

## **An Inquiry into Teacher Agency and Professional Development: The Introduction of the Early Career Framework in England**

### **Abstract**

Focusing on teacher agency has a great deal of potential in elucidating the professional development of teachers and the processes by which this development is supported, conditioned and restricted. Yet there remain both theoretical and practical issues in bringing agency to bear on practice. This chapter therefore engages with both the theoretical definition of agency, and its practical application as a focus of research.

Theoretically, we draw on the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze to evaluate the utility of framing agency 'as event', considering how this furthers existing models in the literature. We then take this framing of agency into an inquiry involving the empirical findings of a pilot evaluation, ahead of a major policy shift in England. Motivated by issues of consistency during induction and the retention of teachers, the Early Career Framework was introduced to codify what all teachers should know, and to underpin programmes of support for the first two years of a teacher's career. We evaluated three pilot programmes to support the rollout of this framework, across 98 schools. As we re-engage with the findings of the evaluation, we demonstrate how focusing on agency provides a powerful lens for research and yields insights into the professional development of new teachers and their mentors. From these insights we argue that framing teacher agency has the potential to reconnect the professional development of teachers with the project of education, informing how teachers develop themselves, each other and engage with issues in the contemporary world.

**Mark Hardman, Becky Taylor, Caroline Daly**

**Institute of Education, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society, UK**

**Key words: Teacher Agency; Early Career Teachers; Professional Development; Deleuze; Event**

## Introduction: An Inquiry into the Development of Agency

A central concern for teacher education and development is affording teachers with agency, so that they can act and improve their practice for the benefit of their students and themselves. We believe that teachers should be agentic professionals, which at a first definition is about the capacity of each teacher to make changes that they see as beneficial. From this belief we propose that teacher professional development should support agency on a number of levels: it should support teachers developing the capacity to make changes to their own practice, it should support teachers in being able to guide their own development and it should support the capacity of teachers to make changes which positively impact on issues in the world today.

Research which focuses on defining and developing teacher agency is arguably in its infancy but has a great deal of potential in elucidating how teachers learn and how they are supported. In turn this has potential to guide policy and practice in teacher education. Furthermore, there is a growing understanding that considering teacher agency can shed light on issues of teacher retention. For example, Heikonen et al. (2017) surveyed 284 early career teachers in Finland and found that an increased sense of professional agency was linked to a lower report of wanting to leave the profession. This fits with our view that the fulfilment of teachers, including their sense that they are making a difference, is important to both the health of the profession and to the project of education itself.

Yet there is more to be done in undertaking research around teacher agency. As Toom et al. (2015) note, there is a relative lack of empirical studies around teacher agency and there remains both theoretical and practical issues in bringing it to bear on teacher professional development. This chapter therefore aims at engaging with both the theoretical definition of agency, and then its practical application as a focus of research. Theoretically, we draw on the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze to evaluate the utility of framing agency as 'event', building on existing models in the literature. We then take that framing of agency into an inquiry into three pilot programmes, ahead of a major policy shift in England: the introduction of the Early Career Framework (DfE, 2019). Through doing so our intention is to elucidate the merits and challenges of using agency as a lens through which to conduct research on teacher professional development. We thus centre the chapter around the question of what an understanding of teacher agency (as event) can do for understandings of professional learning and development.

To answer this question the chapter begins by explaining the context of the empirical work, and how the introduction of the Early Career Framework into the landscape of England begs questions of how teacher agency is restricted and afforded by the programmes which aim to support teachers in the first two years of their career. The chapter then moves on to the theoretical framing of teacher agency and situates the role of teachers within the education system in which they work. This allows consideration of how the past, present and future influence events in which teachers are agentic, and how this agency goes beyond the action of individual teachers. Next, the chapter draws the theory into encounter with empirical data, allowing us to consider how it supports understandings of the professional development of mentors and new teachers, as well as their impact on issues in the world. We argue that these considerations demonstrate how agency affords new understandings of teacher professional development, by focusing on what teachers' agency is being developed in relation to.

## Context: The Early Career Framework in England

Following their Initial Teacher Education, teachers in maintained schools in England are required to undertake a statutory induction period within their place of employment in order to become fully qualified (DfE, 2013). This has previously involved a single year of support for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), including observation of teaching, evaluation against the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011) and then an appropriate body (commonly the school) being responsible for confirming that the induction period has been satisfactorily completed (DfE, 2018). Although NQT induction has not been mandatory for Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) and 'free schools', most have opted in to fulfilling the requirements. Within a decentralised model for school governance, extremely wide variation in support for NQTs has led to inconsistent induction practices. In some settings the developmental support for Newly Qualified Teachers has been informal and unstructured. In other settings, extensive programmes of mentoring and development activities have been provided by Local Authorities, federations of schools and MATs for teachers in their first year. However, there is little evidence of systematic support for teachers in their second year of teaching. This inconsistency was one motivation for a policy shift in teacher induction, although it wasn't the main one.

In line with jurisdictions around the world, England has faced major issues in the recruitment and retention of teachers, with 2020-21 being the first year that overall target recruitment was reached since before 2015 (Long & Danechi, 2021), likely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Around 10% of teachers leave the profession each year, meaning that not only are experienced teachers lost, but a high rate of recruitment needs to be sustained in order to replace departing teachers. Furthermore, over 20% of teachers leave the profession in the first two years of teaching and 33% in the first five years (DfE, 2019b). This is a major concern both in terms of the personal emotional and financial burden borne by teachers and the cost to the government, to schools and to the profession of attracting and training significant numbers of new recruits. The significant issue of teachers being lost early in their careers was central to the latest Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy from the Department for Education (DfE, 2019b). The strategy instigated the launch of the Early Career Framework (ECF) and a package of support for Early Career Teachers (ECTs), defined within the reforms as those within their first two years after an initial teacher education qualification. The package includes an additional 5% timetable reduction within the second year after qualification, and an entitlement to a dedicated mentor. Centralised funding also supports a small amount of additional mentoring and programmes of professional development over these first two years.

The Early Career Framework (DfE, 2019) itself sets out the knowledge that early career teachers should develop. Schools must ensure that ECTs engage with five ECF content areas – behaviour management, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and professional behaviours – each of which is linked with research evidence that is identified as part of a curriculum set out in the Framework and aligned with the pre-existing Teachers' Standards for England (DfE, 2011). Representing what teachers need to know is understandably a thorny issue, inescapably grounded in issues of ideology, politics, epistemology, pedagogy and pragmatics. As such, there is no definitive account of what teachers need to know in order to be able to teach well (Kennedy, 2015). The Department for Education in England approached this issue by appointing an Expert Advisory Group to develop the ECF, consisting of people deemed to represent schools and other educational organisations. Because the ECF was devised by a specific group of people, and linked to the existing Teachers' Standards, it is necessarily a singular perspective on the purpose and practice of teaching, and the evidence that underpins it. Furthermore, because

the framework was introduced as an entitlement for teachers in all phases of compulsory schooling in England across all subject specialisms, the ECF cannot specify the detail of what every teacher needs to know within their individual contexts. There are aspects of teachers' professional knowledge and practice which the framework does not address.

Whilst we could spend considerable time unpacking the politics of how the framework was devised and analysing what is represented and expressed within the framework itself, this chapter will focus on the impact of three pilot programmes that were devised around the ECF. Specifically, we are interested in how focusing on teacher agency allows evaluation of the impact of the Early Career Framework on the professional development of new teachers in England. Our research centre, the Centre for Teachers and Teaching Research, was commissioned to undertake an independent evaluation of pilot programmes prior to the national rollout of the framework. The research was funded by the Education Endowment Foundation; an independent charity who evaluate educational interventions and work closely with the Department for Education in England and Wales. They selected two developers who in turn developed three pilot programmes, building on existing evidence around support for ECTs, notably the successful RETAIN pilot project (Ovenden-Hope et al., 2018). These programmes were:

- **Programme A** (developed by Ambition Institute) was designed to provide face-to-face training, a coaching guide, weekly online resources, and regular online coaching and support sessions to in-school mentors. School induction leads also received initial face-to-face training. Mentors used the programme to provide instructional coaching to ECTs, either weekly or fortnightly.
- **Programme B** (also by Ambition Institute) provided the same training as Programme A to mentors and school induction leads. In addition, this Programme also aimed to provide weekly online content and regular support sessions directly to ECTs.
- **Programme C** (developed by the Chartered College of Teaching) provided online support to mentors, school induction leads and ECTs. All received a selection of online modules, providing weekly content to mentors and ECTs which was used to facilitate either weekly or fortnightly instructional coaching sessions.

Each programme was provided to teachers teaching a variety of different year groups (ages 5-16), and subjects. At the end of the pilot there was a total of 98 schools across the pilot programmes: 50 primary schools, 45 secondary schools and three all-through schools. Despite being two-year programmes of support, we were commissioned to evaluate just one year of the pilot programmes over the 2019-2020 academic year. However, the COVID-19 pandemic meant that schools closed to most students in March 2020, so we adapted our methods and focused on the initial set-up period of the pilot programmes, from summer 2019 until February 2020. We worked with the developers to develop logic models for each of the programmes, which allowed the framing of a theory of change for evaluation (Coldwell & Maxwell, 2018). We then considered indicators and developed research questions for the evaluation, which adopted a mixed-methods approach incorporating: three waves of survey to ECTs, mentors and induction leads; case studies of twenty schools drawing on two rounds of interviews with a sub-set of these participants; observation of mentoring sessions; observation of mentor training and document analysis. A full account of the evaluation and findings can be found in the project report (Hardman et al., 2020).

## An Inquiry into the Agency of Early Career Teachers

The programmes of professional development devised around the Early Career Framework have the potential to support, condition and restrict the agency of Early Career Teachers and this is the focus of this chapter. Perspectives on teacher agency emerged as a dominant feature of the data from our evaluation of pilot programmes, underpinning the themes which were developed. Here we undertake further engagement with our findings to both deploy and develop teacher agency as a frame for research into teacher professional development.

We are therefore not presenting a study which had teacher agency as a theoretical consideration at its outset, we are instead re-reading our findings by bringing them into further engagement with a developing theoretical frame. This is in line with St. Pierre's (2018) suggestions as to the nature of a **post-qualitative inquiry**, which involves a departure from the significance attributed to pre-ascribed categories/codes/classifications (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014). Rather than suggesting that a focus on teacher agency came from an inductive coding of data, we recognise that our interest and understanding of teacher agency has co-developed with our empirical investigation into the support and development of new teachers. We now take the opportunity to bring our findings and theoretical ideas together as a productive undertaking, responding to "moments that glow" (MacLure, 2010) and "living with intensities" (Gale, 2014) in our data as "triggers for new understandings" (Mazzei, 2013). As such, the next section engages with the theorising of teacher agency that we undertook before and during the inquiry. Following this, the inquiry itself is described: what came out of the encounter between theory and evidence: the new understandings that emerged.

### Theorising Teacher Agency

Defining **teacher agency** is not straightforward; it begs questions around what form agency takes and where it is situated. Charteris and Smardon (2018) identify a typology of four theoretical stances in relation to teacher agency. This includes *sovereign* agency, *relational* framings of agency and *ecological* perspectives. The fourth typology has to do with *new materialist* theories, and we will pick this up later by drawing on the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze to propose that agency might also be seen as an *event*.

We will not dwell on accounts of sovereign agency, because it is clear from the literature that teacher agency is recognised as extending beyond sovereign individuals and is often seen as "socially mediated" (Wertsch & Rupert, 1993, p. 230). Those who frame agency as *relational* instead focus on the mutual construction of individual and social. For example, Wertsch & Rupert (1993) draw on Vygotsky's dialectical notion of development to situate the individual-social as a dialectic. Edwards (2012, 2015, 2017) furthers this by suggesting that a teacher's intentions engage with the possibilities in a given setting.

"agency is a crucial element in the dialectic of person and practice and that it may, in some circumstances, unfold when actions are taken in activities, which are themselves located in institutional practices." (Edwards, 2017, p. 5)

Edwards builds her account of agency carefully and with attention to the role of mediation (e.g. by mentors) and therefore provides a sound basis for situating agency within a dialectic of individual and collective, as well as considering how teachers develop within specific local conditions. However, we

find that the socio-cultural basis of this characterisation of relational agency does not sufficiently recognise the detail and complexity of the material contexts in which teachers act. Policy environments, values, purposes and culture are of course important, but in research (and teacher development) we find that such considerations do not possess the level of granularity required to identify specific influence, patterns and events. In particular we will develop the suggestion that the materiality of context needs greater attention.

Rather than deploy a **dialectic framing of agency**, Priestley and colleagues see agency as *emergent*, and from this develop their *ecological* approach, (Biesta et al., 2015a; Biesta & Tedder, 2006, 2007; Priestley et al., 2012, 2015) focusing on “the ways in which agency is achieved in transaction with a particular context-for-action, within a particular ‘ecology’” (Biesta & Tedder, 2007, pp. 136–137). This highlights how teachers act by means of their environments and how agency emerges from the interplay of individual efforts, available resources and structural factors within unique situations (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 22).

Through furthering the work of Emirbayer and Mische (1998), Priestley et al. (2015) build a model of agency which they see as both theoretical and methodological. The model centres on the *practical-evaluative* conditions in which agency manifests, which includes the cultural, structural and material aspects of a context. This practical-evaluative dimension interacts with the *iterational*, where professional histories and broader life histories of teachers condition the patterns of action stemming from the past. A *projective* dimension also interacts with the practical-evaluative to make up the triad of influences on agency, which includes the short and long term intentions of teachers.

“The model thus highlights that the achievement of agency is always informed by past experience – and in the particular case of teacher agency, this concerns both professional and personal experience. The model also highlights that the achievement of agency is always orientated towards the future in some combination of short(er)-term and long(er)-term objectives, values and aspirations. And it emphasizes that agency is always enacted in a concrete situation; it is both constrained and supported by discursive, material and relational resources available to actors.” (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 30)

The **ecological model of agency** has a great deal of power in framing the interplay of factors through which agency emerges and to provide the basis for considering the conditions under which this might take place. As noted above in relation to sociological accounts, we are concerned with the granularity of analysis that is supported by varying models, so as to allow valuable insights when researching teacher professional development. The ecological analogy brings to mind the dynamic and situated nature of emergence and draws in the importance of history and adaptation. However, teacher agency involves intentionality, so stretches analogy to ecological systems. Furthermore, an inclination toward granularity begs questions around the nature of the iterations which condition agency; just what is the genealogy of teacher action?

Here we shall initially return to Charteris and Smardon’s (2018) topology, whereby they propose that **new materialist theory** might position agency differently to other framings. Such theory draws attention to the role of the non-human and the entangled nature of action with meaning and matter. Working with others, we have drawn on new materialist theory to frame teacher actions as ‘**material-**

dialogic' (Hetherington et al., 2018; Hetherington & Wegerif, 2018) and to explore this empirically (Hardman et al., 2022). Here however, we wish to primarily draw on the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, as well as complexity theory, although we give a minimal description of this here as we develop ideas elsewhere (Hardman, 2015, 2019). Whereas (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 5) see agency as an emergent phenomenon, we instead draw inspiration from Deleuze's term event, which provides a unit of analysis in conceptualising agency. For Deleuze (1968, 1969) an event incorporates both material and 'sense' (significance), both the past and the future. To develop this notion of agency as event, reconsider the 'iterative' aspect of Priestley et al.'s ecological model:

"agency doesn't come from nowhere but builds upon past achievements, understandings and patterns of action. This is expressed in the iterational element of agency that has to do with *'the selective reactivation by actors of past patterns of thought and action, routinely incorporated in practical activity, thereby giving stability and order to social universes and helping to sustain identities, interactions, and institutions over time'* (ibid., p. 971; emph. in original). A key word here is 'selective'. According to Emirbayer and Mische, 'the agentic reactivation of schemes inculcated through past experience tends to correspond to (and thus reproduces) societal patterns' (ibid., p. 977)" (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 24)

In the complex, unfolding world of classrooms it must be recognised that each context, indeed each moment, is unique. Yet Deleuze's (1968) notion of difference and repetition provides the basis for considering how people come to link patterns within unique events. We are able to link this with Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) view that there is agency in the selective reproduction of patterns of thought and action, or the emergent creativity of change when a similar situations occur. Without developing this fully here, we suggest that using Deleuze's event to re-frame the account of agency given in the ecological model does three things. Firstly, it draws attention to the importance of patterns within the sense-making and agency of teachers: through engaging within different, yet repeated, events teachers learn, act and create. Secondly, Deleuze's ontological position broadens what we mean by patterns, bringing the human and non-human together as being within the same ontological category. As such, patterns of conversation or thought or movement sit alongside the material patterns of texts, images and objects. All of which can be explored whilst researching how teachers develop. Thirdly, Deleuze provides a philosophy of time which allows us to reconsider intention within teacher agency. He sees each event as a process of genuine creation, which itself determines before and after:

"There is no past or future independent of each synthesis in a living present... The future is left undetermined by the passing away of each present and the pure past founds the future as open." (Deleuze, 1968, pp. 93–94)

The significance of this framing to agency is that it highlights how intentionality is always in the present. Intentions might be oriented to futures which are envisaged in the near or long term, but the subjective actor is in the present. In proposing a Deleuzian take on teacher agency, we therefore suggest that temporal aspects of teacher action and understanding come together in events. Planning, whether the 'mental rehearsal' of an individual or a formalised and shared plan, draws on experience from past and present as well as goals oriented towards the future. Experience manifests intuitively or through conscious reflection whereby actions and understandings have been and are being adapted and rationalised in relation to every new event. Whilst the goals of teachers likely persist over

extended timescales, 'agency as event' renders these goals as within a specific moment. This framing opens new lines of enquiry with respect to the intentions of teachers. For example, we are interested in the relationships between the goals of teachers and the immanent actions they take.

To give a concise sense of how agency might be framed in relation to Deleuze's philosophy of event, we suggest that it draws attention to the patterns that teachers are engaged within and through which they make sense. Although each event is unique, experience and anticipation of patterns of events, conditioned by intentions, allows for the emergence of new understandings and actions as events are encountered. As such we situate teacher agency as within each event.

Through our research into teacher agency to date, we have experienced challenges around the way that the term 'agency' is used, and should be used. Although we reject the view that teacher agency is sovereign, we have found that teachers and other professionals tend to associate agency with the actions of individuals. This is important to take account of, for example when designing research instruments to capture the views of teachers. As researchers and teacher educators, we also want to focus on the development of individuals, whilst recognising that their actions are always bound in events. For these reasons, we have opted to still use the term agency to relate to the experience, thoughts and actions of an individual teacher, whilst recognising that this is only ever a component of the events that constitute learning and change. Rather than frame a latent capacity that exists independently, teacher agency 'as event' recognises that teacher capacities only come into being within particular events. All a teacher's past experiences, as well as their goals and orientations contribute to their agency in an event, which itself is constituted by patterns and novelty within entanglement of human and non-human.

In considering research into the development of teachers, this framing of agency as event begs questions as to whether it is meaningful to consider teacher agency as something coherent which develops over time in a way that can be investigated (for example through scales in surveys), and this remains an open question within our research. Our work to date suggests that the experiences and growing knowledge of teachers over time is likely to mean that they develop new responses to the patterns they encounter within events. It is also plausible that they find new ways to realise their goals within momentary actions. Our focus on patterns, experience and goals within events leads us to a concern for what agency is in relation to. For example, a teacher might have agency in relation to supporting the neurodiversity of learners, but not in relation to behavioural difficulties. They might be able to accommodate feedback from advice but not bring evidence from a research article to bear on their practice. The agency of a teacher within a specific event is to do with their past experiences and so their capacity comes to light only in relation to the aspect of their professional practice at hand.

The literature broadly links agency to teachers affecting positive change, but there are a number of different accounts of what teachers focus upon. Van der Heijden et. al. (2015) identify threads around influencing one's own work, engagement in educational reform, subject-centred development, professional identity development and lifelong learning. Definitions of teacher agency are of course linked to understandings of the role of teachers within the project of education, and this can extend beyond a focus on delivering a curriculum or a concern for attainment in standardised tests. For example, Pantić (2015) develops a model which posits teacher agency for social justice, considering the role of teacher purpose, competence, autonomy and reflexivity. Bentall (2020) reviews models of teacher professional development around global learning, prompting us to notice a lack of research directly linking teacher agency with education in relation to climate justice.



Thus, in this chapter we delineate two core aspects of teacher agency, firstly in relation to professional development, and secondly in relation to addressing issues in the contemporary world. These are analytical categories which, in line with the theoretical perspectives drawn from complexity theory and Deleuze, avoid stratification along temporal lines or through any hierarchy of importance. In a moment in which agency is enacted, a teacher's intentions might be long-held or novel, oriented towards a pedagogic problem or global change.

With our framing of teacher agency as event, and delineating different foci of agency, we now describe our empirical findings from our evaluation of pilot programmes in support of the Early Career Framework in England. As stated at the outset of this chapter, our intention is to describe what an understanding of teacher agency (as event) can do for understandings of professional learning and development. We are not presenting here a fully resolved model of agency, the writing below is the inquiry itself, whereby our theoretical framing of agency as event meets our findings from the empirical study. We use this to further develop our understanding of both the impacts of the Early Career Framework on professional development of mentors and early career teachers, and to frame a broader concern for agency in relation to the contemporary world.

### Mentor agency in relation to professional development

By recognising that agency is not sovereign it becomes apparent that the professional development of Early Career Teachers is entwined with and conditioned by the agency of mentors. The introduction of the Early Career Framework in England underpins programmes of support for both new teachers **and** their mentors, presenting an opportunity to promote the importance of mentoring and support those mentors in their own development. In our data we saw how the agency of mentors and their mentees came together in events which had the potential to occasion the professional learning of both. However, we also saw structural and normative issues which conditioned and sometimes limited this development.

Professional learning for both ECTs and their mentors on the pilot programmes was largely mediated via sets of structured online resources, including research summaries, which provided a guide to engaging with core areas of the framework. The resources were very highly rated across the programmes, with the research summaries being commended as an 'invaluable tool' by most mentors for the way that they brought 'up to the minute' research to bear on practice, that was readily accessible. However, on pilot programme A, resources were provided only to mentors, who were expected to use these to prepare for coaching sessions with their mentees. On programmes B and C, Early Career Teachers also received materials and online sessions directly. Differing sets of relations were therefore in place on the programmes between ECTs, mentors, resources for learning and the related professional learning activities. On programme A, ECTs were reliant upon their mentors to bring the learning from programme resources into mentoring sessions and observations. The agency of the ECTs was restricted because they did not have direct access to the resources themselves. In the other programmes, ECTs and their mentors were both afforded agency in bringing resources to bear on practice. This immediately highlights the interrelationship between mentor and ECT agency. In the case study schools where there seemed to be the most gained from the programmes, ECTs and mentors worked collaboratively to reflect on and evaluate practice in light of the resources provided. It is notable that both survey data and case studies showed that engagement with the programme was less in programme A than in programme B, which used identical resources.

Ensuring that ECTs have agency in their own professional development is therefore important. Our findings show that relying on mentors to digest and apply research evidence has the potential to restrict this agency. There are a range of factors involved in this though, one of which is the time for mentors to themselves engage with materials for professional learning. On the whole, the new teachers were able to integrate self-study and reflection into their working lives. They were afforded time to do so by having reduced timetables and they were able to recognise this as part of their role as ECTs with entitlements to professional learning. This has to do with the culture and expectations of each school, but manifests through the capacity of new teachers to engage with the programmes. This capacity was much less for mentors however, for two reasons. Firstly, because the time available for mentors to engage varied considerably, from receiving cover on a weekly basis to “We haven’t had any time built into our timetables for this” (Mentor, Programme A). Our analysis suggested that mentors spent between one and one and a half hours of additional time on the programmes, beyond the meetings and observations of mentees. This time was not accounted for in their workload planning.

Secondly though, availability of time is entangled with the mentors’ focus on their own learning. It is understandable that mentors are primarily concerned with their own students, and perhaps secondarily with the development of their mentees. The longer-term benefits of focusing on their own development often took a back seat to these concerns. It was common for mentors to express conflicting perceptions of their own capacities for learning within the conditions of their schools, suggesting “I am upskilling myself” whilst at the same time being “so tired. I know I was skimming things just trying to familiarise myself with it all” (Mentor, Programme A). The capacity of mentors to engage with materials to support their professional learning was therefore conditioned by **time**, which in turn was conditioned by their focus on immediate concerns. By characterising agency as event, we might say that the future benefits of mentor professional learning (on pupils, mentees and the mentors themselves) were not sufficiently present in the moment to influence their actions. What is evident is that mentor agency in relation to their own professional development is entangled with their agency in relation to the professional development of ECTs. This, in turn, is entangled with broader contextual factors. The policy changes around the Early Career Framework in England begin to recognise the importance of mentoring and focus on the professional development of mentors. However, the time available for mentors and their own priorities restrict the agency that they have in this development.

Returning to Priestley et al. (2015, p. 23), the suggestion is that mentor agency involves the recognition and refashioning of social patterns, rather than them simply being reproduced. One induction lead was insightful on this point in our case studies:

*“I definitely think from working with other members of staff, trying to upskill them as a mentor, they are pretty much just replicating their entry to the profession over and over again.”* (Induction Lead and Mentor)

Our appeal to Deleuze’s difference and repetition furthers this as we see that understandings but also expectations are taken into each event. This is because teachers have made sense of similar events in the past and carry this sense into new events. For example, they implicitly map their own induction to that of their mentees. The agency of the mentoring relationship involves the goals, expectations, understandings and resources brought into each event, where the professional development of mentors meets that of ECTs within the school context.

Within our evaluation we found that this mentoring relationship was highly sensitive to the expectations around professional development of mentors within the school. The role of the induction lead, the senior leader responsible for supporting new teachers, was key here. As Pedder and Opfer (2013, p. 540) suggest, 'simplistic' framings of professional learning fail to see how it is embedded in working conditions, as well as the personal and professional lives of teachers. The Early Career Framework presents a nucleus around which expectations and processes of support might be enhanced, for all staff. In two case study schools, senior leaders fully committed to the pilot programme by reducing the timetables of mentors in order to provide time to engage with the online learning and materials alongside the new teachers. This was accompanied by clear expectations that time was to be used for this purpose – for their own development as well as that of their mentees. In these two settings the programmes were evaluated extremely positively by all involved. In some other settings, induction leads supported mentors and ECTs by de-prioritising other school activities for them (such as school-level development priorities), although this often required careful negotiation with school leadership.

However, we encountered examples of whole school factors that limited the agency of both mentors and ECTs in relation to their professional development. For example, mentors often needed to engage in both their professional development in relation to the ECF programmes and participate in professional learning around whole school priorities. These competing priorities condition the agency of mentors by forcing them to focus on particular areas, rather than being primarily responsive to their own developmental needs in supporting ECTs. We can relate this to the 'projective' aspect of the ecological model of agency, denoting the goal orientation of teachers as they take action. Through Deleuze's philosophy we have brought these goals into the moment, as conditions of action within an event. Yet such examples from our data show the entanglement of various goals here: the senior leaders who are promoting a whole school focus for development, with the professional learning of the mentors and of the ECTs, each with their own developmental needs. There is perhaps no simple answer to the question of what happens when the agency of various individuals collides within the power dynamics and relations of school culture, but a focus on agency at least highlights the issue.

It is not just human interactions which condition agency though, we found the influence of various non-human patterns within our data. In most of our case study schools and within our survey data, we saw that existing habits, processes and systems were in tension with the new programmes. An example is a school where ECTs and mentors were engaging with an existing learning journal, the online learning system from the pilot, the separate online system for logging action steps in the pilot, and a separate local authority system relating to statutory induction. When we spoke to the induction lead, they lamented that the 'old systems' need not be followed, yet the systems were clearly present within the institutional memory of the school. The need to adhere to any system necessarily restricts the agency that mentors have in relation to professional development, but we found this particularly problematic in cases where habits and processes overshadowed the freedom to respond to professional learning needs. Our framing of agency as event allows us to recognise these patterns and habits which might be labelled as coming from the past ('iterative'), but clearly manifest in the moment. This applies to the expectations that mentors have of their own roles as well as to the modes of learning and development which are normalised within each setting and crystallised within the processes and procedures that teachers follow.

The Early Career Framework presents an opportunity to change the expectations, habits and processes which influence mentor agency in relation to their own professional development. However, realising this opportunity would require a re-consideration of existing norms and the de-implementation of existing processes. We saw how the agency of mentors in relation to their own professional development directly influences the agency of the Early Career Teachers that they work with, and is also likely to influence the professional development of those that they work with in the future.

### Early Career Teacher agency in relation to professional development

As well as the entanglement between mentor professional development and that of their mentees, there were other aspects of the pilot programmes that we evaluated which had a direct impact on the agency of new teachers in relation to their professional. One of which was the use of **instructional coaching** as a mode of development, although this took more prominence in programmes A and B. Instructional coaching involved the observation of tightly defined aspects of practice followed by mentors and early career teachers designing concrete steps to develop these. An example was the procedures that teachers use to bring pupils into the classroom. Initially, a coaching guide provided suggested foci for each week or fortnight, with the expectation that more bespoke steps would develop later in the programme. Instructional coaching was evaluated positively:

*‘It’s really useful because it’s teaching very small steps, focusing on really small chunks at a time that’s really manageable and achievable for the NQT.’ (Mentor, Programme B).*

However, questions were raised by some about how such coaching would cover broader aspects of professional practice, such as differentiated learning. There were also concerns about the pace of development:

*“They are saying ‘we have done all of that. She has done that and is able to do it really well...it’s stifling some of them’. Speaking to some of the NQTs they are saying, ‘I think we should be further on... we have [multiple new teachers] and I don’t think it has met all of their needs.” (Induction Lead, Programme B).*

Here we reflect that agency in relation to the pedagogical development of teachers takes on a particular mode, adopting what Biesta (2007, p. 8) calls a **technological model of professional action**, whereby the goals of such action are pre-determined and the focus becomes on the most effective and efficient ways to achieve them. This, Biesta argues, neglects the ways in which education involves interpretation and sense-making such that the desirability of an approach needs to be evaluated as much as its efficacy. Physical punishment may be suggested as an effective way of managing behaviour - but is undesirable for what it would teach children about enforcing one’s will on others. Instructional coaching can of course include salient discussions about desirable actions, but there is a risk that these fall away where there exists an implicit technological model. Specific practices can be honed and developed efficiently using instructional coaching (Kraft et al., 2018), via ‘expert’ modelling, targeted observational feedback, goal-setting around small steps, ‘acting out’, scripting etc. There is a risk however that professional learning is reduced to the mastery of replicable practices via approaches which attempt to atomise and simplify the complexity of teaching.

Although we only saw the early stages of ECTs’ practice being supported by instructional coaching, it is worthwhile considering the broader resources and activities within the programme to understand

how they together, with the coaching, might support further professional development. The intention of programme designers is that through engaging with the resources and activities, new teachers and their mentors are afforded ways of thinking and acting which they can take into their teaching. In this way the agency of new teachers in relation to their professional development is to do with the ways that they can bring their learning from the programmes to bear on planning, instruction, feedback and reflection. Our study found that this was limited in several instances by the difficulties of relating the learning to ECTs' contextualised practice.

Understandably, at the very start of their careers, new teachers within the pilot had a range of practical concerns which they addressed to mentors as well as other colleagues: from understanding how to take the register or find equipment, to strategies for supporting specific pupils or teaching aspects of the subject or phase-specific curriculum. These concerns fall outside of the scope of the Early Career Framework and the associated programmes of support. The effect of this was a separation of pragmatic advice and guidance, often specific to context and to specific learner needs, from the necessarily broader focus of the developmental programmes. As one mentor noted:

*“when we tried to engage in the programme at the start I had to deviate away from it because I thought I can't focus on this right now because there's so many other things he has to get right before I can get on track with the programme.”* (Mentor, Programme C)

As well as the scope of the framework though, the sequencing of materials to support learning against it further exasperated the separation of pragmatic concerns from the learning supported by the pilot programmes. At the insistence of the Department for Education, each of the developers meticulously sequenced resources so as to cover all of the framework over two years (this was also the case for the subsequent programmes provided nationally). In the pilot programmes there was some choice in selecting 'modules' and many schools chose to initially focus on behaviour for learning. Nevertheless, within these modules there remained a rigidly sequenced set of resources and sessions. Some mentors recognised that this created a continual sense of development, rather than simply being responsive to what new teachers seek support with:

*“it's a lot more supportive, because it's a drip-drip every week, over a year rather than a one-off event.”* (Induction Lead/Mentor, November 2019)

In most schools however, the separation of pragmatic concerns and professional learning through the programmes led to adaptations to the intended coaching models in order to meet the individual needs of ECTs, which varied considerably. Adaptations included reducing the frequency of instructional coaching from weekly to fortnightly (which was permitted under guidance for Programmes A and B); splitting meeting time between instructional coaching and more general school priorities and simply prioritising immediate issues over the learning associated with the programmes: engaging with the programmes only where there was time.

*“there wasn't always the strongest correlation between the meetings and the online platform but we did sometimes check in on things maybe I'd read that week but it wasn't focussed on what I'd learnt really.”* (ECT, Programme C)

Our characterisation of agency as event suggests that an issue in realising the potential of the coaching models and resources is the extent to which they can be brought to bear on the context at hand. As

teachers plan, assess and engage in classrooms, they draw on their current understandings. Where those understandings remain abstract then we suggest it is less likely that teachers will draw on them than when they have a concrete, immediate step forward in realising their goals. The ability of new teachers and their mentors to contextualise the programme was an essential aspect of them affording agency in relation to professional development.

There was also a theme within our case study data which suggested that teachers were likely to rate the materials more highly where they reflected the ECT's specific phase and subject:

*“to have some subject-specific examples especially within the phase because obviously primary school is not something that a languages teacher will go anywhere near.”* (ECT, Programme C)

The Early Career Framework contains general statements about sequencing, misconceptions and fundamental ideas in school subjects but does not elaborate. As such, the role of developing subject-specific pedagogy is left to mentors and departmental colleagues, as well as to the new teachers themselves. Whether this relates to developing group work in Physical Education, experimental work in science or reading phonetically with younger children, the development of pedagogies specific to the age of pupils and subject discipline was not directly supported by the pilot programmes devised around the Early Career Framework.

The evidence above shows us that the agency of ECTs in relation to their development is supported by the quality of resources linked to contemporary research evidence with the programmes of support piloted around the Early Career Framework. However, the agency is also conditioned by aspects of the pedagogic development of new teachers falling outside of the focus of the programmes of support. These include the pragmatic concerns of new teachers in navigating the procedures, processes and norms of their settings. More pronounced is the mismatch between the specific developmental needs of a new teacher in a moment and the sequenced development presented by the pilot programmes. Furthermore, although the translation of examples into relevant phases and school subjects did not present a significant issue, the lack of direct support for subject and phase-specific pedagogies within the programmes was problematic.

In a technological approach to development, the fundamental flaw is that the focus of teachers' pedagogical development becomes homogenised by the framework. Although the Department for Education avoided framing the Early Career Framework as a common 'curriculum' to be followed by ECTs and their mentors, in practice the programmes of support will determine a great deal of what is discussed and focused on. Coupled to the specific systems of recording and evidencing progress, there is a very real risk that the development of teachers will follow the technological approach that Biesta (2007, 2010) describes. This not only reduces the focus on aspects such as subject-specific pedagogy, but misses the intuitive, non-declarative nature of teaching that we have seen in other studies (e.g. Hardman et al., 2022). The adage 'if the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail' rings true. Teacher development – and thus the nature of teachers' knowledge and professional expertise - is at risk of being determined by the parameters of the Early Career Framework.

The lens of agency applied within this chapter presents an alternative view. We propose that the development of agency is supported when the trajectory of professional development is not mapped out in advance. Instead, professional development activities need to be tuned so as to provide

practical, concrete ways forward that harness the contingent elements of learning to teach. Agency manifests in the creative act of developing a solution to a perceived professional problem. These solutions are more likely to draw on the learning from programmes of support when that learning has been contextualised and brought to bear on the situation at hand.

This may happen during planning, within the moment of a lesson, or be part of reflection afterwards, primed to guide action in the next repetition of a different event.

*“it’s good to reflect back on what the aims are for us to be doing...The whole idea of everything crossing over, all the different modules crossing over, I think that’s really important. So that NQTs don’t see it as just ‘behaviour’, just ‘curriculum’, they need to see that the curriculum reflects the behaviour of the children, if they’re bored, they’re going to act silly...I think that’s the thing we keep coming back to is that... everything crosses over, everything is intertwined”. (Mentor, Programme B)*

In this mentor’s reflections, we can identify their awareness of the potential for agency as event. They imply that there is a complex system of teacher needs, pupil needs, teaching history and potential future that are brought together in a continuous state of emergence. Behaviour and curriculum are features warranting attention, but are shifting concepts that take on meaning only in relation to other things, in the context of the ‘intertwined’ reality that is teaching. Although most mentors did not articulate this degree of complexity for ECTs’ learning, many expressed frustrations with normative assumptions that underpinned aspects of programme design, “it felt very tick-boxy” (Mentor, Programme A). Our evaluation highlighted the barriers to addressing the complexity and situatedness of professional learning needs where the learning from programmes of support was not easily brought to bear on the contextualised needs of individual ECTs.

### Agency in relation to issues in the world

As described in the above sections, there is a risk that the development of teacher agency becomes restricted to a technological approach, whereby new teachers in England are conditioned to focus on meeting the ‘learn that’ and ‘learn how to’ statements of the Early Career Framework in a simplistic way. The framework does not elaborate around subject pedagogy for example, so the purposes and power of a subject could be lost through focusing on the knowledge, key ideas and ‘complex mental models’ the framework denotes. What would be lost in such a case is the opportunity to tune events towards considerations that go beyond that of delivering curriculum content in a way that is divorced from the world in which pupils and teachers live. This, we believe, is an important aspect of agency.

In this section we therefore extrapolate from our empirical work, highlighting what we did not see during our research. It should of course be recognised that we saw the very early aspects of ECT development, and the programmes of support being piloted. We nevertheless draw on our theoretical discussion and the findings so far to speculate as to how mentors, ECTs and indeed all teachers might develop agency in relation to issues within the contemporary world, such as social, economic and environmental **inequalities**. Agency manifests in the specific actions and understandings of an event. The key to teachers having agency in relation to broader issues in the world is therefore to do with how the specific actions in an event are tuned to impacting on those issues.

One aspect of this is how teachers conceptualise the scope of what they teach students. The National Curriculum for England (DfE, 2014: 2.2) states that “The school curriculum comprises all learning and other experiences that each school plans for its pupils. The national curriculum forms one part of the school curriculum.” In practice, the programmes of study that are published for each key stage, and the specifications for examinations that pupils take at age 16, constitute a great deal of the focus of school curricula. Nevertheless, teachers have the capacity to work together to influence curriculum, at what Priestley et al. (2015) denote the micro level of policy enactment:

“This is the field in which teachers further re-contextualize the curriculum, developing whole-school and classroom practices to enact the curriculum.” (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 153)

The nature of this **recontextualization** is the focus of a great deal of research (See for example Hudson, 2022; Kitson, 2020) so we will suffice to here draw out points relevant to the framing of teacher agency in relation to issues in the world. Teachers are “curriculum makers” (Deng, 2018), in the sense that subject disciplines are transformed into meaningful understandings in the classroom (Gericke et al., 2018). At the micro level of enactment, teachers have the potential to recontextualise or go beyond what is codified in national curricula and engage pupils in issues such as social justice. This might be done collectively through school, departmental or peer level planning, reflection and discussion, or even through work across schools via multi-academy trusts, federations of schools, subject associations, activist groups, collaboration with university colleagues (something we relish in our research centre) and any other form of interaction. At times, teachers will act individually within their planning, classroom engagement and reflection to bring important issues into their teaching. However, the lines between the individual and social are arbitrary, and we again state the importance of the material context, be it teachers reading or engaging in media, or their own experiences of injustice or the natural world.

As with recontextualization, a great deal has already been written about teaching for **social justice** (Dover, 2013; Gewirtz, 1998; Hackman, 2005; Pantić, 2015) about education for sustainable development (Kowasch et al., 2021; Leal Filho, 2011; Nikolopoulou et al., 2010) and we are not the first to think about the relationship between teaching and issues of racism, colonialism, LGBTQ+ rights, alternative relationships and family structures, indigenous communities and globalisation, the impacts of technology and media, post-truth politics, global inequality, body positivity, capitalism, animal rights, imperialism, war and so many more issues in today’s world. At the more localised level, teachers also engage with issues within their school and the communities that they serve.

Recognising that each issue and each context is unique, here we attempt to draw out how the framing of agency as event may further support understanding of how teachers engage with these issues. Teachers may have agency in relation to both *what* they teach and *how* they teach. Working individually or collectively, teachers can engage with issues in the world as they (re)contextualize the knowledge codified within national curricula, or go beyond these codifications to speak to issues that engage their communities. Take an example of a science teacher choosing not only to consider the processes of global warming, but set this in the context of local industries, or to talk about sexual reproduction along with issues of gender identity, relationship structures or consent. Our colleague Michael Reiss wrote recently about the challenge of teaching genetics without reinforcing misconceptions around people having fixed intelligence (Reiss, 2021). Agency manifests in *what* is



being engaged with, and as Reiss points out, an important aspect of teaching for social justice is raising consciousness around issues, what Freire (1970) termed 'conscientization'.

A group of our colleagues have also developed resources for teaching science in ways that promote social justice (Godec et al., 2017). Drawing on large longitudinal studies (Archer et al., 2013, 2020) into the varying 'science capital' that students have, they advocate broadening what counts as science, personalising and localising it, eliciting, valuing and linking to student understandings and providing opportunities for students to build science capital, so that it is not an avenue pursued by just the few. By recontextualising such guidance into their own practice, teachers can also become agentic in changing the *how* of teaching. This echoes Biesta's (2007, 2010) argument around technological approaches to instruction, that it is not just the ends of education, but also the means that should be evaluated.

Agency is conditioned by teachers' understandings in an event: of the goals to be pursued, around the knowledge to be transformed, the issues to be addressed and the modes of teaching that are best tuned to all of this. The programmes of support we evaluated around the Early Career Framework provided stimuli for teacher learning through literature, exemplification and activities. Instructional coaching also supported mentor-mentee interactions that provided clear steps for progression. However, in the early part of the pilot programmes at least, we found that there were difficulties in recontextualising ideas into understandings and actions which met the immediate needs of the new teachers in addressing practical and pedagogic problems. Over extended timescales mentors would undoubtedly have learnt more about the programmes of support and been able to better support recontextualization of the knowledge codified within the Early Career Framework.

Our inquiry here suggests that there are further facets of teacher understanding which are not adequately addressed within the framework though, and yet they are important in supporting teacher agency in relation to issues in the world. Firstly, there is understanding of the issues themselves. Whilst it would be unreasonable to expect teachers to have a good knowledge of all the issues they might encounter, it might be more reasonable that the role of teachers incorporates time, support and encouragement to engage with issues of the world today. So often do we hear suggestions that education is the means to address issues in the world, yet very little is done to support agency in this regard. Secondly, teachers need to develop and pedagogies that (re)contextualize these issues for pupils. This needs collective action, time and resource. As we have suggested, the *what* of teaching needs to also go hand-in-hand with the *how*, so teachers have the understandings required to make ethical decisions about the best ways to engage young people in these issues.

Beyond these necessary understandings and the conditions in which they might be developed, teachers need to also embody the goals and expectations that this is their role to do so. Goals as oriented by a sense of purpose, working collectively to make a difference in the world; expectations as to how experienced teachers frame the role to those new to the profession. This speaks to the vision that Sachs (2003b) had for **The Activist Teaching Profession**, as a means to "re-instate trust in the teaching profession by the community at large and to counter the de-skilling of teachers by governments who want to control teachers and the teaching profession." (Sachs, 2003a, p. 4). Yet 20 years later, innovations such as the Early Career Framework continue to offer a diminished conceptualisation of teaching and of teacher learning. Questions of how to make the world a better place are no longer part of the discourse, and teachers are not helped to see it as their role.

There remains opportunity for teachers to realise agency in relation to issues in today's world: in supposed space between national and school curriculum; in the recontextualization of subject disciplines into meaningful learning for students; in the capacity of teachers to act within events so as to raise consciousness and teach about the issues of today. However, the conditions that foster such agency are lacking in the way new teachers are inducted into the profession in England: in the understandings teachers have and the support they have to develop them; in the expectations of their roles and the goals they feel empowered to achieve; in the material conditions, resources and empowerment they have to engage in the difficulties of developing appropriate pedagogies and modes of education. The representation of teaching inherent in the Early Career Framework and which infiltrates programmes to support it risks being a 'cuckoo in the nest'. It consumes the attention and resource of development activity which bears no resemblance to the kind of professionalism which would allow teachers to make a real difference in relation to issues in today's world.

## Conclusion: Agency as a Lens for Researching Professional Development

Our inquiry into agency allowed us to re-consider the themes which emerged from our evaluation of the pilot programmes, prior to the national rollout of the Early Career Framework in England. This chapter has been centred around the question of what an understanding of teacher agency (as event) can do for understandings of professional learning and development. Here we attempt to bring together the threads which being to answer this question, by summarising what the lens of agency has allowed us to see, and by making the case for this being the basis of fruitful insight.

In relation to professional learning, we saw how agency was influenced by the relative capacity of mentors and ECTs to engage with programme materials and activities and with each other. When mentors received access to materials, but new teachers did not, we saw that agency was impoverished by reduction to a linear model of learning and crucially, the relational conditions that constitute ECTs' learning were diminished. Across the programmes, we also saw a mismatch between the capacity of mentors and their mentees to engage with the programmes of learning. This was in part due to the time allocated to new teachers for their development, but also in part due to the expectations that mentors have around their role. Mentors, currently, do not prioritise their own professional development and this has the potential to limit their agency in the development of new teachers (as well as their own development). As such, our evidence supports the view that the role of induction leads is key, in setting expectations of both ECTs and mentors, but also in doing what they can to support the learning of both. A significant limitation to agency, within the early stages of the pilot programmes we evaluated, was the presence of and adherence to existing understandings, habits and systems around the induction of new teachers. These influence the modes of learning and at worst promote accountability above professional learning.

The above findings emerge through the deployment of agency as a lens with which to consider professional development of mentors. We took into the inquiry a recognition that each event is unique, yet teachers draw on their knowledge and experience to anticipate and respond to patterns, guided by their intentions. The expectations placed on mentors, by senior leaders but also by themselves, highlights the potential for reproduction rather than agency. The latter manifests in the emergence of new understandings and events within different and repeated events. The promise of the Early Career Framework to develop the agency of mentors was not realised in most schools within

the pilot. We instead saw how habits, expectations and processes already present can inhibit mentor agency and professional development. In turn this limits the professional development of Early Career Teachers.

When focusing directly on ECT agency in relation to their professional development we further highlighted a risk that agency is restricted by technological approaches to development. Although instructional coaching has potential to provide concrete steps to improvement, questions were raised about the form of professionalism it supports. The programmes more broadly were not able to meet the immediate needs of the new teachers: the tight sequencing of materials and their necessary generality (dealing with all phases and subjects) meant that they were not immediately relevant to the events that new teachers find themselves within. Although we didn't find significant barriers to resources and examples being adapted to provide meaningful experiences across phase or subject, there remained gaps where the framework did not provide specific framing, for example around subject-specific pedagogies. As such, the role of mentors was essential in recontextualising learning from the programmes, both in meeting the specifics of context but also in meeting the specifics of phase and subject-specific ways of teaching. Recontextualization becomes a significant issue in relating the learning envisaged in the programmes to the realities of teaching and the pedagogic problems teachers learn by. Although the Early Career Framework underpins a diverse range of learning deemed to be the essentials of teaching, this is far from all there is to the professional and pedagogic learning of teachers.

Here we can further point to the utility of agency as a lens for research. Evaluating how new teachers have agency in relation to their own professional development moves beyond impacts of the resources and activities within programmes and instead highlights what is missing in the full remit of professional development. All teachers are in a state of continuous becoming, and their development is emergent from the complex situations they engage within. Whilst frameworks might provide a way to convey the knowledge that is helpful as teacher develop, they cannot alone account for the complexity of that emergence, or of the needs of an individual in a specific context. Only by affording teachers agency to be responsive to those needs and contexts can we expect them to develop in such a way as to best meet the challenges of education.

This becomes increasingly apparent when we move to considering agency in relation to issues in the world. In recontextualising national curricula into school curricula and classroom practice, teachers have the potential to have collective and individual agency in what they bring to consciousness in young people. As well as what they teach, they also have the potential to evaluate how they teach, to ensure the means meets the goals of education. However, for such potential to be realised teachers need the time, resource and support to develop knowledge of the issues in the world today and pedagogies which are appropriate to addressing them. More than this though, teachers (of all levels of experience) would need to be motivated and knowledgeable as to their role in addressing these issues and meet their colleagues in this as a shared enterprise.

Innovations such as the Early Career Framework and the programmes which support it have the potential to provide useful resources and approaches in the development of Early Career Teachers and their mentors. Our inquiry into agency in this context has highlighted the ways in which the current framework is not sufficient to develop teacher agency though. Agency is conditioned by the norms, habits and expectations within each setting, and these can become crystallised in processes and systems that are not conducive to growth. New ideas need to be recontextualised, 'intertwined',

internalised and made concrete through planning, experience and reflection. This is most readily achieved when mentors and new teachers can meet each other within complex relational environments. The mandatory framing and sequencing of what teachers should learn is likely to miss many important aspects of development; those which do not fit within a generalised frame. Most worrying though is the risk that the development of teachers in reference to a framework provides a solution to the wrong problem. In providing a systematised way of gaining generalised knowledge codified as what they need to teach, it misses the problem of how to develop teachers who can play a role in addressing the challenges of the world today, and empowering their students to do the same.

The central question of this chapter has been around what an understanding of teacher agency as event can do for understandings of teacher professional development. We have shown that the lens of agency has brought into focus the entanglements of mentors and new teachers in recontextualising research evidence; the role of habits, expectations and systems in limiting professional development; the risk of technological modes of development and pre-determined pathways where teachers should be responsive to the complex contexts they work in and their own needs within those. In short, what the lens of agency has the potential to do is reconnect professional development with the role of teachers within the project of education. Teachers need to develop so as to respond to the challenges they face in the classroom, in their own development and in relation to issues in the contemporary world: teacher professional development needs to develop their agency.

## References

- Archer, L., DeWitt, J., Osborne, J. F., Dillon, J., & Wong, B. (2013). *ASPIRES: Young people's science and career aspirations, age 10–14*. Department of Education and Professional Studies, King's College London.  
<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/education/research/aspires/ASPIRES-final-report-December-2013.pdf>
- Archer, L., Moote, J., Macleod, E., Francis, B., & DeWitt, J. (2020). *ASPIRES 2: Young people's science and career aspirations, age 10–19*. UCL Institute of Education.  
<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/education/research/aspires/ASPIRES-final-report-December-2013.pdf>
- Bentall, C. (2020). Continuing Professional Development of Teachers in Global Learning: What Works? In D. Bourn (Ed.), *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Global Education and Learning* (1st ed., pp. 356–368). Bloomsbury Academic; Bloomsbury Collections.  
<http://www.bloomsburycollections.com/book/the-bloomsbury-handbook-of-global-education-and-learning/ch26-continuing-professional-development-of-teachers-in-global-learning-what-works/>
- Biesta, G. (2007). Why 'What Works' Won't Work: Evidence-Based Practice and the Democratic Deficit in Educational Research. *Educational Theory*, 57(1), 1–22.
- Biesta, G. (2010). Why 'What Works' Still Won't Work: From Evidence-Based Education to Value-Based Education. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 29(5), 491–503. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-010-9191-x>
- Biesta, G. J. J., & Tedder, M. (2006). *How is agency possible? Towards an ecological understanding of agency-as-achievement*. Working Paper 5, Exeter: The Learning Lives Project.

- Biesta, G., Priestley, M., & Robinson, S. (2015). The role of beliefs in teacher agency. *Teachers and Teaching*, 21(6), 624–640. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044325>
- Biesta, G., & Tedder, M. (2007). Agency and learning in the lifecourse: Towards an ecological perspective. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 39(2), 132–149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02660830.2007.11661545>
- Coldwell, M., & Maxwell, B. (2018). Using evidence-informed logic models to bridge methods in educational evaluation. *Review of Education*, 6(3), 267–300. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3151>
- Deleuze, G. (1968). *Difference and Repetition*. Continuum.
- Deleuze, G. (1969). *The Logic of Sense*. Continuum.
- DfE. (2011). *Teachers' Standards. Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies*. Department for Education.
- DfE. (2013). *Induction for newly qualified teachers (England)—Statutory guidance for appropriate bodies, headteachers, school staff and governing bodies*. Department for Education.
- DfE. (2014). *National curriculum in England: Framework for key stages 1 to 4*.
- DfE. (2019). *The Early Career Framework*.
- Dover, A. G. (2013). Teaching for Social Justice: From Conceptual Frameworks to Classroom Practices. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 15(1), 3–11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15210960.2013.754285>
- Dweck, C. S. (2000). *Self-theories: Their role in motivation, personality, and development*. Psychology Press.
- Dweck, C. S. (2007). *Mindset: The new psychology of success* (Ballantine Books trade pbk. ed). Ballantine Books.
- Edwards, A. (2012). The role of common knowledge in achieving collaboration across practices. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction*, 1(1), 22–32. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2012.03.003>
- Edwards, A. (2015). Recognising and realising teachers' professional agency. *Teachers and Teaching*, 21(6), 779–784. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044333>
- Edwards, A. (2017). The Dialectic of Person and Practice: How Cultural-Historical Accounts of Agency Can Inform Teacher Education. In pages 269-285, *The SAGE Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (Vol. 1–2). SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529716627>
- Emirbayer, M., & Mische, A. (1998). What Is Agency? *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(4), 962–1023. JSTOR. <https://doi.org/10.1086/231294>
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. The Seabury Press.
- Gale, K. (2014). Moods, Tones, Flavors: Living With Intensities as Inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(8), 998–1004. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800413513725>
- Gewirtz, S. (1998). Conceptualizing social justice in education: Mapping the territory. *Journal of Education Policy*, 13(4), 469–484. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093980130402>
- Godec, S., King, H., & Archer, L. (2017). *The Science Capital Teaching Approach: Engaging students with science, promoting social justice*. UCL (University College London).
- Hackman, H. W. (2005). Five Essential Components for Social Justice Education. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 38(2), 103–109. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665680590935034>
- Hardman, M. A. (2015). *Complexity and Classroom Learning*. PhD Thesis: Canterbury Christ Church University. <http://create.canterbury.ac.uk/14466/>
- Hardman, M. A. (2019). Ghosts in the Curriculum—Reframing Concepts as Multiplicities. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 53(2), 273–292. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12339>
- Hardman, M. A., Riordan, J.-P., & Hetherington, L. (2022). A material-dialogic perspective on powerful knowledge and matter within a science classroom. In B. Hudson, N. Gericke, & C. Olin-Scheller (Eds.), *International perspectives on knowledge and curriculum: Epistemic quality across school subjects* (pp. 157-175). Bloomsbury Academic.

- Hardman, M. A., Taylor, B., Daly, C., Glegg, P., Stiasny, B., Pillinger, C., & Gandolfi, H. (2020). *Early Career Teacher Support—Pilot Report*. Education Endowment Foundation. <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/early-career-support/>
- Heikonen, L., Pietarinen, J., Pyhältö, K., Toom, A., & Soini, T. (2017). Early career teachers' sense of professional agency in the classroom: Associations with turnover intentions and perceived inadequacy in teacher-student interaction. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 45*(3), 250–266. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2016.1169505>
- Hetherington, L., Hardman, M., Noakes, J., & Wegerif, R. (2018). Making the case for a material-dialogic approach to science education. *Studies in Science Education, 54*(2), 141–176. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057267.2019.1598036>
- Hetherington, L., & Wegerif, R. (2018). Developing a material-dialogic approach to pedagogy to guide science teacher education. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 44*(1), 27–43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2018.1422611>
- Hudson, B. (Ed.). (2022). *International perspectives on knowledge and curriculum: Epistemic quality across school subjects*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Kennedy, M. (2015). Parsing the Practice of Teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 67*(1), 6–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487115614617>
- Kitson, A. (2020). *Teachers as recontextualization agents: A study of expert teachers' knowledge and their role in the recontextualization process across different subjects* [UCL (University College London)]. <https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10106526/>
- Kowasch, M., Cruz, J. P., Reis, P., Gericke, N., & Kicker, K. (2021). Climate Youth Activism Initiatives: Motivations and Aims, and the Potential to Integrate Climate Activism into ESD and Transformative Learning. *Sustainability, 13*(21), 11581. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132111581>
- Kraft, M. A., Blazar, D., & Hogan, D. (2018). The Effect of Teacher Coaching on Instruction and Achievement: A Meta-Analysis of the Causal Evidence. *Review of Educational Research, 88*(4), 547–588. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654318759268>
- Leal Filho, W. (Ed.). (2011). *World trends in education for sustainable development*. Peter Lang GmbH.
- Long, R., & Danechi, S. (2021). *Teacher recruitment and retention in England—Research briefing (07222)*. House of Commons Library. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7222/CBP-7222.pdf>
- MacLure, M. (2010). The offence of theory. *Journal of Education Policy, 25*(2), 277–286. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930903462316>
- Mazzei, L. A. (2013). A voice without organs: Interviewing in posthumanist research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 26*(6), 732–740. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2013.788761>
- Nikolopoulou, A., Abraham, T., & Mirbagheri, F. (Eds.). (2010). *Education for sustainable development: Challenges, strategies, and practices in a globalizing world*. Sage.
- Ovenden-Hope, T., Blandford, S., Cain, T., & Maxwell, B. (2018). RETAIN early career teacher retention programme: Evaluating the role of research informed continuing professional development for a high quality, sustainable 21st century teaching profession. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 44*(5), 590–607. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2018.1516349>
- Pantić, N. (2015). A model for study of teacher agency for social justice. *Teachers and Teaching, 21*(6), 759–778. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044332>
- Pedder, D., & Opfer, V. D. (2013). Professional learning orientations: Patterns of dissonance and alignment between teachers' values and practices. *Research Papers in Education, 28*(5), 539–570. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2012.706632>
- Priestley, M., Biesta, G., & Robinson, S. (2015). *Teacher agency an ecological approach*. London.

- Priestley, M., Edwards, R., Priestley, A., & Miller, K. (2012). Teacher Agency in Curriculum Making: Agents of Change and Spaces for Manoeuvre. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 42(2), 191–214. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-873X.2012.00588.x>
- Reiss, M. J. (2021). How Can We Teach Genetics for Social Justice? In M. Haskel-Ittah & A. Yarden (Eds.), *Genetics Education* (pp. 35–52). Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-86051-6\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-86051-6_3)
- Sachs, J. (2003a). *Teacher Activism: Mobilising the Profession: Plenary Address Presented to the British Educational Research Association Conference, Heriot Watt University, Edinburgh, September 11-13 2003*. Southwell: British Educational Research Association. Print.
- Sachs, J. (2003b). *The activist teaching profession*. Open Univ. Press.
- St. Pierre, E. A. (2018). Post Qualitative Inquiry in an Ontology of Immanence. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 25(1), 3–16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800418772634>
- St. Pierre, E. A., & Jackson, A. Y. (2014). Qualitative Data Analysis After Coding. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(6), 715–719. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414532435>
- Toom, A., Pyhältö, K., & Rust, F. O. (2015). Teachers' professional agency in contradictory times. *Teachers and Teaching*, 21(6), 615–623. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044334>
- van der Heijden, H. R. M. A., Geldens, J. J. M., Beijaard, D., & Popeijus, H. L. (2015). Characteristics of teachers as change agents. *Teachers and Teaching*, 21(6), 681–699. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044328>
- Wertsch, J. V., & Rupert, L. J. (1993). The Authority of Cultural Tools in a Sociocultural Approach to Mediated Agency. *Cognition and Instruction*, 11(3–4), 227–239. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07370008.1993.9649022>