high in status' to refer to the finding that young aspirant teachers from all backgrounds figured teachers as *professionals who use their gifts to benefit others.*

Table 12 *Cultural models and storylines contributing to the theme 'teaching is high in status'*

Theme: Teaching is high in status	
Cultural model	Storyline
Teachers make a difference	Teachers shape lives
	Teachers benefit society
Teachers are gifted	Teachers are naturally good with children
	Teachers are naturally good at helping others (learn)
Teaching is a profession	Teachers are highly educated
	Teachers are highly skilled

5.3.1.1 Teachers make a difference

The summary of thematic analyses presented in Table 11 illustrates that the most common cultural model through which teachers and teaching were figured by this study's participants was that 'teachers make a difference'. There were only 4 participant interviews in this study's qualitative data where participants expressed an aspiration to teach but did not evidence that they figured teachers as making a difference. In this way, I suggest that a central aspect of many participants' teaching aspirations was that they saw teaching as synonymous with helping others. This cultural model supports findings from existing research which has shown that people aspire to teach (e.g., See et al., 2022), and report having pursued teaching (e.g., Perryman & Calvert, 2020), for mostly altruistic reasons. This cultural model was found in interviews with all 13 participants, and across all age groups.

Teachers shape the lives of their students

The first of the two storylines that contributed to the cultural model that 'teachers make a difference' was that 'teachers shape the lives of their students'; as can be seen in Lucy's longitudinal data. Lucy is a White British young woman from a working-class background who aspired to become an art teacher at ages 10/11 and 12/13, and either a primary or secondary (English or French) teacher at age 13/14. Lucy also said that she planned to become an art teacher in her interview at age 20/21, though only after she had first worked in a job related to her degree specialism of Game Design. Each time that Lucy expressed a teaching aspiration she highlighted the important and positive impact that teachers can have upon their students, for example by encouraging them to pursue a certain subject. At age 13/14, for instance, Lucy said that some of her own teachers had "inspired" her love of art, and that she would like to teach because she wanted "to do the same thing for other people". This quote indicates that one of the reasons behind Lucy's teaching aspiration was her figuring of teachers as shaping their students' lives. It is also clear that Lucy's passion for art, and her desire to share or ignite this passion in others, formed this figuring of shaping lives; thus echoing research from existing teachers who report wanting to share their subject with others (e.g., Barker & Reyes, 2001).

Lucy's depiction of teachers shaping lives appeared to strengthen as she got older. For example, at age 20/21 Lucy said that although she now wanted to first work in game design, she still wanted to teach when she was older because she still wanted to "inspire" others to pursue art. In particular, Lucy expressed her desire to share with young people that it was possible to study an art-related subject at university and still have lucrative career prospects; something that Lucy herself felt that she

had learnt only after coming across Games Design degrees through her partner. As Lucy put it, she was particularly interested in teaching art at a sixth form or college because she thought that "it would be nice to sort of take it back to the stage before and inspire people themselves to go to university". In this way, the figured worlds lens allows us to see that Lucy's taken-for-granted idea that as a teacher she could impact the lives of young people, for instance by inspiring them to go to university, was key to her teaching aspiration.

Teachers benefit society

The second storyline in the data that contributed to the cultural model that 'teachers make a difference' was that 'teachers benefit society'. This was especially prevalent in interviews with participants who wanted to teach at age 20/21; as evidenced in Buddy's data. Buddy is a White Irish & European young man from a middle-class background. He had not expressed an aspiration to teach before his interview at age 20/21, when he was asked explicitly about teaching for the first time. At this age, Buddy said that he had an interest in becoming a history teacher, and that he had recently signed up to complete a teaching module as part of his undergraduate History degree. Buddy explained that what attracted him towards teaching was that he liked "the idea of putting good out into the world. And coming home, you know, *satisfied* that you've, although it might have been tough […] it was a *good thing* that you did".

I argue that a central aspect of Buddy's interest in becoming a teacher was his emphasis of teaching as 'good', which demonstrates his figuring of teachers as making a positive difference to society. This storyline was most prevalent amongst aspirant teachers at ages 20/21 and 21/22. This prevalence could have been

influenced by perceptions of the social value of teachers during the Covid-19

pandemic, which was ongoing at the time of interviews with participants at both ages

20/21 and 21/22. For example, as discussed in Section 1.2, many teachers provided

(non-teaching) additional support to their local communities during the pandemic

(e.g., Perryman et al., 2022), which may have shaped perceptions of the profession

during this time.

Summary

The vignettes of both Lucy and Buddy demonstrate that aspirant teachers from both

working-class and middle-class backgrounds, who were both young women and

young men, figured teachers as making a difference. Indeed, all 13 participants

figured teachers as making a difference in at least one interview where they

expressed an aspiration or interest in teaching (see Table 11). Furthermore, as will

be explored further in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, this cultural model was especially

common when examining how participants authored their identity work to align with

the figured worlds of teaching, or develop teaching trajectories.

The finding that all participants figured teachers as making a difference, and used

this in their own identity work, supports findings from existing research which

demonstrate that young people at university aspire to teach for altruistic reasons

such as wanting to work with others and make a social contribution (e.g., Gorard et

al., 2021; van Rooij et al., 2020). The analyses presented here, however, extend this

finding to suggest that teachers were commonly figured as making a difference by

aspirant teachers across all ages between 10/11 and 20/21; and not just during

university.

5.3.1.2 Teachers are gifted

Another popular cultural model about the figured worlds of teaching found in this thesis's data, and which I also argue positions teaching as high status, was that 'teachers are gifted'. In other words, one of the reasons why participants in this study aspired to teach seemed to be because they valued the skills or characteristics which they felt made teachers naturally suited to teaching. This cultural model has some similarities with the notion that teaching is a 'calling' or 'vocation' and I thus argue that it could be seen to challenge the professionalisation of teaching (the notion that one can develop expertise in teaching through specialist education, see Section 2.3.1.1[75]). The apparent strength of this cultural model is especially interesting given that, as discussed in Section 2.2.1, despite the popularity of the discourse that teaching is a 'calling' (e.g., Madero, 2020), existing research on trajectories towards teaching tends not to consider whether or not teaching was someone's 'calling' or 'vocation'. Importantly, although this cultural model was seen across the data, figurings of teachers as gifted were closely aligned with stereotypically feminine traits.

Teachers are naturally good with children

The first of the two storylines that contributed to the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted' is that 'teachers are naturally good with children'; examples of which can be found throughout Amy's longitudinal data. Amy is a White British young woman from a middle-class background who aspired to teach at all ages interviewed. From age 12/13 onwards Amy's aspiration was to become a primary school teacher

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[75] As discussed in Section 4.2.4, I acknowledge that this analysis is informed by my own personal experiences of and views towards teaching.

specifically, and by the time of her interview at age 21/22 she was pursuing this aspiration.

Throughout her interviews it was evident that Amy believed that being good with children was a competence that teachers often naturally possess. For example, at age 21/22 Amy said that she thought her aspiration to teach had first come from her own primary school teachers, whom she described as being "brilliant" with children because of their ability to develop a special relationship or "bond" with their students. The way that Amy talked about these teachers indicates her assumption that 'teachers are gifted' at looking after, or caring for, children. In other words, being good with children is something that Amy and others suggested came naturally to those within the teaching profession. As was discussed in Section 2.2.1.1, the way in which teachers are seen as carers for children is stereotypically associated with motherhood and femininity (Acker, 1995; Drudy, 2008). I therefore suggest that this storyline could go some way to explaining why girls and young women are significantly more likely to aspire to teach; a finding presented in Section 5.2.2.1. This is in part because, as will be explored more in Chapter 6, girls and young women are more likely to be recognised as caring and feminine than boys and young men (Lortie, 2002).

Teachers are naturally good at helping others

The second storyline that contributed to the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted' was that 'teachers are naturally good at helping others'; especially to learn or understand new things. This is here evidenced in data from Carol's interviews. Carol is a young woman of Mixed ethnicity (Eastern European and West Asian) who aspired to become a performing arts teacher at age 10/11, a maths teacher at age

12/13, and a media teacher at age 15/16. After completing an undergraduate degree in Media, Carol was pursuing teaching (secondary Media and English) at age 21/22.

Seemingly central to Carol's teaching aspirations was the notion that teachers can naturally, almost without effort, help people to learn. For example, at age 20/21 Carol emphasised how her own teachers had been good at helping others. In this interview, she variously described teachers she knew as having "a lot of patience", being "helpful", and being approachable because she and others felt "able to, like, talk to them". I suggest that the way in which Carol spoke about these teachers demonstrates her view of their traits as more like innate characteristics than skills that teachers can learn or develop. Furthermore, research reviewed in Section 2.2.1.1 demonstrated that teachers' abilities to be patient and approachable as emphasised by Carol could lead young people to think that teaching, especially at the primary level, is best suited to women (e.g., Drudy, 2008); which again implies the gendered nature of the cultural model of that 'teaching are gifted'.

Summary

These brief vignettes of Amy and Carol indicate that young aspirant teachers figure teachers as gifted with skills or characteristics that make them well suited to teaching. Although both Amy and Carol went on to pursue teaching, and use this cultural model in their own space of authoring (see Chapter 6), the view of teachers as gifted was common throughout the dataset (see Table 11). This prevalence is concerning, however, given the argument that the de-professionalisation of teaching may be contributing to teacher shortages (e.g., Ovenden-Hope, 2021). This is because the assumption that teachers naturally possess (some of) the skills needed to be a (good) teacher seems to ignore the fact that, in England and many other

countries (see Section 1.3.1), teaching is a graduate profession which requires specialist education to develop knowledge and pedagogical skills over time (Buijs, 2005).

Amy's and Carol's vignettes also indicate that the construction of teachers as gifted was strongly gendered; meaning that this cultural model was often used to recognise or frame traits typically associated with girls and young women (e.g., caring for children, altruism [Sabbe & Aelterman, 2007]) as 'gifts' that would be suited to teaching. This association of many of the 'gifts' that teachers are assumed to possess with girls and young women could go some way to explaining why more girls than boys aspire to teach (see Section 5.2.2.1), as well as why boys are more likely to drop their teaching aspirations (Sikora, 2021). That is not to say that the three participants in this study who identified as men did not construct teaching using the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted' or use this cultural model to navigate their trajectories towards teaching (see Table 11). Instead, I contend that the association of teaching with characteristics and 'gifts' typically used to describe girls and women may mean that boys and young men have to work hard(er) to demonstrate that they possess such 'gifts'. One example of this comes from an interview with Victor when he was 13/14. Victor, whose teaching aspirations will be considered in more detail in Sections 5.3.2.3 and 7.2.1, said that he wanted to be a teacher partly because he thought he was good at helping people. Victor's mother Sam, however, said that she thought that Victor's natural ability (or gift) to help others meant that he was well suited to working in management. This example echoes the claim made by Lortie (2002) and discussed in Section 2.2.1.1; that nurturance will be regarded as teacher-potential amongst girls but not amongst boys.

5.3.1.3 Teaching is a profession

The final cultural model contributing to the construction of teaching as what I term 'high in status' is that 'teaching is a profession'. As was highlighted in Section 2.3.1.1 whether, and to what extent, 'teaching is a profession' has been debated in the literature (e.g., Acker, 1983; Sachs, 2016). Here, I use the word 'profession' with reference to the notion of 'professionalisation', or the idea that specialist and/or a high level of education is required to develop the skills of teaching (Ingersoll & Collins, 2018). I argue that this cultural model is striking in two ways. First, this cultural model exemplifies the complexity of why young people aspire to teach. This is because the notion that 'teaching is a profession' is at times contradictory to the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted' which coexisted in the data (Section 5.3.1.2). Second, analyses indicate that this cultural model was strongly influenced by participants' social and cultural backgrounds and age; those from working-class backgrounds and participants who were older were more likely to explicitly figure teaching as a profession.

Teachers are highly educated

The first storyline that constructed the cultural model that 'teaching is a profession' is that 'teachers are highly educated'; as evidenced by data from Celina, who regularly emphasised the requirement for teachers to have a university degree when expressing her own teaching aspirations. Celina is a White British young woman who aspired to become a primary teacher at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14 and 15/16, and was studying for an undergraduate degree in Psychology at age 21/22. At age 12/13 Celina expressed how determined she was to go to university so that she could become a teacher; "I've set all my determination and all my knowledge. I'm going to

try my best in college and then go to university [so that I can teach]". Similarly, at age 15/16 Celina described herself as "dedicated" to working hard so that she could go to university and become a teacher.

Based upon Celina's interview data, I suggest that one of the reasons behind her teaching aspiration was her figuring of teachers as highly educated because teaching is a graduate profession (see Section 1.3.1). I argue, however, that this cultural model may be classed and racialised because of patterns of Higher Education participation. In England, White British people such as Celina are less likely to attend university than their peers from Minoritised Ethnicities (Crawford & Greaves, 2015); as are young people from disadvantaged backgrounds (Universities UK, 2019). I therefore posit that one of the reasons why Celina made the professionalisation of teaching so explicit was her desire to go to university; something that may not have seemed likely to happen without a teaching aspiration. In other words, given her White British working-class background, Celina wanted to pursue teaching because she thought it offered her an accessible chance to gain and use a university degree. In contrast, participants with differing intersectional identities may have seen university as more of an inevitable part of their future and were thus less focused on the association of teaching with Higher Education.

Teachers are highly skilled

The second storyline contributing to the cultural model that 'teaching is a profession' is that 'teachers are highly skilled'. Here I present data from Joanne, a White British young woman from a middle-class background who aspired to become a teacher at age 12/13 and again expressed an interest in teaching at age 20/21. I suggest that Joanne figured teaching as highly skilled in her interviews around the time of her

renewed interest in teaching at age 20/21, seemingly because she had held what

Schutz et al. (2001) call a 'teacher-type' role. Speaking about her experience of

tutoring science at an afterschool club whilst at university in her interview at age

21/22, Joanne described asking herself; "'what is it that kids might understand that

can vaguely relate to what I'm trying to talk to them about?' […] based on what they

already know, connecting what they already know to something they don't

understand yet".

Here, my use of the 'figured worlds tool' (Gee, 2010) enables me to understand

Joanne as emphasising the specialist skills required by teachers to build their

student's knowledge, without implying that these skills come naturally as was seen in

the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted' (Section 5.3.1.2). I therefore contend that

her tutoring experience helped to renew Joanne's interest in teaching in part

because it allowed her to better understand the professional techniques of teaching.

Seemingly as a result of her tutoring role, then, Joanne constructed teaching as a

skilled profession; a key aspect of how Joanne figured teaching at the time of her

renewed interest in teaching.

Summary

I suggest that the vignettes of both Celina and Joanne indicate that, although

teachers were commonly figured as naturally gifted amongst some aspirant teachers

(see Section 5.3.1.2), teaching was also often seen as a profession which is highly

educated (meaning that it required a high level of education) and highly skilled

(meaning that teachers were narrated as having to work to develop their teaching

skills). Notably, whilst this cultural model was evident amongst those from both

working-class and middle-class backgrounds, these vignettes indicate that its

influence may not have been as influential in shaping Joanne's interest in teaching, compared with Celina's. I argue that this difference in the influence of the cultural model that 'teaching is a profession' may be a consequence of differences between Celina's and Joanne's social backgrounds, and helps to explain the finding from existing research that more young people from working-class backgrounds aspire to teach (e.g., Gorard et al., 2021).

Celina's vignette builds upon the notion that teaching can be seen as an accessible route to the middle-classes for those from working-class backgrounds (e.g., Lortie, 2002) by suggesting that her teaching aspiration could in large part be because of the classed and racialised access of the qualifications required by the profession (Crawford & Greaves, 2015; Universities UK, 2019), rather than the work or pay of teaching as others have indicated (e.g., Lortie, 2002; Maguire, 2005b). In contrast, I suggest that Joanne's more middle-class social background means that teaching is one of multiple skilled and educated professions that Joanne felt was accessible to her. Furthermore, as will be considered in Chapter 7, the cultural model that 'teaching is a profession' was at times challenged by those from more middle-class backgrounds in a way in which distanced their trajectories from the figured worlds of teaching.

5.3.2 The construction of teaching as high in safety

In this section I examine the final three cultural models used by aspirant teachers in this study to construct the figured worlds of teaching; 1) 'teaching is accessible', 2) 'teaching enables a good lifestyle', and 3) 'teaching is a secure job'. As detailed in Table 13, each of these cultural models is constructed through multiple storylines. I argue that these three cultural models position the figured worlds of teaching as high

in safety. As stated in Section 4.3.2.4, here I use 'high in safety' to mean that teaching was constructed as a safe, rather than risky, route to success (Archer & Francis, 2006; Beck, 1992), and in some cases as an 'insurance' against an uncertain future (Harrison, 2019). Specifically, I use the theme that teaching is 'high in safety' to acknowledge the finding that aspirant teachers in this study figured teaching *as an accessible and secure route to a decent lifestyle*. Unlike with the cultural models introduced in Section 5.3, which were used by participants from all backgrounds (see Table 11), the three cultural models that positioned teaching as high in safety were mostly present in interviews with those who faced multiple social inequalities and/or disadvantages.

Table 13 Cultural models and storylines contributing to the theme that 'teaching is high in safety'

Theme: Teaching is high in safety	
Cultural model	Storyline
Teaching is accessible	Teaching is familiar
	Teaching is a backup career
	ITE is easy to access
Teaching enables a good lifestyle	Teaching is compatible with family life
	Teaching is decently paid
Teaching is a secure job	Teachers are always needed
	Teaching is a career for life

5.3.2.1 Teaching is accessible

The first way in which the figured worlds of teaching were positioned as 'high in safety' by participants who aspired to teach was through the cultural model that 'teaching is accessible'. This echoes the common theme of the accessibility of teaching found in literature on trajectories towards (and away from) teaching as seen in Sections 2.2.1.2 and 2.2.2.3. This was amongst the four most common cultural

models coded in the data, along with the three cultural models introduced in Section 5.3.

Teaching is familiar

The first of the three storylines I coded as contributing to the cultural model that 'teaching is accessible' is that that 'teaching is familiar'. In this way, it was a common belief amongst participants that the work of teaching was already known to them; as evidenced through data from Mienie's interviews. Mienie is a South Asian young woman from a middle-class background who aspired to become a teacher at age 10/11 (though did not specify a specialism), and a secondary teacher (teaching multiple subjects) at ages 12/13 and 13/14.

At age 13/14 Mienie referred explicitly to teaching as an "easy option" for someone who attended school every day as she did. Evoking the concept of 'apprenticeship of observation' as discussed in Section 2.2.1.2 (Borg, 2004; Lortie, 2002), Mienie explained that she thought that teaching might be "easy" because as a student; "you meet different teachers and then you see like they have teaching styles and techniques […] then by doing a teaching course, you kind of know what to expect". Applying the figured worlds tool to this data, I propose that Mienie wanted to become a teacher at least in part because she figured teachers' work as familiar, and therefore perhaps easy or simple. In this way, the storyline that 'teaching is familiar' has similarities with the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted'; both might be interpreted as questioning the need for teachers to receive specialised education.

Teaching is a backup career

The second storyline I identified within the cultural model that 'teaching is accessible'

is the storyline that 'teaching is a backup career'. As highlighted elsewhere in this chapter, and echoing findings from research highlighted in Section 2.2.1.2 (e.g., Drudy et al., 2005), a number of participants in this study were interested in becoming a teacher only as a 'Plan B' when their first choice of career did not work out; as was the case with Louise. Louise is a White British young woman from a working-class background who aspired to become a teacher at ages 12/13 and 15/16. Importantly, however, Louise's teaching aspiration became secondary to her aspiration to work in dance as she grew older.

At age 15/16 Louise reflected that "a lot of people think […] being a teacher is like a backup because if you just do a subject, go down that field then you can always just train to be a teacher in it". In the same interview Louise said that although she thought there was a "100%" chance that she would become an English teacher, she added that this could change if an opportunity to pursue dance "came up". Here I suggest that Louise's figuring of teaching as a backup career was a key aspect of her teaching aspiration because she viewed her first-choice career aspiration of dancing as difficult to succeed in. Her quotes indicate that she depicted teaching as accessible if, or when, her favoured career path did not work out. Furthermore, Louise's description that one can "just" become a teacher in this scenario not only references the wide decision range of teaching (Lortie, 2002), but also implies that this wide decision range means that teaching is not a profession one would aim for as a first-choice. Notably, Louise's data bolster the suggestion made in Section 2.2.2.3; that many more teachers may have pursued the profession as a backup career than findings from research with existing teachers suggest (e.g., Watt & Richardson, 2007).

ITE is easy to access

Finally, the third storyline contributing to the cultural model that 'teaching is accessible' is that 'ITE is easy to access'. Data coded under this storyline referred specifically to the accessibility of ITE, as exemplified via a vignette from Kate's interviews. Kate is a White British young woman from a middle-class background who aspired to teach at age 10/11 but later returned to the idea of teaching seemingly because of the accessibility of ITE. Despite not expressing a teaching aspiration since age 10/11, when she was asked about teaching specifically at age 20/21 Kate said that she had recently drafted an application to ITE. Kate explained that she had begun the application after completing her undergraduate degree in Natural Sciences, but had stopped the application after realising that she was "only really signing up" because she felt that teaching was a job that she "would definitely get". Here Kate is implicitly referring to ongoing teacher shortages in England, especially within her specialism of science; and by claiming that she would "definitely" be accepted onto ITE Kate indicates that she could become a teacher without necessarily having desirable teaching attributes or skills, other than a science-related degree.

The storyline that 'ITE is easy to access' was not only coded in Kate's data, however. It was common for participants across the dataset to describe their teaching aspiration as more 'realistic' or likely to happen than other career aspirations they held at the same time. For this reason, I posit that the figuring of ITE as accessible could help to explain why teaching has been found to be a common second- or third- choice career aspiration in previous research (e.g., Drudy et al., 2005). Furthermore, as will be examined further in Section 7.4.1, Kate's perception

of the likelihood of being accepted onto ITE not only fuelled her teaching aspiration but eventually spurred her (and other participants in this study) to submit an application to ITE. To this extent, one might argue that this storyline has the potential to not only attract people towards wanting to teach, but also to draw people to become teachers. This possibility will be considered further in Chapters 6 and 7.

Summary

The vignettes of Mienie, Louise and Kate provide evidence that one of the attractions of teaching for participants in this study was that it is (figured as) accessible. On one hand this finding supports previous research findings that teaching is a backup career for some (e.g., Dawes & Wheeldon, 2022). I suggest, however, that the current lack of research focusing upon either young people who are not yet teachers (Heinz, 2015), or people who choose teaching as a first career specifically (Gore et al., 2015), means that the existing notion of teaching as a backup or 'fallback' career (Watt & Richardson, 2007) is often confused with those who pursue teaching after first trying a different profession. This study's data indicate the prevalence of the cultural model that 'teaching is accessible' amongst young people specifically, and illustrate that there are multiple facets to the accessibility of teaching (not just that teaching is a backup career).

The degree to which a young person figures teaching as accessible appears to be influenced by the social inequalities that they face. For both Mienie (who identified as a South Asian immigrant to England and described herself as having EAL) and Louise (who came from a working-class background), the accessibility of teaching was a central facet of their teaching aspirations whilst growing up. In contrast, Kate came from a middle-class White British background and thus arguably faced fewer

social inequalities than both Mienie and Louise. For Kate, the accessibility of teaching appeared to be an attractor towards teaching only when she grew older, and specifically during a time of uncertainty after her graduation and during the Covid-19 pandemic (see Section 7.4.1). Mirroring this pattern, the cultural model that 'teaching is accessible' was much more commonly coded in interviews with participants from working-class backgrounds; which could provide evidence that the 'safety' of teaching was more influential in attracting those facing (more) social inequalities towards teaching.

5.3.2.2 Teaching enables a good lifestyle

The second cultural model that positioned teaching as 'high in safety' was the cultural model that 'teaching enables a good lifestyle'. As with the 'perks' of teaching discussed in Section 2.2.1.2, the aspirant teachers who figured teaching as enabling a good lifestyle appeared to do so once they were already interested in teaching. The lifestyle benefits of teaching mentioned here thus seemed not to be a primary reason why participants wanted to become a teacher, but an added bonus. As will now be considered, the attraction of these benefits was mostly evident in the data of participants who experienced multiple social inequalities.

Teaching is compatible with family life

The first storyline which contributes to the cultural model that 'teaching enables a good lifestyle' is that 'teaching is compatible with family life', as evidenced by data from Millie's longitudinal interviews. Millie is a White British young woman from a working-class family who aspired to teach in all of her ASPIRES interviews. Millie was pursuing teaching (specialising in secondary PE) by the time of her interview at age 21/22. The notion that 'teaching is compatible with family life' seemed to have

been central to Millie's teaching aspirations, especially in her later interviews. For example, when I asked Millie at the age of 20/21 what she wanted to be doing in five or 10 years' time, she replied that she would like to be "still in teaching", and added that she would also like to be "probably having a family by then and feeling quite settled". In her interview at age 21/22 Millie implied that her figuring of teaching as compatible with family life was not new; "I remember being younger, it's such a grown up thing to think, but I remember thinking, 'oh, teaching would be good because you get the holidays off, and that means you can spend time with your family'". Notably, this example was one of only a handful of instances where participants explicitly mentioned the long holidays enjoyed by teachers. Whilst some researchers have proposed that the school holidays may themselves attract people towards teaching (e.g., Gorard et al., 2021), I suggest that the relative lack of reference to school holidays means that these are not themselves a reason why young people aspire to teach but can be seen to facilitate other attractive features of the profession (see Section 2.2.1.2).

More significantly than school holidays, however, Millie's reflection suggests that her depiction of teaching as compatible with family life played a central role in her teaching aspiration, even from a young age. This cultural model also supports analysis from Section 2.2.1.1; that traditional views of motherhood (and women as care-givers) could be part of the reason why girls are more likely to aspire to teach than boys (e.g., Trouvé-Finding, 2005). These analyses therefore extend previous research findings suggesting that one of the reasons why existing women teachers joined the profession was because they thought that teaching was compatible with motherhood (Butt et al., 2010; Olsen, 2008), to show that this compatibility can also spark teaching aspirations.

Teaching is decently paid

The second storyline coded within the cultural model that 'teaching enables a good lifestyle' is that 'teaching is decently paid'; as demonstrated by data from Hedgehog's interviews. Hedgehog is a White British young man from a working-class background who aspired to become a primary school teacher at ages 10/11 and 12/13, and a secondary PE teacher at age 13/14. I suggest that, during the period where he aspired to teach, Hedgehog demonstrated how his figuring of teaching as what I call 'decently paid' (i.e. the notion that teachers can be financially comfortable) was a key part of his interest in becoming a teacher. For instance, at age 12/13 Hedgehog said that he could not think of any other job that he wanted to do other than primary school teaching, but added that he would not want what he called a "bad job" which did not pay well, such as working at a fast-food restaurant or as a dustbin worker. Likewise, the following year Hedgehog's only aspiration was to become a PE teacher and when asked whether there were any jobs that he did not want to have Hedgehog again said that he would not like to work in a job where the pay would not be "good".

Data coded using the storyline that 'teaching is decently paid' indicates that not all young people in this study shared this figuring. Amongst those most likely to express this assumption were those from working-class backgrounds and those whose undergraduate specialisms were considered 'shortage subjects' in relation to teacher supply (see Section 1.2.2). For example, as will be considered in more detailed in Section 5.3.2.3, Victor explained at age 21/22 that one of the things that attracted him towards applying to ITE to become a science teacher after his degree in Physics was that it paid "well", "especially" for his subject specialism. This finding echoes

research which has found that additional financial incentives for teachers in shortage subjects can help to attract more people into teaching (Matthias, 2014; Worth & Hollis, 2021). Interestingly, the economic uncertainty caused by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic did not appear to influence how participants in this study figured teacher pay. This finding is slightly unexpected given the increase in young people who applied to become teachers during the pandemic (UCAS, 2023; Worth & Faulkner-Ellis, 2021), but may be because several participants were still in education, and thus not immediately concerned by the economic impact of the pandemic, during their interviews at ages 20/21 and 21/22.

Summary

The vignettes from both Millie and Hedgehog show that some young aspirant teachers depict teaching as enabling a good lifestyle. As hinted at through these vignettes, this cultural model was more widespread in data from participants who identified as women and/or came from working-class backgrounds (see Table 11). This patterning provides further evidence that participants who experienced heightened social inequalities were more likely to be attracted to teaching for reasons of 'safety', compared with their peers from more advantaged backgrounds.

In contrast to the cultural models presented so far in this chapter, the compatibility of teaching with family life, or teacher pay, were always implicit figurings in participants' data at times when they expressed an interest or aspiration in teaching. Using the figured worlds lens (Gee, 2010), however, helps to demonstrate how these figurings may have shaped participants' identity work in relation to teaching; as will be considered in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

5.3.2.3 Teaching is a secure job

The final cultural model under the theme of 'teaching is high in safety' which young people who aspired to teach used to figure the worlds of teaching is that 'teaching is a secure job'. The 'job security' conferred upon teaching by participants seemed to refer to both the assumption that most people are almost guaranteed access to the teaching profession if they want to teach ('teachers are always needed'), and the stability of the role for those already teaching ('teaching is a job for life'). As with the two other cultural models which position teaching as high in safety, the use and impact of this cultural model was most evident amongst young aspirant teachers' who experienced more social inequalities.

Teachers are always needed

The first storyline within the cultural model that 'teaching is a secure job' was that 'teachers are always needed'. I found that this storyline was often linked to the storyline that ITE is accessible (Section 5.3.2.1), but differed in that it referred specifically to the way in which teaching would always provide employment for those interested in being a teacher. One example of this storyline can be seen in data from Victor. Victor is a White British young man from a working-class background who aspired to become a science teacher at ages 12/13 and 13/14, and expressed an interest in teaching science at age 20/21 after completing his degree in Physics. In his interview at age 21/22 Victor told me that he had applied to do a PGCE specialising in physics teaching since we had last spoken, though he was not pursuing teaching at this time after his application was rejected (see Section 7.2.1). Victor explained his choice to apply to ITE pragmatically; "what's there to lose? If you apply to a PGCE you can always say no, and if you get in, you have the chance to

go and do this, if you want to". Although Victor's application was not successful, by listing the multiple options available to him through an ITE application Victor portrays his assumption that teaching is a profession which will always be open to him. In this way, Victor figured teachers as always needed; a figuring which appeared to be central to his renewed interest in becoming a teacher at age 20/21.

As discussed in Section 5.3.2.2, I propose that Victor's assumptions about teaching were especially influenced by his specialism of physics; an area he knew faced severe teacher shortages. I distinguish the case of Victor from the example of Kate (Section 5.3.2.1), however, because Victor's figuring of teaching implies an open door to the profession which can be accessed easily at any time, should he wish to do so. Interestingly, and as seen in Section 5.3.2.2 in relation to teacher pay, this figuring did not appear to be particularly impacted by labour market uncertainties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic that drew some young people to teaching (e.g., Worth & Faulkner-Ellis, 2021); which may be a consequence of the timing of data collection.

Teaching is a job for life

The second storyline contributing to the cultural model that 'teaching is a secure job' was the storyline that 'teaching is a job for life'; as evidenced by Samantha. Samantha is a young woman who described her ethnicity as Mixed (White and Asian), came from a middle-class family, and studied for a degree in Biology. Samantha did not express an interest in becoming a teacher during her earlier ASPIRES interviews, but when asked about teaching in her interview at age 20/21 she said that she had "always been interested in teaching".

Although most data coded under this storyline code came from interviews with participants from working-class backgrounds, Samantha's data illustrate that she was drawn to the stability of teaching because both of her parents had experienced redundancy whilst working in the information technology (IT) sector. Speaking at age 21/22, for instance, Samantha said; "my mum, she worked in the IT industry which, potential for earning-wise is up there, but in terms of, kind of, stability, there's just not a lot of stability". In contrast, Samantha said that she thought that there was "definitely, like, longevity and stability" in teaching, especially science teaching (the specialism in which she expressed an interest) because of the particularly acute need for more science teachers. This figuring of teaching as a job for life therefore goes some way to explaining Samantha's interest in teaching as a second career, as will be discussed further in Section 7.4.2.

Summary

The vignettes of both Victor and Samantha indicate that some young people who have a teaching aspiration or interest figure teaching as a secure job, and thus may be drawn to teaching for this reason. This finding extends research which has shown that the perceived job security of teaching may attract university students towards teaching (e.g., Gorard et al., 2021; See, 2004), by demonstrating that the cultural model of job security can refer to both access into teaching, and the stability of the role for those already teaching.

Furthermore, although young people from working-class backgrounds appeared to figure teaching as secure more often than those from more affluent backgrounds, the vignette of Samantha, who came from a middle-class background but whose parents had experienced precarity in their own employment, suggests that familial

circumstances can also influence young people to aspire to the security of the figured worlds of teaching. This example is an indication of the ways in which participants' multiple and intersecting social positions influenced their teaching trajectories in various ways, as will be examined further throughout the following two chapters.

5.3.3 Summary

In Section 5.3 I have examined some of the factors that appear to have attracted this study's 13 qualitative participants towards teaching both in the long-term and/or temporarily. This examination was conducted and presented using a set of six cultural models which were generated via theoretically driven coding of this study's qualitative dataset (see Section 4.3.2.4), and which summarise how young people who aspire to teach depict teachers and teaching. These analyses respond to, and help to address gaps in, the current research seeking to understand why people aspire to teach by taking into account the social and cultural influences upon a person's reasons for aspiring to teach, as well as their individual motivations.

I first showed that the six cultural models, representing generalisations or assumptions about teaching as depicted by this study's participants (Gee, 2010; Holland et al., 1998), were all regularly used throughout this study's dataset (Table 11). These depictions, however, were multiple, overlapping, and sometimes contradictory to one another. Because I coded three of these cultural models as constructing teaching as 'high in status' (meaning that teachers were figured as professionals who use their gifts to benefit others), and three as constructing teaching as 'high in safety' (meaning that teaching was figured as an accessible and secure route to a decent lifestyle), I was able to demonstrate that all participants in

this study figured teaching as both in status and high in safety. In other words, the young potential future teachers examined in this thesis were attracted towards becoming a teacher because they depicted teaching as both respected and low in risk.

Although the cultural models positioning teaching as both high in status and high in safety were evidenced across the dataset, how they worked to influence teaching aspirations was unique to each participant. In this way, I suggest that it was not wider societal categorisations of 'the status' or 'the safety' of teaching that influenced why participants aspired to teach. Instead, both of these themes were relative, and were informed by the social inequalities encountered by individual participants, as well as participants' ages and lived experiences. Aspirant teachers who were from working-class backgrounds, for example, seemed much more likely to be attracted to teaching because they figured the profession as high in safety. This finding may help to explain some of the reasons why teaching aspirations are patterned by social inequalities, as was highlighted in Chapter 2. In other words, just as Lortie (2002) first argued that some people become teachers due to social and cultural constraints, not simply their individual motivations; this chapter has illustrated that some young people *aspire* to become a teacher because of social and cultural influences. In addition, the cultural models that 'teachers make a difference' and 'teaching is secure' were more common amongst those who became more interested in teaching at ages 20/21, which exemplifies how contextual influences such as the wider labour market during the Covid-19 pandemic may also have shaped participants' teaching interests.

5.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have sought to answer this study's first research question (RQ1); *who aspires to teach when they are older, and why?*, using first this study's quantitative dataset, then its qualitative dataset. Whilst prior studies on young people's teaching aspirations have focused only upon one age group, the data considered throughout this chapter looked at teaching aspirations of a cohort across 11 years, between the ages 10/11 and 21/22.

Using quantitative analyses to consider who aspires to teach, I found that more young people are open to teaching than is currently reflected in teacher recruitment data. This openness to teaching was patterned in a way which reflects ongoing teacher shortages; statistical analyses of over 60,000 ASPIRES survey responses revealed that girls and young women are significantly more likely than boys and young men to be open to teaching throughout their schooling and into young adulthood, and that young people in secondary school who identify as White are significantly more likely than their peers from Minoritised Ethnicities to be open to teaching.

Using qualitative analyses informed by the concepts of figured worlds and cultural models (see Section 3.2.1.1) to consider why young people aspire to teach, I then found that the factors which attract young people towards wanting to teach are multiple, changing and complex; and are strongly patterned by both the theme that teaching is high in status, and the theme that teaching is high in safety. How these themes were patterned across participants' figurings of teaching, however, appeared to be influenced by participants' social positions including their gender, social class, and context.

Viewed together, the findings presented in this chapter indicate that many young people are interested in becoming a teacher when they are older. Importantly, whilst White women are seemingly more likely than others to aspire to teach, those who identify as men and as Minoritised Ethnicities do also aspire to teach. With this in mind, one question that I explore in the following chapters is whether or not, and why, White women are also more likely than others to realise their teaching aspirations. In the following two chapters I use the cultural models that construct teaching as high in status and high in safety to examine participants' longitudinal trajectories towards, or away from, teaching.

Chapter 6. Teacher-makers: Why do some people become teachers, when others do not?

6.1   Introduction

In this chapter I seek to respond to this study's second research question; *Why do some young people pursue teaching?*. Here I explore what factors worked to influence the three young people in this study's sample who were pursuing teaching by age 21/22 (Amy, Millie and Carol) to become teachers when the study's other 10 participants, who also expressed earlier interests in teaching, did not become teachers. Put simply, this chapter considers what factors or experiences were 'teacher-makers' for Amy, Millie, and Carol.

To explore why Amy, Millie and Carol became teachers I examine their longitudinal teaching trajectories; their journeys towards becoming a teacher between the ages of 10/11 and 21/22. As was introduced in Section 3.4, in this chapter I take a narrative approach to this study's longitudinal data. This approach is informed by existing research which suggests that the choices that young people make are not well-defined decisions, but ongoing processes of identity negotiations (Holmegaard et al., 2015). In analysing Amy's, Millie's, and Carol's teaching trajectories I therefore attempt to make sense of their identity negotiations in relation to teaching over time. Through this process, I also aim to consider what forms of identity work were influential in helping these participants to become teachers. As this is the first known examination of young people's teaching trajectories, these analyses are partly inspired by research on young people's trajectories and identity work within science (see Section 3.1).

To analyse the identity work of the three participants considered in this chapter I use an intersectional identities in practice lens, as was introduced in Chapter 3. In particular I use the contexts of positioning and space of authoring proposed by Holland et al. (1998), along with the lens of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), to examine Amy's, Millie's, and Carol's longitudinal data[76]. That is, I examine how these young people, all of whom identified as White women, were positioned by others and authored themselves; and how this identity work may have been informed by the (similar and differing) intersecting identities that they lived and experienced. These analyses develop from those presented in the previous chapter (Section 5.3), which identified six cultural models that aspirant teachers use to construct the figured worlds of teaching[77]. A reminder of these cultural models, which maintain teaching as 'high in status' and 'high in safety', is presented in Table 14. Specifically, in this chapter I examine whether or not, and to what extent, Amy's, Millie's and Carol's identities in practice aligned with and/or or deviated from, these six dominant cultural models about teachers and teaching at different time-points.

Table 14 *An overview of the six cultural models which construct the figured worlds of teaching (as identified in Section 5.3)*

Cultural models contributing to the theme that 'teaching is high in status'	Cultural models contributing to the theme that 'teaching is high in safety'
Teachers make a difference	Teaching is accessible
Teachers are gifted	Teaching enables a good lifestyle
Teaching is a profession	Teaching is a secure job

The analyses in this chapter are presented in the form of in-depth individual teaching trajectories. Each of the teaching trajectories presented in this chapter are introduced in three sections to represent chronological phases in participants' lives; 1) late primary school to mid secondary school (which focuses on participant

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[76] How I operationalise these concepts is discussed in Section 4.3.2.4.
[77] See Section 3.2.1.1 for an introduction of the context of 'figured worlds'.

interviews at ages 10/11, 12/13 and 13/14, as well as parental interviews when participants were 10/11 and 13/14), 2) late secondary school to sixth form (which uses data from participant interviews at ages 15/16 and 17/18, and parental interviews also at these ages)[78], and 3) university and towards/into ITE (which uses data from participant interviews at age 20/21, teaching-focused interviews at age 21/22 and, where available, parental interviews when participants were either 20/21 or 21/22). I end each teaching trajectory with an analysis of which factors appeared to be most influential in helping each participant to become a teacher. The most influential of these factors are referred to as 'teacher-makers', which are summarised in Table 15 and again relate to the cultural models of teaching. These 'teacher-makers', which are not intended to be exhaustive but to summarise this chapter's findings, show that participants chose to become teachers as a result of; 1) being recognised as a gifted teacher from 'trusted insiders' to teaching, 2) (re)negotiations of the safety of teaching, and/or 3) the accessibility of teaching compared with preferred alternatives. Sections of coding tables relevant to this chapter are presented in Appendix 4, and detailed descriptions of Amy's, Millie's and Carol's family and educational backgrounds and ASPIRES data are available in Appendix 1.

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[78] Millie was not interviewed for the ASPIRES project at age 17/18. As a result Section 6.3.2 only explores her and her parent's interviews when she was 15/16 ('late secondary school' only).

Table 15 *Overview of participants' 'teacher-makers' as presented in Chapter 6*

Participant	'Teacher-makers'		
	Being recognised as a gifted teacher from 'trusted insiders' to teaching	The accessibility of teaching compared with preferred alternatives	(Re)negotiating of the safety of teaching
Amy	X		X
Millie	X		X
Carol		X	X

The teaching trajectories presented in this chapter serve to illustrate the complex and multidirectional identity negotiations conducted by Amy, Millie, and Carol in relation to teaching. In other words, these participants' teaching pathways were not smooth or linear, but were found to be shifting journeys towards, as well as away from, teaching that involved overcoming multiple obstacles. As will now be discussed, such obstacles had the effect of distancing Amy, Millie and Carol from the cultural models that construct the figured worlds of teaching as high in status and high in safety, and in response each worked to (re)align themselves with these models in order to (re-)possibilise becoming a teacher. This (re)alignment was seemingly made easier or harder by each participants' intersectional identities; and particularly the extent to which these identities mirrored that of the (stereo)typical White British woman teacher in England (see Chapter 2).

6.2 Amy's teaching trajectory

The first participant in this study who was pursuing teaching at age 21/22 was Amy; a White British young woman from a middle-class background in the South East of England. Amy is categorised as pursuing teaching for the purposes of this study because at the time of my teaching-focused interview with her at age 21/22 she had accepted an offer to start ITE (a School Direct course specialising in primary teaching) the following September.

In this section I present longitudinal empirical evidence of Amy's trajectory into teaching using data from both Amy's own interviews, and interviews with her mother, Mary. Viewed retrospectively, and without theoretical or longitudinal analyses, Amy's trajectory towards teaching might be interpreted as a prime example of someone who was always going to teach, and/or someone who did not struggle to become a teacher. For example, as a White woman specialising in primary teaching who never expressed any career aspirations other than teaching, who had teaching family members, who enjoyed school, and who enjoyed looking after children, Amy shared many of the characteristics of participants in the study by Whitbeck (2000) introduced in Section 2.2 who referred to teaching as their 'calling'. As will now be illustrated, however, Amy's longitudinal interview data indicate that there were multiple and complex influences upon her teaching trajectory and Amy conducted significant identity work to maintain the possibility of becoming a teacher. In other words, teaching was not something that Amy was 'called' or 'destined' to do, but something that she worked hard to achieve.

6.2.1 Late primary school to mid secondary school: (Re)establishing teaching as high in status

From her earliest ASPIRES interview at age 10/11, Amy said that her only career aspiration was that she wanted to become a teacher when she older, and that she had wanted to teach since she "was little". During this period, I suggest that Amy primarily used cultural models which positioned teaching as high in status to conduct her identity in practice in relation to the figured worlds of teaching. Amy worked hard to maintain this identity, however, in response to positioning from Mary who did not fully support Amy's teaching aspirations at this time.

When asked about the reasons behind her teaching aspiration at age 10/11 Amy explained that she wanted to become a teacher because she liked "playing" teachers at home with her younger sister and because she enjoyed her role as a 'play leader' at school, which involved helping younger children. At ages 12/13 and 13/14 too, when Amy now wanted to be a primary school teacher specifically, she again reported that she had 'played teachers' regularly when she was younger. By giving specific examples of how she had already played the role of a teacher I suggest that Amy here works to imply that she is a natural teacher (or someone to whom teaching is well suited), in line with the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted' which was introduced as constructing teaching as high in status in Section 5.3. Moreover, with this alignment Amy hints at the compatibility of her gendered identity with teaching (e.g., Drudy et al., 2005). Specifically, by referring to how she played teachers and cared for younger children Amy could be interpreted as invoking the notions of motherhood typically associated with the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted', as outlined in Section 5.3.1.2.

To a lesser extent, Amy also used cultural models which construct the figured worlds of teaching as high in safety in the authoring of her identity in practice in her first three ASPIRES interviews. For example, at age 13/14 Amy said that she had learnt that to become a teacher she would need to gain at least five GCSEs, and then "good A Levels", in order to go to university to get a degree before starting ITE; something that Amy said that she thought was "very likely" to happen as long as she continued to work hard. Not only does this remark suggest that Amy considered teaching to be a viable option for her, but it could also be seen as evidence of how Amy's intersecting identities helped her to author her identity in practice in line with the cultural model of that 'teaching is accessible'. For instance, as research has

shown that White middle-class students are more likely than others to experience academic success in the English education system (e.g., Archer, 2008; Skelton et al., 2010), it is likely that Amy saw the qualifications needed to become a teacher as attainable thanks in part to the educational privileges that she experienced as a White middle-class young woman.

In her own interviews at this time Amy's mother Mary, who was a science graduate and described herself as "a housewife", indicated that she did not strongly support Amy's aspiration to become a teacher. When asked what she thought of Amy's desire to teach when Amy was 10/11 Mary replied; "I might help her to be a Head Teacher [laughs]". I argue that Mary here implicitly attempts to distance Amy from the figured worlds of classroom teaching and towards the more well-paid and powerful role of a school leader. I interpret Mary's quote as questioning the cultural model that (classroom) 'teaching is a profession', and positioning Amy in line with an alternative and more highly regarded profession (Dolton et al., 2018). Indeed, as well as the role of Head Teacher, later in the same interview Mary said that she thought that Amy would be "good at" working in medicine (another highly regarded profession [Dolton et al., 2018]). Whilst Mary did not appear to explicitly discourage Amy from teaching, then, she seemed to work to position Amy more with the figured worlds of science than of teaching[79].

Similarly, in her interview when Amy was 13/14, Mary said that she would encourage Amy in her teaching aspiration "if she still feels the same after her degree". Here Mary implies that she thought, or even hoped, that Amy's teaching aspiration would

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[79] In Section 7.5 I consider why science-specialist participants in this study dropped their prior teaching aspirations, and suggest that a young person's science identity may make it difficult for them to conduct identity work to closely align with the figured worlds of teaching.

change. This lack of encouragement for Amy's teaching aspiration from Mary may have been influenced by the family's White middle-class background. For instance, not only does Mary's assumption that Amy will go to (and succeed in) university reflect a common belief amongst White middle-class parents (e.g., Reay et al., 2011) but, by implying that Amy's aspiration would likely change after or during university Mary alludes to the wide range of graduate professions other than teaching available to Amy. Given that teaching is widely seen as a route to the middle-classes (e.g., Lortie, 2002), I propose that Mary's perception of the many non-teaching routes open to Amy would have been less likely had the family come from a working-class background.

Amy appeared to be aware that Mary was not particularly supportive of her teaching aspirations, however, and tried to negotiate this lack of explicit support through her own identity work. When asked what her family thought of her teaching aspiration at age 10/11 Amy said that Mary "quite" liked the idea of her becoming a teacher, before immediately adding that her two grandmothers, whom she told the interviewer had both been teachers themselves, thought that she would make a "good" teacher. Amy also spoke about her grandmothers' support of her teaching aspiration at ages 12/13 and 13/14. I here suggest that Amy uses the position offered to her by grandmothers (that she was already a 'good' teacher) to author her identity in alignment with the figured worlds of teaching, and specifically the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted'. Furthermore, by emphasising that her grandmothers were teachers themselves, Amy appears to accord additional importance to their recognition of her as a teacher compared with Mary's less enthusiastic support. In other words, Amy values her grandmothers' positioning of her as a teacher particularly strongly because they were (or had been) insiders to the figured worlds

of teaching. The recognition that Amy received from her grandmothers was therefore a tool she used in her own space of authoring in order to counteract the positioning offered to her by Mary.

6.2.2 Late secondary school to sixth form: Be(com)ing a gifted primary school teacher

At both age 15/16 and 17/18 Amy again said that she wanted to become a primary school teacher, and did not express any other career aspirations. At the time of her interview at age 15/16, however, Amy had temporarily lost her voice and thus wrote down her responses to the interviewer's questions, meaning that this transcript is much shorter and less detailed than Amy's other interview transcripts. Nevertheless, at both age 15/16 and 17/18 there is evidence that Amy continued to author her identity in practice in alignment with the cultural models that 'teaching is accessible' (constructing teaching as high in safety) and that 'teachers are gifted' (constructing teaching as high in status).

Echoing what she had said in her earlier interviews, at age 15/16 Amy reported that she thought it was "quite likely" that she would end up becoming a primary school teacher. One of the factors which may have worked to influence both Amy's continued teaching aspiration at this age, and her figuring of this aspiration as accessible, was that by the time of Amy's interview at age 15/16 Mary had now become a teacher (specialising in secondary science); as had one of Amy's older brothers (also specialising in secondary science).

Perhaps unsurprisingly now that she was a teacher herself, in her own interview when Amy was 15/16 Mary was more supportive of Amy's teaching aspiration than she had been previously. When asked how likely she thought it was that Amy would

become a teacher Mary estimated that there was an "over 50% […] about sort of 80[%]" chance that Amy would become a teacher. This assessment that Amy was more likely than not to become a teacher indicates that Mary used the cultural model that 'teaching is accessible' to position Amy closer to the figured worlds of teaching than she had done when Amy was younger. When asked explicitly what she would like Amy to do in the future, however, Mary reported that she "would still encourage [Amy] in [teaching] if that's what she wants to do". Thus, whilst Mary's support of Amy's teaching aspiration was now more explicit than it had been, she still expressed this support as conditional upon Amy continuing her teaching aspiration and again hinted that she might prefer Amy to pursue other, perhaps more highly regarded, careers.

In spite of Mary's uncertain support at age 17/18, after she had joined sixth form Amy continued to author her identity in practice in relation to the figured worlds of teaching using the cultural model that 'teaching was accessible'. At this age Amy was preparing to go to university the following year, and she not only stated that she thought that there was a "high chance" that she would do a PGCE immediately after her undergraduate degree, but that the only thing that might disrupt this plan would be if she decided to go travelling after her graduation. I interpret this confidence as evidence that Amy used the storyline that 'ITE is easy to access' to direct her trajectory towards teaching (see Section 5.3.2.1).

Further evidence that Amy authored her identity in practice using the cultural model that 'teaching is accessible' comes from her choice of undergraduate degree. At age 17/18 Amy explained that she had chosen to study Sociology because this was her favourite subject at A Level. This decision went against the recommendation of her

school careers advisor, however, who had recommended that Amy study English at university in order to become a primary school teacher. As Amy said at the time; "[the careers advisor] was trying to tell me to do subjects I didn't want to, so I just sort of ignored it really [laughs]". The decision to study what she wanted, rather than what might help her to become a teacher, again indicates that Amy relied upon the storyline that 'ITE is easy to access' to conduct her teaching trajectory; Amy thought that she would be able to become a teacher even if she did not follow the careers advice she received. I posit that this space of authoring may have been influenced by the teaching resources, or capital, that were available to Amy. As someone who had multiple teacher family members, Amy had access to a wealth of support to (accurately) verify that her decision to study Sociology would not exclude her from teaching in the future.

In her interview at age 17/18, Amy also again used cultural models which construct teaching as high in status to conduct her identity in practice. For instance, when asked why she wanted to become a primary teacher at this age, Amy said that she did not really know, but that she had always wanted to teach; "It was just sort of from when I was younger, like when I kind of realised what a job was […] I'd just play loads of games and stuff pretending I was a teacher". As she had done in her earlier interviews, Amy can here be seen to emphasise the length and strength of her teaching aspiration, and indicates that she already has some of the skills to teach because she is used to playing the role of a teacher. I therefore interpret this quote as evidence that Amy worked to align her identity in practice with the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted'.

By the time that Amy was 17/18, however, Mary (who was not interviewed at this time) had left teaching because she did not enjoy it, and was no longer working. When speaking about this change in her own interview at age 17/18 Amy contrasted Mary's experience of secondary teaching with the primary teaching experience of one of her grandmothers; "my mum was a secondary school teacher. She actually hated it, but my grandma, yeah my grandma was a primary school teacher and she loved it". Here, I argue that Amy works to dissociate herself from Mary's apparently negative experience of teaching, and to align herself instead with her grandmother's more positive experience of teaching. Amy highlights this contrast by distinguishing between Mary's and her grandmother's different roles as secondary and primary school teachers. This distinction then enables Amy to align herself with the figured world of primary teaching, and thus distance herself from the figured world of secondary teaching.

Also at age 17/18, Amy again reported that one of her grandmothers had often said that she would make a good primary teacher; "she always said that she thinks I'd be really good at [primary teaching], so I guess there is a bit of a… history with my family". By highlighting her 'family history' of primary teaching Amy both implies that teaching runs in her family (Ewing, 2021), and highlights how she uses her grandmother's experience and recognition in her own identity work. Specifically, I suggest that Amy uses this recognition from her teacher grandmother to author herself as someone who was almost 'meant' to teach, and thus in alignment with the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted'. Furthermore, Amy's grandmother is here referred to by Amy as an insider to the figured worlds of teaching, and is also clearly a close and trusted family member. I therefore again posit that Amy places additional value on the recognition she receives from this grandmother as a someone who is

both trusted, and a former teacher; a 'trusted insider' to teaching. Amy then uses this recognition from a 'trusted insider' to teaching as positioning to maintain her alliance with the figured world of primary teaching in spite of Mary's own disassociation with the figured world of secondary teaching.

6.2.3 University and towards ITE: Navigating obstacles of safety

When I spoke to Amy at age 20/21 she had recently completed her degree in Sociology and was still hoping to become a primary school teacher. By the time of her teaching-focused interview with me the following year at age 21/22, Amy was working as a Teaching Assistant (TA) in a primary school in the same city where she had completed her degree, and had recently accepted a place on a School Direct course specialising in primary teaching which was due to start the following September. I therefore consider Amy as 'pursuing' teaching for the purposes of this study. At age 21/22 Amy said that she planned to stay in teaching long-term, and aspired to progress to having additional responsibilities within a school, such as being a Head of Year.

In these final interviews it was clear that the accessibility of teaching, which had played a key role in Amy's identity work in earlier interviews, was no longer as certain as it had previously been. For example, in her interview at age 20/21 at the end of her undergraduate degree Amy told me that although it was still her "plan" to become a primary school teacher she had decided not to apply for ITE yet. Amy explained that she had made this decision because she could not afford to continue living away from home, as she had done throughout her degree and wanted to continue doing, without earning a salary; and that she was unlikely to earn a salary in her ITE year. Specifically, whilst Amy said that she had always intended to do a

PGCE straight after completing her undergraduate degree, her desire not to move back in with her parents after living independently meant that she was now considering other ITE routes besides a PGCE[80], as well as having a year out before ITE to earn money. Amy told me that she was especially looking into School Direct routes for the following year, because some of these came with a salary and/or bursary (see Section 1.3). As Amy described at the time; "I just don't [know] if there is a feasible way [to do ITE], like if I [am] just able to gather money through like loans or a bit of savings or whatever". Although on one hand Amy still appeared to be determined to become a teacher, she now questioned whether, and specifically how, her aspiration might still be realised. This questioning demonstrates the way in which Amy was navigating the new and previously unforeseen difficulty of accessing ITE.

In my teaching-focused interview with her at age 21/22 Amy reported yet more additional difficulties relating to the accessibility of teaching. Specifically, whilst Amy was working as a TA the year after her graduation—which she did in order to save up money for her ITE year—the DfE removed a previous bursary which had been available for those entering primary teaching through School Direct as a result of the increase in ITE applications during the Covid-19 pandemic (e.g., Whittaker, 2020)[81]. The consequence of the scrapping of this bursary meant that the main ITE route which Amy had been considering at this time no longer came with funding, which again meant that she would be unable to afford to become a teacher and continue living independently.

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[80] PGCEs in England are not salaried, though some offer financial incentives such as a bursary. See Sections 1.3.1 and 1.3.2, for more detail about the different routes into teaching in England.
[81] See Section 1.3 for more detail about policy efforts in teacher recruitment, including changes in the financial incentives available to those in ITE.

By the time of my interview with her at age 21/22, however, Amy had found a way to negotiate this additional financial obstacle and still find an ITE place through School Direct for the following year. This negotiation echoes findings from Varghese and Snyder (2018) (see Section 3.3.2), as it involved managing conflicts between the figured worlds of teaching and the worlds which Amy already inhabited (e.g., of living independently). Amy negotiated these conflicts by making significant compromises; she would have an hour-long commute each way on public transport to travel to her ITE placement school, and she had accepted a far smaller bursary than the one she would have received the previous year. Unusually, this bursary was due to come directly from Amy's placement school, which had put aside a small pot of its own funds to attract ITE recruitment[82]. Whilst Amy expressed relief that she would receive some funding during her ITE year, she predicted that she would be "*just about* be okay" financially during that year.

In spite of the significant compromises in her trajectory negotiations, and the continued threat of financial difficulty during her ITE year, Amy still worked to (re)figure teaching as accessible and secure. For example, also at age 21/22, Amy voiced further relief when telling me that her placement school had expressed an expectation that she would remain teaching at the school after her ITE year; "it's nice to know that I should, so long as it all goes well, like, I've got that job security for the year after". Thus, whilst Amy ended up facing several obstacles in accessing ITE, it

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[82] Most financial incentives for teachers are sourced by government, and this case is thus one example of how individual schools are attempting to use their own resources to overcome the difficulties posed by severe and ongoing teacher shortages. I consider this example to be particularly unusual, however, given the funding crisis faced by schools in England at the time of writing (NAHT, 2022).

was evident that she worked to re-establish the figured worlds of teaching as high in safety.

As was also the case in her earlier interviews, Amy's identity work in relation to the figured worlds of teaching at ages 20/21 and 21/22 also used cultural models which construct teaching as high in status. For example, and as she had done previously, I suggest that Amy worked to author herself as someone who would be a gifted teacher by using the recognition she received from others as positioning in relation to the figured worlds of teaching. For instance, when I asked Amy how her family and friends reacted to her aspiration to teach she replied; "I think I've literally only ever had positive reactions to it. Like everyone was always like, 'yeah, I think you'll really enjoy that, I think you'll be really good at that'".

Indeed, although Mary herself was not interviewed during this period, there was evidence from Amy's interviews at ages 20/21 and 21/22 that Mary's support for Amy's teaching aspiration had grown over time. Speaking at age 21/22, Amy reported that Mary and her older brother (who by this time had also left secondary teaching, to work outside of education) had tried to persuade her that, just because they had not enjoyed teaching did not mean that Amy would not enjoy it;

> they were *very* aware they didn't want to put me off […] I asked them 'are you sure that I should still be doing this?' Um, and they always said to me, whenever we'd speak about it, they'd go, my mum would always be like 'it'll be *so* different for you, though, because, like, primary, it just will be so different', and she was like, 'but also, you know, you, you *want* to do this, a lot more than I've ever wanted to do this'.

As with Amy's own space of authoring at age 17/18, this positioning from Mary and Amy's older brother appeared to distinguish between being a secondary and a primary teacher. Furthermore, by sharing Mary's words it is clear that Amy herself placed significant weight on the positioning she received from Mary and her older brother. I suggest that this significance is because, like the recognition she had earlier received from her grandmothers, it again came from people whom she trusted, and who had been teachers; trusted insiders to the figured worlds of teaching. As a result, Amy used this positioning from Mary and her older brother to continue to author her identity in practice in alignment with the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted'. Specifically, this quote demonstrates how Amy and those around her valued the long-term nature of her teaching aspiration and hints that, unlike Mary and her brother, Amy authored teaching as her 'vocation' or 'calling' (Madero, 2020).

The 'trusted insiders' who recognised Amy as a teacher were not limited to members of Amy's family. Speaking about her experience of working as a TA in her interview at age 21/22, Amy told me that one of her colleagues (a teacher) had told Amy how she thought she would make a good teacher;

> one of the teachers that I work with, she said, she was like, 'I think you'll be really good at [teaching], because you have that, like, you've got a very strong awareness that it's not just the teaching', that educating side of it. She was like 'you have that, like, emotional capacity' […] 'And you are someone that [the children] seem to quite naturally turn to, and, like, they're very happy talking to you'.

Here I suggest that Amy uses this recognition from a colleague to align herself further with the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted'. Although she was already planning to pursue teaching by this time, this recognition from another person whom she trusted and who was themselves a teacher appeared to strengthen Amy's confidence that teaching was a viable option for her, or even that she was choosing the 'right' path. Indeed, Amy told me that it was "nice to hear" that she already had some of the skills to be a teacher, which I interpret as Amy taking this positioning as a validation that she was (or would be) a gifted teacher.

6.2.4 Amy's 'teacher-makers'

This examination of Amy's teaching trajectory demonstrates that there were multiple and overlapping influences upon Amy's choice to pursuing teaching. These influences included Amy playing teachers when she was young, the support that she received from her family, the routes into teaching that were available to her, and her experience as a TA. Yet, despite the dominant cultural model that 'teachers are gifted' running throughout her longitudinal data (and thus the indication that she was 'meant' to teach), Amy navigated several obstacles in order to realise her teaching aspiration. Through this examination I identified two key 'teacher-makers' which worked to enabled Amy to pursue teaching; 1) that she was recognised as a gifted teacher from 'trusted insiders' to teaching, and 2) her (re)negotiation of the safety of teaching.

Perhaps the most striking factor which seems to have encouraged or enabled Amy to become a teacher is the continued support and recognition for her teaching aspiration that she received from family members and, latterly, a colleague. Informed by this study's theoretical lens of identities in practice, I suggest that the reason Amy

became a teacher was not this recognition in itself; but how Amy both interpreted the recognition she received as positioning her as a (future) teacher, and how she then used this positioning to author her own identity work. As detailed throughout Amy's teaching trajectory, one of the reasons why I consider the recognition Amy received to have been so influential in her identity work was that it regularly came from people whom she both trusted, and who were or had been themselves teachers; trusted insiders to the figured worlds of teaching. In proposing this finding I build upon the work of Carlone and Johnson (2007) who found that recognition from 'meaningful scientific others' supported young women of colour to develop science identities; to posit that recognition as a teacher may be more 'meaningful' when it comes from a trusted individual who is (or was) themselves a teacher.

It is also important to note that the recognition which Amy received, and the authoring she conducted, is likely to have been influenced by her intersecting identities as a White British woman. For example, although it is difficult to pinpoint the ways in which Amy's Whiteness in particular influenced her teaching trajectory (see Section 4.3.2.4), being recognised as good with children and someone for whom teaching would be easy to access is tied up with social representations and figurings of teachers as White women (e.g., Hancock & Warren, 2017; Lortie, 2002). Furthermore, although the family's middle-class background seemed to influence Mary's initial lack of support for Amy's teaching aspiration, coming from a middle-class background also helped Amy in feeling able to easily access the educational requirements of teaching. Thus, although most teachers in England tend to come from more working-class backgrounds than Amy's (Chevalier et al., 2007), I propose that together Amy's intersectional identities readied her to conduct identity work in relation to teaching with relative ease (see Millie's and Carol's teaching trajectories in

Sections 6.3 and 6.4). In turn, this identity work allowed Amy to direct and maintain her trajectory towards teaching.

The second key influence which appears to have informed Amy's trajectory towards teaching was her navigation of the safety of teaching. When the accessibility of teaching became uncertain; first because of the cost of ITE and living independently, and then with the additional complication of bursaries being cut, Amy worked to renegotiate her earlier figuring of teaching as high in safety. This identity work involved Amy changing her planned ITE route, extending the distance she was willing to travel to ITE, and accepting a lesser bursary than that which she had originally anticipated; but she chose to focus instead upon the future job security offered to her by her placement school. I therefore claim that, as a result of these identity negotiations and compromises, Amy was able to refigure teaching as safe and thus continue her trajectory towards teaching.

6.3 Millie's teaching trajectory

The next participant who was pursuing teaching at age 21/22 was Millie; a White British young woman from a working-class background who lived in Eastern England for the majority of the ASPIRES project. By the time of my teaching-focused interview with her at age 21/22 Millie was part-way through her ITE year, where she was studying through a SCITT and specialising in secondary PE.

In this section I present longitudinal evidence of Millie's trajectory into teaching using data from her own interviews along with interviews with her mother, Sinead. Like Amy, Millie also encountered multiple barriers on her trajectory towards teaching. In particular, teaching lost its safety for Millie whilst she was in secondary school and, for a time, she thus doubted whether she would be able to succeed in becoming a

teacher. As will now be discussed, the reasons for this loss of safety were strongly tied to the social inequalities that Millie faced as a working-class young woman. Interestingly, not only did Millie overcome these difficulties and succeed in becoming a teacher but she, and those around her, ultimately narrated teaching as something that she had always been meant to pursue.

6.3.1 Late primary school and early secondary school: Demonstrating teaching as both high in status and high in safety

In all three of her earliest ASPIRES interviews Millie said that she wanted to become a primary school teacher, though this desire was often expressed alongside other aspirations. At age 10/11, for example, Millie said that she would like to be a judo teacher, an architect, or a primary school teacher. Amongst the key reasons why Millie wanted to teach at these ages was her interest in caring for younger children. For instance, at age 12/13 Millie said; "I've always enjoyed teaching my little brother or small children, and I love like babies, I love kids […] I love teaching people". Expanding upon this passion for children and teaching, at age 13/14 Millie added that she liked to play teachers with her brother; "as soon as [younger brother] was born I was sitting him down, 'let's play schools, I'll be the teacher'". I here suggest that Millie used her experience of looking after her younger brother (6 years her junior) to imply that she was naturally good with children, and thus author her identity in line with the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted'. As was seen in other examples of similar identity work in Section 5.3.1.2, this self-authoring is strongly aligned with the stereotypically feminine trait of caring for children, and in this way Millie also illustrates the compatibility of her gendered identity with the figured worlds of teaching (e.g., Acker, 1995).

Also at age 13/14, Millie reported that her parents thought that she was good with children and would therefore make a good teacher; "my mum and dad both think I'd do really well at [teaching…] Obviously they see how I work with kids and sometimes I, like, babysit and they see... and they think I'd be good at it". Indeed, in her own interview when Millie was 13/14 Sinead evidenced her positioning of Millie in relation to the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted' by saying that she thought that Millie was "ideally suited to being a teacher", and that she was "just brilliant" with her younger brother, and "like a mummy to him". By emphasising Millie's maternal nature along with her suitability for teaching Sinead here aligns Millie with the stereotypical feminine attributes of teaching, just as Millie herself did in her own interviews.

Not only could Sinead's positioning of Millie be seen as a recognition of Millie's gendered identity, however, but also how her gender intersects with her other identities. Here I extend the claim made by Lortie (2002) that caring or 'nurturant' behaviour is recognised as teaching potential in girls but not in boys (see Section 2.2.1.1), to suggest that Sinead's recognition of Millie as a future teacher was supported by Millie's multiple intersecting identities as a White woman from a working-class background. In the same way in which I proposed that Amy's identity as a White (British) woman enabled her to be recognised as a future teacher (see Section 6.2.4), the mirroring of Millie's intersectional identity as a White British working-class woman with the (stereo)typical image of a teacher in England means that she is more likely to seen as a future teacher than others.

There were also several other influences, besides recognition and/or encouragement from Sinead, behind Millie's teaching aspirations during this period. For example, in her interview at age 12/13 Millie said that she aspired to become an actor, but that

she thought that there was only "a slight chance" of this happening and that her "backup plan" was to become a primary teacher. In this way, Millie authors her identity in practice using the cultural model that 'teaching is accessible', especially compared with her other aspiration of acting. The following year at age 13/14 Millie continued to imply that teaching was a second- or third-choice aspiration that was always available to her, rather than something that she felt desperate to pursue.

In her own interview when Millie was 10/11, Sinead (a White British woman who at the time worked as a TA) appeared to value that becoming a teacher would mean that Millie would go to university which neither she, Millie's father[83], nor Millie's older brother had done; "she seems pretty much caught on the, you know, being a teacher. And it's a good idea to go to university [… Millie] knows that, you know, university will be the next step after secondary school". Sinead also echoed the sentiment that Millie "had" to go to university in her interview when Millie was 13/14. I thus argue that Sinead not only recognised Millie as a (future) teacher, but also worked to position Millie in alignment with the figured worlds of teaching by using the cultural model that 'teaching is a profession' which requires a high level of education. As highlighted in Section 5.3.1.3, which found that this cultural model was especially common amongst those from working-class backgrounds, Sinead's interviews provide evidence for how Millie's working-class background enabled teaching to be seen as an accessible route to social mobility. Sinead's determination that Millie would go to university so that she can 'get on' in life, and which Sinead

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[83] As with all family members and friends, parents not interviewed for ASPIRES have not been given pseudonyms (see Section 4.3.2.2), and are thus referred to using their relationship to participants throughout this thesis.

acknowledged would allow Millie to become a teacher, indicates her figuring of teaching as an accessible route to social mobility for Millie (Lortie, 2002).

6.3.2   Late secondary school: Navigating the lost safety of teaching

When she was next interviewed, at age 15/16, Millie said that she now wanted to "do something with sports" when she was older, and probably be a PE teacher. Unlike in previous years where she had also expressed other aspirations, however, Millie now described herself as "set on" teaching. Millie struggled to see how becoming a teacher would be possible, however, as she now doubted her ability to go to university.

At age 15/16 Millie explained that her aspiration had changed from wanting to be a primary school teacher to a PE teacher partly because PE was the subject that she most enjoyed at school, but also because this aspiration had been encouraged by her own PE teacher. Millie spoke about how this teacher was someone whom she was "quite close" with, and looked up to;

> at parents' evening I spoke to my current GCSE PE teacher about what I wanted to be when I'm older with my mum, and she was saying she feels like [PE teaching] was a good idea for me, and that kind of guided me along.

Using this quote I suggest that, like Amy, being recognised as a potential teacher by someone whom Millie both trusted, and who was an insider to the figured worlds of teaching, was key to the continuation and strengthening of Millie's interest in pursuing teaching.

Despite Millie's apparently stronger teaching aspiration at age 15/16, however, her interview at this age also revealed her navigation of significant obstacles in her path

towards the figured worlds of teaching. Specifically, and in contrast to her previous references to teaching in terms of its accessibility, Millie now questioned whether her academic attainment was high enough to enable her to pursue teaching. Millie explained that she had recently chosen to study for a two-year BTEC[84] in sport at college after her GCSE exams, rather than study for A Levels at sixth form which was by far the most common post-16 qualification for young people in England around this time (Richards, 2016). Millie said that she had made this decision because she had found studying for her GCSEs "very hard" and thus did not feel "capable enough" to pursue the more academic option of A Levels. I posit that this view could have been influenced Millie's intersecting identities as a working-class young woman. Specifically, notions of 'smartness' or 'cleverness' have been found to be framed as both masculine and middle-class (e.g., Francis & Skelton, 2005; Hatt, 2018), which could mean that Millie was less likely to see herself as academically able.

Millie also explained at age 15/16 that the PE teacher who had encouraged her to teach had also taken a BTEC in sport rather than A Levels. Millie therefore knew that this route could still enable her to become a PE teacher; "[My PE teacher] said to me that she wasn't the brightest either, but she really tried. And she obviously succeeded and got where she wanted to be, and that's, kind of, obviously how I see myself". I therefore argue that the choice to pursue a BTEC, inspired by her own teacher who appeared to have faced similar obstacles, offered Millie a way to navigate what she saw as her academic inferiority to others whilst still being able to pursue teaching.

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[84] A BTEC is a post-16 qualification which stands for 'Business and Technology Education Council'.

Yet, despite knowing that her own PE teacher had done a BTEC in sport, Millie expressed a growing concern that going to college would mean that she was unable to go to university and pursue teaching. This concern seemed to have been prompted by an information brochure which Millie had read, stating that only three in every 10 university students had studied at college. Millie interpreted this to mean that more college students, compared with sixth form students, had their university applications rejected. As she expressed at the time, when applied to her own context Millie felt that this statistic meant that she was unlikely to be accepted into university, which in turn could prevent her from teaching; "there's a chance, obviously, that I might not get into university". In this way, her concerns about her own academic ability alongside the academic requirements for teaching had eroded Millie's previous figuring of teaching as safe and accessible.

One of the ways in which Millie responded to the prospect that teaching was less accessible than she had previously thought was by adjusting her plans beyond college. At age 15/16 Millie explained that rather than pursuing an undergraduate teaching degree as she had previously considered, and again inspired by her own PE teacher's route into teaching, she hoped to do an undergraduate degree in sport before then pursuing a PGCE in secondary PE. Millie clarified that doing a non-teaching undergraduate degree would allow her "backup" options if teaching remained difficult to access. This future plan was therefore a strategic choice which Millie made because she thought of herself as "not the brightest person"; "I don't want to, kind of, keep my options closed at all, because I feel it's not a smart idea [laughs] really, for me". In contrast to age 12/13, then, when teaching had been her backup to acting, Millie now felt that she needed a backup option to teaching.

As also seen with Amy, this navigation of a feasible route into teaching by Millie involved significant compromise in her identity work in relation to the figured worlds of teaching. For example, still at age 15/16, Millie reported that whilst her parents had "loved the idea of primary school teaching", they were less supportive of her aspiration to become a PE teacher. Millie said that this was because PE was not an academic subject, which meant that PE teachers were not as well respected as other teachers;

> well in [TV] shows I've watched and, like, comedy sketches and such, PE teachers aren't as, seen as, aren't as smart as the other teachers throughout school […] they never seem to be as smart or as good as the others.

Notably, Sinead did not express such views towards PE teaching in her own interview at this time, which indicates that the stereotypical reputation of PE teachers as reported by Millie was something that concerned Millie more than her parents. This concern thus evidences some of the difficulty Millie experienced in negotiating the change in her aspiration from primary teacher (which she figured as more respectable but less accessible) to PE teacher (which she figured as less respectable but more accessible).

Neither Millie nor Sinead were interviewed when Millie was 17/18. During this time Millie completed her planned BTEC in sport and was accepted onto a university degree in PE. Sadly, during her time at university and before her next interview, Millie's father died.

6.3.3 University and into ITE: Working to re-establish teaching as high in safety

When I interviewed Millie at age 20/21 she was in the final months of her undergraduate degree in PE, and had accepted a place on a SCITT course specialising in secondary PE teaching due to start the following September. The next time I spoke with Millie, at age 21/22 for her teaching-focussed interview, she was part-way through this ITE year. In these interviews Millie expressed her intention to remain in teaching long-term, and progress to a pastoral position such as Head of Year.

At age 20/21 Millie remembered her previous uncertainty about becoming a teacher and said that her college BTEC course had made her "doubt" her future in teaching even more than she had whilst in secondary school. This doubt was a result of Millie's comparisons of her own sporting and academic ability with those of her course mates, along with her awareness that the sector was somewhat "competitive" because PE was not a specialism facing teacher shortages as severe as other specialisms[85];

> There's quite a lot of PE teachers, probably, compared to, you know, maths and science. And I always thought, 'am I good enough?', because I was comparing my level of sporting performance to [that of my peers].

When I asked Millie at both age 20/21 and age 21/22 about why she thought that she had gone on to pursue teaching despite her previous concerns, it was clear that numerous factors had played a role in this decision. In addition to her figuring of

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[85] As highlighted in Section 1.2.2, postgraduate teacher recruitment in PE has sometimes been above target in recent years.

teaching as compatible with family life (see Section 5.3.2.2), studying for an undergraduate degree in PE—from which most students went on to ITE specialising in PE—seemed to have helped Millie to refigure teaching as accessible.

One example of how Millie's degree helped her to refigure teaching as accessible was through the careers education, advice, information and guidance (CEIAG) it offered. Millie was the only participant in this study who, when asked about the CEIAG that she had received about a career in teaching, reported that her university lecturers provided her with careers advice about how to become a teacher. Against the context of Millie doubting her ability to become a teacher, then, her lecturers supplied frequent and detailed information about ITE and thus regularly reminded Millie that teaching was a possibility available to her. Interestingly, however, at age 21/22 Millie told me that the advice she had received from university had been "very, very directed towards you doing a PGCE", and that she had learnt about the SCITT route into teaching through her own independent research. Millie said that what appealed about a SCITT, rather than a PGCE[86], was that it was more "hands on". Given the more practical, and less theoretical, nature of schools-based ITE such as SCITT routes (see Section 1.3.1), this decision could hint at how Millie worked to negotiate her continued uncertainty about her academic ability along with her refiguring of teaching as accessible.

Next, Millie had multiple teaching-type experiences whilst at university which she reported as solidifying her aspiration to teach, and demonstrate that her identity work in relation to teaching was built upon her existing experiences (see Section 3.3). For instance, at age 20/21 Millie told me that her experience of working as a team leader

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[86] Although some SCITT routes offer a PGCE (see Table 1, in Section 1.3.1) Millie chose not to do this.

at an activity camp for teenagers for two summers was "probably one of the biggest things" that helped her to realise that she definitely wanted to teach because it showed her that she could (already) lead groups of children. As found by Schutz et al. (2001), I therefore suggest that this role, alongside other teaching-type experiences that she had, helped Millie to see herself as a teacher; and specifically to author herself as a future member of the figured worlds of teaching using the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted'.

Being recognised by others as a teacher was also, retrospectively, something that Millie credited as supporting her trajectory towards teaching. For example, at age 20/21 Millie told me:

> everyone always used to say to me, like, 'you'd be a really good teacher'. Or if I expressed, you know, wanting to go into [teaching] they'd be like 'oh yeah I can definitely see you doing that, you'd be great at that'. So that naturally does make you think 'oh, okay yeah', and that kind of guides you.

In her interview at age 21/22 Millie went on to describe how this recognition and support, both implicit and explicit, began when she was little but was ongoing; "my dad always said, like, 'you'd be a great teacher'. People have said it since I was younger […] I think people just kind of thought, 'yeah, that sounds right for [Millie]'". Where this recognition came from also seemed to be an important factor in Millie's decision to teach. For instance, one possible factor could have been her father's death and wanting to live out his wishes, though this was not something that Millie mentioned explicitly in her interviews at ages 20/21 and 21/22. In a more practical example of the support that she received in becoming a teacher, Millie acknowledged that she would not have been able to have pursuing teaching without

the financial support of her partner, with whom she was living during her ITE year. Worryingly, and echoing Amy's concerns (see Section 6.2.3) as well as those reported by ITE students in previous studies (Matthias, 2014), even though she was receiving the maximum teacher training loan available Millie described herself as "struggling to survive" financially in her interview at age 21/22, and said that she had recently had to sell her car to save money. Selling her car meant that Millie now had to take public transport to her placement school, which made her journey to work increase from 15 minutes to one hour.

Millie also reflected that she was often told that she would make a good teacher by Sinead specifically. Importantly, and like with Amy, Millie appeared to consider this recognition as important because it was sustained over a period of time, came from someone with whom she had a close relationship, and who was an insider to the figured worlds of teaching. At age 21/22 Millie reflected how she had valued Sinead's position as both a TA and an LSA (Learning Support Assistant) whilst growing up;

> I kind of, admired mum, because I knew that we, I didn't grow up with a lot of SEN[D][87] children […] Um, but those students that did [have SEND], I saw them with LSAs and knew how difficult it was. I always thought 'wow, my mum, my mum does that and she helps them learn'.

Thus, whilst Sinead was never a classroom teacher, Millie appeared to view Sinead as a member of the figured worlds of teaching, and strongly value the recognition she received from her as a result.

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[87] SEND is a common acronym in education used to refer to children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Finally, once she had decided to pursue teaching Millie spoke about her trajectory with increasing reference to how she had 'always' wanted to teach; hinting at a belief that teaching was her 'vocation' (Madero, 2020). At age 21/22 Millie explained that she had always felt like a teacher because of the way that she cared for, and 'mothered', others;

> I have four nephews and nieces and I was, I was made an aunty at, I must have been [pause] 13 […] So I was really young […] and you, kind of, have to be, like, really responsible really quick […] I do think I'm very mature and I do think I'm very, um, motherly and kind of got that teacher, kind of, vibe.

When I asked more about this teacher 'vibe' or identity, Millie went on to add;

> I emulate that [vibe] in all, clearly in all areas of my life [laughs]. I lived with five boys last year and I was the 'mum' that looked after them, and they had to, they'd come to me to speak about things […]. So it's just kind of remained constant that I'm always in that position.

In these attempts to illustrate herself as an already-experienced teacher (of sorts), Millie evidences her space of authoring to align herself with the figured worlds of teaching using the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted' in two ways. First, and even though Millie experienced several difficulties on her teaching trajectory and at times doubted whether she would end up in teaching, she did not narrate her pathway into teaching with references to the obstacles that she encountered. Instead, Millie authored herself as having been well suited to being a teacher since she was at least 13. I suggest that this is an example of what Holland et al. (1998) describe as 'reinterpreting the past' (see Section 3.2.1.3); where people use past experiences to fit within, or align with, the figured world(s) into which they have

become members. Second, not only does Millie here align her gendered identity with the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted' (as was seen in the examples given in Section 5.3.1.1), but she also aligns her capacity for motherhood (her 'future parenthood', see Appendix 4) with this construction. This identity work thus reveals Millie's figuring of teaching as suited to those who are, or can be, mothers like herself (Drudy et al., 2005), and forms another connection between Millie and the figured worlds of teaching.

6.3.4   Millie's 'teacher-makers'

Viewed longitudinally, Millie's teaching trajectory demonstrates that, like Amy, there were multiple influences upon her decision to become a teacher which included support from her family, support from her teachers, her teaching-type experiences, and the (renewed) accessibility of teaching. Also like Amy, Millie's trajectory illustrates that she worked hard to maintain her path towards teaching by conducting continued identity work to align with cultural models that construct teaching as both high in status and high in safety. I thus suggest that the two key influences upon Millie's decision to become a teacher are shared with Amy; 1) Millie was recognised as a gifted teacher from 'trusted insiders' to teaching, and 2) she renegotiated the safety of teaching to re-possiblise becoming a teacher.

The first key influence upon Millie's decision to pursue teaching was the continued recognition that she received from trusted insiders to the figured worlds of teaching. These trusted insiders included Sinead, whom Millie herself worked to position as an insider to teaching, and her own PE teacher. As seen with Amy, then, Millie strongly valued the recognition that she received from these sources precisely because they were both trusted, and were (or had been) teachers themselves. I suggest that Millie

then used this recognition as positioning in order to author her own identity in practice in alignment with the figured worlds of teaching, especially using the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted'. This recognition was undoubtedly tied to Millie's intersecting identities; as a White British woman she is much more likely than others to be have been recognised as a teacher and/or as having the skills suited to becoming a teacher. In this way the positioning of Millie by others, for example as a 'mother' figure, was dependent upon dominant images and cultural models of teachers as White British women who are gifted at looking after children and others (e.g., Hancock & Warren, 2017).

Second, I suggest that Millie became a teacher partly because of how she negotiated the accessibility of teaching. When Millie doubted whether she had the academic ability to pursue teaching, which was itself influenced by her intersecting identities as a White British woman from a working-class background, she worked to reconstruct teaching as accessible and thus high in safety. Millie worked to navigate herself a viable path into teaching by first doing an undergraduate degree in PE rather than an undergraduate teaching degree, and then by pursuing a SCITT rather than a PGCE. In this way, Millie improvised a teaching trajectory in response to the obstacles that she encountered; one which aligned with her identities, expectations and abilities.

Finally, and seemingly more so than Amy, despite the significant identity work that Millie was seen to conduct over time to navigate her trajectory towards the figured worlds of teaching, once she was pursuing teaching Millie indicated that her trajectory had been straightforward. Specifically, Millie used the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted' to author herself as someone who had always been likely, or

even 'meant', to become a teacher. This space of authoring exemplifies the dominance, or strength, of the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted' and feeds into dominant social assumptions that teaching is a vocation (Madero, 2020).

6.4 Carol's teaching trajectory

The final participant who was pursuing teaching at age 21/22 was Carol. Carol is a young woman of Mixed ethnicity (Eastern European and West Asian) who described herself as White and having English as an Additional Language (EAL), and came from a working-class background. Carol was born and lived as a young child in a country in West Asia, and moved to England (London) before starting primary school. By the time of my interview with her at age 21/22 Carol was part-way through a PGCE specialising in secondary Media and English.

In this section I present longitudinal empirical evidence of Carol's trajectory into teaching using data from Carol's own interviews, interviews with her mother, Linda, and one interview with her stepfather, Peter. As will now be illustrated, Carol's teaching trajectory was not straightforward. She encountered numerous and difficult obstacles to becoming a teacher and at times turned away from teaching. Like Amy's and Millie's, Carol's journey towards teaching was therefore the result of considerable identity work and compromise. Unlike Amy's and Millie's, however, key influences upon Carol's teaching trajectory included her intersecting identities as an EAL immigrant to England. Thus, although Carol was also a White woman, I propose that the increased precarity that Carol and her family experienced as a result of these identities led her to favour the safety of teaching when her trajectories towards other professions became unviable. In this way, I suggest that Carol ultimately pursued teaching because it was more accessible than alternative careers.

6.4.1 Late primary school to mid secondary school: Authoring teaching as the most accessible aspiration

In her first three interviews for the ASPIRES project Carol expressed multiple aspirations, including to become a teacher. During this time Carol used cultural models which positioned teaching as both high in status and high in safety to conduct her identity in practice in relation to the figured worlds of teaching, but most heavily relied upon the cultural model that 'teaching is accessible'.

At age 10/11 Carol said that she wanted to be either a scientist, an archaeologist, a performing arts teacher, a singer, or a vet. As might be expected given her multiple career aspirations, Carol did not give a lot of detail about her teaching aspiration at this age, but said that she wanted to be a performing arts teacher because she was "quite good" at performing arts and because she wanted to work with children. Whilst these reasons echo some of the most commonly cited reasons for wanting to teach in the current literature (e.g., Gorard et al., 2021), I also suggest that by expressing a desire to work with children Carol here aligns herself with the cultural model that 'teachers make a difference' (see Section 5.3.1.1). In a more overt example of this space of authoring, at age 12/13 Carol said that her own maths teacher had inspired her to want to teach maths. As Carol put it; "I think he actually has helped me to like realise I want to be a Maths teacher. Because [of] the way he teaches, and I think that would be really good if I did that also". I interpret this quote to mean that part of the reason why Carol wanted to become a teacher was because she had an interest in helping others, just as her own teacher had helped her.

In addition to cultural models positioning teaching as high in status, cultural models positioning teaching as high in safety were also evident in Carol's interviews during

this period. At age 13/14 Carol said that she wanted to become a magazine editor, a bilingual secretary, or a languages or drama teacher. Whilst her non-teaching aspirations had changed since her previous interviews, Carol said that becoming a teacher was the "most likely" to happen of her aspirations; something that she had also expressed in her interview at age 12/13. This professed likelihood of becoming a teacher is evidence of Carol's identity work to align with the cultural model that 'teaching is accessible', which may be a result of Carol's background and intersecting identities. Specifically, I suggest that the intersecting social inequalities Carol experienced as an ethnic minority and EAL immigrant to England, and a working-class young woman, means that she was more likely than others (e.g., those with more financial security, as will be considered in Chapter 7) to figure teaching as safe and accessible; and thus a viable future career even if it was not her first-choice aspiration. This conclusion further develops analyses from Section 5.3, which found that those from working-class backgrounds were more likely to figure teaching as high in safety. I therefore posit that Carol's interest in teaching at this age was partly strategic; she worked to align herself with teaching because it was safe, especially when compared with the other jobs in which she was also interested.

Carol's mother Linda, who was originally from Eastern Europe and worked as travel consultant at the time, did not explicitly mention Carol's teaching aspiration during this period. Nevertheless, Linda did appear to value many of the characteristics of the figured worlds of teaching. For example, speaking when Carol was 10/11, Linda said that the most important things to her regarding Carol's future were that Carol would be happy, would go to university as she herself had done, and would pursue "a job where the chances are she's going to be in employment". Linda also said that

she wanted Carol to "do something useful for society". First, I propose that the desire

for Carol to be in secure employment was likely strongly influenced by Linda's own

background as an ethnic minority immigrant to England and a lone parent when

Carol was younger. As a lone immigrant parent Linda is likely to have experienced

periods of financial precarity, which may mean that she supported the prospect of

stable employment for Carol more than she may otherwise have done (e.g.,

Berrington et al., 2016). Second, by wanting Carol to contribute to society Linda can

be interpreted as implicitly valuing the social contribution of teaching (e.g., Watt &

Richardson, 2007). So, whilst neither of these statements from Linda explicitly

mention teaching, both reflect common cultural models about teaching; namely that

'teaching is a secure job', and that 'teachers make a difference'. One could therefore

argue that Linda here indirectly demonstrates her support for Carol becoming a

teacher.

Whilst Linda was not interviewed when Carol was 12/13 or 13/14, there was further

evidence of her continued, though still sometimes implicit, support for Carol's

teaching aspirations through Carol's own interviews at this time. For example, at age

12/13 when asked what her family thought of her aspirations, Carol described Linda

as "keen" for her to become a teacher, but said that Linda did not think that her other

aspiration at the time, to work in forensic science, was suitable for her. As Carol

described; "[Linda] just thinks that I shouldn't be doing [forensic science], it's not a

girly job". This quote provides evidence that Linda was working to position Carol in

line with a future role which she saw as compatible with Carol's gendered identity.

Whilst this positioning may not be interpreted as explicit support for Carol's teaching

aspiration, the stereotypically feminine cultural models that are used to construct the

figured worlds of teaching (see Section 5.3), compared with the stereotypically

masculine cultural models with which people tend to figure the worlds of science (e.g., Archer, Moote, & MacLeod, 2020a; Wade-Jaimes & Schwartz, 2019), mean that Linda's words imply that she would be much happier for Carol to become a teacher than to work in science. Carol expressed some confusion at Linda's response to her forensic science aspiration, however, because she did not see herself as girly and thus questioned why she needed to do a 'girly' job; "the thing is I'm not really girly, I don't wear loads of make-up […] if I had the chance I wouldn't go shopping, I'd go to play football, sports. I'd choose the non girly thing". Yet, despite Carol's questioning of Linda's words, this gendered positioning may have worked to impact Carol's trajectory. By age 13/14 Carol had dropped her aspiration to work in science but maintained an interest in teaching.

6.4.2 Late secondary school to sixth form: Securing the safety net of teaching

As Carol progressed through secondary education she continued to express multiple career aspirations. Although Carol's aspirations during this period included teaching, becoming a teacher was now much less prominent than her aspiration to work in media. Carol's trajectory might therefore be described as moving away from teaching during this period; though she continued to figure teaching as an accessible and secure 'backup' option should her first-choice aspiration of working in media not work out.

In her interview at age 15/16 Carol said that she wanted to become a media producer, a teacher, or work in Human Resources (as Linda now did). When asked about why she wanted to teach at age 15/16 Carol first said that this was because she felt that she "could teach younger kids". Carol explained that although she had "always" felt that she was good with children, she had recently become a sister to a

baby brother whom she was good at looking after; "because of my little brother I have so much, like, experience now. I feel like I could deal with any little kids". Echoing extracts from both Amy's and Millie's trajectories, in giving an example of how well she already looked after children I here suggest that Carol worked to align her identity in practice with the figured worlds of teaching through the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted'.

By her next interview, at age 17/18, Carol said that that she was "still thinking about teaching", probably specialising in the subject of media. Now, however, Carol said that she was primarily interested in teaching as a career for later in life after she had first worked in the media industry (which was still her first-choice aspiration). Just as she had earlier constructed teaching as a backup aspiration, I propose that Carol's now 'second career' interest in teaching was informed by her figuring of teaching as both accessible and secure; a type of 'safety net' that she could use if and/or when media was not successful. For example, at age 15/16 Carol explained that her first-choice career aspiration was to become a media producer because she was very much enjoying studying media for one of her GCSEs. Carol added, however, that becoming a teacher was probably more likely to happen than working in media; "being realistic I don't know if [media is] very likely, but I think I would try and if not I'd fall back to teaching and then maybe go to teaching, but I really hope the producing will work". As seen in her earlier interviews, the notion that she would 'fall back' to teaching—which directly evokes a common description of the accessibility of teaching in the extant literature (e.g., Watt & Richardson, 2007)—provides evidence of the ways in which Carol's (and Linda's) life history as an immigrant and the intersecting social positions that she held informed her career aspirations. Specifically, I posit that the inequality and instability that her family experienced

meant that Carol felt compelled to seek a secure 'insurance' for her future (Harrison, 2019).

Indeed, Carol explicitly mentioned the pressure she felt to choose a stable career which would please her parents. Still at age 15/16, for example, Carol described Linda as "persistent" in her interest of Carol's future plans, and said that Linda often asked her to prepare presentations about her career interests and aspirations; "she'll try and make me do presentations about, like, 'next week I want you to talk about what you want to be and who you want to be and, like, what you want to do in life'". This extract suggests that Carol felt burdened to not only choose her future career path at this age, but also to choose a profession which Linda deemed to be secure.

Separate interviews with both Linda and Carol's stepfather, Peter (a White British working-class man who at the time worked in sport), when Carol was 15/16 hint at their frustration that Carol had not yet chosen her future career. Linda described herself as "struggling to help [Carol] to find her life path", despite the two of them "having conversations about it all the time"; whereas Peter described the frequency with which Carol seemed to change what she wanted to do:

> one week [Carol] wants to be a rocket scientist, then three weeks later 'oh, I want to be a teacher', then talking about being a lawyer. So, you know, I still don't think there's anything there that would suggest that [Carol]'s definitely going in one direction.

Echoing what was implied in Carol's own interview data, both Linda and Peter here imply that the decision made by Carol at this age will last for life, and will thus be secure. Again I propose that this expectation placed upon Carol was not only a result of the social inequalities that she and Linda experienced as immigrants to England,

but also the family's continued precarity as a result of their working-class identities. Research has shown, for example, that it would have been more difficult for Linda to access graduate jobs, despite her holding an undergraduate degree, because she was an immigrant from an eastern European country (Parutis, 2014). As a result it is perhaps unsurprising why her parents, but especially Linda, wanted Carol to increase her chances of obtaining, and maintaining, secure graduate employment by setting her sights on her future career early.

6.4.3 University and into ITE: Using the safety net of teaching, and reinterpreting the past

When I interviewed Carol at age 20/21 she had recently completed her undergraduate degree in Media, and had accepted an offer to study for a PCGE specialising in secondary Media and English starting the following September. By the time of my teaching-focused interview with her at age 21/22 Carol was part-way through this PGCE. In these interviews Carol expressed her desire to remain in teaching long-term, and to eventually become a Head Teacher. Somewhat paradoxically, at this time Carol both made it clear that she had sought to pursue other careers before deciding upon teaching, and worked to establish herself as someone who had always been destined to become a teacher.

Cultural models constructing the figured worlds of teaching as high in safety were strongly evident in Carol's interviews at both age 20/21 and 21/22. It was clear that teaching remained Carol's backup choice of graduate career and that she had worked to realign her identity in practice with the cultural model that 'teaching is accessible' after first considering several other different careers. First, and echoing her aspirations at age 17/18, Carol told me that she had originally planned to pursue

a career in media after her degree. Pursuing a career in media became less viable, however, after Carol discovered through a chance encounter with someone who worked in media for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) that her degree in Media may not help her to find work in the sector. As Carol explained at age 20/21;

> when I was, I think like, 6 months into my Media degree I was on a train coming to [hometown] and I was standing next to this woman who looked at my book—I was a reading a Media book—and she was like 'oh you're doing Media?', I was like 'yeah'. She was like, 'oh I work for BBC News' and I was like, 'oh wow, that is a really great job'. And she was like, 'yeah. Are you doing a degree in Media?' and I went, 'yes I am'. And she went, 'oh you don't need a degree, just experience. Your 3 years now you're doing is a waste of time, you should just be doing experience'.

In response to this encounter Carol described "freaking out" about whether her degree was the best use of her time and said that as a result she considered dropping out of university. Carol continued her degree, however, which she said was because she wanted to finish what she had started. Yet, as Carol continued her course, she found that the message that her degree was less useful for a future in media than industry experience was also reinforced by lecturers at her university. Carol said that this reinforcement ultimately led her to look for careers outside of media, but which would require her to have a degree. This assertion that she wanted to find a job which would require her to have a degree exemplifies the way in which Carol worked to use her degree as insurance against future uncertainty, as Harrison (2019) notes is a common practice amongst those from working-class backgrounds.

The first jobs that Carol considered after she had decided against a future in media were graduate training schemes, mostly in the field of marketing. Carol later said that she had only applied to these schemes because she had been told by careers advisors that they were often the first step in a graduate career. Her applications to these schemes were unsuccessful, however, which Carol reflected was probably because her Media degree meant that she did not have experience or expertise in marketing. Carol then told me that she next considered becoming a lecturer in media, which she felt would make good use of her degree. When she spoke to one of her own media lecturers, however, Carol realised that becoming a lecturer was likely to require at least four more years of university to secure postgraduate qualifications. Speaking at age 20/21, Carol said that she did not feel able to complete postgraduate study because she had found university very difficult, and so (re)turned to considering teaching Media in schools instead;

> I thought I was going to be a lecturer, but then I realised you had to do a PhD and a Masters. And that's 4 more years. I just don't think I'm capable of doing 4 more years at uni. So I went down a little bit, and I was like 'oh a teaching course only needs to be one year'.

Here, Carol's description of going "down a little bit" could be referring to the different length of the qualifications typically needed to become a teacher compared with becoming a lecturer, but it may also be a reference to the social standing of school teaching compared with university teaching (e.g., Ingersoll & Collins, 2018). In this way, Carol appears to acknowledge the 'low' societal categorisation of the status of teaching (see Section 2.3.1.1), whilst recognising its accessibility via, implicitly, the

wide decision range of teaching (Lortie, 2002) and, explicitly, the front-loaded nature of ITE in England (Allen & Sims, 2018).

Carol's decision to pursuing teaching did not seem to have been made immediately after her other plans did not pan out, however. At age 21/22 Carol described her decision to apply for a PGCE as impulsive, and made on "a whim", rather than something that she had planned for a long time; and one which had resulted in her "scraping by" financially and having to move back in with her parents and (now) two younger brothers during her ITE year. One might stipulate that this choice to teach was therefore influenced by the wider contextual uncertainty caused by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic at the time, though Carol did not agree with this stipulation and instead narrated her choice as fuelled by her own motivations.

Carol's impulsivity was evident in the way that she continued to work hard to align different aspects of her identity with the figured worlds of teaching even after she had accepted her PGCE offer. One clear example of this negotiation is how Carol narrated her desire to become a Head Teacher. For example, at age 20/21 Carol told me that although Linda and Peter had been supportive of her plans to become a teacher, her father (who lived abroad) had expressed concern that she would not earn enough money as a teacher;

> my dad didn't understand, he's very much like money orientated, so he wanted me to get a job like in a big business […] and he asked me to send him how much Media and English teachers make and all this. But my end goal is to become a Head Teacher […] I told him that [teaching]'s just a stepping stone to become a Head Teacher.

I interpret this quote as evidence of Carol's father working to distance her from teaching, and specifically the cultural model that 'teaching enables a good lifestyle' (which includes the storyline that 'teaching is decently paid', see Section 5.3.2.2); and Carol's response to this positioning, which was her plan to become a Head Teacher. In her interview at age 21/22 Carol spoke more about how she had developed this aspiration to become a Head Teacher;

> before I started teaching, I kind of spoke, I had a discussion, with my mum and like, *myself*. And I kind of said that, like, I didn't want to just stop at teaching because I know that [a] teaching salary isn't that much. So, I kind of wanted to progress, like I *hopefully*, I don't even know about the job that much but, I kind of like power. So, I was thinking of progressing to Head of Year, and then Head of Department and then head of, I mean, the school, Head Teacher. Which I wouldn't mind doing […] I thought, 'okay, Head Teacher', and I can, then, like they get paid a lot.

Carol also explained at age 20/21 that she had chosen to specialise in English as well as Media teaching because she had heard that, as she put it, "Media teachers don't ever become Head of Years because people look down on Media teachers". Although Carol also described wanting to become a Head Teacher because she liked the idea of "being in charge", the above quotes indicate that this career plan is a negotiation of her own, her father's, and Linda's expectations that she would earn more than a typical classroom teacher salary. In other words, Carol did not turn away from teaching because she was deterred by the comparatively low pay and which many have assumed is a key deterrent from the profession (see Section 2.3.1.2). Instead, Carol's response to this low pay was to navigate her teaching trajectory towards Headship, and thus refer to teaching as simply a "stepping stone" to this

better-paying role. This response again demonstrates how the multiple inequalities that Carol faced as a working-class and immigrant young woman might have influenced her choices; she chose to maintain the security of teaching whilst aiming to earn more money than she saw possible as a teacher. This is an example of how Carol's identity work in relation to the figured worlds of teaching was not separated from, but informed by, her wider identity work and social positions (e.g., Avraamidou, 2019).

One of the additional appeals of teaching for Carol was its compatibility with her future plans to start a family. When I asked Carol at age 20/21 what she saw herself doing in the next five years she replied:

> 5 years, definitely already been a teacher for 4 of them, proper qualified teacher. Preferably already moved out. I'm really… I'm one of those people that I really want to get married and have kids really soon, because I think that's part of [the] East European in me, that my mum's always like drilling into me. But probably moved out, married, working as a teacher already… and hopefully a head of year. Not a head teacher, a head of year – so that's my first kind of step.

Here, Carol authors her desire to "get married and have kids really soon" explicitly as a reflection of her Eastern European identity and Linda's expectations of her. It is also an expression of the intersections of both Carol's ethnic and gender identities; as an Eastern European young woman she was positioned by Linda as someone who would start a family 'soon' and chose to accept this positioning. In terms of teaching, Carol uses these intersectional identities to implicitly align herself with the

cultural model that 'teaching enables a good lifestyle', and specifically the storyline that teaching is compatible with family life (see Section 5.3.2.2).

Notably, and much like Millie, despite turning to teaching on "a whim" after several other careers became unviable Carol retrospectively narrated her teaching trajectory in alignment with the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted'. In this way, Carol was seen to ignore the possible impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as other social and contextual influences, upon her choice to teach and instead implied that she had always intended to become a teacher. One example of this narration is that, at both age 20/21 and age 21/22, Carol spoke about teaching her grandmother English when she was younger; something that she had not mentioned in earlier interviews. For example, at age 21/22 Carol said;

> when I was younger, my grandma, who spoke only [another language], moved here to help look after me when my mum was working. She really didn't speak any English. So we used to, I used to give her lessons but, like, I'd make it big thing and have a register and make her sit down, like, tick off her name, and, I'd call it out. And I'd have lesson plans […] I would teach her just stuff, like, we'd go to a shop and when they'd ask 'do you have a [loyalty card]?', like for her she's got no idea what they're saying, so I was like explaining to her. They were like, 'how do you want to pay?', and I was like going through it all. And at that point I was, like, probably, like 'yeah, I like teaching'.

Echoing Millie's reflections once she too was in ITE, in this quote Carol hints that she was almost always destined to teach because she taught her grandmother English as a young child. This could be seen as another example of 'reinterpretation of the

past' (Holland et al., 1998), or perhaps shows that "new perspectives [have] become visible" to Carol from her present viewpoint from within teaching (Holmegaard et al., 2015, p. 38). In other words (maybe more surprisingly than with Millie who appeared to hold stronger, or more consistent, teaching aspirations that Carol), Carol's new position within the figured worlds of teaching allowed or encouraged her to author herself as someone who had always been a gifted teacher and was thus 'meant' to teach.

6.4.4 Carol's 'teacher-makers'

This insight into Carol's teaching trajectory has shown that, like with Amy and Millie, there were many influences upon Carol's decision to become a teacher. Also like Amy and Millie but maybe to a greater extent, Carol conducted considerable identity work to (re)steer her future towards teaching. The key reasons why Carol eventually became a teacher were thus 1) the relative accessibility of teaching when compared with other graduate roles that did not seem as accessible or viable, and 2) her renegotiation of the safety of teaching. In short, Carol pursued teaching because she figured it as an attainable route to success and/or social mobility as a Head Teacher (e.g., Lortie, 2002).

Through this trajectory I have shown that Carol's first 'teacher-maker', the relative accessibility of teaching, was strongly influenced by her intersecting identities. Although, like Amy and Millie, Carol's identity as a White woman is likely to have helped teaching to seem more accessible (see Sections 6.2.4 and 6.3.4), Carol's additional identities as an EAL Eastern European and West Asian immigrant to England who came from a working-class background meant that she had the potential to face increased social and financial precarity. As a result, I have shown

that the safety offered by teaching was more attractive, more quickly, than it may have been had Carol held different intersectional identities.

Like both Amy and Millie, a second key influence upon Carol's decision to pursue teaching was how she worked to negotiate the safety of teaching, specifically using the cultural model that 'teaching enables a good lifestyle'. When her father challenged the construction of teaching as high in safety by questioning the level of teacher pay, Carol responded to this by developing a trajectory towards becoming a (more highly paid) Head Teacher. Although this response could also be interpreted as a renegotiation of the status of teaching because of the higher social standing of Head Teachers compared with classroom teachers (Dolton et al., 2018), I here suggest that part of why Carol became a teacher was specifically because she worked to (re)construct teaching as enabling a good lifestyle; as a Head Teacher she would be decently paid.

Strikingly, despite the considerable identity work that Carol conducted to align herself with the figured worlds of teaching once she had made the decision to teach, including developing an aspiration for Headship, once she was pursuing teaching Carol reinterpreted her past in a way in which implied that she was always destined to teach. Through this interpretation of Carol's narrative I do not wish to discredit or question her account of why she became a teacher; but to indicate through longitudinal analyses that teaching choices and trajectories can be more complex and nuanced than is often depicted. Specifically, I suggest that Millie's and Carol's 'reinterpretations' of their pasts indicate the power of the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted' over other cultural models which construct the figured worlds of teaching. This finding echoes a claim made by Jenkins (2013); that shared beliefs

about a 'field', or in this case figured worlds, can be more likely to occur amongst those within that world. Similar to the way in which previous ASPIRES research has found that those who pursue physics are likely to construct physics as for the 'effortlessly clever' rather than attainable through hard work (e.g., Archer et al., 2017), now that they are within the figured worlds of teaching Millie and Carol narrate their positions as almost 'meant to be'.

6.5   Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have presented the longitudinal teaching trajectories of Amy, Millie, and Carol in an attempt to consider why it was that they were pursuing teaching at age 21/22, when their peers who had also expressed earlier interests in teaching were not pursuing teaching at this time. Building upon findings from Chapter 5 (Section 5.3), which showed that young people who aspire to become a teacher figure teaching as both high in status and high in safety, this chapter has shown that Amy, Millie and Carol became teachers because they worked to continually refigure teaching as both high in status and high in safety; despite encountering sometimes significant obstacles in this identity work.

Amy's, Millie's and Carol's teaching trajectories indicate that all three of these participants held long-term aspirations to teach. Importantly, however, their trajectories evidenced that these participants became teachers not because of the length of their aspirations, but because of three key 'teacher-makers'; 1) continued recognition from trusted insiders to the figured worlds of teaching (for Amy and Millie), 2) the accessibility of teaching compared with preferred alternatives (for Carol), and 3) the renegotiation of teaching as high in safety when something had occurred to question or challenge this safety (for Amy, Millie and Carol).

The ways in which these three key influences or 'teacher-makers' worked to support Amy, Millie and Carol in navigating and (re)directing their teaching trajectories was found to be informed by the cultural models which construct the figured worlds of teaching. As seen in Section 5.3, these cultural models are closely bound to the (stereo)typical image of teachers in England as White British women. As a result, it is not happenstance that all three participants in this chapter identified as White women; their trajectories demonstrate that although all three worked hard to maintain their pathways towards teaching their intersectional identities as White women helped them to see themselves, and for others to see them, as viable (future) teachers. The trajectory of Carol, however, illustrates the additional difficulty that someone who does not identify as White *British* encountered in working to identify with the figured worlds of teaching in England.

Finally, although all three teaching trajectories presented in this chapter were multidirectional and sometimes precarious, Amy, Millie and Carol all retrospectively narrated their choice to pursue teaching as something which was bound to happen or that they were destined to choose. Whilst this finding echoes research underlining the prevalence of the discourse that teaching is a 'vocation' or 'calling' (e.g., Madero, 2020), it is especially striking given that this chapter's longitudinal analyses reveal the complex positions and experiences that each participant negotiated in order to pursue teaching. The implications of these findings will be discussed in more detail in Section 8.2.2. Before this discussion, in the following chapter I consider this study's final research question; *why do some young people drop their teaching aspirations, especially in science?*

Chapter 7. Teacher-breakers: Why do some young people drop their teaching aspirations?

7.1 Introduction

In this final analysis chapter, I consider this study's third research question; *why do some young people drop their teaching aspirations, especially in science?*. To do this, I present analyses of the teaching trajectories of Buddy, Celina, Hedgehog, Joanne, Kate, Louise, Lucy, Mienie, Samantha, and Victor. These 10 participants were not pursuing teaching by the time of my final interview with them at age 21/22 yet, as detailed in Section 4.3.2.1, they had all expressed an interest or aspiration in teaching in at least one of their interviews with the ASPIRES project. Five of these participants are also science specialists and were therefore considered to be 'potential future science teachers' at age 20/21. Mirroring the analyses presented in Chapter 6, in this chapter I consider what factors and experiences (or 'teacher-breakers') worked to influence this study's 10 non-teaching participants to 'drop' their teaching aspirations.

In order to determine why 10 of this study's participants chose not pursue teaching by age 21/22 I examine each participants' trajectories towards and, ultimately, away from teaching over a period of 11 years. Informed by the narrative approach taken in this study, these trajectories are considered as a continuous and multidirectional process of identity work in relation to the figured worlds of teaching (Holmegaard et al., 2015). The analyses presented in this chapter therefore attempt to understand how and why young people, along with those around them, conducted identity work which had the effect of distancing them(selves) from the figured worlds of teaching.

As outlined in Section 4.3.2.4, I examine this identity work in relation to the figured worlds of teaching using the contexts of positioning and space of authoring proposed by Holland et al. (1998), and an intersectional analytical lens (Crenshaw, 1989)[88]. Specifically, I present analyses of how and why young people who were not teaching by age 21/22 worked to distance their identities in practice from the cultural models of teaching which were presented in detail in Chapter 5 (see Table 11). In this way, these analyses use and build upon the cultural models seen to construct the figured worlds of teaching as both high in status and high in safety.

As outlined in Table 16, the 10 trajectories away from teaching considered in this chapter are presented in three sections to represent the three 'teacher-breakers' that were developed with reference to the themes of status and safety as introduced in Section 4.3.2.4; 1) that teaching was no longer high in safety, 2) that a non-teaching passion became safer than it had been, and 3) that teaching was no longer high in status. Eight of this study's participants were coded as having one of these 'teacher-breakers', whereas two participants were coded as having two 'teacher-breakers'. It was not possible to present a detailed trajectory of all 10 participants considered in this chapter due to word limitations. Within each of these sections, then, I present a detailed teaching trajectory of one participant (or, in Section 7.3, two participants) whose decision not to become a teacher is best described using that section's 'teacher-breaker'. I then end each section with a comparison of all participants coded as having shared this 'teacher-breaker'. In Section 7.5 I then examine the five science specialists examined in this chapter, in order to consider why these young people chose not to become a science teacher specifically. For a more detailed

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[88] These theoretical concepts are introduced and discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

overview of each participant's ASPIRES project data, family background, educational and work experiences, and career aspirations, see Appendix 1. Sections of coding tables relevant to this chapter are presented in Appendix 4.

Table 16 *Overview of participants' 'teacher-breakers' and teaching trajectories as presented in Chapter 7*

Participant	'Teacher-breakers'		
	Teaching was no longer high in safety	A non-teaching passion became safer than it had been	Teaching was no longer high in status
Victor*	X		
Hedgehog	X		
Louise		X	
Lucy		X	
Celina		X	
Joanne*		X	X
Mienie*		X	X
Kate*			X
Samantha*			X
Buddy			X
* Science specialists (considered in Section 7.5)			

As will now be demonstrated, the 10 participants examined in this chapter represent a range of teaching trajectories; from those who held long-term teaching aspirations and/or applied to ITE, to those who only momentarily considered becoming a teacher. The factors and experiences which shaped participants' decisions not to pursue teaching were complex and overlapping, and were shaped by participants' other aspirations and interests, and their intersectional identities. The 'teacher-breakers' considered in this chapter are not, therefore, exhaustive or exact 'reasons why' young people chose not to teach, but portray the influences which prompted this study's participants to distance themselves from teaching. Indeed, whilst for ease I refer throughout this chapter to 'teacher-breakers' and to aspirations having been 'dropped', the participants whose trajectories are presented in this chapter might more helpfully be considered as having navigated away from teaching by the

age of 21/22. In other words, the trajectories presented in this chapter are subjective

interpretations of participants' unfinished and ongoing identity work (towards and)

away from teaching by the time of my teaching-focused interview with them. I

therefore acknowledge the possibility that these participants may still go on to

become teachers, because their identity work will continue beyond this study.

7.2 Teaching was no longer high in safety

Analyses indicated that one particularly influential 'teacher-breaker' for two

participants in this study was that teaching was no longer figured as high in safety. In

this section I demonstrate how Victor and Hedgehog (who both identify as White

British men) expressed a teaching aspiration in multiple interviews and were

attracted to teaching because they figured it as both high in status and high in safety.

When the safety of teaching was lost for them, however, both Victor and Hedgehog

turned away from teaching and sought a safer alternative career.

In this section I first exemplify this 'teacher-breaker' through detailing the teaching

trajectory of Victor (Section 7.2.1) because, unlike Hedgehog, Victor applied to ITE

and thus came closer to becoming a teacher. I then briefly summarise the similarities

and differences between Victor's and Hedgehog's trajectories in order to consider

why and how the lost safety of teaching led both participants to drop their teaching

aspirations and navigate away from teaching (Section 7.2.2).

7.2.1 Victor's teaching trajectory

Here I present Victor's teaching trajectory using analyses of empirical data from

interviews with Victor, and with his mother Sam. Victor aspired to become a

secondary school science teacher at age 12/13 and age 13/14, and was again

considering becoming a science teacher in his interview at age 20/21. Another common aspiration reported by Victor, however, was to work in science and engineering; first as a scientist or an inventor, and later as an astrophysicist. Indeed, Victor went on to complete a degree in Physics. When I spoke to Victor at age 21/22, the year after he had graduated from his degree, he told me that he had applied to ITE the previous year to become a science teacher specialising in Physics. After this application was unsuccessful, however, Victor found work as a cleaner and caretaker and was hoping to find a non-teaching graduate role in a profession related to science or engineering.

When Victor first aspired to become a science teacher, at ages 12/13 and 13/14, he reported being attracted towards teaching for reasons which aligned with the cultural models which construct teaching as both high in status and high in safety. For example, at age 12/13 Victor said that he wanted to teach so that he could show people "the wonders of science". I interpret this quote as Victor working to align himself with the cultural model that 'teachers make a difference' to the lives of their students by, in this instance, inspiring them in the subject of science. These data seem to support research which has shown that science teachers report wanting to teach because they want to share their love of science with others (e.g., Barker & Reyes, 2001).

Then, at age 13/14, a key aspect of Victor's teaching aspiration appeared to be the accessibility, and thus safety, of teaching compared with science. For example, when Victor was asked at this age whether he knew what he would need to study in order to pursue his different aspirations, Victor responded;

> if I was to be a scientist, which I have considered being before, then I would need to take three science… all three sciences and I'd need to be really good […] I should be in set one but then there's those people that really excel in science. So I'm in set two at the moment […] if you're a science teacher, you need to learn the science and that's it.

Using this quote, I suggest that part of the reason why Victor may have been attracted towards teaching at this age was because, as he points out, he had recently been moved from the first ("set one") to the second ("set two") attainment group in science at school[89]. In her own interview when Victor was 13/14, Sam spoke about this change and explained that Victor's teachers had told her that although his attainment in science was good there were "absolutely extremely talented children in the school this year", meaning that Victor's attainment was ranked lower than it may have been in other years. Partly as a result of his move to 'set two', then, Victor here indicated that he no longer saw becoming a scientist as a viable option because he was not "really good" at science, as others in his school were. In other words, his move to 'set two' had made Victor doubt whether he had the academic ability in science to succeed in becoming a scientist. This, I argue, illustrates how science teaching was partly a 'backup' career for Victor when a future in science became less feasible due to its associations with natural, or effortless, cleverness (e.g., Archer, Moote, & MacLeod, 2020a).

By age 15/16, however, Victor no longer reported that he wanted to become a teacher. Instead, in his interviews at ages 15/16 and 17/18 Victor reported that his only aspiration was now to become an astrophysicist. One could therefore consider

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[89] Flexible subject-by-subject grouping by attainment, or 'setting', is a common practice in schools in England. See Tereshchenko et al. (2019) for more information.

Victor as having directed his trajectory away from the figured worlds of teaching. Speaking at age 15/16, Victor explained that he had first heard about the subject of astrophysics by chance from a friend;

> a friend just mentioned the word 'astrophysics' and I was thinking 'I like physics and I like astronomy […] I want to do something along the lines of how everything works', and then my friend said 'astrophysics' and sort of by chance that's exactly what I want to do.

In this quote Victor claims that when he first learnt about astrophysics, he realised that it combined two areas of science which he was already interested in pursuing. I propose that Victor here demonstrates how becoming aware of the field of astrophysics enabled him to refigure a non-teaching future career in science as viable. As has been discussed in detail elsewhere (Archer, Moote, & MacLeod, 2020b), I suggest that this (renewed) feasibility of science, specifically physics, for Victor was strongly shaped by his intersecting identities as a White British middle-class man, his masculine and science identities, and his family's strong support for his physics aspirations; all of which have been shown to contribute to someone seeing themselves as 'suited to' physics (e.g., Archer, Moote, & MacLeod, 2020a; Avraamidou, 2022).

After completing a degree in Physics (where he specialised in astrophysics), however, Victor redirected his trajectory towards teaching once more. Victor reported that he was considering becoming a teacher in his interview at age 20/21, and at age 21/22 Victor told me that he had recently applied to ITE to become a science teacher. Explaining his decision to apply to ITE specialising in secondary Physics in his interview at age 21/22, Victor explained that he wanted to teach because he had

enjoyed working as a children's sports teacher during two summers at university., Victor also reported, however, that he had been attracted by the financial incentives available to specialise in Physics teaching and that he saw teaching as "almost guaranteed work" which was "very secure, and very stable". I suggest these data provide evidence that Victor had worked to align himself with all three cultural models constructing teaching as high in safety. Victor simultaneously seemed to figure teaching as accessible because it was 'almost guaranteed', as enabling a good lifestyle through generous physics-specialist bursaries, and as secure (as was exemplified in Section 5.3.2.3). Indeed, Victor did not report applying for any other graduate roles at this time, which hints at how much Victor's self-authoring was tied to these figurings of teaching as high in safety, and indicates Victor's assumption that he would become a teacher after applying to ITE.

It was clear from Sam's interview at this time, however, that Victor had struggled to find a non-teaching role in science and engineering after graduating from his degree, and that she had encouraged him to apply to ITE because she knew that science teachers were needed. Viewed alongside Victor's own valuing of the safety of teaching, I therefore argue that teaching was (again) a backup option for Victor at this time, in that he seemed to have decided to apply to ITE after first trying, but failing, to find an alternative career in science or engineering. In this way, Victor's renewed interest in teaching has some similarities with Carol's return to teaching (as presented in Section 6.3), and also supports findings which suggest that science teachers may be more likely to turn to teaching after other careers did not work out (e.g., Dawes & Wheeldon, 2022).

Furthermore, although Sam reported that she thought Victor's difficulty in finding a non-teaching role in science or engineering might have been a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, I suggest that this difficulty could provide evidence of the lack of science career resources, or capital, that Victor had available to him. For example, throughout his interviews Victor reported that he did not know anyone who worked in physics or astrophysics. As Sam said in her own interview when Victor was 15/16;

> I mean, man, if [Victor] does do this astrophysics thing, you know, I think, oh man, good on him. Because it's not something, you know, anyone in the family can, you know, help him with or anything else, and he'll kind of be pioneering his own way.

This quote from Sam indicates that, although Victor's family were supportive of his aspirations to work in astrophysics, they may have felt unequipped to provide him with any practical support to achieve this aspiration. In addition, looking back on his time at university at age 20/21 Victor told me that a daytrip to another, more prestigious, university during his degree had made him and his course mates realise that his institution did not have the best resources; "we were all like, 'wow, we should have put in some work when we were in A Levels', just to go to a place [like that]". Victor here implies that he had not considered the potential for such differences between universities when he had applied to undergraduate degrees; something that may be a consequence of Victor being the first person in his family to attend university. In this way, I argue that the difficulty that Victor encountered in finding a non-teaching role in science, and his subsequent return towards teaching, was shaped by a lack of available science (career) resources, or capital, from either his family or his university. Indeed, previous research from the ASPIRES project has

shown that those with lower levels of 'science capital'[90], or science-related capital and resources, are less likely to pursue science as they grow older (Moote et al., 2021). Informed by the cultural model that 'teaching is accessible', becoming a science teacher was seen by both Victor and his family as a more attainable route towards working in physics than other careers in science.

In my interview with Victor at age 21/22, however, he told me that he had not been accepted onto any of the three secondary physics PGCE courses that he had applied to through UCAS[91]. According to Victor's narrative, the reason why he had been unsuccessful was because he had submitted his application too late in the academic year (spring 2021), and he was told that all PGCE physics places for the following September had already been filled by the time he had applied. On one hand, Victor's ITE application may well have been rejected due to timing because, as was highlighted in Sections 1.2 and 2.2.2.3, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic saw an increase in the amount of people applying to teach, including in science (Worth & Faulkner-Ellis, 2021). On the other hand, this scenario seems unlikely given the recurrent missed targets in physics teacher recruitment (Long & Danechi, 2022), and the ongoing severe shortages of physics teachers (e.g., Allen et al., 2018). One alternative explanation is therefore that Victor's ITE application was not successful because it was not deemed to be of a high enough quality. Indeed, nearly 40% of the 43,305 applicants to postgraduate ITE in England in 2021 were not accepted onto ITE courses[92] (UCAS, 2023). Whatever the reason(s) why Victor's ITE applications

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[90] For a detailed conceptualisation of the concept of 'science capital' see Archer et al. (2015).
[91] Victor applied to ITE in spring 2021, and thus before the change in ITE application systems detailed in Section 1.3.2. Through this system applicants could apply to three different PGCE providers.
[92] Published ITE acceptance rates do not include breakdowns by subject specialism, and so this figure relates to all postgraduate teaching specialisms.

were unsuccessful, however, it was clear that not being accepted onto ITE served to disrupt, and ultimately redirect, Victor's trajectory away from teaching.

The data show that Victor's experience of having his ITE applications rejected worked to dismantle his earlier figurings of teaching as high in safety; and especially his emphasis on the accessibility of teaching which had been so central to his reattraction towards becoming a teacher. In other words, the safety with which Victor had previously figured teaching was lost once his assumption that he would become a teacher after applying to ITE was proved wrong. This dismantling of the safety of teaching led Victor to navigate his identity in practice away from the figured world of teaching. As he told me at age 21/22, because teaching "didn't end up happening" as he had planned, Victor now doubted whether he would apply to ITE again. Instead, Victor said that he was taking time to find something else that he could do, and in the meantime had started a temporary role as a cleaner and caretaker. Victor also spoke about finding work in a supermarket, and said that he had recently booked a careers guidance session with his old university in the hope of identifying an alternative career path to teaching; one which he hoped would involve science and/or engineering.

In this way, I suggest that Victor could be viewed as interpreting his ITE rejections as positioning him as an unviable teacher, or outside of the figured worlds of teaching. Victor then responded to this positioning by working to distance himself from the— now risky—profession of teaching. Instead of considering reapplying to ITE in the future, then, Victor was looking for roles which might provide the accessibility and job security with which he had previously figured teaching. To this extent, although on one hand Victor was himself rejected from teaching, on the other hand I posit that

Victor then rejected teaching himself; he turned away from teaching because he no longer depicted it as high in safety.

7.2.2 Victor and Hedgehog's 'teacher-breaker'

Victor's teaching trajectory suggests that the biggest factor in why Victor dropped his earlier teaching aspiration was that he no longer figured teaching as high in safety. Likewise, another one of this study's participants, Hedgehog, also dropped a long-term teaching aspiration after teaching was no longer high in safety, and/or became risky. Unlike Victor, however, Hedgehog dropped his teaching aspiration whilst he was still in school and for reasons linked with the cost of university.

Hedgehog is a White British young man and comes from working-class background. He expressed an aspiration to become a teacher, first in primary and then in secondary PE, at ages 10/11, 12/13 and 13/14. As seen in Section 5.3.2.2, this aspiration was influenced by Hedgehog's figuring of teaching as decently paid and enabling a good lifestyle. By age 15/16, however, Hedgehog reported that he no longer aspired to teach, partly because he no longer wanted to go to university. Using data from interviews with Hedgehog's father, Larry, I suggest that Hedgehog dropped his teaching aspiration after the cost of going to university meant that he no longer figured teaching as high in safety. For instance, speaking when Hedgehog was 13/14 and shortly after the government's increase in the university tuition fees cap in England from £3,000 to £9,000 per year[93], Larry described student debt as "a nightmare" which was likely to affect young people's ability "to get on the housing ladder". This, I argue, illustrates that Larry was not simply uneasy about the

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[93] For more information about this policy change see Section 1.3 of a report on Tuition Fee Statistics by Bolton (2017).

significant cost of a university degree, but was particularly worried about the negative effect of this debt on Hedgehog's future, and specifically Hedgehog's ability to buy his own home. In this way, Larry could be interpreted as implicitly questioning the capacity for teaching (along with other graduate roles) to offer a good lifestyle, thus challenging Hedgehog's earlier figuring of teaching as high in safety. As a result, just as Victor interpreted his unsuccessful ITE applications as distancing him from a future in teaching, Hedgehog interpreted Larry's concerns as positioning him at a distance from figured worlds which would require a degree; including those of teaching. As a result of this positioning, Hedgehog thus worked to navigate his trajectory away from teaching and he instead worked towards a future career which would not involve the cost and risk of university debt.

Interestingly, however, Hedgehog did go on to pursue an undergraduate degree and thus, like Victor, became the first person in his family to go to university. In his interview at age 21/22 Hedgehog recalled how he had made the decision to attend university after first working full-time for two years after college in roles which he did not enjoy. Whilst working, Hedgehog had researched the student loans system in the UK, and had learnt that university debt is not treated in the same way as other types of debt. In particular, Hedgehog learnt that university debt does not prevent home ownership, as he and Larry had previously thought (see Bolton, 2017). As a result, Hedgehog chose to pursue his "passion" for film, by studying Film at university. Most notably for this study, however, at age 21/22 Hedgehog said that he hoped to work in the film industry after graduating, and that he was not interested in pursuing teaching. I suggest that Hedgehog did not reconsider teaching at this time because of his earlier identity work to distance himself from the figured worlds of teaching.

Of course, there are multiple differences between the trajectories of Victor and Hedgehog. These differences include the specialisms within teaching that Victor and Hedgehog originally aspired towards, their family's support for their teaching aspirations, and the ages at which they dropped their teaching aspiration. Nevertheless, as I have attempted to demonstrate in this section, both Victor and Hedgehog seem to have turned away from teaching after it was no longer high in safety, and instead became 'risky' (Archer & Francis, 2006). For Victor, teaching became unsafe because he was rejected from ITE; whilst for Hedgehog teaching became unsafe because of the high financial cost of a university degree which, as highlighted in Section 1.3.1, is a requirement for becoming a qualified teacher in England. This loss of safety, I suggest, worked to disrupt the identity work that both Victor and Hedgehog had earlier conducted in relation to teaching, particularly the cultural models that construct teaching as high in safety. As a result, once teaching became risky, both of these participants dropped their teaching aspirations.

7.3   A non-teaching passion became safer than it had been

The second factor that was found to be influential in shaping young people's decision not to become a teacher in this study was where participants had a non-teaching passion[94] which became safer than it had previously been. In this section I present analyses of five participants (Celina, Louise, Lucy, Joanne and Mienie); all of whom identified as young women and all of whom expressed a teaching aspiration in multiple interviews. All of these participants, however, also held a long-term first-choice aspiration in a non-teaching sector which they initially figured as high risk, and therefore unviable. I argue that all five participants were interested in teaching

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[94] Here I refer to a 'passion' as a subject or area that was not teaching, in which participants held a long-term (often first-choice) alternative aspiration.

partly as a second-choice, or backup, career that was 'safer', or less risky, than their first-choice aspiration. Once their first-choice aspirations became safer, however, all of these participants dropped their teaching aspiration in favour of pursuing their first-choice non-teaching passion.

In this section I present the teaching trajectories of Louise (Section 7.3.1) and Joanne (Section 7.3.2); both of whom I chose because they dropped their interest in teaching despite significant teaching-type experiences. I end this section with a consideration of some of the similarities and differences between Celina, Louise, Lucy, Joanne and Mienie in order to consider why and how their passion becoming safer led them to drop their teaching aspirations (Section 7.3.3). As highlighted in Table 16 two participants considered in this section, Joanne and Mienie, both also share a second teacher-breaker; that teaching was no longer high in status (see Section 7.4).

7.3.1 Louise's teaching trajectory

Here I introduce the teaching trajectory of Louise, in which I present analyses of data from longitudinal interviews with Louise and with Louise's mother, Marie. Louise is a White British young woman from a working-class background who reported that she wanted to become a drama teacher at age 12/13, and that she was still interested in teaching at age 13/14. By age 15/16 Louise said that she wanted to become an English teacher. By the time of her interviews at ages 17/18 and 20/21, however, Louise said that she was interested in teaching only as a second career. Throughout these interviews Louise's aspirations to teach were mostly presented as implicit or explicit 'backup' options to her long-term first-choice aspiration to work in dance, mostly as a dancer or choreographer. Louise completed an undergraduate degree in

Dance and was studying for a Masters in Dance when I spoke to her at age 21/22, at which time she expressed her continued hope to work in a dance-related non-teaching role after her graduation.

When Louise reported that she wanted to become a teacher in her interviews at ages 12/13, 13/14 and 15/16 it was clear that this interest in teaching was influenced by multiple factors which, in line with findings from Section 5.3, reflected cultural models which construct teaching as both high in status and high in safety. In terms of status, for example, at age 12/13 Louise said that she looked up to two of her cousins who were teachers, whom she described as having "good jobs". I propose that this admiration for her cousins provides evidence of Louise's figuring of teaching as a profession.

Louise also figured teaching as high in safety. This figuring was evident in Louise's continued use of the cultural model that 'teaching is accessible', especially when comparing teaching with her first-choice aspiration of dance. For instance, when asked about her career aspirations at age 15/16 Louise said that her "ultimate dream" would be to become a dancer, but added that she thought that this was unlikely to happen compared to becoming a teacher;

> I know that [becoming a dancer is] slightly unrealistic considering like, the like, the marketplace for those kind of jobs. So I'm looking more to teach, like, English probably. […Teaching is] going to be easier, because I'm not going to a dance college [...] I'd love to do [dance], but I just know how hard it is.

As highlighted in Section 5.3.2.1, at age 15/16 Louise also explicitly described teaching as her "backup" career; something which was strongly supported by Marie, who worried that the risk of injury made dancing an unstable career. This evidence,

along with the above quote, indicates that Louise did not consider teaching to offer her the chance to pursue her passion in dance but that she figured teaching (specifically ITE) as more accessible and stable, and therefore safer, than a career in dance. Indeed, Louise explained that the reason why her teaching aspiration was now to specialise in English, and not dance, was because she thought that there would be more job opportunities available to her as a secondary school English teacher than as a secondary school dance teacher. These data provide further evidence of how important the safety of teaching was to Louise. Unlike Victor, then, who seemed to see teaching as an alternative way to work in his passion of science (Section 7.2.1), Louise was apparently ready to abandon her passion of dance in favour of the safety and security of teaching.

Louise's focus on the cultural models underlining the safety of teaching was shaped by the social inequalities that she experienced as a young woman from a working-class background. First, I suggest that the economic hardships that Louise's family experienced meant that Louise and her parents saw teaching as well-paid and secure employment. For example, and in stark contrast to examples that will be presented later in this chapter (see Section 7.4), when Louise was 15/16 Marie, who worked in retail along with Louise's father, said that Louise would "get lots of money as a teacher". And later, in her interview at age 21/22, Louise spoke about her expectations regarding repaying her student loan; "I think, to pay back my student loan, I have to be earning at least 25K. I'm never, I've never expected to earn 25K in my life! Like, in *any* job. I'm not *expecting* to do that, my *parents* don't earn that". In this way, it is perhaps easy to see why teaching, which has a starting salary above that of the minimum student loan repayment salary (see Section 1.3.2), was

assumed to be a secure career and was thus figured as desirable in relation to a career in dance.

A likely second reason why teaching was depicted as a viable and safe future for Louise compared with dance, by both Louise herself and those around her, was that her intersecting identities as a White British working-class woman mirrored the image of the 'typical' teacher in England. Thus, as seen through the teaching trajectories of Amy and Millie in Chapter 6, identifying as a White British woman may have helped Louise to both be more readily recognised, and more easily see herself, as a teacher compared with those whose identities do not identify as White British women (e.g., Hancock & Warren, 2017; Lortie, 2002). In this way, the identity work needed to develop and maintain a trajectory towards teaching was simpler for Louise than it was for Victor and Hedgehog (Section 7.2), because her existing identities more closely aligned with those typically associated with teaching.

By her interview at age 17/18, however, Louise narrated how she no longer wanted to teach as a first career because she had decided to pursue a degree in Dance at university. Through this process Louise had learnt that there were many more jobs in dance than she had previously realised; "you wouldn't even believe. One of the things they say at [one university] is […] there's like 40,000 jobs for like Dance, like Dance jobs, out there". Louise explained that she had decided to pursue a Dance degree following encouragement from her school dance teacher. Speaking about this encouragement more at age 20/21 Louise told me that, whilst she had earlier planned to apply to study English at university so that she could become a secondary school English teacher, her dance teacher had questioned this:

> She was like 'Why are you not doing Dance?'. And I said to her, like, I didn't think there was a career and I had never really anticipated, like, degrees in Dance […] So she gave me a couple of unis – [one university] and [another university] were two of them… cos she had a lot of ex-students go to those unis. So that evening I booked my [university] open day ready for the September.

This interaction appears to have been a pivotal moment in Louise's teaching trajectory. Louise interpreted her teacher's encouragement to do a Dance degree, and her teacher's confirmation that others had seemingly successfully taken this route, as positioning her as someone with a viable future in dance. This positioning, accompanied by her realisation that there were a multitude of career opportunities in Dance, weakened Louise's earlier concerns about the accessibility and security of a career dance. Importantly, I suggest that this weakening meant that the safety with which Louise had previously figured teaching was no longer as important, and she thus chose to pursue a Dance degree and a Masters in Dance, and hoped to work in dance after graduating.

Louise's choice not to pursue teaching by age 21/22 does not, however, mark the end of her teaching trajectory. Interestingly, and unlike Victor and Hedgehog as seen in Section 7.2, even after Louise had pursued a degree in Dance she indicated that she had not fully turned away from teaching. In her interviews at ages 17/18, 20/21 and 21/22 Louise reported that she maintained an openness to teaching as a backup career if a future in dance performance and/or choreography did not work out. At age 20/21, for instance, Louise described her response to Marie's continued encouragement that she become a school dance teacher; "My mum's like 'be a

teacher, be a teacher' and I'm like 'I don't want to teach yet'". This quote illustrates that Marie continued to value the economic safety of teaching, and that Louise still figured dancing as viable. Specifically, by indicating that she did not want to teach "yet" I suggest that Louise had not fully 'dropped' her teaching aspiration, and that she maintained her alignment with the cultural model that 'teaching is accessible'.

One possible reason for Louise's continued interested in teaching was that, by the time of my interview with her at age 21/22, Louise had been working as a part-time maths and English tutor for several years. In this role Louise both tutored groups (up to six children at a time) and provided one-to-one support for individual tutees. Given that past research has drawn a link between such teaching-type experiences and the choice to pursue teaching (e.g., Schutz et al., 2001), one might therefore assume that being in this role may have enabled Louise to maintain her interest in teaching. Indeed, Louise spoke fondly of the "buzz" she got through this role when her tutees learnt something new, which could be interpreted as Louise aligning herself with the cultural model that 'teachers make a difference'. Louise was quick to point out, however, that her role as a tutor was different from teaching; particularly because she did not need to plan lessons in advance, and because the groups that she tutored were much smaller than most school class sizes[95]. In this way, although Louise appeared to maintain the possibility of becoming a teacher as a future backup career should dance (once again) become unviable, she also worked to maintain a distance from the figured worlds of teaching.

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[95] In England, the average class size is 26.7 students per class (UK Government, 2023).

7.3.2 Joanne's teaching trajectory

Next I introduce the teaching trajectory of Joanne, whom I suggest also dropped her teaching aspiration because working in her passion, this time in science, became safer than it had been. Joanne is a White British young woman from a middle-class background. Here I summarise analyses of data from longitudinal interviews with Joanne, and with her parents Judy and Matthew. Whilst Joanne expressed numerous different career aspirations throughout her ASPIRES interviews, she often reported aspirations to work in science; mostly as a doctor or, later, as a research scientist. In addition, Joanne reported an aspiration to become a secondary teacher (though said that she did not know which subject she would like to teach) at age 12/13. At age 20/21 Joanne again said that she had an interest in pursuing teaching (this time specialising in secondary science) along with other graduate careers, partly because she had enjoyed working and volunteering with young people. Joanne completed an undergraduate degree in Natural Sciences and in my interview with her at age 21/22 she explained that she had applied to ITE to become a science teacher the previous year, but had ended up withdrawing her application and pursuing a Masters in Biology instead. At this time Joanne also reported that she had recently accepted a place on a training scheme to become a lawyer specialising in scientific patents.

Although Joanne expressed a teaching aspiration at age 12/13, this was one of several career aspirations that Joanne expressed at this age, and she did not go into detail about what interested her about teaching. As she got older, however, Joanne's interviews indicated that she was conducting more significant identity work in relation to the figured worlds of teaching. In particular, at age 20/21 Joanne told me that she

had often considered becoming a teacher, and gave the example of depicting herself as a future teacher on a coaster that she had designed at school aged 9 on the topic of 'what I want to be when I grow up'; a coaster that Joanne said was still used in her family's living room. In addition, at age 20/21 Joanne said that she had recently been considering applying to Teach First to become a secondary science teacher after her undergraduate degree. Joanne told me that her renewed interest in teaching was partly because she had enjoyed working in science communication during a summer at university which had involved visiting schools, as well as volunteering as a science tutor at a state secondary school for a term of her undergraduate degree. Just like Louise (Section 7.3.1), Joanne referred to her enjoyment of helping young people learn, which I interpret as an alignment with the cultural model that 'teachers make a difference' and the storyline that teachers are highly skilled (see Section 5.3.1.2). In addition, Joanne described teaching as "a definitive road that you can go down", which I suggest demonstrates her figuring of teaching as a secure job; perhaps in comparison to other routes that she was considering at this time.

Indeed, also in her interview at age 20/21, Joanne expressed some doubt as to whether she could, or wanted, to pursue a career in scientific research as she had previously planned. Referring to her research experience at university, for example, Joanne said;

> My experience with laboratory work is very much love and hate. Sometimes I think 'oh this is great', and sometimes you think 'oh I lack any dexterity whatsoever, I'm failing at this' [… so] I'm not sure I want to go into academic research.

This quote indicates that part of the reason behind Joanne's interest in teaching at age 20/21 was its relative familiarity, and thus accessibility, compared with a future in science which she was now questioning. Indeed, just as Victor did at age 13/14 (Section 7.2.1), Joanne here seems to have turned towards the possibility of teaching because she doubted whether she had the natural ability to succeed in science; again invoking the idea that scientists need to be 'effortlessly clever' (Archer, Moote, & MacLeod, 2020a). As seen with Louise too, then, Joanne appears to consider teaching as an accessible 'backup' option if she cannot succeed in finding a non-teaching role in the subject for which she has a passion.

Unlike other participants considered so far in this chapter, however, at age 20/21 Joanne appeared to have additional backup options other than teaching. As she put it; "I am considering teaching, but I'm considering lots of things". Here, by describing how she is considering options aside from teaching, Joanne indicates that she is keeping multiple options open simultaneously. This openness to other options might have been influenced by Joanne's middle-class background, and specifically the relative economic stability of her family compared with that of Victor, Hedgehog and Louise. Indeed, unlike any of these participants, Joanne attended a fee-paying school and one of her parents, Judy, did not (need to) work (see Appendix 1). In other words, because of her family's financial stability, Joanne did not feel the same immediate pressure to find a source of stable income as the other participants so far considered in this chapter.

By the time of my teaching-focused interview with Joanne when she was 21/22, there was evidence that Joanne had worked to direct her trajectory away from the figured worlds of teaching. The first evidence of Joanne's navigation away from

teaching was her decision not to pursue ITE. Although at this age Joanne reported that she had ended up applying to become a science teacher since we had last spoken, she told me that she had withdrawn her application after receiving an invite to interview. Joanne explained that she had chosen to withdraw her ITE application because by this time she had already been offered a place on her Masters course in Biology and she wanted to try again at scientific research; "I wanted to, kind of, give one last shot at research. To have a slightly longer project that I could focus on, to see if, that, if I could, kind of, hack it there". I suggest that Joanne interpreted her Masters offer as positioning her as someone for whom a future in scientific research was, or might be, viable. In other words, the opportunity to do a Masters in science may have worked to assuage some of Joanne's earlier doubts about her ability to work in science, and she therefore dropped (or lessened) her backup aspiration in teaching.

Joanne's continued navigation away from teaching was clear from her choice of what to do after her Masters degree. At age 21/22 Joanne said that during her Masters she had chosen not to pursue future work in research after all, due to the "pressure to get results" and the instability of academic funding. In contrast to her previous interview, however, Joanne did not repeat doubts about her own ability in research, and seemed mostly deterred from research because of the structural issues within academia[96]. As a result, Joanne said that she had decided to apply for jobs outside of science but which were still related to science, and that she had ultimately ended up accepting a role to train as a patent lawyer. Joanne explained that this role provided her with the job security that was lacking from many scientific research

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[96] See Rosa (2022) for a review covering some of these issues.

jobs, and provided more predictable day-to-day work than research whilst allowing her to keep "talking to other people about the science". In terms of her teaching trajectory, Joanne did not appear to return to her interest in teaching at this time and instead navigated her trajectory away from teaching. I therefore argue that Joanne dropped her teaching aspiration because she had found a job which aligned with her hopes and expectations; a job which was both secure and used science. As with Louise (Section 7.3.1), then, Joanne did not become a teacher partly because her non-teaching passion (in science) became safer.

Importantly, however, and as outlined in Table 16, Joanne's teaching trajectory also indicated a second 'teacher-breaker'; that Joanne no longer figured teaching as high in status. For example, when I asked Joanne at age 21/22 what her family would have thought if she'd have become a teacher, she replied; "I think my, like, my parents would think that I'm 'better' than [teaching …] that I could probably do better […] Basically, from the conversations I've had with them about it, that's kind of the impression that I get". In terms of status, then, although Joanne figured teaching as making a difference, this quote hints that she did not figure teaching as a profession[97]. Indeed, in Judy and Matthew's own joint interview when Joanne was 20/21 (before she had decided to pursue law), they both acknowledged that Joanne had recently expressed an interest in teaching, but seemed to dispute whether Joanne would actually become a teacher. For instance, echoing Joanne's own quote, Matthew referred to teaching as something that would be a "last resort" for Joanne. In this example of implicit dissuasion from teaching, Matthew can be seen to question the cultural model that 'teaching is a (highly educated) profession' and

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[97] See Sections 7.4 and 8.2.3 for discussion of whether the status of teaching was 'lost', or was never evident, for Joanne and others.

implies that Joanne is too highly qualified to consider becoming a teacher whilst other possibilities are available. In this way, Joanne's parents not only discouraged her from teaching, but actively worked to distance her from the figured worlds of teaching by questioning the cultural model that 'teaching is a profession' compared with other careers in science. Just as research has shown that dissuasion from teaching can be classed (see Section 2.3.1.6), this positioning further demonstrates the family's middle-class position, and specifically their economic privilege compared with other participants so far considered in this chapter. Compared with Victor's mother Sam, for example, who encouraged Victor to become a teacher when other roles in science seemed difficult to attain, Judy and Matthew assumed that there would be many other options open to Joanne before she would need to consider becoming a teacher. See Section 7.4 for further discussion on the 'teacher-breaker' that teaching is no longer high in status.

7.3.3 Louise, Lucy, Celina, Joanne and Mienie's 'teacher-breaker'

In this section I have examined the teaching trajectories of Louise and Joanne; two White British women who aspired to teach in more than one interview between the ages of 10/11 and 20/21, both of whom decided not to pursue teaching after a career in their passion became more viable than it had previously been. Analyses of this study's data revealed that three other participants (Lucy, Celina and Mienie) all also dropped an earlier teaching aspiration because their non-teaching passion became safer than it had previously been; meaning that this 'teacher-breaker' is the most common influence identified in this study upon why people decide not to teach. The ways in which different passions became safer, however, differed greatly between participants as will now be discussed.

Lucy and Celina, like Louise, are White British women from working-class families. Both expressed an aspiration to teach in four different interviews, but both also held a long-term non-teaching aspiration in a subject which they were passionate about. For Lucy, this passion was in art and design and was evident from her first APSIRES interview at age 10/11; whereas for Celina, this passion was in psychology, which she first mentioned at age 15/16. As seen with both Louise and Joanne, teaching was depicted as a realistic and secure 'backup' career by Lucy and Celina, compared with their more risky and uncertain potential respective future careers in art and psychology.

Both Lucy and Celina experienced something which made their respective passions in art and psychology seem much safer, or more viable, than they had originally been. For Lucy, secure employment in art and design became viable after she developed an awareness of the game design sector through her partner and her partner's brother, both of whom worked in the video game industry; and she went on to do an undergraduate degree in Game Design. In contrast, Celina learnt more about the range of roles available in the field of psychology after experiencing her own mental health difficulties, as a result of which she had multiple interactions with people working in psychology through the NHS's Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Celina went on to study psychology for her undergraduate degree[98]. In this way, both Lucy and Celina dropped their teaching aspirations because, as was shown in more detail through the trajectories of Louise and Joanne, their non-teaching aspiration became less risky and therefore more viable. This means that one of the main factors that had drawn both Lucy and Celina

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[98] Whilst I recognise that the field of psychology is sometimes considered a science, in line with this study's definition of 'science specialist' (see Section 4.3.2.1) I do not consider Celina to be a science specialist.

towards teaching (its relative accessibility compared with their passion) was no longer as important.

As with Louise, however, both Lucy and Celina maintained an openness to teaching even after they had decided not to pursue teaching as a first career. In the case of Lucy, this maintained openness to teaching may have been because she had worked for two years as a children's sports teacher before starting university. Just as Louise's experience as a tutor, then, this role may have provided Lucy with the opportunity to conduct continued identity work in relation to teaching. Something that Louise, Lucy and Celina all shared, however, was that they all identified as White British women and came from working-class backgrounds. As discussed in Louise's teaching trajectory (Section 7.3.1), all thus shared intersectional identities with the typical teacher in England (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 6).

The fifth and final participant who dropped their teaching aspiration because their non-teaching passion became safer was Mienie, an Asian young woman who described herself as EAL (having moved to England from different European country when she was part-way through primary school). Mienie's passion was in science, as was evident from her first ASPIRES interview at age 10/11, where she expressed an aspiration to become either a doctor or a teacher. By age 13/14, however, Mienie dropped her aspiration in science in favour of teaching because of a fear of blood. As seen in Chapter 5 (Section 5.3.2.1), Mienie described teaching at this age as "the easy option" which hints that, as with the other four participants considered in this section, teaching was a 'backup' or second-choice option for Mienie once her future as a doctor was called into question.

By her interview at age 15/16 it was clear that Mienie had come to see a future in science as once again possible after learning about cosmetic chemistry on a recent visit to a department store beauty counter. Specifically, Mienie spoke about now wanting to be a cosmetic chemist after discovering how chemists who worked for a specific beauty brand had developed a natural serum to protect darker skin types against the sun;

> [the brand] have a serum which, well it, because I feel like I have a dark neck, so then I use their serum […] the melanin in your skin, well in darker people there's a lot, so when you're exposed to sun it's more […the serum] doesn't make your skin go quickly dark, so I feel that's quite interesting and it's made by three flowers, which I find that so interesting.

In this quote Mienie provides evidence of the way in which her aspiration to work in science had become viable once more. Specifically, Mienie seemed to see cosmetic chemistry as aligning with her intersecting identities including her science identity (e.g., her understanding of melanin), her Asian identity (e.g., her skin colour), and her gender identity (e.g., her interest in beauty). In this way, as seen with the other participants considered in this section, I suggest that Mienie dropped her teaching aspiration because a future in science had become more viable, or safer, than it had previously been. Unlike Louise, Lucy and Celina, however, Mienie then distanced herself from teaching rather than maintaining it as a backup option. Furthermore, like Joanne, Mienie's transcripts evidence her questioning of the cultural models that 'teaching is a (highly educated and skilled) profession'; as will be discussed further in Section 7.4.

In this section I have demonstrated how five of this study's participants (Louise, Lucy, Celina, Joanne and Mienie) dropped their earlier interests in teaching after their non-teaching passion became safer, or more viable, than it had previously been. Of course, there are notable differences between each of these participants' teaching trajectories; including the different specialisms within teaching that they aspired towards, their 'passion' subject, the ages at which they dropped their teaching aspiration, as well as how and why their passion subject became more safe or viable. Despite these differences this section has illustrated that all five of these participants aspired to teaching, to some extent, as a backup aspiration to a first-choice aspiration that was initially seen as riskier, or unsafe. Once this first-choice aspiration became safer then, each of these participants chose to pursue their passion and as a result dropped their teaching aspiration. Three of these participants, Louise, Lucy and Celina, all worked to maintain the possibility of becoming a teacher in the future, whilst Joanne and Mienie both conducted additional identity work to distance themselves from teaching. Notably, Joanne and Mienie's also no longer depicted teaching as high in status of teaching. This teacher-breaker was also influential for this study's final three participants, as will now be explored.

7.4   Teaching was no longer high in status

The third and final factor that I identified as influencing participants in this study to drop their earlier teaching interests and/or aspirations was that teaching was no longer constructed as high in status. As highlighted in Chapter 5 (see Table 11), all participants in this study were seen to figure teaching as both high in status and high in safety at least once in their longitudinal interviews. Analyses presented here,

however, indicate that the three remaining participants in this study (Kate, Buddy and Samantha) chose not to pursue teaching because they no longer figured teaching using cultural models that construct teaching as high in status at age 21/22.

I have chosen to exemplify this 'teacher-breaker' through Kate's teaching trajectory (Section 7.4.1) because unlike Buddy and Samantha, both of whom might be described as having only briefly considered teaching, Kate's teaching trajectory clearly demonstrates her multidirectional identity work in relation to teaching over a period of time. In Section 7.4.2 I then consider the similarities and differences between Samantha, Kate and Buddy's trajectories, in addition to those of Joanne and Mienie who also shared this 'teacher-breaker' (as highlighted in Section 7.3), in order to consider why and how these participants all dropped their aspirations because teaching was no longer high in status.

7.4.1 Kate's teaching trajectory

Kate is a White British and Irish young woman from a middle-class background. In this section I present Kate's teaching trajectory using analyses of data from interviews with Kate, as well as interviews with her mother, Sue. Kate included becoming a teacher amongst her career aspirations at age 10/11. From age 12/13 onwards, however, Kate did not mention wanting to teach again and instead tended towards wanting to work in science, most often as a vet. When asked specifically about teaching at age 20/21, however, Kate said that she had recently started an application to ITE to become a science teacher, but had ultimately decided not to continue with the application. When I spoke to Kate at age 21/22 she had graduated from an undergraduate degree in Natural Sciences, and was studying for a Masters in Biology. At this time Kate told me that she had ended up applying to ITE, but had

withdrawn the application after being invited to interview. She had recently accepted a position to study for a PhD in Biology after her Masters, and hoped to continue working in scientific research in the future.

Although Kate included teaching amongst her career aspirations in her first ASPIRES interview, there was little evidence of why she was attracted towards teaching at this age. This suggests that Kate may have only had a fleeting interest in teaching at age 10/11. By her interview at age 20/21, however, there was evidence to suggest that Kate had recently considered teaching more seriously. For instance, when asked if she had ever considered teaching[99] at age 20/21 Kate replied;

> Uh yes, I have. I did like the first stages of an application for Teach First, and then I was like, 'well I'm only really signing up to this because I know it's a job that I would definitely get', and I don't really want to do teaching […] My friends are quite often like 'Oh you'd be a good teacher', but I think doing more of a 9 to 5 job where you kind of know that in 10 years you might be doing the same thing as when you started doesn't… it would kind of feel a little bit like giving up, maybe, going into teaching.

In this quote, Kate both explains why she had considered teaching and started an ITE application, as well as why she did not continue with the application. First, Kate indicates some of the influences upon her decision to begin the application. By telling the interviewer that her friends often told her that she would (already) be "a good teacher" Kate demonstrates that she attempted to work to align her identity work with the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted'. Next, by claiming that she would

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[99] As outlined in Section 4.3.2.1, this question was included in the ASPIRES interview schedule when the project's participants were 20/21 in order to aid this study's primary sampling and data collection.

"definitely get" an ITE place, it seems Kate also authored herself in line with the cultural model that 'teaching is accessible' (as was discussed in Section 5.3.2.1). In this way I suggest that Kate, though seemingly briefly, worked to develop her trajectory towards teaching using cultural models that positioned teaching as both high in status and high in safety.

The above quote from Kate also, however, demonstrates that Kate worked to distance herself from the figured worlds of teaching once she had decided not to continue with her ITE application. For example, in addition to reporting that she did not "want" to become a teacher, a second interpretation of Kate's claim that she would "definitely get" an ITE place is that she questions the cultural models that 'teachers are gifted', and that 'teaching is a (highly educated) profession'. This is because Kate here implies that she would be accepted onto ITE without necessarily having any specific skills (or 'gifts') or qualifications (or 'education'), other than her undergraduate degree.

Likewise, by suggesting that pursuing teaching would be like "giving up" Kate further challenges the cultural model that 'teaching is a (highly skilled) profession'; as both Joanne and Mienie also did (see Section 7.3). This is because Kate indicates that teaching would be a monotonous "9 to 5 job" that would not change or develop over time, or with experience. In contrast, the same quote also demonstrates that Kate figures science as offering a more interesting and varied career which would require her to learn and adapt to new experiences. In this way, compared with Kate's figuring of non-teaching careers in science, teaching was no longer high in status. One could therefore argue that the 'low status' of teaching played a role in Kate's decision not to continue with her ITE application. Importantly, however, I do not

define 'low status' as the categorisation of the social standing of teaching against other professions (as seen in Section 2.3.1.1), but with reference to the way in which Kate challenged or disputed the cultural models that construct teaching as '*high* in status'.

More so than the other science specialists considered so far in this chapter (Victor, Joanne and Mienie), Kate also demonstrated her high self-confidence in science along with her belief that she would be able to find a job in science. For example, also at age 20/21, Kate described herself as "a science-y person" and said that others would describe her as such. Kate also indicated that she could see herself working in scientific research in the future. In this way, Kate had a strong science identity. Drawing upon wider research about how young people do (and do not) develop science identities, I suggest that Kate's science identity development was supported by factors including her White British identity, that she came from a middle-class background, had a parent working in science, and attended a fee-paying single-sex school[100] (Archer, Moote, MacLeod, et al., 2020; Carlone & Johnson, 2007). In other words just as Louise, Lucy and Celina's intersectional identities seemed to help them fit within, or closer to, the figured worlds of teaching (see Section 7.3); Kate's intersectional identities helped her to fit within the figured worlds of science.

When I spoke to Kate again at age 21/22, however, it was apparent that since her interview the previous year Kate had vectored her trajectory closer towards the figured worlds of teaching before, again, navigating away from these worlds. In her

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[100] Where relevant in this thesis I identify the school/s that participants attended as 'single-sex' (as opposed to 'mixed-sex') in order to provide contextual information about whether or not their school was gender segregated. These terms are the most commonly used descriptors of types of school used by the DfE.

interview with me at age 21/22 Kate said that she had ended up submitting an ITE application to become a science teacher after all. Kate explained that she made this decision after it had been difficult to find a temporary job as a lab technician, as she had originally hoped to do after graduating from university on the advice of a friend;

> Maybe it was because it was during the pandemic [laughs], or maybe this is just how it is […] I *thought* there would be, like, lots of lab tech positions, and there just, kind of, *wasn't* […] I wasn't really sure what to do […] I thought, 'well just fill in the [ITE] application, and think about it later'.

Although Kate had now considered becoming a teacher more seriously than she had in the previous year—given that this time she had submitted her ITE application— this quote reveals that teaching was somewhat of an emergency, or sudden, backup option when Kate was unable to find work in a lab and was not sure what else to do. Echoing some of what she had said the previous year, then, the most significant aspect of Kate's renewed interest in teaching was the accessibility of teaching, and specifically the ease of access to ITE, in comparison with other roles that she was interested in.

In this way, Kate's trajectory at age 21/22 has comparisons with that of both Victor (Section 7.2.1) and Joanne (Section 7.3.2), both of whom also encountered difficulties in finding graduate roles in science before turning towards teaching. More so than Victor and Joanne, however, Kate speculated whether the reason why she could not find work in science may have been due to restrictions associated with the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. In this way, Kate's decision to apply to ITE seems reflective of many of those whose applications generated a temporary spike in teacher recruitment during the pandemic (e.g., Worth & Faulkner-Ellis, 2021), and

who applied to ITE due to economic and labour market uncertainty in other sectors (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.3). As Kate went on to explain, however, she chose not to pursue teaching and withdrew her ITE application after receiving an invite to interview for an ITE place. As Kate told me at age 21/22; "I was like, 'oh, I don't really want to spend ages preparing for [the ITE interview…], then I think I was, like, 'well if I don't want to do these things I really don't think I want to [teach]'". In this way, Kate's narration of why she withdrew her ITE application differed from Joanne's (see Section 7.3.2); whilst Joanne said that she had already received an offer to study for a Masters by the time that she was invited to interview for ITE, Kate said that she chose not to interview for ITE because she did not think that she would enjoy teaching.

Although at age 21/22 Kate did not work to challenge the cultural models of teaching in the same explicit way as she did previously, when I asked more about her views of teaching Kate implicitly questioned the cultural model that 'teaching is a profession'. For instance, when I asked Kate what she thought her planned future in scientific research offered that teaching did not, she said that she thought that whilst science was "always changing" and thus offered continuous opportunities to learn new and different things, teaching did not; "if you're a teacher, you will teach one lesson one year, and then come the next academic [year], you might teach the same lessons *again*". As with the previous year, Kate here demonstrates her figuring of teaching as a career which does not offer opportunity for development and which is the same for those newly qualified in the profession, as it is for those with long-term experience in the profession. I interpret this figuring as evidence of Kate disputing the cultural model that 'teaching is a (highly skilled) profession', as was also seen in the trajectories of both Joanne and Mienie (Section 7.3). I also posit that this figuring

could be informed by what Lortie (2002) would call Kate's 'apprenticeship of observation'; her experience of watching and evaluating (only) the 'frontstage' work of teachers as a school student (Borg, 2004).

Specifically, there did not appear to have been a specific moment or identifiable driving factor which prompted teaching to no longer be figured as high in status by Kate. In other words, Kate's questioning of the cultural model that 'teaching is a profession' was not obviously because her future in science became more viable (as with both Joanne and Mienie), or the result of a her parents' positioning (as with Joanne, Section 7.3.2); but appeared to be informed by Kate's underlying and existing assumptions about teaching. This lack of a 'critical incident' may be linked with what one might call the 'seriousness' of Kate's interest in teaching. Although Kate's teaching trajectory navigated both towards and away from the figured worlds of teaching, perhaps more so that any of the other participants so far considered in this chapter, Kate's interest in teaching seemed only momentary. I suggest that this was the case because Kate never really figured teaching as high in status. More specifically, and just like Joanne (Section 7.3.2), although there is evidence that Kate figured teaching as making a difference (see Table 11), maybe she never figured teaching as a profession.

7.4.2 Kate, Buddy and Samantha's (and Joanne and Mienie's) 'teacher-breaker'

In this section I have demonstrated that a third key influence in participants' decision not to pursue teaching was that teaching was no longer high in status. Specifically, using her trajectory journey (towards and) away from teaching I have illustrated how Kate questioned the cultural model that 'teaching is a (highly skilled and highly

educated) profession'; similar to the way in which both Joanne and Mienie also did. Unlike all other participants considered so far in this chapter, however, Kate's decision not to become a teacher was linked only to the status, and not the safety, of teaching. There are two other participants in this study for which this was also true; Buddy and Samantha.

Buddy is a White British and European young man and Samantha is a young woman who described her ethnicity as mixed (White and Asian). Like Kate, both Buddy and Samantha came from middle-class backgrounds and attended fee-paying single-sex schools. Unlike Kate, however, neither Buddy nor Samantha included teaching among their aspirations in any of their ASPIRES interviews until the age of 20/21. When they were asked explicitly about teaching for the first time at age 20/21, both Buddy and Samantha indicated an interest in becoming a teacher. Buddy suggested that teaching was something that he had been contemplating for a while, along with his main aspiration to work in the performing arts. Buddy added that he had recently signed up to take a non-compulsory teaching module as part of his university degree in History because he liked the idea of contributing to society (see Section 5.3.1.1). In addition, Samantha said that she would "love" to become a science teacher in her interview at age 20/21, but only as a second career after she had first worked in science policy, partly because she saw teaching as secure (as discussed in Section 5.3.2.3), but also as a "family friendly" career that she could turn to after she had children. In a similar way to Carol (see Section 6.4), then, Samantha's interest in teaching was closely linked to her figuring of teaching as both secure and 'compatible with family life', and thus high in safety.

Both Buddy and Samantha claimed to maintain their interest in teaching during my interviews with them at age 21/22. Indeed, by the time of this interview, Samantha was a volunteer maths tutor in a disadvantaged school; a role which she said she was really enjoying and which had made her "more seriously consider going to teaching later", though still only as a second career. Like Kate, however, both Buddy and Samantha could be seen to question the cultural model that 'teaching is a (highly educated or highly skilled) profession' at age 21/22. For example, Buddy said that he thought that parents of young people who expressed a teaching aspiration "would say 'aim a bit higher first'", whereas Samantha said that she thought that becoming a science teacher would be "almost a waste of a science degree" and that there were better "career prospects" outside of teaching. Both of these quotes echo Kate's questioning of the opportunities for progress and challenge within teaching. I therefore suggest that, like Kate, both Buddy and Samantha doubted the construction of teaching as high in status and that this was the main influence in their decision not to become a teacher.

The specific ways in which both Buddy and Samantha challenged the cultural model that 'teaching is a profession' differed, however. Just as Kate questioned the intellectual challenge of teaching, Buddy appeared to doubt the pedagogical skills and demands of teaching when he spoke about the ease with which he had supported his partner's mother, a primary school teacher, in her marking. In contrast, one of the key ways in which Samantha disputed the high status of teaching was through her narration of teacher pay. As she put it at age 21/22, "the potential for earning [as a teacher] is *fairly* capped". On one hand, Samantha's mention of teacher pay echoes what many presume to be a deterrent from teaching for science specialists (e.g., Sims, 2018b) and could be interpreted as a challenge to the safety

of teaching (i.e., the storyline that 'teaching is decently paid'; see Section 5.3.2.2).

On the other hand, the way in which Samantha framed pay whilst talking about

'career prospects' mirrors Kate's questioning of the opportunities for progress and

challenge within teaching (and thus the storylines that 'teachers are highly skilled

and educated', see 5.3.1.3). Similarly, the comparatively low pay of teaching was

also mentioned by Mienie but, like Samantha, seemingly in relation to the status of

teaching rather than relating to the ability for teachers to earn a liveable or decent

wage[101]. Taken together, this evidence suggests that (mis)understandings of the

work of teaching, along with perceptions of teacher pay, did not in themselves deter

these participants from teaching as some research has proposed (see Chapter 2,

Section 2.3); but contributed to their positioning of teaching as no longer high in

status. Importantly, and as with Kate, neither Buddy not Samantha had to conduct

significant identity work to distance themselves from teaching once they decided not

to teach, seemingly because they had only briefly considered teaching.

Why teaching was not, or no longer, high in status for Kate, Buddy, and Samantha

was linked with the multiple social and economic privileges that they experienced.

For example, unlike all other participants in this chapter these three participants had

at least one parent who had attended university[102]. All three also attended

academically selective fee-paying schools. Interestingly, both Joanne and Mienie,

the other two participants whose transcripts provided evidence of their questioning of

the status of teaching, also came from middle-class backgrounds and attended

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[101] This was evident in both Kate's and Mienie's data, and both Kate and Mienie identify as Minoritised Ethnicities. These data therefore could be interpreted as evidence that young people from Minoritised Ethnicities aspire to jobs that pay more highly than teaching (Platt & Parsons, 2018). Given the lack of ethnic diversity in this study's qualitative sample (see Section 8.4), however, I do not draw this conclusion.

[102] All seven other participants in this chapter were the first people in their immediate family to attend university. Being the 'first in family' is a common, though contested, measure of social disadvantage in England (e.g., Coombs, 2022).

academically selective schools for at least part of their education. On one hand, this pattern could be seen as further evidence of a finding from Mann et al. (2013), who found that young people who attend state comprehensive schools, rather than fee-paying or selective schools, are more likely to aspire to become a teacher. Research in England, however, has demonstrated that those who attend academically-selective, as well as fee-paying, schools are much more likely to be from socially advantaged backgrounds (e.g., Burgess et al., 2018; The Sutton Trust, 2019). I therefore suggest that this pattern may be evidence of the way in which these participants' social and family backgrounds influenced their figuring of teaching and their identity work in relation to teaching. In other words, those from middle-class and/or economically advantaged backgrounds may not simply be deterred from teaching through discouragement from friends or family members as was considered in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3.1.6), but because the identity positions available to them make it especially difficult for them to align themselves with the figured worlds of teaching.

7.5   A summary of 'science-teacher-breakers'

In this chapter I have considered the 'teacher-breakers' of all 10 of this study's participants who had chosen not to pursue teaching by age 21/22 despite previously expressing an interest or aspiration to teach. These 10 participants were considered together because, as this chapter has attempted to demonstrate, there were three clear influences upon these participants' choice not to pursue teaching, whether or not they were science specialists (that is, those who held or were studying for an undergraduate degree in the natural or physical sciences; see Section 4.3.2.1). Due to particularly severe shortages of science teachers in England as highlighted in Section 1.2.2, this thesis has an additional focus on why those with specialisms in

science choose not to teach. This chapter has considered five such young people; Victor, Joanne, Mienie, Kate, and Samantha. Strikingly, and unlike the non-science-specialist participants considered in this chapter, most of whom came from working-class backgrounds[103], these five science specialists all came from middle-class backgrounds. This patterning, I suggest, is not a coincidence given that social class has been found to be a strong influence upon who is most likely to pursue science at university (e.g., Archer, Moote, MacLeod, et al., 2020; Gorard & See, 2008; Moote et al., 2020a). This patterning does, however, mean that examination of whether and how science played a role in these participants' decision not to pursue teaching cannot be truly separated from consideration of whether and how social class influenced participants' trajectories[104].

Statistical analyses of free-text survey data presented in Section 5.2.1 found that very few young people report that they aspire to become a science teacher specifically. In contrast to this finding, analyses presented in this chapter indicate that the five science specialists in this study did consider, in some cases very seriously, becoming a teacher. Indeed, three of the five science specialists in this study (Victor, Joanne and Kate) applied to ITE to become science teachers. Data presented in this chapter has demonstrated, however, that teaching was a 'backup', or second-choice, aspiration for all of those who specialised in science; which could

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[103] As presented in Table 5, Hedgehog, Louise, Lucy and Celina all came from working-class backgrounds. Buddy was the only non-science-specialist in this chapter to come from a middle-class background.

[104] Attempting to separate, or distinguish between, the influence of science identity and social-class background would not be in the spirit of this study's intersectional analyses. I here wish to acknowledge, however, that whilst the analyses presented in this section refer specifically to science, they do not consider how science specialisms or identities work in isolation to influence young people's teaching trajectories.

go some way to explaining why so few ASPIRES survey respondents explicitly included science teaching amongst their aspirations.

That all five science-specialist participants expressed teaching, implicitly or explicitly, as a 'backup' aspiration to a non-teaching career in science supports findings from research presented in Section 2.2.2.3; that teachers who specialise in science are more likely to report that they went into teaching after another career did not work out (e.g., Dawes & Wheeldon, 2022; OECD, 2019b). What I here describe as 'backup' however, includes a wide spectrum of varying interests in science teaching; from Victor, who chose to pursue science teaching after other routes in science seemed unviable but who turned away from teaching after his ITE applications were unsuccessful; to Samantha, who reported an interest in science teaching only as a second career, later in life.

Notably, although the five science-specialists represented all three different 'teacher-breakers' identified in this chapter, four of these five participants were found not to have become a teacher at least in part because they no longer figured teaching as high in status. Specifically, Joanne, Mienie, Kate and Samantha all questioned the construction of teaching as a profession which is highly educated and highly skilled when compared with non-teaching science careers. Notably, these four participants all came from more advantaged backgrounds than Victor, and appeared to have stronger science identities than Victor. In this way, I do not suggest that participants were deterred by the 'low status' of teaching compared with other jobs as was discussed in Section 2.3.1.1; but that those who had (been able to develop) strong science identities struggled to align themselves with the dominant cultural models of teaching. In this way, just as Avraamidou (2019) found that beginning science

teachers' identities in practice were shaped using their existing experiences of, and beliefs about, science; a young person's science identity may in some cases be an obstacle to developing an identity in practice in alignment with teaching. I suggest that this conclusion is supported by research with existing science teachers, which has consistently shown that those new to teaching science tend to align themselves more closely with science than with teaching (Rushton & Reiss, 2021).

7.6   Chapter summary

In this chapter I have presented findings from longitudinal analyses of 10 young people who had expressed an interest or aspiration in teaching at least once (but in some cases multiple times) between the ages of 10/11 and 20/21, but none of whom were pursuing teaching at age 21/22. These 10 participants included five science specialists, or 'potential science teachers', three of whom had applied to ITE to become science teachers. Through the analyses presented here, I sought to identify what factors and/or experiences shaped these 10 participants' decisions not to pursue teaching.

Longitudinal data from interviews with these 10 participants, and their parents, indicated that their decisions not to pursue teaching were shaped by three key 'teacher-breakers'; 1) that teaching was no longer high in safety (for Victor and Hedgehog), 2) that a non-teaching passion became safer than it had been (for Louise, Lucy, Celina, Joanne and Mienie), and/or 3) that teaching was no longer high in status (for Kate, Buddy, Samantha, as well as Joanne and Mienie). This chapter's findings thus build upon those of Chapter 6 by demonstrating the need for young people to figure teaching as both high in status and high in safety in order to pursue teaching.

Just as the 'teacher-makers' considered in Chapter 6 were found to be shaped by participants' intersecting identities, the ways in which these three 'teacher-breakers' worked to deter or stop participants from becoming a teacher were found to be informed by participants' intersecting identities, and particularly their genders and social class backgrounds. Analyses in this chapter have also demonstrated that teaching-type experiences can support young people to conduct identity work in relation to the figured worlds of teaching even where they do not pursue teaching, and that young people's experiences of school may feed into their assumptions about the work of teachers. The implications of these and other findings in this chapter, and how they build upon those of Chapters 5 and 6, will now be considered in the final chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 8. Discussion and conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter brings together findings from the three analytic chapters and literature review of this thesis. In the context of severe teacher shortages affecting multiple subject and area specialisms, and a teaching workforce that is not representative of its students, this study has sought to contribute new knowledge about why young people with different intersectional identities in England aspire to teach; as well as why some go on to realise, whilst others 'drop', their teaching aspirations.

This study is the first known longitudinal examination of young people's teaching trajectories. The research presented in this thesis thus contributes to addressing limitations in the current literature reviewed in Chapter 2, most of which focuses on those who have already decided to teach. Specifically, this study has developed new understandings of the multiple and complex factors that influence young people to want to become teachers, as well as why young people go on to pursue these aspirations, or drop their teaching aspirations; especially in science teaching, where shortages are particularly severe. This work has been done through consideration of the following research questions;

1) Who aspires to become a teacher (RQ1a), and why (RQ1b)?
2) Why do some young people pursue teaching? (RQ2)
3) Why do some young people drop their teaching aspirations, especially in science? (RQ3)

The findings of this study show that, in order to better understand England's ongoing and severe teacher shortages, we must examine why some people decide not to

pursue teaching as well as why others decide to teach. The study illustrates that considering the identity work of potential future teachers over time (i.e., whether and how they 'see' themselves as teachers) can help to gather new perspectives on how and why young people make the choice to (not) become a teacher. In this final thesis chapter I first discuss the empirical findings of this study (Section 8.2), then examine the original contributions (Section 8.3) and limitations (Section 8.4) of this research, before considering how findings from this work can help to inform recommendations for future policy, practice, and research (Section 8.5). I end this chapter with my concluding thoughts about this work (Section 8.6).

8.2   Discussion of findings

This study has taken a unique approach to understanding teacher supply by tracking the teaching trajectories of young people who expressed a prior interest in teaching over a period of 11 years (from 2009/2010 to 2020/2021) as the cohort progressed from primary school, through secondary school, through sixth form and/or college, through Higher Education, and towards or into a first career. This approach was made possible through the use of secondary data from ASPIRES; a national longitudinal research project following young people's career aspirations in England from age 10/11 to age 21/22.

8.2.1   Who aspires to be a teacher, and why?

This study's first research question was examined in two parts; 1a) who aspires to become a teacher?, and 1b) why do some young people aspire to become teachers?

8.2.1.1 Who aspires to become a teacher?

Regarding research question 1a), analysis of secondary free-text and Likert-scale data from six ASPIRES surveys presented in Section 5.2 found that, on average, 5% of young people between the ages of 10/11 and 21/22 surveyed for the ASPIRES project reported that they aspired to become a teacher, and more than one third (36%) of young people surveyed between the ages of 13/14 and 21/22 reported a more general openness to becoming a teacher. These data also demonstrated that the proportion of young people surveyed at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 or 21/22 who reported an interest in teaching was fairly consistent at all ages surveyed between 10/11 and 21/22. These findings thus highlight that many more young people at all ages between 10/11 and 21/22 report being open to teaching than is reflected in the current teacher recruitment data. Very few respondents at all ages surveyed reported an aspiration to teach science specifically, however.

These analyses represent the first known examination of who aspires to become a teacher at different ages in England. One implication of the resulting findings is that young people who aspire to teach may not only do so because of their proximity to teachers. It has been suggested that the popularity of teaching amongst young people is simply because teaching is a career that young people know, or are familiar with, through their time at school (e.g., Chambers et al., 2018; Lortie, 2002). This suggestion implies that most young people drop their interest in teaching after leaving compulsory education. I propose that this study's finding that a similar proportion of all ASPIRES survey respondents between ages 10/11 and 20/21 had an interest in teaching contradicts this assumption. Even if proximity to teachers does prompt some young people to want to teach, then, this proximity may have a

lasting impact. Nonetheless, these findings should be interpreted with consideration of the wider context within which this research took place. Most notably, the ASPIRES survey when respondents were aged 20/21 was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic. This timing may mean that the relatively high interest in teaching reported amongst this age group in the Likert-scale data could have been influenced by increased economic uncertainty during this period.

Another implication of the findings from this study's statistical analyses is that, when viewed in light of teacher recruitment statistics (e.g., McLean et al., 2023), many young people who are interested in teaching do not go on to become teachers. Indeed, the three known existing studies which have tracked teaching aspirations from childhood into adulthood[105] all indicate that most young people drop their teaching aspirations before they enter the workforce (Croll, 2008; Hanushek & Pace, 1995; Sikora, 2021). This conclusion is also supported by the assumption that many of those who are interested in teaching do not go on to become a teacher, as reported in the DfE's 2019 Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy (see Section 1.3.2). I argue, however, that the high proportion of young people who reported either an explicit teaching aspiration or an openness to teaching, especially at age 21/22, still provides some promise for teacher recruitment. Specifically, when viewed along with the finding that teaching appears to be a common backup career aspiration (see Section 8.2.3), this finding suggests that a significant minority of the non-teaching workforce may still consider pursuing teaching as a second, or later, career.

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[105] As introduced in Chapter 1, only one of these three studies (Croll, 2008) is from England, and this study was not focused on teaching aspirations specifically; but career aspirations more generally.

Next, crosstabulation analyses presented in Section 5.2.2.1 demonstrated that girls and young women were significantly more likely than boys and young men to be open to teaching at ages 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 and 21/22, and that young people who identified as White were significantly more likely than respondents who identified as Minoritised Ethnicities to be open to teaching at ages 13/14, 15/16 and 17/18. This patterning of teaching aspirations by gender and ethnicity echoes findings from one-off studies looking at teaching aspirations amongst only one age group (e.g., See, 2004), and is unsurprising given that more women than men teach, and that the vast majority of teachers in England identify as White British (DfE, 2022d). Although this study's findings demonstrate that teaching aspirations are not predictive of becoming a teacher, the patterning of these teaching aspirations by gender and ethnicity indicate that the teaching workforce is likely to remain dominated by White women in the future unless there are targeted efforts to change this status quo. Such efforts do not currently exist in England (see Section 1.3.2).

Furthermore, the statistical significance of the findings presented in Section 5.2.2.1 extends findings from previous research to establish that the patterning of teaching aspirations by gender and ethnicity is more than happenstance and is likely to be the result of ingrained social structures. Specifically, the (stereo)typical image of teachers as women, along with gendered assumptions about the work of teaching, may work to implicitly and/or explicitly deter young men from teaching. As posited in Section 2.2.1.1, too, people from Minoritised Ethnicities may be less likely to aspire to teach as a result of their experiences of systemic marginalisation. From a social justice perspective, this finding furthers evidence of the inequitable access to teaching hinted at by findings from Chapter 2, and is explored further in this study's qualitative dataset.

8.2.1.2 Why do some young people aspire to become teachers?

Qualitative analyses to explore question 1b) were presented in Section 5.3. In order to consider why some young people aspire to teach, this research adopted a theoretical framework informed by the context of 'figured worlds' as put forward by Holland et al. (1998) and operationalised by Gee (2010). This approach allowed an examination of what this study's 13 participants took for granted, or believed to be true, about teachers and teaching when they aspired to teach; as well as what cultural and social influences informed these depictions. Through these analyses I generated six 'cultural models', or stereotypical assumptions, about teaching amongst this study's participants; 1) 'teachers make a difference', 2) 'teachers are gifted', 3) 'teaching is a profession', 4) 'teaching is accessible', 5) 'teaching enables a good lifestyle', and 6) 'teaching is a secure job'.

The six cultural models of teaching were complex, overlapping, and sometimes contradictory to one another. The first three of these cultural models were coded as constructing teaching as 'high in status' (meaning that teachers were figured as professionals who use their gifts to benefit others), and the second three were coded as constructing teaching as 'high in safety' (meaning that teaching was figured as an accessible and secure route to a decent lifestyle). These analyses represent the first known attempt to collectively categorise the reasons why young people aspire to become teachers. All 13 participants were found to have constructed teaching as both high in status and high in safety. The young aspirant teachers in this study were therefore attracted towards becoming a teacher because of both the respect they held for teaching, and the low risk they associated with the profession.

Importantly, the cultural models that construct the figured worlds of teaching identified in Section 5.3 were relative and transitory. This finding means that, although all 13 participants constructed teaching as both high in status and high safety; how, why, and to what extent they did so differed between participants and between individual participants' different ages. For example, the cultural model that 'teaching is a secure job' was more common amongst those who reported a new or renewed interest in teaching at ages 20/21. I posit that this finding indicates the attraction of the accessibility of teaching for recent or soon-to-be graduates; and hints at the potential influence of the Covid-19 pandemic upon the graduate labour market at the time of data collection (e.g., Gustafsson, 2020). This finding that the 'status' and 'safety' of teaching are relative also casts doubt on previous research which implies that the status of teaching is a fixed state across contexts (e.g., Lankford et al., 2014) as discussed in Section 2.3.1.1, and indicates the value of qualitative research which can examine people's individual and potentially unique reasons for wanting to teach.

The vignettes of data presented in Section 5.3 also demonstrated that participants' experiences and intersectional identities helped to shape their constructions of the figured worlds of teaching. For example, participants from working-class backgrounds were much more likely to be attracted to teaching because they figured teaching as high in safety. I propose that this patterning could help to explain why more young people from working-class backgrounds and/or low socioeconomic backgrounds aspire to become a teacher, as found by See (2004) for example; because they perceive teaching to be a relatively risk-free route to decent lifestyle. This finding also echoes the work of Lortie (2002), who suggested that for existing teachers in the US the teaching profession was seen as a ladder to social mobility.

Perhaps most importantly, however, the findings presented in Section 5.3 demonstrate that who formed teaching aspirations and why was not the result of one single factor, but was shaped by the interplay of participants' multiple figurings of teaching as both high in status and high in safety. As will now be explored, these figurings of teaching as high in status and high in safety are not only themes through which the figured worlds of teaching are constructed, but are anchors around which participants negotiated their identity work as potential future teachers.

8.2.2 Why some young people realise their teaching aspirations

In order to consider why some young people pursue teaching (RQ2), in Chapter 6 I presented longitudinal analyses of the teaching trajectories of the three young people in this study's sample (Amy, Millie, and Carol) who were pursuing teaching by age 21/22. These analyses used the contexts of positioning and space of authoring proposed by Holland et al. (1998), and an intersectional analytical lens (Crenshaw, 1989), in order to consider Amy's, Millie's and Carol's identity work in relation to the figured worlds of teaching over time. Using the six cultural models of teaching (highlighted in Section 8.2.1.2), I traced participants' orientations towards, as well as away from, teaching between the ages of 10/11 and 21/22 and identified three key 'teacher makers' to summarise the factors which supported these participants to become teachers.

The first 'teacher-maker' considered in Chapter 6 was that both Amy and Millie received frequent recognition for their teaching aspirations and identities from trusted insiders to the figured worlds of teaching; those with whom they had a close relationship (or trusted), and who themselves were or had been teachers (insiders to teaching). There are two key implications arising from this finding. First, although

Amy's trajectory demonstrated that this recognition can in some cases come from those who have left teaching, the ongoing retention crisis amongst existing teachers (e.g., Long & Danechi, 2022) casts doubt upon whether there are enough willing 'insiders' to the figured worlds of teaching to provide the recognition needed to fuel young people's trajectories into teaching. This lack of willing insiders within teaching points to a potential important link between teacher recruitment and teacher retention (see Section 8.5.1).

Second, this finding raises the question as to who receives recognition from trusted insiders. The intersectional approach used in these analyses draw attention to the shared intersectional identities of Amy and Millie, who both identify as White British women and who were both born in England and speak English as a first language; compared with Carol, whose ethnicity was Eastern European and West Asian and who spoke English as an Additional Language (EAL) after having moved to England as a young child. As both Amy and Millie received regular recognition from trusted insiders but Carol did not, I suggest that this recognition was highly dependent upon social, cultural and contextual images, stereotypes and depictions of teachers as White British women. Put another way, had Amy and Millie not identified as White British women, like Carol they may not have received the same recognition that they did for their teaching aspirations. This conclusion builds upon research which has shown that young people's science identities are shaped by the culturally-dependent recognition they receive from others (e.g., Avraamidou, 2022), and indicates that the patterned nature of England's teacher shortages evidenced in Section 1.2.2 may be partly a result of the typical 'image' of a teacher in England as a White British woman.

The next 'teacher-maker' examined in Chapter 6 was specific to Carol, and was due to the accessibility of teaching compared with the accessibility of her preferred (or first-choice) alternative careers. I found that Carol became a teacher partly because she first encountered obstacles in accessing a career in three other sectors; media, marketing, and Higher Education. I propose that this finding calls into question findings from research which has found that most pre-service teachers consistently disagree that teaching was a fallback career choice for them (Richardson & Watt, 2006; Watt et al., 2017a). This is because, despite turning to teaching after first seriously considering (and attempting to pursue) three other professions, Carol retrospectively narrated her choice to become a teacher using the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted'. In other words, once she became an insider to the figured worlds of teaching Carol implied that she had always been destined to become a teacher. Whilst on one hand this narrative is simply a way in which Carol (and, to a lesser extent, Amy and Millie) made sense of her messy and multidirectional pathway into teaching (e.g., Holmegaard, 2015), on the other hand this narrative serves to imply that Carol believed that she was always 'meant' to teach, which feeds into dominant discourses that teaching is a 'calling' (e.g., Madero, 2020). The dominance of this discourse not only casts doubt upon findings from research which relies solely on reports from those already in the teaching, but also prompts consideration of whether this discourse may in fact deter others (i.e., those who do not feel, or are not recognised as, gifted teachers) from teaching.

The third and final 'teacher-maker' considered in Chapter 6 was that all three participants worked to renegotiate teaching as high in safety when they encountered obstacles which positioned teaching as risky and/or inaccessible. These renegotiations demonstrate that, even for those who appear to maintain and express

long-term teaching aspirations, the 'decision' to become a teacher is the result of continual and significant identity work in relation to the figured worlds of teaching. The choice to teach is therefore not a single decision, as is implied by the one-off approach taken by most research into teacher supply (Heinz, 2015; See et al., 2023), but is an ongoing series of identity negotiations. This finding is the first of its kind in relation to teaching, but echoes research taking a narrative approach to young people's educational choices (Holmegaard et al., 2015). Although all current research into teaching identities considers only existing teachers (e.g., Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004), this study has shown that people who are not (yet) teachers but who aspire to teach also work to develop aspects of their identities in relation to the teaching profession.

8.2.3 Why some young people drop their teaching aspirations

The final research question of this study (RQ3) considered why some young people drop their teaching aspirations. In order to answer this research question, Chapter 7 considered the teaching trajectories of 10 young people who had previously expressed an interest or aspiration in teaching, but were not pursuing teaching at age 21/22. As in Chapter 6, these analyses were informed by an intersectional identities in practice approach that considered participants' identity work in relation to the figured worlds of teaching over time (Crenshaw, 1989; Holland et al., 1998). Here I again used the cultural models of teaching (see Section 8.2.1.2) to pinpoint participants' orientations (towards and) away from teaching. The first key implication arising from the analyses presented in Chapter 7 is that the reasons why young people do not pursue teaching are not the same reasons why people leave the profession. Whilst the research reviewed in Section 2.3 illustrated that high workload

and/or accountability pressures are the most commonly reported reasons for leaving the profession amongst both those planning to leave teaching (e.g., Adams et al., 2023), and teachers who have already left the profession (e.g., Perryman & Calvert, 2020); the young people in this study chose not to become teachers because, for them, teaching was no longer high in status and/or high in safety.

The first 'teacher-breaker' presented in Chapter 7 showed that, for Victor and Hedgehog, teaching became unviable because it was no longer high in safety. As was indicated through the trajectories considered in Chapter 6, however, young people can renegotiate, or regain, the lost safety of teaching. Whilst there are undoubtedly multiple possible reasons why Victor and Hedgehog did not work to renegotiate the safety of teaching, one key difference between Victor and Hedgehog and the three participants considered in Chapter 6 is their gender identity. I therefore suggest that one implication arising from the trajectories of Victor and Hedgehog is that young men do not (as easily or as frequently) see themselves as future teachers and/or are not (as easily or as frequently) positioned by others as future teachers (Lortie, 2002). One example from the data to support this conclusion was presented in Section 5.3.1.2, where I highlighted how Victor's ability to help others was recognised by Sam as management-potential, rather than teaching-potential. I therefore argue that once teaching was no longer high in safety it was more difficult for both Victor and Hedgehog to refigure teaching as viable because, as young men, their identities did not neatly or easily align within the figured worlds of teaching due to stubborn social associations with teaching and women (Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2010). This conclusion further strengthens the notion that the prevailing image of a teacher as a White British woman may in fact mean that others struggle to develop an identity in relation to teaching. I do not claim that young men cannot develop an

identity in alignment with teaching (Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2010), however, but that without positive positioning and/or recognition from others this identity work is made more challenging to maintain.

The second 'teacher-breaker' considered in Chapter 7 was that a non-teaching passion became safer than it had been. Louise, Lucy, Celina, Joanne and Mienie had all decided not to pursue teaching by age 21/22 at least in part because working in something that they were more passionate about had become more viable. On one hand this finding demonstrates that although having a long-term teaching aspiration may be correlated with pursuing teaching (as seen in the cases of Amy, Mille, and Carol; discussed in Section 8.2.2); a long-term teaching aspiration does not, in itself, cause a young person to pursue teaching. It is a young person's identity work in relation to teaching, rather than simply the length of their teaching aspiration, which influences their trajectory towards or away from teaching. On the other hand, however, the trajectories of Louise, Lucy and Celina especially suggest that those who have previously expressed a strong and/or long-term interest in teaching but who pursue a non-teaching career may be likely to maintain teaching as a backup career aspiration. Indeed, this finding may help to explain why over a third of ASPIRES survey respondents at all ages between 10/11 and 21/22 reported that they were open to teaching (see Section 8.2.1.1) but why England still continues to experience such severe teacher shortages; it may be that teaching is a common backup, or second-choice, career aspiration for many young people in England. In terms of teacher recruitment, then, we must consider whether and how it might be possible for young people to strengthen and/or lengthen their teaching aspirations.

One way in which some of the participants examined in Chapter 7 developed strong(er) interests in, and identities in relation to, teaching was through teaching-type experiences. Louise, Lucy and Joanne, as well as Victor and Samantha, all had long-term teaching-type experiences (Schutz et al., 2001). These experiences included working as a children's sports teacher (Victor and Lucy), working as a science communicator visiting schools (Joanne), and working or volunteering as a tutor (Louise, Joanne and Samantha). Strikingly, these participants' trajectories indicate that, despite research suggesting otherwise (e.g., Hillier et al., 2013; Schutz et al., 2001), teaching-type experiences may not in themselves prompt people to pursue teaching. Analyses indicate, however, that these teaching-type experiences provided some of this study's participants with the opportunity to further align themselves with the figured worlds of teaching. Although teaching-type experiences may not act as a tipping point into teaching, they may therefore be useful in helping potential teachers to develop stronger ties to the figured worlds of teaching.

The third and final 'teacher-breaker' considered in Chapter 7 was that, for Kate, Buddy and Samantha, as well as for Joanne and Mienie, teaching was no longer high in status. In particular, all five of these participants were seen to question the cultural model that 'teaching is a (highly skilled) profession', and for some there was an indication that they never figured teaching in this way. As was discussed in Section 2.3.1.1, the extent to which teaching is a profession has been questioned before (e.g., Acker, 1983; Ingersoll & Collins, 2018), but has previously been considered from the perspective of the general public rather than potential future teachers. This study demonstrates that, as proposed in Section 2.3.1.1, the 'status' of teaching is specific and relative to individuals and can be strongly dependent upon a person's social background. One way in which to increase the 'status' of teaching

according some scholars is through increasing teacher pay (see Sections 2.3.1.1 and 2.3.1.2). Whilst data from Samantha's interview at age 21/22 indicated that pay was part of her figuring of teaching as 'low' in status, the relative lack of reference to teacher pay in this thesis's data overall indicates that pay is not in itself a key driver for young people dropping their teaching aspirations. This implication is supported by evidence reviewed in Section 2.3.1.2, which indicated that the level of teacher pay does not change people's career plans towards teaching (See et al., 2020); and appears to provide evidence to support the idea that, as others have posited (e.g., Worth, 2023), pay alone does not stop or deter young people from becoming teachers.

More importantly, this finding indicates that status of teaching may be more difficult to renegotiate once it is lost than safety of teaching. I propose that the inflexibility of teacher status (once lost) as seen in this study may be because it was those participants from the most advantaged backgrounds for whom the status of teaching was 'lost'. Just as indicated in previous applications of identities in practice (see Section 3.3), this finding suggests that whether and how young people construct their identities in relation to the figured worlds of teaching cannot be separated from their existing social positions and identity work in relation to other figured worlds. For example, Kate's, Buddy's, and Samantha's trajectories all indicate that part of the reason why they questioned the cultural model that 'teaching is a profession' was down to the, arguably mistaken, persistent assumptions about the work of teachers and teaching held by them and those around them. These assumptions may have been informed by their shared experiences of attending fee-paying schools, and included the belief that being a schoolteacher is very repetitive work which does not offer the opportunity for career development. As others have argued (e.g., Ovenden-

Hope, 2021), I propose that this finding indicates the need for teaching to be emphasised as a dynamic and evidenced-based profession.

All 10 teaching trajectories considered in Chapter 7 demonstrated that the figuring of teaching as high in status and high in safety is not fixed, but is negotiated and contested over time in response to different factors, experiences and identities. Finally, this conclusion raises the question as to how we can raise both the safety and status of teaching for all; and indeed whether this is possible given that participants' figurings were heavily informed by their own social and cultural backgrounds. For example, if teaching became higher in status for some, might this lead to it becoming less safe for others? This potentially impossible balance hints at some of the difficulties which are likely to exist in implementing recommendations from this thesis, as discussed further in Sections 8.5 and 8.6.

8.2.3.1 Why some young people drop their science teaching aspirations

This thesis has an additional focus upon why young people who could teach science and have expressed an interest in teaching science do not to become science teachers. For this reason, within Chapter 7 I examined the teaching trajectories of five potential future science teachers; all of whom had decided not to pursue teaching by age 21/22, but three of whom had applied to ITE to become a science teacher. As discussed in Section 7.5, the implications discussed here will inevitably be tied to these participants' intersectional identities, and specially the fact that all five came from middle-class backgrounds.

The most striking finding to emerge from analyses of science specialists' teaching trajectories was that teaching was a backup aspiration for all five science specialists. Although current research into science teaching motivations has focused only on

those who have already chosen to join the profession, I suggest that this finding does correspond with research which has shown that science teachers are more likely to report having pursued teaching after their first-choice aspiration did not work out (Dawes & Wheeldon, 2022; OECD, 2019b). As noted in Section 7.5, however, these 'backup' science teaching aspirations refer to those who very seriously considered becoming a science teacher when a career in science seemed unviable (e.g., Victor), as well as those who only temporarily considered teaching (e.g., Kate), and those who reported that they would consider becoming a science teacher only as a second career (e.g., Samantha). In other words, the term 'backup' is an umbrella term which denotes a wide spectrum of interests in teaching. In terms of implications, I suggest that this finding holds some promise for those interested in increasing science teacher supply as it indicates that science teacher shortages may not be due to a complete lack of interest in teaching amongst science specialists; but are down to science teaching being seen as second-best to non-teaching careers in science. If we are to recruit more science teachers, then, more work must be done to encourage science specialists to consider teaching as a first-choice career.

When considering how to encourage more science specialists to consider teaching as a first-choice career aspiration one must consider the second key finding arising from analyses from Chapter 7; which is that four of this study's five science specialists chose not to become a teacher at least in part because they no longer figured teaching as high in status. Specifically, these participants questioned the extent to which 'teaching is a profession' compared with non-teaching science careers. First, because the cultural model that 'teaching is a profession' includes the storyline that 'teaching is highly educated' (see Section 5.3.1.3), it seems that this study's science specialist participants did not perceive ITE to be equal, or equivalent,

to the other postgraduate education routes available to them in science. As was discussed in Section 2.2.2.3, Dawes and Wheeldon (2022) suggest that many people who study science at undergraduate level expect (or are expected) to study for a Masters and/or PhD degree. Indeed, this suggestion is exemplified by the fact that four of the five science specialists in this study went on to do a Masters degree within their science specialism. In this way, perhaps the storyline that teachers are highly educated is particularly questioned amongst science students because their specialism carries the assumption of (and thus makes viable) postgraduate education; and ITE may not be seen as such[106].

The second implication of the finding that this study's science specialists questioned teaching as a profession stems from the second storyline contributing the construction of teaching as a profession; that 'teaching is highly skilled' (see Section 5.3.1.3). Examined in light of findings presented in Chapter 6, the questioning of the *skill* of teaching may be the result of dominant perceptions and expressions that 'teachers are gifted'; rather than teaching being seen as an expertise or skill that one can develop through time and experience. In other words, the cultural model that 'teachers are gifted' may not only work to attract young people towards teaching (as demonstrated in Section 5.3.1.2), but may also work to undermine perceptions of teaching as a profession and thus deter people from teaching. Together, then, these implications illustrate significant differences between the figured worlds of science and teaching. Just as found by Varghese and Snyder (2018) in relation to the figured world of dual language teaching and the existing worlds that dual language teachers

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[106] For example, a PGCE (the most common teaching qualification; see Section 1.3.1) is typically worth 60 university credits, whilst a Masters degree is worth 180 credits. University 'credits' refer to a scheme (the Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme) used by most universities in the UK to monitor and reward degree courses, and to facilitate people transferring between courses or institutions.

inhabited prior to teaching, I propose that whilst these differences between the worlds of science and teaching remain it will be challenging for science specialists to develop and maintain a trajectory towards science teaching over time.

8.3   Original contributions of this research

This research makes several methodological and theoretical contributions to the field of education research, in relation to both teacher supply and research into young people's career aspirations and trajectories.

8.3.1   Methodological contributions

The first methodological contribution of this thesis is its use of quantitative cross-sectional cohort data to provide new insights into who aspires to become a teacher at different ages. As was highlighted in Section 2.3, there are only three known studies from the international literature which have tracked young people's teaching aspirations over time (Croll, 2008; Hanushek & Pace, 1995; Sikora, 2021), all of which only focus upon one age during childhood. This study thus extends results from previous research about who aspires to teach by considering data which spans the lives of young people in England over 11 years and six ages (10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18, and 21/22), rather than focusing on only one age group.

A second methodological contribution of this research is the qualitatively led approach taken throughout the rest of this thesis. This approach is unusual given that most current research into teacher supply, both from the perspective of aspirant and existing teachers, relies on quantitative methods (e.g., Gorard et al., 2021; Watt et al., 2017a). As demonstrated by findings presented in Section 5.2, statistical data can helpfully provide broad contextual information about teacher shortages.

Quantitative-only approaches can, however, inadvertently mask the cultural, social and contextual influences that shape people's decisions (not) to become a teacher due to the restricted definitions required in statistical methods (Klassen et al., 2011). This study's qualitatively led approach thus responds to calls for more qualitative studies into teacher supply (e.g., Heinz, 2015), and has enabled an in-depth consideration of how and why social and cultural factors pattern teacher shortages; rather than simply focusing on who does, or does not, (aspire to) become a teacher.

A third methodological contribution of this study is its longitudinal consideration of teaching trajectories. Thanks to the use of secondary data from the ASPIRES project, this study provides a unique insight into how and why young people make the decision to become a teacher, or not, over time. This insight is available through the 'crystallisation' of data from interviews with young people (and their parents) at seven different ages (Ellingson, 2009). This study therefore contributes to addressing the need for more research into teacher recruitment to be longitudinal; as stated by scholars including Heinz (2015) and See et al. (2023). Furthermore, whilst the one-off approach taken in most teacher supply studies can imply that the choice to become a teacher is a single decision that is (or can be) made at one point in time (see Section 2.4), the longitudinal methods employed in this thesis demonstrate that the choice to become a teacher is an ongoing process of identity work to align oneself with teaching. Indeed, the way in which this study's teaching participants retrospectively narrated their teaching trajectories as almost inevitable (see Section 8.2.2) highlights to need to interpret findings from research which is solely reliant upon retrospective accounts with caution.

Finally, a particular benefit of this study's longitudinal methods is that they have facilitated the examination of young people who had chosen not to become a teacher by age 21/22 after previously expressing an interest in doing so. As discussed in Section 2.3, there is a particular paucity of existing research into why people do *not* teach. This study's approach thus also responds to calls from researchers including See et al. (2022) who suggest that research should "consider the career drivers of those who might otherwise have going into teaching" (p. 21). Indeed, the longitudinal methods used in this study illustrate how considering people's trajectories towards, or away from, teaching over time is a useful way to generate new, and much needed, knowledge to progress our current understandings about the reasons behind ongoing teacher shortages, as has been hypothesised by other researchers (e.g., See et al., 2023).

8.3.2 Theoretical contributions

The theoretical contributions of this study are four-fold. The first theoretical contribution of this research relates to its use of the concept of identity, and specifically the lens of identities in practice, to develop understandings of teacher recruitment patterns. Whilst researchers have employed the concept of identity to gain insights into the professional lives of experienced and beginning teachers (e.g., Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004), existing research on why people become teachers has typically either not applied theoretical perspectives (Heinz, 2015), or has been informed by motivations literature from the field of psychology (e.g., Watt & Richardson, 2007). Using the lens of identities in practice (Holland et al., 1998) in this thesis has helped to provide a more in-depth perspective on teaching choices and trajectories than is currently available in the literature. This is

first because an identities in practice lens allows for consideration of the social, cultural and contextual, as well as the individual, influences upon young people's teaching aspirations and trajectories. For example, data presented in Section 5.3 showed that the reasons why people want to become teachers go beyond their individual desires such wanting to work with children—one of the most commonly reported teaching motivations in the current literature (Fray & Gore, 2018; See et al., 2022)—and include how potential teachers see themselves, and are seen by others, in relation to dominant constructions of teaching. In addition, this theoretical approach has enabled this research to illustrate that, despite current research into teaching identities focusing only upon those already with the profession (see Section 3.3.2), even those who have chosen not to become teachers by age 21/22 have conducted, and continue to conduct, identity work in relation to teaching (see Chapter 7).

The second theoretical contribution of this study relates to its use of an intersectional lens to consider how young people's multiple overlapping, and sometimes conflicting, identities shape whether or not they see themselves as a teacher. In the current literature there is currently very little consideration of how individuals' multiple identities interact to inform whether or not they see themselves as a teacher (Gore et al., 2015). In particular, I argue that this study's intersectional lens allows this research to take a social justice approach in considering how structural forces upon the choice to become a teacher shape the teaching workforce (e.g., Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016). For example, although in Chapter 6 I considered the trajectories of three White women who were pursuing teaching by age 21/22, by employing an intersectional lens I was able to identify the specific and additional challenges faced by Carol, who identifies as a young woman of Mixed ethnicity (Eastern European

and West Asian), has EAL and who had immigrated to England as a child; compared with Amy and Millie, both of whom identify as White British women, grew up in England and spoke English as their first language. In this way, taking an intersectional approach to considering who sees themselves as a teacher was particularly useful in considering how social and cultural structures acted as obstacles to make becoming a teacher more difficult, or less viable, for some than it was for others (Fraser, 2010).

The third and final theoretical contribution of this thesis relates to this study's development and definitions of 'high in status' and 'high in safety' to refer to the cultural models, or stereotypical assumptions (Holland et al., 1998), about teaching held by those who express a teaching aspiration or interest. Whilst 'status' has multiple existing definitions and theorisations in relation to teaching (see Section 2.3.1.1), to my knowledge no scholars have previously used the concept of 'safety' to refer to the teaching profession. Importantly, and as highlighted in Section 4.3.2.4 and throughout this thesis's analysis chapters, my consideration of the construction of teaching as 'high in status' and 'high in safety' goes beyond existing efforts to rank or compare how teaching is viewed in relation to other professions (e.g., Dolton et al., 2018); and demonstrates that teaching must be associated with respect (Sennett, 2003) and minimal risk (Harrison, 2019) in order for a young people to both aspire to teach, and ultimately become a teacher. Developed using empirical data, these themes of status and safety represent the first known attempt to collectively categorise the reasons why young people aspire to become teachers, and were shown to be useful tools with which to understand young people's identity work to align themselves with, and distance themselves from, the figured worlds of teaching.

8.4   Limitations of this research

In addition to the specifically theoretical limitations of this research considered in Section 3.5, some methodological limitations were inevitable in this work despite precautions taken to minimise these issues. As detailed in Section 4.3.1, this study's research methods build upon those of the ASPIRES research project. Specifically, in this research I have analysed secondary data from the ASPIRES project, and this study's 13 primary teaching-focused interviews with young people at age 21/22 extend existing ASPIRES longitudinal qualitative data. This approach has enabled this thesis to have a far larger dataset, spanning a much longer period of time, than would have otherwise been possible. I acknowledge, however, that developing this study from an existing research project brings about several limitations. For example, I acknowledge that in using secondary data from the ASPIRES project, this study inherits some of the methodological limitations of ASPIRES. These include the limitations of conducting long-term and/or longitudinal projects as listed in Section 4.3.1; such as the consequences of participant attrition (Derrington, 2019). Perhaps the most obvious limitation of using secondary data from the ASPIRES project, however, is that this study's research aims were unable to inform the collection of all data used in this research (Greenstein, 2006). One example of the way in which this limitation has influenced this research is that the statistical analyses presented in Section 5.2.2 represent an 'openness' to teaching rather than specific or definite teaching aspirations because of the wording of the questions used in ASPIRES project surveys (see Section 4.3.3).

In addition, the statistical analyses of cross-sectional cohort survey data presented in Section 5.2 were reliant upon the data collected for the ASPIRES project. As a

result, these analyses do not consider the potential impact of identities such as dis/ability, sexual orientation, and religion upon young people's teaching aspirations. Furthermore, these analyses were conducted using a simplified and binary treatment of both gender and ethnicity. As a result, and as discussed in Section 4.3.3.1, this study took a cis-normative approach to quantitative data analyses; meaning that I was unable to consider the possible influence of identifying as non-binary, for instance, upon young people's teaching trajectories. Increasingly, research with existing teachers indicates that those who identify as non-binary experience significant barriers to inclusion within the workforce (e.g., Bancroft & Greenspan, 2022). It may therefore be the case that young people who identify as non-binary face heightened challenges in their teaching trajectories, though this was something that this study was unable to consider.

Relatedly, whilst the analyses presented in Section 5.2 demonstrated that ASPIRES survey respondents who identified as White were significantly more likely than those who identified as Minoritised Ethnicities to report they were open to teaching at ages 13/14, 15/16 and 17/18, this finding was produced when those who identified as Minoritised Ethnicities were viewed collectively. It is therefore possible that people who identify as Black, for example, could be more likely than those who identify as White to aspire to become a teacher. Indeed, this may well be the case given that, as discussed in Section 1.2.2, research by Worth et al. (2022) demonstrates that people who identified as Asian, Black, Mixed and Other were all overrepresented amongst ITE applicants in England in 2020/21 when compared with those who identified as White. Whilst the intersectional approach taken to qualitative analyses in this thesis works to minimise the impact of this quantitative limitation with regard to

this study, care should therefore be taken when interpreting this study's quantitative findings.

An associated limitation with using secondary data in this study was restricted sampling of this study's qualitative dataset. As highlighted in Section 4.3.2.1, this study's 13 qualitative participants were identified as 'potential future (science) teachers' from the ASPIRES project's wider qualitative sample of 50 participants. As a result of this sampling the backgrounds, experiences and identities of these 13 young people are not as diverse as they may have otherwise been. For example, the lack of ethnic diversity in this study's sample means that I was unable to examine the role of ethnicity upon young people's teaching trajectories in detail. Notably, none of the 13 young people included in this study's sample identify as Black, and none identified as having a physical disability; two characteristics historically severely underrepresented in the teaching workforce (Tereshchenko et al., 2020; Ware et al., 2022), and which deserve increased academic attention but which this research does not consider. This study was thus unable to examine, for example, how young people Black people are not only deterred from teaching but are excluded from teaching due to structural marginalisation (Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2010). In addition, because the ASPIRES project did not record participants' religion and/or sexual orientation, this study in turn did not consider the role of these identities upon participants' teaching trajectories.

Finally, one may also consider this study to be limited in its lack of a participatory approach to research. In an attempt to establish research reliability, and informed by my social justice axiology, I invited all 13 participants to reflect or feedback on the primary data collected for this study (as mentioned in Section 4.3.2.2, see also

Appendix 3). Whilst I acknowledge that some have questioned the way that such methods can privilege participants' views over researcher interpretations (Creswell, 2014), seeking feedback and reflections from participants was an attempt at an approach to research which could more meaningfully include participants (e.g., Kitzinger, 2004), and which could help to counteract the power imbalance ingrained in research interviews (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). No participants provided feedback on their interviews, however; perhaps because of a lack of clarity in my instructions, or because of participants' unfamiliarity with this approach despite being accustomed to all other aspects of research interviews (see Section 4.3.2.2). As a result, whilst this study's participants are considered to have co-constructed the teaching trajectories presented in this thesis, they do not take the take the role of co-researchers in this work.

8.5 Recommendations and future directions for policy, practice and future research

The findings from this research suggest a number of future avenues for policy, practice and research aimed at improving teacher supply in England and in other countries experiencing patterned teacher shortages. In this section I propose recommendations for these areas based on the evidence presented in this thesis. Whilst these recommendations are presented according to sector, they necessarily overlap.

Before considering these recommendations, it is first important to be reminded of two key aspects of this study. First, this study has focused on young people specifically. This focus means that the recommendations presented here are intended to propose ways that more young people may be recruited into teaching (i.e., as a first career).

Research suggests that others, (i.e. 'career changers'), may go into teaching for different reasons (e.g., Raggl & Troman, 2008; Richardson & Watt, 2005; Williams & Forgasz, 2009), and so the recommendations proposed here should be considered with young people specifically in mind. Second, these recommendations have been developed using evidence from young people who have previously expressed an interest or aspiration in teaching. The recommendations presented here may not, therefore, attract people without a prior interest in teaching into the profession.

In addition, as has been discussed throughout this thesis, this research shows that who aspires to become a teacher and who becomes a teacher is impacted not only by individual motivations, but also by complex and overlapping societal structures. Whilst one broad-brush recommendation could be to 'broaden the typical image of teachers as White (British) women', in reality this association will be difficult to change without long-term social change within, as well as outside of, education. Whilst the practical recommendations presented here are based upon empirical evidence from this research, it should therefore be noted these recommendations may be limited in their scope to make sustainable improvements to teacher recruitment whilst wider structural influences remain.

8.5.1 Recommendations for teacher supply policy

The first policy implication leading from the findings of this study relates to the combined consideration of teacher recruitment and retention in education policy. As demonstrated in Section 1.3.2, teacher recruitment and retention are currently regularly grouped together in policy discussions (e.g., DfE, 2019c; Long & Danechi, 2022). Underpinning this approach is an assumption that policies aimed at motivating people to stay in teaching will, or may, simultaneously attract new

teachers into the profession. Despite the low recruitment and low retention of teachers both resulting in teacher shortages, however, this study's findings illustrate that the reasons why young people do not pursue teaching are not the same as the reasons why people leave the teaching profession (see Section 8.2.3). These differences imply that policies developed to aid the retention of existing teachers are unlikely to also attract people into the profession. I thus recommend **that teacher recruitment policies should be explicitly separate from teacher retention policies, and should be informed by evidence from those who have chosen and turned away from teaching**; such as this study.

Nevertheless, findings from this thesis have indicated that the retention of existing teachers could play a role in teacher recruitment. Evidence presented in Chapter 6 demonstrated that a key influence in in both Amy's and Millie's trajectories towards teaching—one of their 'teacher-makers'—was the sustained support they received from current and/or former teachers. As was highlighted in Section 8.2.2, one implication of this finding is that the current teaching workforce is somewhat responsible for (directly or indirectly) encouraging the recruitment of the next generation of teachers. Yet, as was outlined in Sections 1.2 and 2.3.1, this research has been conducted during periods of industrial action aimed to pressurise government to increase teachers' pay (Booth, 2023), and when a high proportion of teachers in England report that they intend to leave the profession for reasons other than retirement (e.g., Adams et al., 2023). This wider context of high teacher dissatisfaction with pay and working conditions raises the question as to whether there are currently enough enthusiastic insiders to teaching who would be willing to provide the recognition which seems so essential to some potential future teachers' trajectories. I therefore suggest that, **in order to boost teacher recruitment, policy**

makers must also work to ensure that the current teaching workforce is better supported. Whilst this study does not itself point to how existing teachers can be better supported, studies on teacher pay, teacher working conditions and teacher wellbeing, such as those from Adams et al. (2023), Allen et al. (2021), McLean et al. (2023), and Savill-Smith and Scanlan (2022), may provide useful avenues forward.

Furthermore, given that teacher shortages are strongly patterned by intersecting inequalities (see Section 1.2.2), and that this study's findings indicate that a young person's intersectional identities strongly inform their teaching trajectories, I join others (Maguire, 2005a; Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2010) in recommending **that efforts to increase teacher recruitment take an intersectional approach**. Policymakers must consider what barriers prevent Black men from teaching, for example, or why men science specialists from middle-class backgrounds may be deterred from teaching. Such an approach is especially important, I argue, because this study's quantitative analyses signify that teacher shortages in England, at least, are likely to remain strongly patterned by gender and ethnicity in the future unless attempts are made to change current conditions.

Finally, trajectories away from teaching presented in Section 7.4 showed that five of this study's participants dropped their previous interest in teaching because they no longer perceived teaching to be a highly educated profession. All of these five young people came from middle-class backgrounds, and four of these five were science specialists. As was discussed in Section 1.3.1, numerous scholars have previously argued that teaching in England is increasingly seen as a practical craft rather than a research-based profession partly because of the expansion of some school-based ITE routes (e.g., Ovenden-Hope, 2021). Although this study has considered the

profession of teaching more holistically, rather than focusing upon how different ITE

routes are viewed by potential future teachers, its findings do hint that increased

professionalisation of ITE routes may improve teacher recruitment, particularly in

science. I therefore suggest that, especially **in order to boost teacher recruitment**

amongst those from more advantaged backgrounds and science graduates,

policy efforts should focus on developing the initial professionalisation of

teaching so that ITE might be seen as more akin to other postgraduate study and

training routes. As discussed in Section 8.2.3, pay was not an obvious significant

factor in young people's figurings of teaching as 'low' in status in this study; but

professionalisation and pay are undoubtedly linked for some (Ingersoll & Collins,

2018) and so I propose that efforts to improve perceptions of teaching as a

profession should include pay increases for teachers.

8.5.2 Recommendations for teacher supply practice

Next, findings presented in this thesis point to numerous practical implications which

may help increase and diversify teacher recruitment in England. These

recommendations are aimed primarily at ITE providers, but may also be usefully

taken up by other bodies and organisations with an interest in improving in teacher

shortages. The first, and main, recommendation for those working in teaching

recruitment is to **provide increased careers education information, advice and**

guidance (CEIAG) informing young people that, and how, they can become

teachers. Most participants in this study said that they had never received

information about how to become a teacher throughout their education. Although

there were some exceptions to this—such as Millie, who studied PE at

undergraduate level and received regular information during her degree about

different routes into PE teaching (see Section 6.3), as well as Joanne and Kate, who reported coming across Teach First at careers events at their universities (see Sections 7.3.2 and 7.4.1)—these data suggest that the onus of finding out how to become a teacher is upon those who are interested in teaching. Young people who hold teaching as a backup career aspiration, of which there appear to be many, may therefore consider teaching more seriously if they knew more about how to become a teacher.

The lack of teaching CEIAG reported by this study's five participants with, or studying for, science degrees was particularly striking given both the urgent need for more science teachers in England (see Section 1.2.2), and the science-specific careers advice that some of these participants reported receiving at university. For example, in her interview with me at age 21/22 one participant, Samantha, said:

> being someone on a science course, I was *never* really talked to about the possibility of teaching. Like, it was *always* going and working in a lab, or, you know, engineering, things like that. Like, doing a Masters, doing a PhD. Teaching was never, kind of, up there, in terms of what was advertised. So, I think advertising teaching more to science students would definitely make a difference. Because I have course mates who, I think, had they thought *more* about teaching, they would have considered it.

I therefore recommend that **teaching CEIAG is provided to science undergraduate and postgraduate students especially**. Indeed, although three science specialists in this study had submitted ITE applications (Victor, Joanne and Kate), all described researching these routes themselves.

In terms of when this teaching CEIAG could best be targeted, findings from both Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 indicate that the choice of whether or not to become a teacher is not a simple or one-off decision. As a result, I suggest **that teaching CEIAG should not be targeted at one age group, but should span across secondary, further, and higher education** in order to help young people to develop and direct their trajectories towards teaching over time.

Regarding the content of this CEIAG, **I recommend that teaching CEIAG includes more teaching-type work experience opportunities for young people**. This recommendation is informed by the trajectories of Victor, Louise, Lucy, Joanne, and Samantha considered in Chapter 7; all of whom had significant experience in a teaching-type role. Whilst these participants' trajectories all indicate that teaching-type experiences may not in themselves cause young people to pursue teaching, they show that these experiences can help young people to develop stronger, or closer, identity work with the figured worlds of teaching.

Finally, data presented in Chapter 6 showed that those participants who went on to pursue teaching in this study narrated their decision as something that was almost an inevitability. I suggest that this dominant narrative feeds into the social discourse that teaching is 'a calling' (e.g., Madero, 2020) and may discourage those who do not feel that they were 'born' or 'destined' to teach. **I therefore recommend that CEIAG presents teaching as a skill or expertise that can be developed through professional education, rather than a natural gift**. In this, teaching CEIAG might helpfully showcase some of the 'backstage' work of teaching rather than relying on potential teachers' perceptions of teaching which, as data presented in Section 7.4 highlight, may focus on only the 'frontstage' work of teachers (Borg, 2004).

8.5.3 Recommended directions for future research

Finally, the findings of this study point to several potential courses of action for future research into teacher supply. First, as highlighted in Section 8.5.1 in relation to policy, evidence from this research demonstrates that the key influences upon teacher recruitment are different from those which influence teacher retention, and I therefore recommend that **the issues of teacher recruitment and teacher retention should be researched as separate issues**. Currently, researchers often group these related, yet different, issues together (e.g., Howson, 2016; See et al., 2020; Sims, 2018a). This consistent association of teacher recruitment and retention in research implies that, because both of these issues result in teacher shortages, they must have the same, or similar root causes. Continuing to combine the issues of recruitment and retention in future research may therefore distort findings and could risk the development of new knowledge on either issue.

This study is the first study examining young people's longitudinal teaching trajectories, and has therefore offered new insights into what factors work over time to influence young people in their choice of whether or not to become a teacher. As has been posited by other researchers (e.g., Heinz, 2015), this study's findings suggest that **future research into teacher supply could also helpfully use longitudinal research methods in order to examine people's trajectories into and away from the teaching profession**. For example, the findings of this study could be extended to consider how people within different age groups, and/or in different country contexts develop and maintain, or drop, teaching aspirations over time. Whilst longitudinal research can pose many challenges including participant attrition (Derrington, 2019) and significant financial costs (Miller, 2000), as

highlighted in Section 4.3.1, not all longitudinal research needs to rely on primary data, as this research has demonstrated. Indeed, I would argue that the growing priority of longitudinal research in the UK (Davis-Kean et al., 2017), along with the increased availability of secondary qualitative and quantitative data within the field of education (e.g., Bishop & Kuula-Luumi, 2017; Smith, 2008) provide a fruitful landscape for future longitudinal research into teacher supply.

Next, I argue that the current dominant approach of focusing only upon those already in the teaching profession may distort findings and conclusions relevant for teacher supply. For example, although research has shown that teachers value the creative aspects of their role, and report this as one of the reasons why they were drawn to teaching (Perryman & Calvert, 2020), this thesis has found no evidence that the desire for creativity played a role in its participants' teaching trajectories. Furthermore, recent research examining the teacher workforce has suggested that the rise in working from home in non-teaching graduate professions since the pandemic may be contributing to teacher shortages, because teachers' opportunities to work from home are limited (McLean et al., 2023). Whilst research with older ITE students hints that the inability to work from home could be a factor in why career-changers may not wish to teach (Glover & Stewart, 2023), this thesis has found no evidence that this inability is a deterrent from teaching for young people. I therefore suggest that current research overemphasises the perspective of existing teachers, and that **future research in the field of teacher supply should sample potential, rather than only existing, teachers**; as has been recommended by others (e.g., Heinz, 2015; See et al., 2022). Such methods might enable, for example, further examination of how young people's observations and experiences of the work of teachers through their own schooling influences their perceptions of teaching (e.g.,

Borg, 2004). Future research seeking to address this research gap need not only focus on young people. Studies with those who have pursued teaching after another career suggest that potential teachers are also likely to exist amongst the parents of school-age children (Williams & Forgasz, 2009), those with prior teaching-like experiences (Richardson & Watt, 2005), and those in professions that are at increased risk of redundancy (Anthony & Ord, 2008).

Finally, **I advocate for future research to examine larger, and more diverse, samples of potential teachers; especially relating to ethnicity**. The methods used in this thesis mean that its findings cannot be automatically applied to all young people (in England, or elsewhere) and the intersectional identities of this study's participants should be remembered when interpreting its findings. For example, and as also discussed in Section 8.4, people who identify as Black, as non-binary, and/or who have a physical disability are three examples of identities not considered in this research but which could lead to obstacles in developing teaching aspirations and/or pursuing teaching (because all are currently underrepresented in the teaching workforce, see Section 1.2.2), and would thus be worth considering in future research on teaching trajectories.

8.6   Concluding thoughts

This study has sought to examine why some young people aspire to become a schoolteacher when they are older, and what influences young people to either realise or drop these teaching aspirations over time. The quantitative findings of this longitudinal and qualitatively led study suggest that more, and more diverse, young people are open to becoming teachers than is reflected in the teacher recruitment data. This finding suggests that there is an untapped pool of young people who could

help to resolve the teacher shortage crisis in England. Qualitative analyses demonstrate that the participants in this study (all of whom were aspirant teachers) aspired to become a teacher because they depicted teaching as both high in status and high in safety. Those who became teachers by age 21/22 worked hard to maintain their identities in alignment with constructions of teaching as high in status and high in safety, whereas those who dropped their teaching aspirations were found to have lost the relative status and/or safety of teaching.

My reasons for completing this research included my concerns, as a former teacher and someone keenly interested in education, about rising teacher shortages and the apparent lack of research into the reasons behind these shortages. In addition, working on the ASPIRES project for four years before starting this PhD increased my awareness of some of the social inequalities within education, which in turn led me to question the sustained underrepresentation of certain groups within the teaching workforce.

As such, I have taken a social justice approach to this research; with the hope that examining the reasons contributing to England's patterned teacher shortages may increase current understandings of, and thus potentially improve, these shortages. Yet, whilst I have ended this thesis with recommendations that could help to improve teacher supply, the wider societal structures influencing young people's teaching aspirations and identities should not be underestimated. If teacher shortages are to improve, teaching must be seen as both high in status and high in safety by more (young) people, but this study has highlighted some of the stubborn obstacles that may prevent this from happening. For example, although some issues regarding the relative status and safety of teaching would likely be partly addressed via changes in

education policy and practice (e.g., by developing greater professionalisation of ITE), significant complexities around, for example, the synonymity of teaching with White women cannot be as easily addressed through policies and practice specific to education.

To conclude, then, whilst I do not believe that this study alone can improve England's teacher shortages my hope is that the innovative methods used here have contributed new knowledge on this pressing issue. I therefore view this research as a small part of an important, and what I hope to be growing, research agenda that seeks to better understand why people do, and do not, become teachers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 An overview of all qualitative participants

Here I present individual overviews of each of this study's 13 qualitative participants' longitudinal data. Each overview includes information about each participant's ASPIRES interviews in addition to their family background, education and work experiences, and career aspirations. Participants' career aspirations are also summarised in Table 17.

Table 17 *An overview of participants' teaching aspirations and interests*

Participant	Aspired to teach at different ages?						Parent(s) interviewed
	10/11	12/13	13/14	15/16	17/18	20/21	
Amy	Y	Y	Y	Y+	Y	Y	Mary
Buddy	N	N	N	N	X	Y*	Naomi & Michael
Carol	Y	Y	Y*	Y**	Y**	Y	Linda & Peter
Celina	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Leah & Dave
Hedgehog	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Larry
Joanne	N	Y	N	N	N	Y*	Judy & Matthew
Kate	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Sue
Louise	N	Y	Y*	Y**	Y**	Y**	Marie
Lucy	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y**	Florence
Mienie	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Dawn
Millie	Y	Y	Y	Y	X	Y	Sinead
Samantha	N	N	N	N	N	Y**	Claire
Victor	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y*	Sam

Y   aspired to teach
N   did not aspire to teach
X   not interviewed
+   interviewed but participant had lost their voice, so very little data
*   a general interest in teaching (rather than an explicit aspiration)
** interested in teaching only as a second, or backup, career

Amy[107]

Amy is a White British young woman from a middle-class background in the South

East of England. She was interviewed at all data collection phases of the ASPIRES

project (at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16 [though this was a short interview where

Amy wrote down her answers because she had lost her voice], 17/18 and 20/21*),

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[107] In each participant's overview, interviews conducted by myself are indicated with an asterisk (*).

and I interviewed her again for this study at age 21/22*. Amy's mother, Mary, was interviewed when Amy was 10/11, 13/14, and 15/16. In total, Amy's longitudinal data include 10 interviews.

Until Amy left home for university she lived with Mary, her step-father, and her siblings in the South East of England. She was also in regular contact with her father, but did not live with him during the course of the project. Amy has four siblings, three of whom are older. All three of Amy's parents are White British, and all three also held degrees in a science-related subject. When Mary was first interviewed she described herself as a "housewife", and when Amy started secondary school Mary became a school science technician, then later a secondary school science teacher. By the time Amy was doing her A Levels Mary had stopped teaching because she did not enjoy it, and had retired along with Amy's step-father. Both Amy's father and step-father worked in the financial sector before retiring.

After attending her local mixed-sex state-funded primary school, then a single-sex state-funded secondary school where she stayed for sixth form to study for A Levels in Biology, History, Psychology and Sociology, Amy completed a degree in Sociology at a 1960s university[108], in a town where she stayed living after graduation.

In terms of career aspirations Amy aspired to become a teacher in all of her interviews (at age 10/11 she did not specify a teaching specialism, but from age 12/13 onwards she said that she wanted to become a primary school teacher), and never expressed a career aspiration other than teaching. Between her interviews at ages 20/21 and 21/22 Amy worked as a Teaching Assistant (TA) at a primary school

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[108] A 1960s university is a university in the UK which was established or promoted to university status in the 1960s (sometimes referred to as a 'plate glass' university). The term is used here to differentiate from Russell Group universities, and post-1992 universities.

for a year, and when I spoke to her at age 21/22 she was in this role and had recently accepted an offer to start ITE (through School Direct) the following September, specialising in primary teaching. Amy hoped to remain in teaching long-term, and hoped to become a Head of Year or similar.

Buddy

Buddy is a White Irish & European young man from a middle-class background. He was interviewed for the ASPIRES project at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, and 20/21, and I interviewed him specifically for this study when he was 21/22*. Buddy's parents, Naomi and Michael, were interviewed separately for the ASPIRES project when Buddy was 10/11, then together when Buddy was 13/14, and Naomi was interviewed again when Buddy was 15/16. In total, Buddy's longitudinal data include 10 interviews.

Before leaving home for university Buddy lived in London with Naomi, Michael, and his brother (2 years his junior). Naomi is a second-generation European immigrant and left school at 18 before working in business. Naomi left work to care for her children, and returned to work (in management consultancy) when Buddy was doing his GCSEs. Michael is White Irish and was the first person in his family to go to university. He worked as a lawyer for the length of the ASPIRES project.

Buddy attended academically selective fee-paying single-sex primary and secondary schools. He stayed at his secondary school for sixth form to complete A Levels in History, English Literature, Drama and Latin. Buddy then took a gap year, during

which time he worked in publishing, before studying for a degree in History at a Russell Group university[109].

In terms of career aspirations, at age 10/11 Buddy said that he might want to become a lawyer, a doctor, or an author, and at age 12/13 he said that he was interested in becoming a psychiatrist, working in the performing arts as an actor, or being an author. At both ages 13/14 and 15/16 the main career aspiration that Buddy expressed was to become an actor, though he said that he was still somewhat interested in psychiatry and writing. In his next interview, at age 20/21, Buddy said that he wanted to work in film or drama but was also considering postgraduate routes in journalism or history. In addition, when asked specifically about his views of teaching at age 20/21, Buddy said he had thought about becoming a teacher since he was doing his GCSEs, and had recently signed up to complete a teaching module as part of his undergraduate degree, because he wanted to see if he enjoyed teaching as much as he thought he would. Buddy was in the third year of his three-year undergraduate degree when I spoke to him at age 21/22, and was hoping to work in television or theatre after graduating.

Carol

Carol is a young woman of mixed ethnicity who described herself as White and having English as an Additional Language (EAL). She comes from a working-class background. Carol was interviewed at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18*, 20/21* for the ASPIRES project, and I interviewed her again for this study at age

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[109] A Russell Group university is one of 24 research-intensive universities in the UK. The Russel Group is sometimes referred to as the British equivalent of the 'Ivy League' in the US and contains many of the UK's leading universities in terms of league tables and research funding allocation. Most of these universities were established before the 1960s, and the term 'Russell Group' is thus used here to differentiate from 1960s universities, and post-1992 universities.

21/22*. Carol's mother Linda was interviewed when Carol was 10/11, 15/16, and 17/18*, and Carol's stepfather Peter was also interviewed separately when Carol was 15/16. In total, Carol's longitudinal data include 11 interviews.

Carol was born and lived as a young child in West Asia, but moved to England before starting primary school. Throughout the ASPIRES project Carol lived with Linda and Peter in London. Linda is originally from eastern Europe and held a university degree in maths. Linda worked as a travel consultant at the start of the ASPIRES project, and later in banking, and then hospitality. Peter, who was White British, did not have a university degree and worked in sports at the start of the ASPIRES project, but later became a letting agent. Carol's father, who worked in logistics, was West Asian and lived abroad for the duration of the ASPIRES project, though Carol described regularly speaking to him over the phone. Carol has two younger brothers, the first of whom was born when Carol was studying for her GCSEs, and the second of whom was born when Carol was at university.

Carol attended mixed-sex state-funded schools throughout her education, and stayed at her secondary school for sixth form to study for A Levels in media, English Language, Psychology and her first language. Carol then attended a post-1992 university[110] to study for a degree in Media.

In terms of career aspirations, at age 10/11 Carol said that she was interested in becoming a scientist, an archaeologist, a performing arts teacher, a singer, or a vet, and at age 12/13 she said that she would like to become a teacher (in maths,

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[110] A post-1992 university is a former polytechnic or central institution in the UK that became a university through the government's Further and Higher Education Act 1992, or an institution that has been granted university status since 1992 without receiving a royal charter. This term is used here to differentiate from Russell Group universities, and 1960s universities.

science, geography, or PE), a forensic scientist, or a doctor. At age 13/14 Carol said that she now wanted to become a magazine editor, a bilingual secretary, or a teacher (in languages or drama), and at age 15/16 she said that she wanted to work as a media producer, or a teacher if that did not work out (Carol did not specify a teaching specialism at this age). At age 17/18 Carol again said that she wanted to become a media producer, or something else related to media, but added that she was still considering teaching as a possibility if she was not able to pursue a career in media. Finally, at age 20/21, Carol said that she had recently been accepted onto a PGCE course specialising in secondary Media and English, for which she was studying when I interviewed her at age 21/22. Carol hoped to remain in teaching long-term, and eventually become a Head Teacher.

Celina

Celina is a White British young woman from a working-class background. She was interviewed for the ASPIRES project at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 and 20/21*, and I interviewed her specifically for this study when she was 21/22*. Celina's mother, Leah, and her father, Dave, were interviewed together for the ASPIRES project when Celina was 10/11 and 13/14. After they separated, Leah was then interviewed again when Celina was 15/16 and 17/18. Dave was interviewed when Celina was 21/22. In total, Celina's longitudinal data include 12 interviews.

Celina had three older siblings as well as a younger sister (5 years her junior), and a younger brother who was born when she was 20/21. At the time of her first three interviews Celina lived with Leah and her younger sister in London. By the time of her interviews at age 15/16 and 17/18, and again for a time during the Covid-19 pandemic when she was 20/21, Celina lived with Dave; also in London. Both Leah

and Dave are White British and both left school at age 16. Leah worked as a nursery nurse when she was first interviewed, then later as a teaching assistant, and then worked as a bookmaker. Dave did not work due to a disability.

Celina attended mixed-sex state-funded schools and, following her GCSEs, completed A Levels in History, Sociology and Psychology at a local college. Celina attended this college for three years, after having to retake the first year of her A Levels. She then worked as a bookmaker for a year before starting a degree in Psychology at a post-1992 university.

In terms of career aspirations, at age 10/11 Celina said that she wanted to become a primary school teacher or a police officer. At ages 12/13 and 13/14 Celina repeated her aspiration to become a primary school teacher, and did not name any other career aspirations. By age 15/16 Celina said that she was still interested in becoming a primary school teacher, but was now also interested in becoming a psychiatrist or working in the field of psychology. By the time of her next interview at age 17/18 Celina said that she thought that she wanted to become a counsellor or a child psychologist, but that she no longer wanted to become a primary school teacher. By her interview at age 20/21 Celina said that she was hoping to become a therapist. When I spoke to Celina at age 21/22 she was in the second year of her three-year undergraduate degree, and was still hoping to work as a therapist after graduating.

Hedgehog

Hedgehog is a White British young man from a working-class background. He was interviewed for the ASPIRES project at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18* and 20/21*, and I interviewed him for this study again when he was 21/22*. Hedgehog's

father, Larry, was interviewed for ASPIRES when Hedgehog was 10/11, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18* and 21/22. In total, Hedgehog's longitudinal data include 12 interviews.

Until he left home for university Hedgehog lived with Larry, along with his mother and his sister (four years his senior), in the East of England. Both Hedgehog's parents are White British and both left school at age 16. For the length of the ASPIRES project Larry worked as a postal carrier and Hedgehog's mother worked at a supermarket. After leaving college Hedgehog's sister first worked in beauty, and then also at a supermarket.

Hedgehog attended mixed-sex state-funded schools and then studied for A Levels in Financial Studies, Film Studies and Business at a college. After this Hedgehog first worked as an estate agent, and then as a water technician. Two years after leaving college Hedgehog started a degree in Film at a post-1992 university.

In terms of career aspirations, at both ages 10/11 and 12/13 the only aspiration that Hedgehog named was to become a primary school teacher. At age 13/14 Hedgehog said that he now wanted to become a Physical Education (PE) teacher, but by age 15/16 he said that he now wanted to be an accountant instead. At age 17/18 Hedgehog said that he wanted to become either a mortgage advisor or a financial advisor after first being an estate agent, and later added that he had also always wanted to become a pilot. By age 20/21 Hedgehog was hoping to work in the film industry. Hedgehog was in his second year of his three-year undergraduate degree when I spoke to him at age 21/22, and he was hoping to work in film production after graduating, though also expressed a continued interest in becoming a pilot.

Joanne

Joanne is a White British young woman from a middle-class background. She was interviewed for the ASPIRES project at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 and 20/21*, and I interviewed her specifically for this study when she was 21/22*. Joanne's parents, Judy and Matthew, were jointly interviewed for the ASPIRES project when Joanne was 10/11, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18, and 21/22. In total, Joanne's longitudinal data include 12 interviews.

Before leaving home for university Joanne lived in London with Judy and Matthew, both of whom are White British and both of whom left school at age 16. Judy worked in a bank, and then stopped work when Joanne was born. Matthew completed an engineering apprenticeship after leaving school, and then worked in business. When Joanne was completing her GCSEs Matthew developed an ongoing illness and, as a result, he left his job and began volunteering.

Joanne attended a mixed-sex state-funded primary school, and then a mixed-sex academically selective fee-paying secondary school on a partial scholarship, where she stayed for sixth form and studied for A Levels in Biology, Chemistry, Maths and History. Joanne then completed an undergraduate degree in Natural Sciences at a Russell Group university, followed by a Masters in Biology at a different Russell Group university.

In terms of career aspirations, at age 10/11 Joanne said that she aspired to become either a naturalist or a wildlife photographer, and at age 12/13 Joanne said that she wanted to become a chemist, a biologist, a secondary school teacher (but said that she did not know which subject she would like to teach), or a historian. By the following year at age 13/14 Joanne said that she no longer wanted to become a

teacher or a historian, but wanted to do "something sciencey", though was not sure what. At age 15/16 Joanne said that she was interested in working in scientific research, maybe within medicine or pharmaceuticals, and mentioned that she also sometimes considered careers in history or law. By age 17/18 Joanne said that she wanted to work in medical research or become a doctor through a postgraduate route. Finally, at age 20/21, Joanne said that she wanted to become a scientist but not in academia, and was still considering postgraduate routes in medicine as well as working in science communication or science policy. At this age Joanne also said that she had been considering applying to ITE to become a science teacher, alongside other graduate careers, because she had enjoyed working and volunteering with young people. When I interviewed Joanne at age 21/22 she explained that she had applied to ITE to become a science teacher the previous year, but had ended up withdrawing her application and pursuing a Masters in Biology instead. At the time of our interview Joanne was studying for her Masters, after which she was intending to become a lawyer specialising in scientific patents, having recently accepted a place on a legal training scheme.

Kate

Kate is a White British and Irish young woman from a middle-class background. She was interviewed for the ASPIRES project at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 and 20/21, and I interviewed her specifically for this study when she was 21/22*. Kate's mother, Sue, was also interviewed for the ASPIRES project when Kate was 10/11, 15/16, 17/18*, and 21/22. In total, Kate's longitudinal data include 11 interviews.

Before university Kate lived with Sue, along with her father, and her two older brothers in the South East of England. Sue is White British and worked as a GP, whilst Kate's father was White Irish, had an engineering degree, and worked in marketing and later computing. By the final ASPIRES interview, one of Kate's older brothers was a doctor and the other was working in pharmaceuticals.

Kate attended fee-paying single-sex primary and secondary schools. She stayed on at her secondary school for sixth form to study for A Levels in Maths, Chemistry, Physics and Biology. Kate then completed an undergraduate degree in Natural Sciences at a Russell Group university, and went on to study for a Masters in Biology at a different Russell Group university.

In terms of career aspirations, at age 10/11 Kate said that she wanted to become a food scientist, a zoologist, a teacher, or a photographer. At age 12/13 Kate said that she wanted to become a vet or a doctor, and no longer wanted to become a teacher. Kate repeated her aspiration to become a vet at age 13/14, adding that she still had some interest in becoming a doctor, and was also interested in working as a television producer or camera operator. By age 15/16 Kate said that she had recently decided against becoming a vet, and that she was now considering working in scientific research. At age 17/18 and age 20/21 Kate continued to express an aspiration to work in scientific research. In addition, when asked specifically about teaching at age 20/21 Kate said that she had recently started an ITE application to become a science teacher, though had decided against it. When I spoke to her at age 21/22 Kate was studying her Masters. At this time Kate said that she had ended up applying for ITE, but had withdrawn her application after being invited to

interview. She had recently accepted a position to study for a PhD in Biology after her Masters and hoped to continue working in scientific research in the future.

Louise

Louise is a White British young woman from a working-class background. She was interviewed for the ASPIRES project at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18* and 20/21, and I interviewed her specifically for this study when she was 21/22*. Louise's mother, Marie, was also interviewed for the ASPIRES project when Louise was 13/14, 15/16, 17/18*, and 21/22. In total, Louise's longitudinal data include 11 interviews.

Up until she left home for university Louise lived with Marie and her father in the East of England. Both Marie and Louise's father are White British and both left school at the age of 16. They both worked in retail for the length ASPIRES project.

Louise attended mixed-sex state-funded schools, and studied for A Levels in Dance, Psychology, and combined English Literature and Language at college. She then completed an undergraduate degree in Dance at a post 1992-university, and went on to study for a Masters degree, also in Dance, at a different post-1992 university.

In terms of career aspirations, at age 10/11 Louise said that she wanted to work in show business, and at age 12/13 Louise said that she aspired to become a drama teacher, or a choreographer. The following year at age 13/14, however, Louise now said that she had "no clue" what she wanted to do when she was older, but that she was still considering teaching. By age 15/16 Louise said that she aspired to work in dance or the performing arts, but added that she was also considering becoming a secondary school English teacher. At age 17/18 Louise said that she still wanted to

work in dance, though was open to different roles related to dance. She added that she was also still interested in teaching, but only as a second career after she had first worked in dance. By her interview at age 20/21 Louise said that she did not know what she wanted to do but still wanted to work in a dance-related role, and repeated that she was interested in teaching as a second career. When I spoke to Louise at age 21/22 she was studying for her Masters degree, and she hoped to work in a dance-related field after graduating.

Lucy

Lucy is a White British young woman from a working-class background. She was interviewed for the ASPIRES project at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18* and 20/21, and I interviewed her again for this study when she was 21/22*. Lucy's mother, Florence, was interviewed for the ASPIRES project when Lucy was 10/11, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18*, and 21/22. In total, Lucy's longitudinal data include 12 interviews.

During her schooling Lucy lived with Florence and her younger brother (4 years her junior) in the East Midlands. Florence is White British and left school at 16 before working in a customer-service role at a leisure centre at the start of the ASPIRES project, then in a nursery. For some of this period Florence also had a second job in a theatre. Florence was not in work at the time of her final interview, when Lucy was 21/22, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Florence was separated from Lucy's father, with whom Lucy was not in regular contact.

Lucy attended mixed-sex state-funded schools, and then did a BTEC in Art at college. After this, Lucy spent two years working as a swimming teacher before

starting a degree in Game Design at a post-1992 university; during which time she lived with her partners' family.

In terms of career aspirations, at age 10/11 Lucy said that she wanted to become a teacher (in art at a secondary school), or a fashion designer, and at age 12/13 she said that she wanted to work abroad as a fashion or interior designer, or become a primary school art teacher. The following year, at age 13/14, Lucy said that she wanted to become a secondary school teacher, specialising in either French or English, or work in design. By age 15/16 Lucy said that she had "no idea" what she wanted to do when she was older, but expressed a continued interest in working in art and design. And by age 17/18 Lucy said that she was interested in becoming an art therapist, though said that she was not certain about this because of the costs of university. Finally, at age 20/21, Lucy aspired to work in games design, and said that she wanted to become a teacher as a second career later in life. Lucy was in the second year of her three-year undergraduate degree when I spoke to her at age 21/22, and was hoping to work as a designer in gaming after graduating, and still hoped to become a teacher later in life.

Mienie

Mienie is an Asian young woman who comes from a middle-class background and describes herself as EAL. She was interviewed for the ASPIRES project at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18* and 20/21*, and I interviewed her specifically for this study when she was 21/22*. Mienie's mother, Dawn, was also interviewed for the ASPIRES project when Mienie was 10/11, 13/14, 15/16, and 17/18*. In total, Mienie's longitudinal data include 11 interviews.

Mienie lived with Dawn and her younger brother (2 years her junior) in the East of England before leaving home for university. Dawn and Mienie's father were originally from different countries in South East Asia. Neither Dawn nor Mienie's father had a university degree. Dawn has an accountancy qualification and worked as a financial administrator for the length of the ASPIRES project, and Mienie's father ran a restaurant in another European country; where the family had lived until Mienie was party-way through primary school. Dawn moved to England with Mienie and Mienie's younger brother so that they could complete their education in England. Sadly, Mienie's father died shortly before Mienie started university.

Mienie attended mixed-sex state-funded primary and secondary schools, and then an academically selective single-sex state-funded school for sixth form, where she completed A Levels in Physics, Chemistry and Maths. Mienie took a gap year after sixth from, during which time she worked in retail. She then started a degree in Chemistry at a Russell Group university.

In terms of career aspirations, at age 10/11 Mienie said that she wanted to become either a doctor or a teacher (specialising in languages or science). By age 12/13 Mienie said that she wanted to become a teacher in maths, religious studies, physics or chemistry, and then become a lecturer as a second career. The following year, at age 13/14, Mienie said that she now wanted to be a teacher in an international school (teaching English, science, maths, or German), and at age 15/16 Mienie said that she no longer wanted to teach, and was instead interested in working in chemistry, especially in relation to the beauty industry. This was an aspiration that Mienie repeated at age 17/18, when she also added that she had always wanted to be an actress. Finally, by age 20/21 Mienie said that she still aspired to work in

cosmetic chemistry, or maybe perfumery. Mienie was in the third year of her four-year undergraduate with combined Masters degree when I interviewed her at age 21/22, at which point she said that she still aspired to work in cosmetic chemistry after graduating.

Millie

Millie is a White British young woman from a working-class background. She was interviewed for the ASPIRES project at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16 and 20/21*, and I interviewed her again for this study at age 21/22*. Her mother, Sinead, was interviewed when Millie was 10/11, 13/14, 15/16 and 21/22. In total, Millie's longitudinal data include 10 interviews.

Before moving away for university Millie lived with Sinead, along with her father and younger brother (6 years her junior). Millie also has an older brother who had left home before Millie was 10/11. When Millie and Sinead were first interviewed the family lived in London, and they then moved to live in the East of England during Millie's first year of secondary school. Sinead is White British worked as a TA when Millie was young, and after Millie's younger brother was born she also worked as a retail assistant, and later as a primary school Lunchtime Supervisor and Learning Support Assistant (LSA) to children with additional needs. Millie's father was White British and worked as a mechanic, and then in house removals. Neither of Millie's parents, nor her older brother, went to university. Sadly, Millie's father died during her time at university.

Millie attended mixed-sex state-funded schools throughout her education, then left school at the age of 16 to study for a two-year BTEC in Sport at college. Millie then studied Physical Education (PE) at a 1960s university.

In terms of career aspirations, at age 10/11 the only aspiration that Millie expressed was to become a primary school teacher. At age 12/13 Millie said that she either wanted to be an actor or, as a second choice, a primary school teacher. By the following year at age 13/14 Millie said that she no longer wanted to become an actor but still wanted to be a primary school teacher, and in her interview at age 17/18 Millie said that she now wanted to be a secondary school PE teacher. By the time of her next interview, at age 20/21, Millie said that she was now pursuing teaching as she had recently accepted a place on a SCITT, specialising in secondary PE. Millie was on school placement part-way through this ITE year when I interviewed her at age 21/22. Millie expressed her intention to remain in teaching long-term, and progress to a pastoral position such as Head of Year

Samantha

Samantha is a is a young woman from a middle-class background who described her ethnicity as mixed (White and Asian). She was interviewed for the ASPIRES project at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 and 20/21, and I interviewed her specifically for this study when she was 21/22*. Samantha's mother, Claire, was also interviewed for ASPIRES when Samantha was 10/11, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18*, and 21/22. In total, Samantha's longitudinal data include 12 interviews.

Before leaving home for university Samantha lived with Claire and her father in the South East of England. Claire is a second-generation Asian immigrant and Samantha's father is White British. Claire did a degree in science and Samantha's father left school at age 16. Both of Samantha's parents worked in IT throughout the course of the ASPIRES project, though both also experienced periods of redundancy during this time.

Samantha attended single-sex fee-paying primary and secondary schools, and later an academically selective state-funded school for sixth form where she studied for A Levels in Chemistry, Biology and English Literature. She then completed a degree in Biology at a Russell Group university, and went on to study for a Masters, also in Biology, at a different Russell Group university.

In terms of career aspirations, at age 10/11 Samantha said that she wanted to be a journalist, a marine biologist, or a doctor, and at both ages 12/13 and 13/14 she said that she now wanted to become either a journalist or a doctor. By age 15/16 Samantha said that she now mainly wanted to become a doctor, but was still also interested in pursuing journalism, and by age 17/18 she said that she was still interested in both medicine and journalism, but thought that she would most likely end up in medicine. Finally, at age 20/21, Samantha said that she would like to work in scientific research, possibly for a pharmaceutical company, but that she was also considering a wide range of graduate schemes. In addition, when asked specifically about teaching at this age Samantha said that she had "always been interested" in becoming a science teacher, but that it was something that she would only consider as a second career after first working in science. When I spoke to Samantha at age 21/22 she was studying for her Masters and at this time was hoping to work in health policy after her graduation.

Victor

Victor is a White British young man from a middle-class background. He was interviewed for the ASPIRES project at ages 10/11, 12/13, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18* and 20/21*, and I interviewed him again for this study when he was 21/22*. Victor's

mother, Sam, was also interviewed for ASPIRES when Victor was 10/11, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18* and 21/22. In total, Victor's longitudinal data include 12 interviews.

Until university Victor lived in London with Sam, along his father, and his brother (3 years his junior). Both Sam and Victor's father are White British. Sam left school after her A Levels, and completed a physiotherapy qualification at college. She worked as a physiotherapist throughout the length of the ASPIRES project. Victor's father left school at age 16 before doing an apprenticeship, and worked as an engineer in a factory throughout the ASPIRES project.

Victor attended mixed-sex state-funded schools, and stayed at his secondary school for sixth form to complete A Levels in Maths, Physics, and Product Design. Victor then completed a degree in Physics at a post-1992 university.

In terms of career aspirations, at age 10/11 Victor said that he wanted to become a scientist, an inventor, or an engineer. Then, at both ages 12/13 and 13/14, Victor said that he most wanted to become a secondary school science teacher. During this time he also expressed interests in being a musician in a band, working in Information Technology (IT), being a scientist, an inventor, or working in engineering. By ages 15/16 and 17/18 Victor said that he most wanted to be an astrophysicist and no longer wanted to teach. Finally, at age 20/21, Victor said that he still wanted to work in astrophysics but was not sure how to do this. He also expressed an interest in becoming a classic car mechanic, or an electrical engineer. When I spoke to Victor at age 21/22, the year following his degree, he had applied to ITE but was not pursuing teaching and was instead working as a cleaner and caretaker. Victor referred to this as a temporary job, however, and said that he still hoped to work in a profession related to science or engineering.

Appendix 2 Ethical approval and participant recruitment documents

From: Sin, Pui <p.sin@ucl.ac.uk>
Sent: 19 December 2019 11:34
To: Macleod, Emily <e.macleod@ucl.ac.uk>
Subject: IOE ethics approval

Dear Emily

Thank you for sending in your ethics application.

I am writing to confirm that ethical approval has been granted by the UCL Institute of Education for your doctoral research project titled:

Understanding young people's aspirations to become a (science) teacher

This ethical approval has been granted from 19th December 2019 and the document you provided has been saved to your student file.

Please can you upload the approved ethics form to your UCL Research Student Log https://researchlog.grad.ucl.ac.uk/.

I wish you all the best for your forthcoming research.

Best wishes,
Pui

Ms Pui Sin
Programme Administrator |Academic Programmes Office| Centre for Doctoral Education |UCL Institute of Education|20 Bedford Way London WC1H 0AL

Phone: +44 (0) 20 7911 5544 |Email: p.sin@ucl.ac.uk |https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/cde/

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS – To be read by participants

Understanding young people's aspirations to teach - Emily MacLeod
Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), reference ES/P000592/1 – 2229509
Ethical approval granted by UCL Institute of Education (Data Reference Z6364106/2019/12/03)

I am a former Research Officer on the ASPIRES2 project, and I am now studying for a PhD, looking at what influences young people's aspirations to become a teacher, or not, especially in the sciences.

As you have been a research participant on the ASPIRES projects, I would like to invite you to continue to participate in this associated research project about teaching aspirations, specifically in (science) teaching careers. You should agree to participate only if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of this study?

I want to find out more about what young people think about teaching as a career, especially at secondary science level. I also want to find out about how you have made, and continue to make choices about your education (e.g., whether you went to university, and what you chose to study) and about how you are making plans for your future. All of these things will help me to make recommendations for how to attract more people to the teaching profession, especially in the sciences.

In addition to this interview I intend to use the data collected from the previous ASPIRES studies, so I may also analyse the data from the other interviews you have undertaken with ASPIRES.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been asked to take part because the ASPIRES projects interviewed you in Years 6, 8, 9, 11, and/or 13. I am now able to continue to work with the project and I hope to find out how your thoughts and ideas about teaching have changed, or not, as you have got older.

Do I have to take part?

You do not have to take part. You should read this information sheet and ask any questions you have. If you do not want to take part, please let me know.

What will happen if I take part?

You will participate in this interview with me. This interview will again last around 60-90 minutes and will be similar to the previous ASPIRES interviews, talking about science and your other school experiences, what you plan to do in the future and the kinds of things you're interested in. I will also ask some more specific questions about your thoughts on teaching as a career. There are no right or wrong answers, I am only interested in your thoughts and experiences.

It is up to you to decide whether to take part or not. You are free to stop participating at any time. You do not have to give a reason. Even if you agree to take part now, you may also withdraw your data from the project by contacting me before the end of 2021. Again, you do not have to give a reason for this. I would like to record this interview, and it will then be transcribed into text. Recordings will never be shared with anyone else and will be deleted at the end of my project (estimated September 2022). The anonymised transcript of our recording, which I will type up, will be uploaded onto the 'UK Data Service' website at the end of my PhD, in case other researchers wish to use this data. They will be required to have a researcher login to

access this data. This is a condition of my funding and I will ensure that you are not identifiable from this transcript.

There are no foreseeable risks to you if you agree to take part in this research, but please ask me any questions if you have any concerns. If you wish to take part but do not want to answer any particular question/s, you can ask me to skip a question at any point.

Will my taking part be confidential?

What is said in the interviews is considered confidential. If you change your mind about participating, let me know by the end of 2021 and I will delete the data (my contact details are below). I will not discuss what you say with your parents, carers, college/university or employer.

I will use a pseudonym to identify you in my research. This was chosen by you when you first started participating in the ASPIRES research project, though you will have the option to change it.

The way that I will collect and store this data has been authorised by the UCL Institute of Education Doctoral Students Ethics Process. The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will apply to all the data I collect. I will hold the information on the UCL network, in a password-protected area that only I can access. I will protect your anonymity by using your pseudonym, and will also apply pseudonyms to any names/places you mention in the interview so that you are not identifiable from the transcript that I will use for my analysis.

Local Data Protection Privacy Notice

Notice:
The controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Officer provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk

This 'local' privacy notice sets out the information that applies to this particular study. Further information on how UCL uses participant information can be found in its 'general' privacy notice: For participants in research studies, click here.

The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided across both the 'local' and 'general' privacy notices.

The lawful basis that will be used to process your personal data is: 'Public task' for personal data.

Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this [as discussed above], and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk.

Who has funded this research?

The project is funded by an organisation called the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), who also fund the ASPIRES research project, with additional funding from the Royal Society of Chemistry.

What will happen to the results?

I will write a PhD thesis sharing my anonymised findings. I will also write or contribute to publications about the research for conferences, teachers and other researchers. These publications may also be used by policymakers and other organisations to improve teacher recruitment. <u>Neither you, your family members, nor any institution you have attended or place you have worked will ever be named in my thesis or any associated reports</u>.

What if I have other questions?

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact me using these details:
Emily MacLeod
UCL Institute of Education
e.macleod@ucl.ac.uk
(or my supervisor Professor Louise Archer on l.archer@ucl.ac.uk)

If this study has harmed you in any way or if you wish to make a complaint you can contact UCL Institute of Education Ethics Committee on ioe.researchethics@ucl.ac.uk.

Thank you for reading this information sheet and considering taking part in this research.

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS – To be completed by participants

Understanding young people's aspirations to teach - Emily MacLeod
Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), reference ES/P000592/1 – 2229509
Ethical approval granted by UCL Institute of Education (Data Reference Z6364106/2019/12/03)

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You

can contact the researcher via email: e.macleod@ucl.ac.uk. You can keep a copy of this Information Sheet and Consent Form to refer to at any time.

Please write your initials in the right-hand column if you agree with each statement:

I confirm that I have read and understood the associated information sheet dated November 2020. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and asked questions, which have been answered satisfactorily.	
I consent to taking part in an interview as part of this research project.	
I consent to this interview being recorded, to aid with transcription.	
I understand that if I decide at any time during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researcher involved and withdraw from it immediately without giving any reason. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to withdraw my interview data up to the end of 2021.	
I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be handled in accordance with the terms of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and the ethical guidance of both the funder and institution of this project.	
I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify me in any publications.	
I understand that at the end of this study an anonymous transcript of this interview will be made available to other researchers who are registered on the 'UK Data Service' website, as requested by the funders of this study (ESRC).	

Participant's Statement: I, _____ [write your name], agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the table above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.   Signed [write name/insert electronic signature: Date:
Investigator's Statement (to be completed by Emily):

I _____ confirm that I have carefully explained the nature, demands and any foreseeable risks (where applicable) of the proposed research to the participant.

Signed:
     Date:

Appendix 3 Primary interview schedule

Introduction – All participants
o Thanks for agreeing to speak with me today. How are you? o *Introduce myself. Ask about ASPIRES experience. Read through consent form if not signed before (sent ahead of interview).* o *I'll introduce you to the project*: The way that this works is very similar to the interviews you have taken part in for ASPIRES. This is a study about teaching aspirations. The questions I would like to ask you are about whether or not you've ever wanted to become a teacher, and whether *how* you feel about becoming a teacher has changed over time, and what may have influenced this. I am using some of the ASPIRES data in my research so I have a record of what you've spoken about in other interviews, but I may also ask to you reflect on some of your old aspirations today. I'm also interested in your experience of teachers and teaching more generally. Our conversation is likely to take around one hour. o The reason that I've asked you to be a part of my research study because you: 1) were planning to pursue teaching last time we interviewed you, *or* 2) mentioned that you might be open to teaching last time we interviewed you, *or* 3) were planning to pursue a career in science last time we interviewed you, and I'd like about your views on *science* teaching. o Your participation in this study is strictly confidential. Our interview will be audio-recorded, and this simply helps me to remember what you said accurately so that I don't have to make lots of notes during our conversation *[if using zoom ask that the video be recorded to aid with transcription but emphasise that video will not be seen by anyone else]*. I will then transcribe the recording myself, but will delete or alter any details which would make you identifiable. I will then send you the transcript so that you will have the opportunity to make any edits to my record of our conversation, if you want to. Then the recording will be destroyed. As with ASPIRES, the transcript will be uploaded onto a website for researchers after I have completed my study, which is a requirement of my funding, but there will be no information on this transcript which makes you identifiable. o *[Check if all OK]*. Finally thank you for agreeing to be part of this study, because your participation is really important for my research. However, should you wish to stop, you can do so at any time and there's no need to give a reason. I just ask that you contact me before the end of the year if you'd like to withdraw. You are also free to ask me any questions during the interview, or you can contact me again at any time in the future. o Do you have questions before we start?

Part 1 – Questions for all participants (identity and 'general teaching views')
1. Before I start I just wanted to check that I have the right information for you. As I mentioned you will remain anonymous in my research, but I will use a pseudonym for you, and may refer to your gender, your ethnicity etc. The pseudonym we have used for you on the ASPIRES project has always been [X], as chosen by you in the first interview you had for ASPIRES – would you be happy for me to still use this to refer to you? *[If not, ask would they like to have a new one, what would they like that to be?]* o And in terms of your gender, how do you identify? o And how would you describe your ethnicity? *[check parents' ethnicity here if unsure about it from earlier ASPIRES interviews]* o Is there anything else you'd like to share about how you identify? o Can I check what it is that your parents do? *[confirm parents' education level if unknown]*
2. When you last spoke with [X] last year you were doing [X]. How is that going/what are you up to? o *(if unclear/unknown) And what job would you like to have in the future? Can you tell me about how you'll get there (prompt: additional qualifications?) / If multiple paths ask what job they'd like in 10 years time.*
3. In terms of teaching, could you start by telling me whether you know anyone who is, or has been, a teacher? o *Did you ever speak to them, or they to you, about teaching? What impression did you get about teaching from them? To what extent do you think that influenced how you saw teaching as a career (for you)? [any friends who are (becoming) teachers?]*
4. How important, or not, do you feel that teachers have been in your own life? o *Could you give me an example of that? Could you tell me about a memorable teacher you had at school? How did they do [X]?* o *Can you tell me about any negative feelings or experiences that you associated with teachers when you were younger? To what extent have these changed, or not, as you've got older?*
5. And what about you - Can you tell me about any times when you remember wanting to be a teacher when you were younger? o *(if yes) Could you tell me about that/the type of teacher that you wanted to be? Why?* o *(if no) Could you tell me about why think that is? [if prompt needed: acknowledge that it is a common career aspiration for YP]*
6. More generally, how do you think teachers are viewed by society? *Prompt about money/salary. How would 'average' person respond if their child wanted to be a teacher?*
7. And to what extent do you agree, or disagree with that view/those views?

8. [*has mostly come up already by this point*] And have you have had any experience of teaching, or teaching-like activities (tutoring, coaching etc.)? *To what extent do you think you have, or haven't linked those experiences to teaching/becoming a teacher?* 9. (to all but those teaching) To what extent do feel that teaching is something you'd be open to in the future? o *Confirm answer back to them to ensure correct categorisation before part 2 (e.g., Would it be true to say that you are (not) considering teaching as a possibility in the future?).*		

Part 2 – Questions dependent on participant categorisation ('becoming a teacher')		
(if pursuing teaching)	**(if they are open to teach in the future)**	**(if not teaching)**

10. Could you tell me about why you want to be a teacher?
11. Can you tell me about the type of teacher you'd like to be?
   o Do you have anyone in mind?
12. Is this something that you have spoken about with others? *(mention careers advisors)*
13. *(if they've applied for ITE)* Could you tell me about how you applied to train as a teacher, and how you found the process?
AND *(if in ITE/working as teacher)* to what extent does is it how you imagined?
OR *(if not yet applied for ITE)* Could you tell me about how you plan to apply to become a teacher?
	12. Could you tell me about why you may be considering going into teaching? (or *why is that?* – follow on from Q9)
	13. If you were to become a teacher, can you tell me about what type of teacher you'd like to be?
	   o Do you have anyone in mind?
	14. Have you spoken to anyone about this possibility of becoming a teacher? (mention careers advisors)
	   o *Did anyone speak to you (teacher family members?)*
	15. Can you tell me about under what circumstances you think you could become a teacher (preferred route?)? *Why is that?*
		12. *(if had a teaching aspiration)* Could you tell me about why you no longer want to be a teacher?
		OR *(if never had teaching aspiration)* What, if anything, do you think put you off or discouraged you from wanting to teach?
		13. *(if relevant)* Can you tell me a bit more about what type of teacher you used to want to be?
		   o *Do you have anyone in mind?*
		14. *(if relevant)* Did you speak to anyone about this? (mention careers advisors)
		15. *(if relevant)* Did you know about how you might become a teacher when you wanted to be one?/ What do you know about how people can become a teacher?

Part 3 – Questions for participants who have studied/worked in science only (& dependent on above categorisation)		
16. Could you tell me about why you'd like to a science teacher specifically? (if	16. Could you tell me about whether/why you are considering working/want to work in science?	16. Could you tell me about why you want to be a ___/work in science? What is it that you value about it?

not science why discipline/why not science) 17. Before deciding to become a teacher, did you ever want to work in a different job related to science? 18. To what extent do you think that any of things that you value about teaching also exist, or not, in other jobs which involve working in science? 19. To what extent do you think that science teaching is, or is not, a type of working in science? To what extent do you think other people would agree with you? 20. (if relevant) How do you think that your experience of tutoring (/other teaching-like activity) influenced how you feel about becoming a teacher, if at all? And specifically, becoming a science teacher?	17. To what extent do you think that any of things that you value about working in ___ also exist in teaching, or not? 18. What about for science/science specialism teaching specifically – to what extent do you think that science teaching does or doesn't offer any of things offered by working in a different role in science? 19. *[could relate back to memorable teacher]* To what extent do you think that science teaching is, or is not, a type of working in science? To what extent do you think other people would agree with you? 20. (if relevant) How do you think that your experience of tutoring (/other teaching-like activity) influenced how you feel about becoming a teacher, if at all? And specifically, becoming a science teacher?	17. To what extent do you think that any of things *[NAME them]* that you value about working in ___ also exist in teaching, or not? 18. What about for science/science specialism teaching specifically – to what extent do you think that science teaching does or doesn't offer any of things offered by working in a different role in science? 19. *[could relate back to memorable teacher]* To what extent do you think that science teaching is, or is not, a type of working in science? To what extent do you think other people would agree with you? 20. (if relevant) How do you think that your experience of tutoring (/other teaching-like activity) influenced how you feel about becoming a teacher, if at all? And specifically, becoming a science teacher?
**Part 4 – Questions for all participants**		
21. [*Start with how pandemic has changed work lives etc.*] To what extent has the pandemic influenced how you feel about being a teacher, or not? *Prompt – outline teachers as key workers v. teachers at increased risk when others work at home/more teachers going into teaching this year.* o And to what extent do you feel that the current financial crisis (as a result of the pandemic) specifically, has that influenced how you feel about being a teacher, or not? *Prompt: Teaching is seen as a relatively stable career* 22. So that's nearly the end of the interview. My last question is about the wider context of the research – the background to my study is that we have a shortage of teachers in England, especially in the sciences. Is there anything that you think government, or people within the education system or the wider public could, or should, do to improve this situation?		

23. Finally, is there anything that I haven't asked you about that you'd like to add about how you view becoming a teacher, or teachers in general?
   o *Thanks…. Reminder of timeline of PhD and research outputs and how to contact me with Qs.*

Example email sent to participants, with interview transcript attached

Hi [participant],

I hope you've had a good week. Thank you again for speaking with me [on date] for my PhD research – it was great to hear how you're doing and really useful to hear your thoughts on teaching.

As promised, I attach a final transcript of our conversation, and I invite you to suggest or make any edits that you'd like. Though it would be useful if you use 'track changes' if so, so that I can see where you've made changes.

Equally, I know that you're very busy so there's no pressure to look over the attached at all. Though if you get a chance to reply to this message either way that would be useful – but no rush.

Wishing you all the best for [your future plans]. Please don't hesitate to get in touch in the future if you have any questions. All the best,

Emily

Emily MacLeod *(she/her/hers)*
PhD Researcher
UCL Institute of Education

Appendix 4 Qualitative coding frameworks

Table 18 *This study's 'figured worlds' coding framework*

High in status/high in safety?	Cultural model	Literature	Storyline	Example data
High in status	Teachers make a difference	Gorard et al. (2021) Perryman and Calvert (2020) van Rooij et al. (2020)	Teachers shape the lives of their students	"certain teachers have inspired me, I'd like to do the same thing for other people" (Lucy, 13/14) "teachers definitely very much changed my education in which way I went in terms of education - that makes [teaching] appeal to me" (Samantha, 20/21)
			Teachers benefit society	"teaching just seems like a way where you can go, when you can come away from it and go, 'you know, I did good today'" (Buddy, 21/22) "I think, with a lot of people, the pandemic has, kind of, given a shift towards more people-focused roles, and, kind of, roles that give back. And, I think, realising how much the pandemic has affected education […] has made teaching seem like a much more important role for me" (Samantha, 21/22)
	Teachers are gifted	Britzman (1986) Hansen (2021) Madero (2020)	Teachers are naturally good with children	"At primary school some of the teachers were really good there […] I think it's just the way they spoke to people and explained things, they didn't just shout at you straight away if you didn't get something." (Amy, 12/13) "Cos [young brother has] got so much from school and… the teachers have a lot of patience for that age really" (Carol, 20/21)

			Teachers are naturally good at helping others	"I had one [teacher…] I had him for a good few years […] as you progressed *more*, and you got older, he, you know, he relaxed more with you. Um, and it was more like a dialogue with, sort of, posing questions, thinking about them, answering, like, and proposing answers to them, or, like, you could, you could *test* those answers" (Joanne, 21/22)
	Teaching is a profession	OECD (2005) Sachs (2016)	Teachers are highly educated	"I've set all my determination and all my knowledge. I'm going to try my best in college and then go to university" (Celina, 12/13) "I'm planning on going to university, college, obviously you need that to get a teaching degree" (Millie, 13/14)
			Teachers are highly skilled	"I mean you have to be pretty intelligent to be able to teach a subject. Like I've always found that you have to really know something inside out to be able to teach it to someone else" (Samantha, 21/22)
High in safety	Teaching is accessible	Chevalier et al. (2007) Dawes and Wheeldon (2022) Lortie (2002) See (2004)	Teaching is familiar	"we come to school like every day so you, you meet different teachers and then you see like they have teaching styles and techniques […] so then [teaching is] a bit like it's the easy option" (Mienie, 13/14)
			Teaching is a backup career	"if you just do a subject, go down that field then you can always just train to be a teacher in it" (Louise, 15/16) "I think I would try [working in media] and if not I'd fall back to teaching" (Carol, 15/16)
			ITE is easy to access	"you know what they say, like you should be in the industry before you teach, so I think it would be good like if I did, if I was in the Media industry and then taught in my later years, because I've had experience" (Carol, 17/18)

				"I think I'd never want to go straight into teaching, but I'd definitely consider teaching when I was a bit older" (Samantha, 20/21)
	Teaching enables a good lifestyle	Drudy et al. (2005) Lortie (2002) Dolan et al. (2012)	Teaching is compatible with family life	After having decided to teach: "I always wanted a family and I always wanted a job that would provide" (Carol, 20/21)
				"I think teaching's a lot more, like, *family* friendly. So I don't know whether, if, like, I mean I'm definitely someone who's always said, like, kids a lot *later* in life [laughs], but like, if, when that happened, I wanted something that is a bit more family friendly, then I think that would definitely be when I moved into teaching" (Samantha, 21/22)
			Teaching is decently paid	"my brother went into teaching as like a 'come out of uni, I've got no idea what to do – I'll just do teaching, it's decently paid'" (Amy, 20/21)
				When asked who see looked up to: "Maybe my cousins [who are teachers] cos they've got good jobs and a girlfriend each. Um ... yeah nice houses, flats, yeah […] Doing well" (Louise, 12/13)
	Teaching is a secure job	Atfield and Purcell (2010) Gorard et al. (2021)	Teachers are always needed	"in teaching you can have like loads of teaching, like different teachers for everything, so there's more options really" (Carol, 12/13)
				"my brother literally did [teaching] because he didn't know, *literally* didn't know what to do, like, coming out of uni. And he was just, like 'it's a very stable job, I could, you know, I could see myself doing it, so, like, I'll give it a go'" (Amy, 21/22)

				"[teaching] feels like it's going to be such a clear, set pathway" (Lucy, 21/22)
			Teaching is a job for life	"I think about [teaching] obviously sort of a long-term thing cos sometimes... and obviously I think about like will I enjoy this job […] the people that help out at the youth club are like... some of them are teachers, and one of them has been there since that school opened, so she's been there for about 40 years" (Millie, 13/14)

Table 19 This study's 'positionality' coding framework

High in status/high in safety?	Cultural model	Storyline	Example positioning *towards* teaching	Example positioning *away from* teaching
High in status	Teachers make a difference	Teachers shape the lives of their students	Celina, about what her parents thought of her teaching aspiration: "I'm a teacher and say I teach loads of people that are bright in the other school, then they come and thank me and that, I think they'll be really proud" (Celina, 10/11)	N/A
		Teachers benefit society	"being a teacher is a good job […] Because then [Celina]'s teaching the next generation of children, and I think that's cool" (Leah, when Celina was 15/16)	N/A
	Teachers are gifted	Teachers are naturally good with	"I've said he's good with children, so I think that would be good" (Larry when Hedgehog was 10/11)	"that seems to be the only thing that people seem to be contacting her about is teaching at the moment, but she doesn't know if she would have the patience to teach" (Judy, when

		children	"if I expressed you know wanting to go into [teaching] they'd be like 'Oh yeah I can definitely see you doing that, you'd be great at that'" (Millie, 20/21)	Joanne was 20/21)
		Teachers are naturally good at helping others	"It's often been told me that I have a demeanour of like an A Level English teacher […] Sort of slightly laid back and collaborative" (Buddy, 20/21)	N/A
	Teaching is a profession	Teachers are highly educated	"I want her to be a proper teacher, not like just work in a nursery like I do. I want her to go to university. I want her to go to college, university, then train to be a proper qualified teacher in a school" (Leah, when Celina was 10/11)	Joanne, about her parents' anticipated response to her interest in teaching: "I think my, like, my parents would think that I'm 'better' than that, um, and that I could probably do better" (Joanne, 21/22)
		Teachers are highly skilled	"I want her to be better than me […] there's nothing wrong with what I do, I work long hours, but… she's got a better brain than I have – I know she can go all the way with college and university, then become [a teacher]" (Leah, when Celina was 13/14)	About what her mother, Claire, would think of her becoming a teacher: "I think she'd *want* me to do something else *first*, but she's always been pretty supportive of teaching" (Samantha, 21/22)
High in safety	Teaching is accessible	Teaching is familiar	"I said to her you know remember the fact that you always wanted to be a teacher and you love PE, so combine the two and at least get a teaching degree behind you" (Sinead, when Millie was 15/16)	About a teaching module on a Physics degree course: "I think is a really great government initiative for new teachers in the country, but I just think 'Man, there's a lot of work' – there's a huge amount of work" (Sam, when Victor was 15/16)

		Teaching is a backup career	"we try to push her in that direction [of teaching] well, not push her but guide her, and also obviously if she'd got an injury with Dance, she may not be able to do it so she needs to have something else to fall back on" (Marie, when Louise was 13/14) "we'd said to him previously… you know if you do get to do a Physics degree it's probably worth you thinking about doing a teaching certificate at the end of it because, you know, it's something you can always go back to" (Sam, when Victor was 15/16)	N/A
		ITE is easy to access	"I think the more realistic one would be a teacher, but we'll see how he gets on really" (Larry, when Hedgehog was 10/11) "I mean [teaching]'s the baseline, that's you know […] you go from there [to] whatever it is you want to do" (Sinead, when Millie was 13/14)	"[teaching] is obviously a big decision and a long way… it's a long old slog… she must realise that. It ain't just schooling, it's university … there's a lot more to it than maybe she realises, so… she needs to grasp that. Cos it's not going to happen overnight, it's going to be years of dedication she needs to put into that" (Leah, when Celina was 13/14)
	Teaching enables a good lifestyle	Teaching is compatible with family life	"I would like her to have a family. You need to have a job that will pay well... while you can do it part-time and mix both […] for me that leaves the professions in reality. Teaching, accountancy, you know, law, even medicine you know" (Claire, when Samantha was 10/11)	N/A

		Teaching is decently paid	"I actually keep trying to say 'Why don't you go down the teaching route?' […] You can walk into a job from uni at 20 odd grand" (Florence, when Lucy was 13/14) When the interviewer asked what she could see Louise doing in 15 years' time: "Looking after me probably. She'll get lots of money as a teacher" (Marie, when Louise was 15/16)	"my dad didn't understand [my interest in teaching], he's very much like money orientated, so he wanted me to get a job like in a big business" (Carol, 20/21)
	Teaching is a secure job	Teachers are always needed	Carol, speaking about her mum Linda: "she was like 'Oh [Carol] you're fine, because teachers will be needed' - even if tutoring, even if I'm doing online teaching – they'll always need teachers" (Carol, 20/21)	N/A
		Teaching is a job for life	"I actually keep trying to say 'Why don't you go down the teaching route?', because it's a job for life" (Florence, when Lucy was 13/14)	"I'm worried because she can't make a decision [to teach], so I'm not going to have her 'flim flam' it. She's got to, even if she gets one good thing you know she has [teaching] to fall back on" (Sinead, when Millie was 15/16)

Table 20 *This study's 'space of authoring' coding framework*

High in status/high in safety?	Example cultural model	Example storyline	Example space of authoring *towards* teaching	Example space of authoring *away from* teaching
High in status	Teachers make a difference	Teachers shape the lives of their students	"teaching just seems like a way where you can go, when you can come away from it and go […] 'I helped people, you know, in a, in an important stage in their life'" (Buddy, 21/22)	N/A
		Teachers benefit society	"I like the idea of like actually being able to like see a genuine change that you're making, I just think that's the best thing you could ever get from a job" (Amy, 20/21)	N/A
	Teachers are gifted	Teachers are naturally good with children	"even though I'm small I've always enjoyed teaching my little brother or small children, and I love like babies, I love kids, and when I'm older I'll probably love people my age" (Millie, 13/14)	"I mean I'm patient but in certain… I don't know, I guess, situations. So talking through something with someone of course I'm patient, but like with children though I can't… [laughs] can't do it" (Celina, 17/18)
		Teachers are naturally good at helping others	"I think teaching younger children [you] need quite a creative standpoint, and so that wouldn't be too much of a problem for me" (Lucy, 20/21)	"I'm not emotionally invested [laughs] […] I would like my classroom to be, like, all achieving A*s, or whatever. And if a student, like, didn't want that, and just wanted a B I would find it difficult to be like, 'why do you just want the B?', you know?" (Mienie, 21/22)
	Teaching is a profession	Teachers are highly educated	"obviously I'm planning on going to university, college, obviously you need that to get a teaching degree, so obviously I know that" (Millie, 13/14)	"we've been going through that in Economics at the moment. Um, our teacher […] he finished his degree, worked in [an] accounting firm type place for a year and then just didn't like it and went into

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				teaching. 'Why did you go into teaching sir?' Er, but like he's still here, so something is good about teaching apparently" (Victor, 15/16)
		Teachers are highly skilled	"that's actually really why I picked teaching, because teaching is theory based and I'm so used to theory now and how to analyse and how to understand everything and develop a theory, and explain a theory" (Carol, 20/21) "I was definitely interested in the idea of becoming a teacher. I thought doing a role like [sports coaching] would definitely give me some insight, err, and it really did. In terms of this very, err, dealing with lots of different sets of children […] you get this real grasp of, 'alright, how does a class dynamic work? How are you supposed to interact with all the kids?'" (Victor, 21/22)	"I don't know whether it's seen as a career that's, like, as high-reaching as it should be. I think it's seen as a very, like, kind of, average, run-of-the-mill career. Like, even when I was at uni I think a lot of people viewed teaching as a *bit* of a fail-, like not a *failure*, but it was the *easy* route from uni. It's like, if you didn't know what you wanted to do you could just go and do a PGCE" (Samantha, 21/22)
High in safety	Teaching is accessible	Teaching is familiar	"In teaching you can have like loads of teaching, like different teachers for everything, so there's more options really" (Carol, 12/13) "I often say… if I'd teach anywhere I'd teach secondary school education Physics, just because that's when I started enjoying Physics, and that's when I also went 'These people could be doing a better job'" (Victor, 20/21)	"I know I need to go and learn a lot about how to deal with children and how to make sure you can teach. Making sure your kids are protected and things like that, go and take a PGCE and do it the proper way. Whereas I just wanted to get into like… turn up, tell some kids about something" (Victor, 20/21)

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		Teaching is a backup career	"I've always told myself the teaching one, well for the past couple of years, because obviously [teaching]'s the more realistic one. It's going to be easier, because I'm not going to a dance college" (Louise, 15/16) "I was like, you know, 'that would be more than I'd be earning anywhere else, anyway, so I may as well do [apply to ITE], all I have to do is be a teacher for a few years afterwards, and then I can move on to doing something else'" (Victor, 20/21)	"when I was younger, my grandma, who spoke only [another language], moved here to help look after me when my mom was working. She really didn't speak any English. So we used to, I used to give her lessons […] And at that point I was, like, probably, like 'yeah, I like teaching'" (Carol, 21/22)
		ITE is easy to access	"I feel like, because you can get a PGCE at any time […] And go and teach at any time" (Louise, 17/18) "I think, always in the back of my mind, even from a young age, even if I worked in a different job I've always thought I would finish as a teacher" (Lucy, 21/22)	"*Honestly*, if [Teach First] had dance I would be applying *now* to start in September" (Louise, 21/22) "I always wanted to do it, but it was just, when I had moments of doubt I thought, 'are you really, want to, are you going to be good enough at this?'" (Millie, 21/22)
	Teaching enables a good lifestyle	Teaching is compatible with family life	"I remember being younger, it's such a grown up thing to think, but I remember thinking, 'oh, teaching would be good because you get the holidays off, and that means you can spend time with your family'" (Millie, 21/22)	"I've got a sense of the homelife of it, right, and how a lot of it is [pause], sometimes just *graft*, right, like you've literally just got to put the hours in, *a lot* of hours at home, right, which is ticking and crossing, and writing those comments. And there's a huge amount of your, your free time need to go into, particularly primary school teaching, *it seems*, right" (Buddy, 21/22)

		Teaching is decently paid	Millie, when comparing teaching with her other aspirations: "with the teaching […] obviously I think about, like, will I enjoy this job, will I get a good amount of money […] it's mostly teacher" (Millie, 13/14)	Samantha, on why she did not want to pursue teaching at the time: "I mean part of it is because [of the] money, you're very capped as a teacher with how much you can earn" (Samantha, 20/21)
	Teaching is a secure job	Teachers are always needed	"I definitely think [the pandemic] might have even, like, made me *more* into the teaching. Because I know, that like, teachers are always needed" (Carol, 21/22) "I think because the world does need teachers so there might a market for it" (Mienie, 13/14)	N/A
		Teaching is a job for life	"as I get older I probably am going to want to progress, like. I don't know if I could ever see myself being like a head teacher or anything, but at least like maybe somewhat of a senior position, or just some sort of responsibility" (Amy, 20/21)	N/A

Table 21 This study's 'intersectionality' coding framework

Example intersectionality code	Example data
Teaching, gender, ethnicity, future parenthood	Carol, explaining what she wanted to be doing in five years' time: "definitely already been a teacher for 4 of them – proper qualified teacher. Preferably already moved out. I'm really… I'm one of those people that I really want to get married and have kids really soon, because I think that's part of my East European in me that my mum's always like drilling into me, but probably moved out, married, working as a teacher already" (Carol, 20/21)

Teaching, gender, future parenthood	"another is, is a growing paternalistic, fatherly instinct within me, right. I, you know, I'm *very* attached to the idea of, of being a father one day, right, and so that, I think that's mixed up from, in my, in my want to teach. I very, I very much like the idea of helping, you know, young people grow or change for the better" (Buddy, 20/21)
Teaching, social class	"I have to give her the commercial spin to say 'well, it might be great if you go and study some very obscure thing, but there's no job in it'. You know, like, [music teacher] her music teacher is an amazing woman, but there's not a vast amount of money being a [musical instrument] teacher. She's very happy and I respect her and she's amazing, but, you know" (Matthew, when Joanne was 10/11)
Teaching, gender	"It's just, you kind of grow into, even at home, you're still a teacher. So you still have those kind of, that kind of *way* of being […] And I emulate that in all, clearly in all areas of my life [laughs]. I lived with five boys last year and I was the mom that I looked after them, and they had to, they'd come to me to speak about things […] So it's just kind of remained constant that I'm always that position" (Millie, 21/22)
Science, ethnicity, gender	Mienie spoke about now wanting to be a cosmetic chemist after discovering how chemists who worked for a specific beauty brand used had developed a natural serum to protect darker skin types against the sun; "[the brand] have a serum which, well it, because I feel like I have a dark neck, so then I use their serum […] the melanin in your skin, well in darker people there's a lot, so when you're exposed to sun it's more [… the serum] doesn't make your skin go quickly dark, so I feel that's quite interesting and it's made by three flowers, which I find that so interesting" (Mienie, 15/16)
Science, social class, gender	"I mean, man, if [Victor] does do this Astrophysics thing you know I think, oh man, good on him. Because it's not something, you know, anyone in the family can you know help him with or anything else and he'll kind of be pioneering his own way" (Sam, when Victor was 15/16)

Appendix 5 Quantitative analyses

Table 22 Breakdown of free-text survey responses

	Teaching aspiration according to the ISCO-08 2300 = General teacher or unspecified specialism 2341 = Primary Teacher 2330 = Secondary Teacher 2352 = Special education teacher				Respondents who reported a teaching aspiration		Respondents who reported a science teaching aspiration		Total free-text survey responses
	Code 2300	Code 2341	Code 2330	Code 2352	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*N*
Age 10/11 (2009/10)	448	24	66	1	539	5.78	2	0.02	9,319
Age 12/13 (2011/12)	168	53	119	0	340	6.03	5	0.09	5,634
Age 13/14 (2012/13)	103	58	109	2	272	5.91	12	0.26	4,600
Age 15/16 (2014/15)	365	167	259	10	801	5.97	12	0.09	13,421
Age 17/18 (2016/17)	188	111	131	4	434	6.19	6	0.09	7,013
Age 21/22 (2020/21)	92	34	26	3	155	2.03	4	0.05	7,635

Table 23 *ASPIRES survey respondents who agreed or disagreed that they would like to be a teacher or work with children, by gender (Girl or young woman vs. Boy or young man)*

		Agreed or strongly agreed		Neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed		Total
		n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*N*
Age 13/14 (2012/13)	Girl or young woman	1164	46%	1369	54%	2533
	Boy or young man	364	18%	1655	82%	2019
	x^2 (1, *n* = 4552) = 391.616, *p* = 0.000), *phi* = 0.294					
Age 15/16 (2014/15)	Girl or young woman	3128	44%	3983	56%	7111
	Boy or young man	1134	18%	5067	82%	6201
	x^2 (1, *n* = 13312) = 1004.054, *p* = 0.000), *phi* = 0.275					
Age 17/18 (2016/17)	Girl or young woman	1756	43%	2322	57%	4078
	Boy or young man	631	25%	1923	75%	2554
	x^2 (1, *n* = 6632) = 228.842, *p* = 0.000), *phi* = 0.186					
Age 21/22 (2020/21)	Girl or young woman	2299	51%	2229	49%	4528
	Boy or young man	805	29%	1932	71%	2737
	x^2 (1, *n* = 7265) = 317.217, *p* = 0.000), *phi* = 0.209					

Table 24 *ASPIRES survey respondents who agreed or disagreed that they would like to be a teacher or work with children, by ethnicity (White vs. Minoritised Ethnicities [ME])*

		Agreed or strongly agreed		Neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed		Total
		n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*N*
Age 13/14 (2012/13)	White	1128	34%	2143	66%	3271
	ME	401	31%	888	69%	1289
	*x*2 (1, *n* = 4560) = 4.577, *p* = 0.032), *phi* = -0.032					
Age 15/16 (2014/15)	White	3370	33%	6785	67%	10155
	ME	895	28%	2266	72%	3161
	*x*2 (1, *n* = 13316) = 26.058, p = 0.000), *phi* = -0.044					
Age 17/18 (2016/17)	White	1895	37%	3207	63%	5102
	ME	492	32%	1038	68%	1530
	*x*2 (1, *n* = 6632) = 12.483, p = 0.000), *phi* = -0.044					
Age 21/22 (2020/21)	White	2536	42%	3435	58%	5971
	ME	660	43%	885	57%	1545
	*x*2 (1, *n* = 7516) = 0.021, p = 0.884), *phi* = 0.002					