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*Developing Socially-Just Teachers Through A Proposed Alternative Curriculum For Initial
Teacher Education*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY BY PUBLICATION

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ABSTRACT

Problems of teacher burnout, low job satisfaction and high rates of teacher attrition are not specific to England but are also global concerns and symptomatic of a profession in crisis. In England, teacher education is a highly regulated sector and, in recent years, has become increasingly complex, fragmented and marketised. Increased government control over what pre-service teachers learn during their initial training phase has resulted in a centralised teacher training curriculum which is both reductionist and situates teachers as technicians. Universities have always played a distinctive role in teacher education, but the marketisation of the sector in recent years has led to a de-professionalisation and re-professionalisation of university teacher educators. The disappearance of universities from teacher training policy discourse and the tightening of government control over what is taught to pre-service teachers reflects a lack of trust in the university teacher education sector.

Given this aggressive policy context, it is not surprising that some higher education institutions in England have withdrawn their teacher education courses. Courses which were once the ‘bread and butter’ of many institutions are now viewed as a reputational risk. Inspection regimes seek to enforce the government prescribed curriculum and there are heavy penalties that are imposed on institutions where the prescribed curriculum is not being delivered in its entirety or where it is not being taught in sufficient depth. The government curriculum is reductionist and produces teachers as technicians who believe in and can implement the prescribed approaches.

This thesis presents 13 published papers. Implications to support the development of an alternative teacher education curriculum are drawn from the findings. The findings of the papers demonstrate that matters of inclusion and social justice need to be given greater emphasis in teacher education to enable pre-service teachers to respond to the professional challenges that they will face in classrooms. Key broad themes drawn from the papers include teacher identity, social justice and inclusion as critical components of a teacher education curriculum. These themes are used to develop a proposed curriculum framework for initial teacher education, which aims to situate teachers as critical thinkers who can challenge government policy, advance equality and prioritise both their own mental health and the mental health of their students. In addition, a framework for a mentor curriculum is also proposed to support the implementation of the teacher education curriculum in schools.

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MY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PAPERS

Paper	Contribution (%)	Design	Data collection	Data Analysis	Preparation for Publication	Contributed to theorisation	Comments
1	80	√	√	√	√	√	
2	10	√	X	√	√	√	First author conducted the interviews.
3	90	√	√	√	√	√	
4	90	√	√	√	√	√	
5	80	√	√	√	√	√	
6	70	√	√	√	√	√	
7	95	√	√	√	√	√	
8	90	√	√	√	√	√	
9	90	√	√	√	√	√	
10	100	√	√	√	√	√	
11	25	X	√	√	Partially	√	First two authors designed the data collection tools. I supported the write up by providing feedback on drafts.
12	90	√	√	√	√	√	
13	100	√	√	√	√	√	

TABLE OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	
CCF	Core Content Framework
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer /other
NEU	National education Union
OECD	The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ONS	Office for National Statistics
RSPH	Royal Society for Public Health
SCITT	School Centred Initial Teacher Training

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

The following section outlines the context of teacher education in England and identifies some of the challenges associated with teaching. It presents the key papers which form the body of published work and outlines the key themes which have arisen from my research. The papers constitute a patchwork of content representing the key themes. Although not all papers are specifically related to teacher education and are more closely related to teaching in schools, they have implications for teacher education.

1.2 Teacher education in England: the current policy context

In England there are several routes that pre-service teachers can follow to learn to be a teacher. Most undertake an undergraduate or postgraduate course in initial teacher education within a higher education institution (Scott, 2020). Some pre-service teachers choose to follow a school-based route via a School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) programme. There is an assessment only route for graduates who are currently working in schools and a School Direct route which was introduced by the Education Secretary, Michael Gove, in 2010. The diverse range of routes into teaching can be confusing for those wishing to be teachers (Mutton et al., 2017). The move to school-based routes in England has led to a fragmented system (Golding, 2015; Brown et al., 2016) and the development of a competitive market which has resulted in universities and school-based teacher training courses working in direct competition (Scott, 2020).

Providers are required to ensure that the teacher training curriculum addresses the teachers' standards (Department for Education [DfE], 2011), the Initial Teacher Training [ITT] criteria (DfE, 2022), the ITT Core Content Framework [CCF] (DfE, 2019) and the current inspection

framework by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills [Ofsted] (Ofsted, 2020). Providers of teacher education must ensure that the CCF is the driver for course design and delivery. The CCF is divided into 8 strands. Each strand is underpinned by government approved research. The strands of the CCF are shown in Figure 1. Providers are not allowed to introduce trainee teachers to research which contradicts government policy. For example, in the teaching of early reading, the inspection framework for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) (Ofsted, 2020) states that providers will be graded inadequate if they introduce trainees to alternative approaches to early reading other than synthetic phonics, despite the academic research which challenges this approach. I have summarised my critique of this approach in article 13.

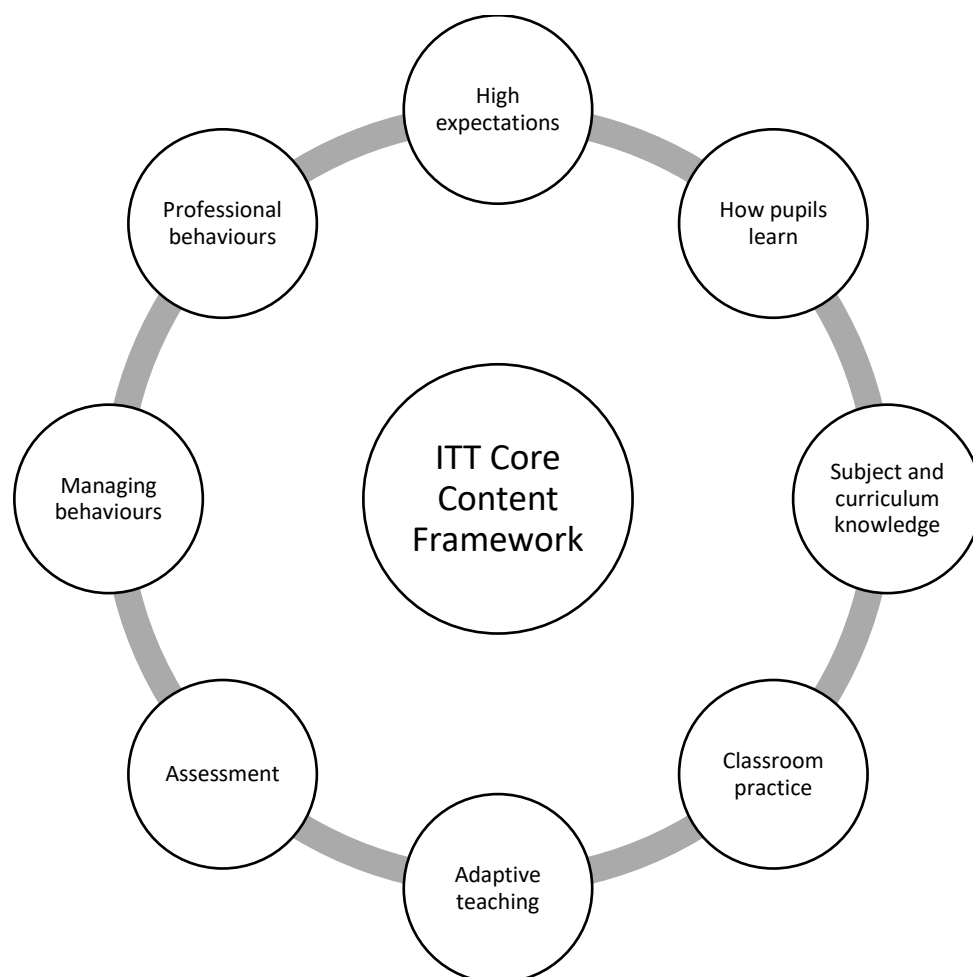


Fig. 1. The strands of the CCF (DfE, 2019)

1.3 What are the problems with the CCF?

The CCF is reductionist because it does not address the challenges which lead to teacher burnout, poor job satisfaction and high teacher attrition (Gray, Wilcox, & Nordstokke, 2017). It does not directly address the reasons why there is a significant retention issue in teaching (Foster, 2019). Its emphasis on subject knowledge, classroom practice, behaviour management and assessment results in the development of teachers as technicians rather than developing teachers with a strong teacher identity, a crucial aspect of teacher development (Parsons et al., 2017). The CCF outlines a series of technical skills that pre-service teachers need to learn. For example, in the *classroom practice* strand, pre-service teachers are required to learn the techniques of modelling, scaffolding and retrieval practice. There is an emphasis on explicit, direct teaching, which the CCF presents as the most effective way of supporting pupils to learn in classrooms. Although this approach is supported by research (Barker, 2019; Coe et al., 2014; Kirschner et al., 2006), direct instruction is not the only way that pupils learn. Seminal theories of learning have emphasised the importance of learning as a social process (Vygotsky, 1978) and learning through experience (Dewey, 1938) and therefore deserve recognition within the CCF. Within the strand which addresses *how pupils learn*, there is an emphasis on the role of memory in the learning process and no emphasis on the socio-cultural factors which impact on learning and development (Vygotsky, 1978). Within the CCF learning is described as largely a passive process; the teacher is positioned as someone who both imparts knowledge and supports pupils to remember the knowledge they have been taught. This emphasis on knowledge and knowledge retrieval is also reductionist because education should also develop skills, attitudes and provide children and young people with rich and meaningful experiences.

There are other examples of reductionism in the CCF. The strand on *behaviour* emphasises strategies that teachers should use to *manage* pupils' behaviour, thus ignoring the research which emphasises the need to *teach* children about learning behaviours (Bitsika, 2003; Ellis

& Tod, 2018; McDermott et al, 2001; Nolan, 2011; Norwich & Rovoli, 1993; Núñez and León, 2015; Powell & Tod, 2004), and ignoring the factors which impact adversely on behaviour which are well-documented in the teacher training literature (Cooper & Elton-Chalcraft, 2018; Glazzard et al., 2014; Graham-Matheson, 2014; James, 2016). In addition, the strand on *adaptive teaching* uncritically assumes that all pupils can learn the same curriculum regardless of their individual needs, despite academic research demonstrating that some learners require a more tailored curriculum (Education Endowment Foundation [EEF], 2020). Finally, in the strand on *subject and curriculum* there is an emphasis on subject knowledge development. There is also an exclusive emphasis on synthetic phonics as the government approved solution to ensuring that all children learn to read. However, academic research has consistently highlighted that there is no evidence that this approach to reading development is superior to other approaches (Goswami, 2005; Torgerson, Brooks & Hall, 2006; Wyse & Goswami, 2008).

In some ways, there is nothing wrong with pre-service teachers knowing this content. Effective teachers need a wide range of approaches in their pedagogical tool bags (Brooks, 2021). However, it is problematic that specific government approved approaches must be taught exclusively, and it is also concerning that there is no emphasis on teacher identity, a crucial aspect of teacher development (McKay & Manning, 2019). There is no emphasis on issues of social justice and inclusion despite research which has highlighted the need to address social justice concerns within ITE (Goodwin et al., 2014, Goodwin & Chen, 2016; Goodwin & Darity, 2019). In addition, the day-to-day challenges of teaching, which lead to high rates of attrition, burnout and poor job satisfaction (Holloway et al., 2017) are not addressed in the CCF.

Although it is fair to recognise that the CCF is a minimum entitlement and that providers are required to go beyond its requirements, it is an extensive curriculum and there is little time on

a postgraduate teacher education course to address additional content. It is also important to acknowledge that the CCF is focusing on *initial* teacher education. Therefore, it might be reasonable to suggest that new teachers could learn some of the content that is not addressed in the CCF when they gain employment as teachers. However, it is important to recognise that there is evidence which suggests that teachers experience burnout and poor job satisfaction very early in a teaching career (Foster, 2019) and therefore it would make sense for the teacher education curriculum to directly address the aspects which are not covered in the CCF.

The recent ITT Market Review (DfE, 2021) in England signalled a move to increased government control of teacher training. The review emphasised that current teacher training curricula were underpinned by outdated or discredited theories of education and curricula were not well enough informed by the most pertinent research. Autonomy to design teacher training courses has been gradually eroded in recent years. The ITT Market Review included a new requirement for registered providers of teacher education to pass an accreditation process, which included scrutiny of the taught teacher education curriculum. Two-thirds of university providers failed to pass the accreditation in the first round because the government was not assured that the provision met the new quality requirements that were set out in the Market Review (TES, 2022).

The increased regulation of teacher education in England demonstrates unequivocally the government's distrust of university teacher education. Providers are required to teach the prescribed curriculum, which is set out in the CCF, and the government approved research which underpins it. Although the CCF is intended to set out the minimum expectations for a teacher education, it is important to remember that the postgraduate qualification route to become a qualified teacher in England is only one year in duration. It is therefore challenging

for providers to teach the requirements of the CCF and adding additional content is arguably impossible within the demands of a programme which lasts only 12 months. The teachers' standards and the CCF, reduce teaching to vocational rather than an intellectual activity. There is an emphasis in these statutory frameworks on learning the techniques of teaching, but there is no emphasis on teacher identity and broader aspects of inclusion and social justice, including mental health. This leaves beginning teachers largely unprepared for the day-to-day challenges that they will encounter in classrooms, including how to manage their own mental health and the mental health of the students they teach and how to respond to students' diverse needs in the classroom.

1.4 Content analysis of the ITT Core Content Framework

There appears to be a paucity of academic research on the ITT Core Content Framework (DfE, 2019). My professional experiences as a teacher educator have highlighted some significant gaps in this framework, particularly in relation to the lack of emphasis on inclusion, social justice, and teacher identity. A deductive content analysis was carried out to identify key themes which permeate the framework. According to Fischer (2006) document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents. Content analysis is a specific strategy used to determine whether words or concepts are present within a text or series of texts, and these are quantified and analysed. A deductive content analysis was conducted by following four steps. These are outlined below.

Step 1: It was necessary to identify content that was missing from the CCF. To carry out this analysis, specific words or phrases were identified, and the whole document was searched using the 'Find' tool on Microsoft Word. The text was searched for the following words or phrases: *race; race equality; disability; sexual orientation; sexuality; gender; gender equality, mental health, teacher identity, identity, equality act and equality*. This was the deductive

aspect of the content analysis in that these categories were pre-determined. The intention was to count the number of times each category appeared in the text. However, none of the identified categories were present within the text so it was not necessary to complete a table of results.

Step 2: It was necessary to identify the content that was present within the CCF. The CCF is sub-divided into 8 strands. Post-it notes were used to record key *pedagogical approaches* that were listed in the CCF. Examples of these approaches included *synthetic phonics, modelling, explicit teaching, and adaptive teaching*. The 'Find' tool on Microsoft Word was not used for this step and the approaches were not pre-determined. However, the decision to look for examples of pedagogical approaches was deliberate and pre-determined. The whole document was analysed manually, and pedagogical approaches were noted on post-it notes. No count was taken of the number of times a category appeared.

Step 3: It was decided that it would be useful to identify words or phrases in the CCF which reflected an emphasis on raising pupil attainment. The 'Find' tool on Microsoft Word was not used for this step and the content was not pre-determined. However, the decision to look for examples of words or phrases which reflected raising pupil attainment was deliberate and pre-determined. The whole document was analysed manually, and words or phrases related to raising pupil attainment were noted on post-it notes. No count was taken of the number of times a category appeared.

Step 4: The post-it notes generated from step 2 and step 3 were grouped into broader themes. These are summarised below. This was the thematic element of the content analysis.

1.4.1 Theme 1: Teachers as agents of performativity

There is an explicit emphasis in the CCF on the role of the teacher in influencing academic outcomes within *subjects* for pupils. For example, the CCF states that trainees should learn that:

Teacher expectations can affect pupil outcomes; setting goals that challenge and stretch pupils is essential. (p.9)

High-quality teaching has a long-term positive effect on pupils' life chances. (p.9)

Explicitly teaching pupils the knowledge and skills they need to succeed within particular subject areas is beneficial. (p.13)

A whole strand of the CCF is devoted to subject and curriculum knowledge. Although the emphasis on academic outcomes and subject knowledge is not problematic, there is no emphasis in the CCF on knowledge of matters related to social justice and inclusion. Arguably, children also need to learn about aspects of social justice and inclusion if education is to serve a broader purpose of advancing equality within society (Goodwin & Chen, 2016; Wilkins, 2014). There are no explicit references to 'race', 'race equality', 'disability', 'equality', 'gender', 'gender equality' and 'sexual orientation' or 'sexuality'. There are no references to 'mental health' in the document. These omissions are concerning given that education should also play a fundamental role in preparing pupils to be responsible and respectful citizens in a diverse global society (Connor, 2016; Glazzard & Stones, 2021). Classrooms, as microcosms of society, also reflect the diversity within society (Arifin & Hermino, 2017; Connor, 2016) and therefore courses of teacher preparation should support new teachers to educate the next generation about matters of inclusion and social justice (Goodwin & Darity, 2019).

1.4.2 Theme 2: Teachers as technicians

The CCF requires trainees to learn about specific pedagogical approaches. These are listed in the strand on classroom practice on p.17 of the document and include the following:

- Modelling
- Scaffolding
- Using worked examples
- Questioning
- Metacognitive strategies
- Repeated practise
- Homework

Although each of these pedagogical approaches plays an important role in promoting learning, the identified strategies support a model of teaching which prioritises explicit and direct instruction to promote knowledge transfer rather than social constructivist approaches. There is no mention of ‘enquiry’ as a pedagogical approach or ‘problem-based learning’. The framework positions teachers as technicians who serve to implement specific pedagogical approaches which are privileged within current educational policy.

There is no emphasis within the CCF on ‘teacher identity’ and the term ‘identity’ does not appear in the CCF. Having a strong and relatively stable teacher identity can help teachers to navigate, and transgress policy changes (Dassa & Derose, 2017; Parsons et al., 2017), particularly when specific approaches which have been privileged by policy at a given time are suddenly dispensed with. Training teachers in a broad range of pedagogical approaches, rather than focusing on a limited repertoire of strategies which are listed in the CCF, and subsequently facilitating reflection on these approaches after trainees have experimented with them, can foster the development of a strong teacher identity (Mansfield et al., 2016).

1.4.3 Theme 3: Reductionist pedagogy

The CCF promotes specific approaches which are not supported by evidence from research. For example, it states explicitly the trainees should learn that 'systematic synthetic phonics is the most effective approach for teaching pupils to decode' (p.14) despite well-documented research evidence which suggests that pupils need a repertoire of approaches to support early reading development (Glazzard, 2017; Glazzard & Stones, 2020; Goswami, 2005; Wyse & Goswami, 2008). The emphasis on a specific approach to reading development can result in teachers lacking a broader range of strategies to meet the needs of specific pupils who do not learn to read effectively using synthetic phonics (Glazzard, 2017; Glazzard & Stones, 2020).

Effective teacher education programmes should provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to critically reflect on current education policies. This is essential given that education policy is continuously in a state of flux and therefore focusing on one pedagogical approach, such as synthetic phonics, is unwise given that policies are likely to change in the future (Glazzard & Stones, 2020).

The strand of the CCF which focuses on 'professional responsibilities' is designed to support new teachers to develop knowledge of the following aspects:

- Working effectively with teaching assistants and other colleagues
- Developing effective relationships with parents
- Engaging in high quality continuing professional development
- Becoming reflective practitioners

(DfE, 2019, p.29-30)

These are key skills which underpin effective teaching. However, there is no requirement within the CCF for beginning teachers to learn about and understand their professional

responsibilities in relation to inclusion and social justice. The Equality Act 2010 sets out clear duties which have implications for schools and individual teachers. There is no mention of the Equality Act in the document. Professional responsibilities and duties in relation to the Equality Act include addressing discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, and fostering positive relations between different groups of people. The legislation therefore has implications not only for curriculum development, but also for the way in which teachers interact with pupils, colleagues and parents who have protected characteristics. It is therefore concerning that the specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 have not been integrated into the strand of the CCF which focuses on professional behaviours and responsibilities.

1.4.4 Theme 4: Limited conceptualisations of inclusion

Stand 5 of the CCF focuses on the concept of 'adaptive teaching' for learners with special educational needs. For example, trainees must learn that:

Seeking to understand pupils' differences, including their different levels of prior knowledge and potential barriers to learning, is an essential part of teaching. (p.20)

Adapting teaching in a responsive way, including by providing targeted support to pupils who are struggling, is likely to increase pupil success. (p.20)

Although a focus on special educational needs is important in teacher preparation, it is concerning that there is no explicit reference to 'inclusion' in the CCF. There is no requirement for trainee teachers to learn about broader aspects of inclusion, including how to support racial and ethnic diversity in classrooms, how to develop pupils' awareness of diverse family structures and sexual orientation and how to develop pupils' knowledge of mental health. There is also no requirement in the CCF to introduce trainee teachers to the Equality Act. The following words or phrases are absent from the CCF: inclusion; race; ethnicity; sexual orientation; mental health; disability and Equality Act. These omissions mean that teacher

training programmes may not adequately prepare trainee teachers to meet the diverse needs that they will encounter in classrooms. The CCF does not unpack the concept of inclusion for trainees. Given the diverse nature of schools and classrooms (Connor, 2016), arguably this is a concerning omission within a policy document that is designed to support teacher preparation.

1.4.5 Summary of content analysis

Today's classrooms are diverse (Arifin & Hermino, 2017), and teachers experience a range of professional challenges (Parsons et al., 2017). They must be equipped to support children and young people's mental health and they must be prepared to fulfill their legal duties that are set out in the 2010 Equality Act. In addition, they must be supported to develop a repertoire of pedagogical approaches to support the diverse needs of learners and reliance on a limited range of strategies or approaches is unwise and very likely to leave them unequipped (Skourdumbis, 2017). This content analysis has demonstrated that the CCF omits important knowledge which pre-service teachers need to support their professional growth and, therefore, there is a need to broaden the teacher education curriculum to include the aspects that have been omitted from the CCF.

1.5 What are the problems that need to be addressed?

The challenge of maintaining adequate teacher supply has been evident for some time (Sibieta, 2020). A third of teachers leave the profession within the first five years of qualifying (Foster, 2019). Issues related to workload, poor work-life balance, accountability pressures, and poor school leadership are cited by former teachers as reasons for leaving the profession (National Audit Office [NAO], 2016; Worth et al., 2018). Reports in the media have highlighted a 'teacher supply crisis' (Fearn, 2017) which has been described as 'severe' (Coughlan, 2018) and 'alarming' (Hazell, 2018).

The detrimental effects of increased workloads and high-stakes accountability that impact on teachers' job satisfaction and wellbeing have been well documented in the international literature (Holloway et al., 2017; Perryman et al., 2011). Studies highlight the damaging effects of increased accountability, including inducing anxiety and fear (Nathaniel et al., 2016), fatigue and demoralisation (Buchanan, 2010), and the adverse impact on teachers' physical and mental wellbeing (Manning et al., 2020). The unrelenting demands of school inspections have resulted in teachers in England working longer hours than teachers in most other countries (Dolton et al., 2018). Research on teacher wellbeing in England demonstrates that increasing numbers of teachers are stressed and anxious (National Education Union [NEU], 2019).

Teacher wellbeing and teacher attrition have become interlinked, with both characterised in 'crisis' terms (Falecki & Mann, 2021). Both work together to produce a powerful narrative of teachers experiencing unprecedented levels of stress, being 'burned out' (Tapper, 2018) and leaving the profession 'in droves' (Fearn, 2017). However, there is a less dominant counter narrative that needs further research. Although a third of teachers exit the profession within five years, two-thirds of teachers remain (Foster, 2019). Thus, more teachers stay in the profession than leave. Although most existing research on teacher attrition focuses on the reasons why teachers leave, a growing body of international research is beginning to focus on the reasons why teachers remain in the profession (Towers, 2020; Tricarico et al., 2015) to better understand the conditions that facilitate teacher retention. Research suggests that the teachers who remain in teaching are more likely to be working in schools with collaborative and cohesive cultures (Yonezawa et al., 2011) and supportive school leaders (Burkhauser, 2017). While the specific contexts of schools do influence approaches to school leadership (Towers et al., 2022), leaders who demonstrate sensitivity and empathy can make a critical difference to the ways in which teachers cope with change (Maguire et al., 2019), with those leaders who 'possess a high degree of emotional intelligence' (West-Burnham, 2009, p. 13)

far better placed to buffer teachers from some of the negative effects of educational policies (Yonezawa et al., 2011).

It seems reasonable to suggest that the current teacher education system is not adequately addressing teacher wellbeing and the associated factors which lead to poor wellbeing in a meaningful way. The emphasis on subject knowledge and the technical aspects of being a teacher do not adequately prepare new teachers for the day-to-day challenges that they will encounter in the classroom. The following section will examine more closely the issues of burnout and job satisfaction.

1.6 The problem of teacher burnout and job satisfaction

The problem of teacher stress is not specific to England. It is a global concern and is pervasive (Gray, Wilcox, & Nordstokke, 2017). Teacher stress is associated with lower job satisfaction and burnout (Kyriacou, 2011). In 2021, 84% of senior leaders and 69% of teachers reported symptoms of stress (Education Support 2021). The factors which impact on the mental health of teachers and school leaders and the strategies to support mental health are inadequately addressed in teacher education programmes because they are not part of the prescribed curriculum that is outlined in the CCF or the teachers' standards. This results in high rates of teacher attrition, particularly in the early stages of teachers' careers (Gray, Wilcox, & Nordstokke, 2017). Educating pre-service teachers explicitly about how to protect their own mental health is likely to support teacher retention in the long-term.

There is a growing body of literature outlining possible predictors and correlates of attrition (Nguyen et al., 2020). A range of factors can influence teacher attrition. These include facets of the teacher themselves (personal factors), their students (social factors), and the school

(environmental factors) (Chambers et al., 2019). Factors which can reduce attrition from teaching include seeking help from colleagues (Tait, 2008), positive school climates (Cohen et al., 2009), and role stability (Billingsley, 2004). In addition, psychosocial factors, such as teachers' emotional states (De Neve & Devos, 2017) and teacher stress (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019) can influence whether teachers choose to remain in teaching or leave the profession. Burnout and job satisfaction are factors which have been highlighted in the literature as crucial factors which can influence attrition (Madigan & Kim, 2021) and both are likely to have negative consequences for individuals because they are enduring.

Burnout is a psychosocial syndrome that develops as a reaction to chronic work-related stress (Madigan & Kim, 2021) and is particularly common among teachers (Chang, 2009) due to the multiple demands placed on teachers throughout their working day (McCarthy et al., 2016). The symptoms of burnout include emotional exhaustion, cynicism and reduced efficacy. It can lead to lower levels of job commitment, reduced physical and mental health (Hakanen, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2006) and absence from the classroom (Kokkinos, Panayiotou, & Davazoglou, 2005; Brunsting, Sreckovic, & Lane, 2014). Affective symptoms of burnout include emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation and cognitive symptoms include reduced accomplishment (Madigan & Kim, 2021). Emotional exhaustion can lead to reduced energy to complete daily tasks. Depersonalisation can lead to increased interpersonal conflict with colleagues and students and reduced accomplishment can lead to negative performance evaluations. Studies have found an association between burnout and intentions to leave the profession (Bartrum et al., 2012).

In relation to teachers, job satisfaction can positively influence enthusiasm and positively affect interpersonal communication with students (Weiqi, 2007). Lack of job satisfaction is likely to lead to demotivation. Conversely, high job satisfaction is likely to lead to greater engagement,

enhanced motivation, enjoyment, and ultimately an increased likelihood of remaining in the job (Madigan & Kim, 2021). Researchers have argued that burnout leads to decreases in job satisfaction (Madigan & Kim, 2021) and others have argued that the reverse is true (Tehseen & Hadi, 2015). Although there may be a relationship between the two, it is important to recognise that they are distinct. A teacher who does not experience job satisfaction does not like their job, but a teacher who is experiencing burnout may feel incapable of adequately performing their job. It has been argued that job satisfaction is a psychological dimension of teacher wellbeing, but burnout is a physical dimension (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020). Being overloaded by work, having little or no freedom to make decisions and interpersonal conflict in the workplace can impact on overall job satisfaction and lead to burnout. Conversely, having positive relationships with colleagues, being treated fairly and experiencing teaching as a meaningful job can impact positively on both (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). Where the demands of the job outweigh the available resources to do the job, teachers are more likely to experience burnout and want to leave the profession (Madigan & Kim, 2021). In addition, where the demands of the job are low, this can also result in low job satisfaction.

Teacher shortage is an international problem and is therefore not specific to the UK (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2016). Increasing teacher recruitment alone will not solve the problem of teacher shortage because the attrition rate is so high (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2019). Therefore, reducing teacher attrition must be a global priority. Although increasing job satisfaction may prevent attrition, alleviating burnout, particularly exhaustion, is a more effective approach. Research demonstrates that changing workplace cultures by reducing demands (for example, reducing workloads) may be highly effective in alleviating burnout risk (Panagioti et al., 2017). In addition, providing teachers with professional autonomy in supportive environments (for

example, by involving teachers in decision making) and increasing levels of social support can help protect teachers from burnout (Awa, Plaumann, & Walter, 2010).

The current curriculum for teacher education does not include any content on burnout and job satisfaction. If new teachers were more aware of strategies to prevent burnout and to increase job satisfaction, it is possible that they would remain longer in teaching. Although it is important to recognise that workplace factors impact on both burnout and job satisfaction, individual factors also play an important role in preventing burnout, including protecting personal time, participating in stress relief activities and maintaining social networks outside of school (Greenfield, 2015).

The day-to-day challenges of teaching which impact negatively on burnout and job satisfaction are not adequately addressed in the teacher education curriculum that is prescribed by the government and it is therefore not surprising that cases of mental ill-health among teachers are increasing year-on-year (Education Support, 2021). New teachers need to know how to deal with interpersonal conflict among colleagues, how to manage heavy workloads, how to navigate toxic workplace cultures and how to respond to students' diverse needs in classrooms. These are the factors which result in burnout and poor job satisfaction and lead to high rates of teacher attrition (Glazzard & Rose, 2019). Consequently, these issues should be carefully addressed in teacher preparation programmes.

1.7 Capacity to respond to student diversity and social justice

Education plays an important role in the advancement of inclusion and social justice (Parsons et al., 2017). It can transform young people's attitudes in a positive way, thus preparing them for life in a diverse society. However, educating children and young people about diversity is

more challenging if pre-service teachers have not been adequately prepared for this during their teacher education programmes. The prescribed curriculum in the CCF does not address matters of race, sexuality, disability or gender and these aspects of content are also not addressed in the National Curriculum for schools (DfE, 2013). Thus, beginning teachers are inadequately prepared to teach in diverse classrooms and lack the training that they need to design projects that address matters of inclusion and social justice.

Seminal research in teacher education in England has highlighted a gradual reduction in the theoretical content of the curriculum, as subject/curriculum knowledge and generic training in practical skills began to feature more noticeably (Crook, 2002). More recent research also identifies this move to an anti-intellectual and technical teacher education curriculum which prioritises subject knowledge for teaching (Knight, 2017). According to Bagley and Beach (2015):

The neo-liberal and neo-conservative critiques of the university-based system of teacher education as ineffective and over-theorised, coupled with the argument for a stronger practical skills-based 'training' can be perceived as a deliberate attempt to open up teacher education to market forces. (p.428)

The introduction of school-based 'training' routes in England, within a policy discourse which privileges a school-led system of education, represent political attempts to reduce the theoretical input on teacher education programmes in favour of more practical 'on-the-job' training. The ITT Market Review (DfE, 2021) criticised the overly theoretical content of university teacher education programmes and the introduction of the National Institute of Teaching and Education in England has signalled a clear direction in teacher education policy which favours a school-led model of teacher training.

It has been argued that the quasi-market in teacher education in England emphasises measurable classroom skills and craft performance (Bagley & Beach, 2015). Within this performative context, the opportunity for sociological, philosophical, historical or psychological engagement with issues of social justice is marginalised or totally removed (Bagley & Beach, 2015). However, schools in England are required to address their statutory duties in relation to the Equality Act 2010. According to Grimaldi (2012) 'discourses of school effectiveness, standardisation, meritocracy, and performativity do not address any of the wider structural inequalities' (p.113). Teacher education, therefore, should play a critical role in developing pre-service teachers' understanding of inclusion and social justice and to do this effectively it is essential to include theoretical content. Teachers cannot adequately address mental health, disability, race, sexuality and gender equality in classrooms without an understanding of the historical, sociological and psychological frames of reference which underpin these aspects of social justice. These aspects of content are missing from the ITT Core Content Framework (DfE, 2019) and they are missing from the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) in schools. To advance social justice, children and young people need to learn about how attitudes in relation to specific minoritised groups and individuals have changed over time and they need to understand the legislation which protects individuals with protected characteristics. Teachers will not confidently be able to teach their students about social justice if it is absent from the pre-service teacher education curriculum.

Classrooms are increasingly diverse and complex (Parsons et al., 2017). One in six children aged 5-16 years are likely to have a mental health problem and 52% of 17- to 23-year-olds have experienced a deterioration in mental health in the last five years (Children's Society, 2021). Teachers at the early stages of their careers are also inadequately prepared to support the mental health of the students they teach (Glazzard & Stones, 2021). The prevalence of mental ill health in children and young people has recently increased from one in ten to one in six and government models of intervention have focused on clinical interventions rather than

psychosocial interventions (Glazzard & Stones, 2021). The global pandemic has resulted in young people experiencing multiple and multi-dimensional transitions (Jindal-Snape, 2012) which have adversely impacted on their mental health. Resilience and self-esteem can act as buffers to negative transitions (Jindal-Snape, 2016) and therefore developing these attributes in young people can support them to manage their mental health better during normative and non-normative transitions. Designing and delivering a mental health curriculum can improve young people's mental health literacy and potentially improve overall wellbeing (Glazzard & Szreter, 2020). Some young people with mental ill-health display conduct disorders and these can adversely impact on overall long-term outcomes. Teachers at the early stages of their careers are inadequately prepared to respond to these challenges because mental health is not a component of the teacher education curriculum that is prescribed by the government (Armstrong, Macleod & Brough, 2019). If beginning teachers were more adequately prepared to identify the signs and symptoms of mental ill-health and had the knowledge to deliver a range of school-based interventions, they would be able to address these challenges more confidently (Armstrong, Elliot, Hallett, et al., 2016; Askeil-Williams & Murray-Harvey, 2016).

There are also other concerns that teachers must address. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is increasing rapidly (Office for National Statistics [ONS], 2022). The proportion of the UK population aged 16 years and over who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual has almost doubled from 1.6% in 2014 compared to 2.7% in 2019 (ONS, 2020). The way in which we now think about gender has changed and teachers need to be able to respond to this. The prevalence of prejudice-based bullying in schools is growing, particularly for young people who identify as transgender (Bradlow et al., 2017) and the relationship between social media use and poor mental health is now well documented (Frith, 2017; Royal Society for Public Health [RSPH], 2017). School exclusions for specific groups are disproportionate, particularly for Black Caribbean students (Gilborn, 2018) because of institutional racism in schools and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children are permanently excluded at five times the

rate of White British pupils (NEU, 2021a). In addition, poverty is the strongest statistical predictor of how well a child will achieve at school (NEU, 2021b).

These issues illustrate the extent of the challenges that teachers face in schools. A curriculum which focuses largely on the technical skills of teaching will not enable beginning teachers to address these social justice concerns. Pre-service teachers need time to learn about these issues both on a theoretical and practical level. They need to learn the underpinning research and theories and have opportunities to design social justice projects in their schools. The current prescribed government teacher education curriculum does not address these concerns, yet research demonstrates that increasing student diversity is one of the reasons why teachers choose to leave teaching. A revised curriculum is therefore required to develop teachers' capacities to address these matters of social justice (Goodwin & Darity, 2019).

1.8 The problem of teacher identity

Development as a teacher involves a considerable degree of identity work (Glazzard & Coverdale, 2018). There has been a move away from coherent and stable identities towards a view that professional identities are multiple, fragmented and prone to change (Smith, 2007). Britzman (2003) emphasised identity construction as a continuous 'becoming', suggesting that identity is always in a state of flux. Teachers are required to continually adapt to current educational discourses and are expected to quickly adapt to change. Those who resist change are often perceived negatively by their colleagues or school leaders and resisting change is difficult when changes to policies are presented as solutions to improving educational outcomes for students.

Sfard and Prusak (2005) categorise identity into two types; actual identity, which refers to a personal identity and a socially assigned identity, which refers to an identity which is imposed on the individual by others. Notions of what it means to be an effective teacher are transmitted through educational discourse and internalised by individual teachers. The effective teacher is one who can raise attainment and therefore improve life chances. Although this is a worthy aim, attempts to improve educational attainment might utilise a variety of unethical approaches, including narrowing the curriculum and removing learners from classrooms for a variety of interventions. This can damage self-esteem and produce feelings of exclusion. For teachers, this becomes problematic when their personal and professional identities do not align. This can result in adopting approaches to teaching which do not match with teachers' personal values. This can lead to reduced job satisfaction and lead to teacher attrition.

According to Smith (2007) new teachers rapidly internalise the current educational discourse without question. They internalise contemporary notions of what it means to be an effective teacher within current discourse, but they become dissatisfied when their socially assigned identity does not align with their personal identity. Education does not operate in a vacuum. It is influenced by policy and teachers are keen to teach in accordance with the latest curriculum or inspection frameworks. The problem with this is that policies go out of fashion almost as quickly as they come into fashion. During the last three decades, a plethora of education policies have been introduced and retracted. Examples include *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003), the National Numeracy Strategy (DfEE, 1998), the National Literacy Strategy (DfEE, 1999), the National Strategies (2011) and frequent changes to the Ofsted Inspection Framework (Ofsted, 2020). These continual changes to policy require teachers to constantly engage in identity work. Approaches to teaching that were once deemed to be effective are no longer considered to be effective and this can result in frustration and cynicism.

Teacher education should therefore support pre-service teachers to think critically and deeply about their teacher identity. Teachers who develop a strong set of personal values and beliefs about the type of teacher they wish to be, have the advantage of a relatively stable personal identity which can guide their day-to-day practice, regardless of subsequent policy changes. The current ITT Core Content Framework (DfE, 2019) reinforces a specific approach to teaching which is likely to be disregarded in the future. The emphasis on memory in the learning process, the importance of explicit, direct teaching and the focus on managing behaviour in the classroom all support one specific model of learning which positions the student as a passive learner and the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge. Training pre-service teachers in one approach to teaching is unlikely to support new teachers to navigate the day-to-day complexities of teaching and if this approach does not work, they do not have alternative pedagogical approaches to draw upon. Pre-service teachers should be supported to think more critically about approaches to teaching and supporting behaviour and they should develop a deep understanding of how students learn, rather than one 'official' perspective of how they learn. They need to learn a broad range of pedagogies and understand how to respond sensitively and inclusively to student diversity.

1.9 Research questions

As a collective, this thesis seeks to address the following research questions:

- What are the problems with the current government curriculum for initial teacher education?
- How can the research outputs inform the development of a teacher education curriculum?
- What are the elements of an alternative teacher education curriculum that might support pre-service teachers to address key professional challenges, including responding to diversity in the classroom?

1.10 The body of published work

The papers that have been selected for inclusion in this narrative are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. List of Publications

Paper	Full reference
1	<p>Glazzard, J., & Rose, A. (2019), The Impact of Teacher Well-Being and Mental Health on Pupil Progress in Primary Schools. <i>Journal of Public Mental Health</i>, 19, (4), 349-357. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPMH-02-2019-0023</p> <p>I contributed to 80% of this paper.</p>
2	<p>Maitland, J., & Glazzard, J. (2022), Finding a way through the fog: school staff experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic, <i>Cambridge Journal of Education</i>. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2022.2040954</p> <p>I contributed to 10% of this paper.</p>
3	<p>Glazzard, J., & Stones, S. (2021), Supporting young people's mental health: reconceptualizing the role of schools or a step too far? <i>Frontiers in Education</i>, 5. https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2020.607939/full</p> <p>I contributed to 90% of this paper.</p>
4	<p>Glazzard, J., & Stones, S. (2021), 'Nothing fazes me, I can do it all': Developing headteacher resilience in a complex and challenging educational climate, <i>International Journal of Leadership in Education</i>. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2020.1829712</p> <p>I contributed to 90% of this paper.</p>
5	<p>Glazzard, J., & Rose, A. (2019), The impact of peer mentoring on students' physical activity and mental health. <i>Journal of Public Mental Health</i>, 20, (2), 122-131, https://doi.org/10.1108/JPMH-10-2018-0073.</p> <p>I contributed to 80% of this paper.</p>

6	<p>Glazzard, J., & Szreter, B. (2020), Developing students' mental health literacy through the power of sport. <i>Support for Learning</i>, 35, (2), 222-251. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9604.12301.</p> <p>I contributed to 70% of this paper.</p>
7	<p>Glazzard, J., & Stones, S. (2020), Supporting Student Teachers with Minority Identities: The Importance of Pastoral Care and Social Justice in Initial Teacher Education. In Beckett, L. (Ed), <i>Research-Informed Teacher Learning</i>, London: Routledge, pp. 127-138.</p> <p>I contributed to 95% of this paper.</p>
8	<p>Stones, S., & Glazzard, J. (2020), Tales from the Chalkface: Using Narratives to Explore Agency, Resilience, and Identity of Gay Teachers, <i>Frontiers in Sociology</i>. https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsoc.2020.00052/full</p> <p>I contributed to 90% of this paper.</p>
9	<p>Glazzard, J., & Stones, S. (2021), Running Scared? A Critical Analysis of LGBTQ+ Inclusion policy in Schools. <i>Frontiers in Sociology</i>. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2021.613283.</p> <p>I contributed to 90% of this paper.</p>
10	<p>Glazzard, J. (2017), Trainee Teachers with Dyslexia: Results of a ^[1]Qualitative Study of Teachers and their Mentors. <i>International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research</i>, 16, (12), 87-107. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.16.12.6</p>
11	<p>Jacobs, L., Collyer, E., Lawrence, C., & Glazzard, J. (2021), "I've got something to tell you. I'm dyslexic": The Lived Experiences of Trainee Teachers with Dyslexia. <i>Teaching and Teacher Education</i>, 104. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103383.</p> <p>I contributed to 25% of this paper.</p>
12	<p>Glazzard, J., & Coverdale, L. (2018), It feels like its sink or swim': newly qualified teachers' experiences of their induction year. <i>International Journal of Learning</i>,</p>

	<p><i>Teaching and Educational Research</i>, 17, (11), 89-101.</p> <p>https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.17.11.7</p> <p>I contributed to 90% of this paper.</p>
13	<p>Glazzard, J. (2017), Assessing Reading Development through Systematic Synthetic Phonics. <i>English in Education</i>, 51, (1), 44-57. https://doi.org/10.1111/eie.12125</p>

1.11 Themes arising from the body of published work

The key themes arising from my published work are listed as follows:

- Mental health
- Social justice and inclusion
- Critique of government policy

In Chapter 3 I have justified the relevance of these themes to the initial teacher education curriculum. I have then used these themes to suggest an alternative model for a teacher education curriculum.

1.12 Summary

Chapter 1 has outlined the problems with the current government prescribed teacher education curriculum. I have argued that the CCF is reductionist and produces technical teachers who do not demonstrate that they have a strong teacher identity. I have outlined the challenges facing the teaching profession. These include issues related to burnout, low job satisfaction and poor teacher mental health, all of which lead to high rates of teacher attrition. I have argued that the government prescribed teacher education curriculum is not fit for purpose because it does not address these challenges. Chapter 2 outlines some of the key research which underpins teacher identity and development.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The marketisation of education in recent decades can destabilise teacher identity (Ball, 2003) but enquiry-based approaches to teacher education, through engaging pre-service teachers in meaningful classroom projects which develop pupils' sense of social responsibility, can play a critical role in developing a strong professional identity (Ulvik et al., 2018). Supporting pre-service teachers to challenge, resist and transgress policy discourses in the pursuit of inclusion and social justice supports their professional growth (Churchward & Willis, 2019; McKay & Manning, 2019). This section addresses the key research on teacher education, teacher identity and social justice in teacher education.

2.2 Teacher education

Multiple quality discourses impact on teacher education provision in universities (Churchward & Willis, 2019). Despite the fact that in internationally recognised high quality ITE, both schools and universities each play a role (Mutton et al., 2017), policy makers in England have persistently emphasised the gap between theoretical and practical knowledge (Cochran-Smith, 2016). The discourses of a self-improving school-led system and context-specific school-led professional development (Peiser, Duncalfe & Mallaburn, 2019) have been the government's response to policy which positions university teacher education as the problem (Peiser et al., 2019). Policy continues to emphasise teaching as a technical craft and therefore promotes an apprenticeship 'on-the job' model of training which has led to university providers of ITE occupying a marginal place, at least through the eyes of policy makers. Teacher education continues to operate within a discourse of performativity in which experimentation in teaching and learning through process of enquiry to develop a professional identity is viewed by some school-based mentors as too great a risk to take (Jaspers et al., 2014) due to perceived damaging effects on students' progress. The effect of this discourse of

performativity has been the policy emphasis on creating 'oven-ready' teachers who emulate the practice that they observe in schools through school-led training rather than university teacher education which seeks to nurture the development of professional identities through experimentation and risk taking (Ulvik et al., 2018).

Subject and pedagogical knowledge are not sufficient by themselves to produce effective teachers. Goodwin and Darity (2019) have emphasised that a collection of 'how to's' (p.66) is insufficient. They argue that teacher preparation courses should empower pre-service teachers to be 'architects of change' (p.66) within a rigid and prescriptive education system which is based on neoliberal principles. However, the marketisation of teacher education in recent years in England has reduced teaching to a set of skills which must be mastered (Biesta, 2017). Reductionist discourses, evident through a set of professional standards (DfE, 2011) which teachers must demonstrate, along with the Core Content Framework (DfE, 2019), have prioritised evidence-based approaches to teaching (Skourdombis, 2017). Policy scripts have therefore emphasised a 'what works' discourse and given less emphasis on the role of teacher education in promoting socially-just pedagogies and values. The recent emphasis on grading pre-service teachers reflects a discourse of performativity (Ball, 2003) which has been so damaging for the teaching profession.

2.2.1 Social justice in teacher education

Matters of race, disability, sexuality, and gender are not identified as aspects of curriculum content in the teachers' standards (DfE, 2011), the ITT Core Content Framework (DfE, 2019) and the initial teacher education inspection framework (Ofsted, 2020). Despite this, pre-service teachers must be ready to teach in increasingly diverse classrooms where multiple and intersectional identities are represented. Various studies have highlighted the need to upskill teacher educators in this aspect (Goodwin et al., 2014, Goodwin & Chen, 2016;

Goodwin & Darity, 2019), given the fact that classrooms are increasingly diverse (Arifin & Hermino, 2017; Connor, 2016), yet teacher educators may not have experienced these types of classrooms themselves (Goodwin & Darity, 2019).

The Equality Act 2010 necessitates a shift away from anti-discriminatory practices towards the promotion of race equality through changing institutional cultures and practices (Wilkins, 2014). Issues of race and racial diversity have not been given adequate attention in ITE and have, at best, occupied a marginal space (Wilkins, 2014). In addition to the under-representation of Black and Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) teachers in the profession, ITE Ofsted inspectors have not placed race equality 'at the heart of everything they do' (Wilkins, 2014, p.465). The teachers' standards (DfE, 2011) do not specifically refer to issues of race, sexuality or gender and Wilkins (2014) has argued that institutions have positioned themselves as colour blind, in that they are seen as neutral arenas, thus perpetuating structural inequalities.

It is important to recognise that when students embark on a teacher education course, they have already formed beliefs, attitudes, and values in relation to disability, race, gender and sexuality. These have been shaped by a range of influences including interactions with others, school, family and community contexts. Teacher education programmes must therefore support pre-service teachers to reflect critically and deeply on their beliefs, attitudes and values (Goodwin & Darity, 2019) if teacher education is to have a transformative effect. Teacher educators must be able to 'interrupt discriminatory and harmful schooling practices' (Goodwin & Darity, 2019, p.67) which perpetuate exclusion and teacher education programmes should provide, for some, an uncomfortable space to address contested issues of inequality in relation to disability, race, social class, gender and sexuality. Pre-service teachers should be supported to be aware of, and confront, their own biases, privilege, and

prejudices in order to reduce deficit thinking. McKay (2013) has highlighted how university teacher education programmes can transform pre-service teachers' attitudes and values through attending to attitudes, values and beliefs and not just skill development.

Teacher education programmes must directly engage pre-service teachers with diversity through a rich diet of immersion activities, including opportunities to work directly with children and young people who are culturally and linguistically diverse (Zeichner et al., 2016). For some, these immersion experiences will be both uncomfortable and transformative. Pre-service teachers can only deeply understand children's lives and cultures through rich, concrete experiences which force them to re-evaluate their own assumptions and biases (Kretchmar & Zeichner, 2016). Research demonstrates that teachers who cannot address adequately the needs of a diverse range of students are at risk of burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Teacher education courses must therefore fully prepare them to teach students of all races, ethnicities, abilities, sexualities, and genders so that they are empowered to address the professional challenges that they will face.

Henderson (2019) argues that the complex temporalities of teacher identity are further complicated for teachers who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or other (LGBTQ+). Ferfolja and Hopkins (2013) have argued that the relationship between schooling and sexuality has historically been complex and Neary (2013) has argued that the 'desexualised' (p.13) school is embedded within assumptions of heterosexuality. LGBTQ+ teachers therefore often begin their teaching careers with the sense that they must conceal their personal identities due to heteronormative discourses which are strongly prevalent in schools. There has been an uneasy relationship between schooling and sexuality (Henderson, 2019) and LGBTQ+ teachers may feel obliged to disclose their personal identities and be a visible or vocal voice of the LGBTQ+ community, thus succumbing to the role model discourse

(Henderson, 2019). In my publications I have argued that teacher education courses should directly address LGBTQ+ identities as a social justice priority (Glazzard & Stones, 2020). Making visible a range of marginal identities on a teacher education programme fosters a sense of belonging and supports the development of a strong teacher identity (McKay & Manning, 2019) which is characterised by courage and a determination to make a positive difference in schools through usualising difference in classrooms and disrupting normative environments (Carlile, 2020).

Meyer's model of minority stress (Meyer, 2003) is a useful conceptual framework to support understanding of the experiences of individuals with minority identities. Meyer (2003) helps us to understand that although all individuals are exposed to general stressors due to environmental circumstances, individuals with minority identities are subjected to additional stressors which can lead to mental ill-health. Meyer categorises these stressors into distal and proximal stressors. Distal stressors include the direct experience of prejudice and discrimination because of a person's minority status. Proximal stressors are an internalised form of stress, arising from the anticipation that an individual with a minority status may be exposed to various distal stressors. Proximal stressors can result in concealment and internalised stigma, both of which can lead to negative mental health outcomes (Meyer, 2003).

It is important that pre-service teachers understand that children and young people with minority identities may experience both distal and proximal stressors on top of the general stressors which all people experience. However, it is also important that ITE providers think more carefully about how to reduce exposure to these stressors for pre-service teachers with minority identities. Addressing matters of social justice through the teacher education curriculum is therefore critical because it empowers pre-service teachers to advance inclusion

and social justice in their own classrooms and it facilitates a sense of belonging for trainees with minority identities.

Most pre-service teachers learn to become a teacher by following a university teacher education course. Therefore, pre-service teachers are also students in higher education as well as professionals. The invisibility of LGBTQ+ experiences and identities in the higher education curriculum has been highlighted by Formby (2017) and results in students skilfully negotiating their sexualities and gender identities to fit in with the dominant heteronormative discourses. Research by Ellis (2009) reported the existence of homophobia on university campuses in the UK and this also replicates earlier findings in the United States (Rankin, 2005). In the UK Ellis concluded that 'LGBTQ+ students do not particularly perceive a 'climate of fear', but [still] actively behave in ways that respond to such a climate' (Ellis, 2009, p. 733). Ellis found that university students deliberately concealed their sexualities or gender identities because they did not feel comfortable disclosing them. Valentine et al., (2009) found that transgender students reported a higher proportion of negative treatment, including threat of physical violence, compared to those who identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual and these findings have also been replicated in the United States (Garvey and Rankin, 2015). In the United States research has found that the LGBTQ+ community is the least well-served and most discriminated against on university campuses (Rankin et al., 2010).

University spaces, once described as 'threateningly straight' (Epstein et al, 2003, p. 138), are places where varying levels of 'outness' or self-censorship (Formby, 2012; 2013) may exist. Even where LGBTQ+ students experience university spaces as liberal and accepting, the heterosexist and heteronormative discourses can result in them modifying their behaviour so as not to transgress heterosexual norms (Taulke-Johnson, 2008). This can result in LGBTQ+ students carefully negotiating their identities due to lack of certainty about other people's

reactions to them, or as a response to homophobic language which is explained away as 'banter' but which nevertheless objectifies and 'others' LGBTQ+ students (Keenan, 2015). Pressure to behave as a 'good homosexual' (Epstein et al., 2000, p.19), i.e., one who is 'straight looking' and 'straight acting' (Taulke-Johnson, 2008, p. 128), can result in gay students carefully negotiating their homosexuality to fit in, despite experiencing university as a place where they feel accepted and supported (Taulke-Johnson, 2008). Banter from heterosexual students towards LGBTQ+ students may not be framed as homophobic, but nevertheless reinforces compulsory heterosexuality and students' passive responses to these perpetuates anti-LGBTQ+ discourses (Taulke-Johnson, 2008).

Keenan (2014) found that despite institutional commitments to equality and diversity, the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ students suggests that these policies are often not borne out in practice. It is evident that verbal and physical abuse are still apparent on university campuses although verbal abuse is more common than physical abuse (Keenan, 2014). Additionally, other research has found that homophobic language is sometimes explained away merely as 'banter' but nevertheless this still pathologises students who identify as LGBTQ+.

It has been argued that LGBTQ+ teachers have inhabited spaces of exclusion within schools (Gray et al., 2016). Schools have historically been part of the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1990) by playing a critical role in the normalisation of heterosexuality. Heteronormativity has been actively reproduced within schools (Gray et al., 2016) through both the formal and hidden curriculum, resulting in heterosexuality being upheld as the only legitimate and dominant form of sexuality. In England, Section 28 (1988-2003) functioned as a form of surveillance (Foucault, 1977a; 1992) which turned schools into panoptic laboratories (Edwards et al., 2016). During this time, 'coming out' carried implications for teachers' careers and consequently teachers adopted strategies such as 'passing' and 'covering' (Sparkes, 1996) to

hide their sexuality; they either passed off as straight or covered up their sexuality. Whilst many LGBTQ+ teachers are now more prepared to openly declare their sexual or gender identities in school, some choose not to for a variety of reasons, including fear of repercussions.

2.3 Teacher Identity

Becoming a teacher is complex, messy, and non-linear (McKay, 2013). Critically engaging with research and reflecting on their own values and beliefs will support professional growth and foster the development of a teacher identity (McKay & Manning, 2019). Strong teacher identities help teachers to navigate policy change (Dassa & Derose, 2017) and address professional challenges (McKay & Manning, 2019). Developing and nurturing the skill of critical reflection in the early stages of a teaching career can sustain teacher resilience (Greenfield, 2015; Mansfield et al., 2016). Teacher educators must therefore go beyond the technical requirements of the ITT Core Content Framework and nurture the development of teachers who have strong beliefs and are prepared to resist dominant and discriminatory discourses which result in children being marginalised.

Policy frameworks for teacher education (DfE, 2019; Ofsted, 2020) also offer a limited perspective on behaviour, assessment, and professionalism. In relation to the latter, there is an emphasis on producing 'compliant', rather than 'thinking' teachers who have a strong sense of teacher identity. Power acts as a disciplinary mechanism to reinforce dominant discourses and disciplinary regimes effectively turn people into 'docile bodies' (Foucault, 1977a, p. 138).

The complex temporalities of teacher identity (Henderson, 2019) caused by fluctuating policy discourses, expectations of mentors and the uneasy relationship between teachers' personal

values and the socially assigned identity of the 'good teacher', mean that the process of developing a strong professional identity is a continuous process of becoming (Mayer et al., 2017). Research demonstrates that teacher identities are less stable during programmes of teacher preparation (Henry, 2016) and subject to multiple influences. Teacher educators can nurture the development of teacher identities by supporting pre-service teachers to reflect critically on policy, practice and research and designing programmes of teacher preparation which are underpinned by critical reflection in all components of the programme. Research has emphasised how the formation of professional identity is a continuous process of becoming (Mayer et al., 2017). Identity is fluid, complex, dynamic and emergent but in the early stages of a teaching career it is the most volatile (Henry, 2016).

Initial teacher education plays a crucial role in shaping the development of teacher identities. Teacher identities are shaped by ITE curriculum content, but also by mentors and school contexts. Strong preparation to address future professional challenges should be an essential component of teacher education programmes. Having a strong vision of the type of teacher they are and the type of teacher they wish to become can prepare beginning teachers for addressing future professional challenges (Parsons et al., 2017).

Literature suggests that teachers in the early stages of their careers are often challenged when the realities of teaching do not meet their expectations or when their personal beliefs about education do not match their workplace context (McKay & Manning, 2019). A strong teacher identity, developed during university teacher education programmes, can increase their capacity to respond to the professional challenges of teaching (Parsons et al., 2017). Providing pre-service teachers with opportunities to experiment, reflect and learn from their practice can shape teacher identity and provide empowerment and experimentation with pedagogies that advance inclusion and social justice, for example by developing projects in the classroom that

address mental health. These opportunities provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to address broad social concerns.

Teachers at the early stages of their career benefit from understanding the type of teacher they wish to become (Parsons et al., 2017). Pre-service teachers have become measured and commodified in recent years (Churchward & Willis, 2019) and they have been subjected to datafication. Even though teaching is complex (Cochran-Smith, 2003), the focus on professional standards, technical skills and subject knowledge content has resulted in fewer opportunities to develop critically informed teachers.

Seminal work on teacher identity has illustrated how the occupational and personal selves become integrated to produce a coherent self (Nias, 1989), whereas other work has highlighted the tensions that exist between substantial and situational selves (Sikes, Measor & Woods, 1985; Woods & Jeffrey, 2002). However, more recent work suggests that teacher identity is not a stable entity but continually reconstructed as a product of conflicting discourses and practices (Day et al., 2003; Sammons, 2006; Sikes et al., 1985). It is 'always deferred and in the process of becoming - never really, never yet, never absolutely there' (MacLure, 2003, p.131). Web and Vulliamy (2006) have demonstrated how teachers are able to subvert, reject and recast the dominant political versions of what it means to be a teacher, thus enabling them to assert their own professional values on their identity. In support Clarke (2008) argues that it is possible for teachers to 'author' their own identities by resisting identities which are undesirable. Thus, identity formation is a continual process of negotiation and 'a potential site of agency' (Clarke, 2008, p.187). Clarke argues that teachers have an ethical obligation to reflect on their identities and to engage in identity work by 'claiming' their identity (Clarke, 2008).

According to Foucault (1972) regimes of power exist to ensure that discourses become accepted, established and normal. Discourse serves a regulatory function. Thinking and acting outside of a discourse is problematic because it challenges the 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1980, p.131) which have been accepted by society. According to Foucault:

Truth is a thing of the world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true.

(Foucault, 1980, p.131)

More than twenty years ago, Woods and Jeffrey (2002) highlighted how teachers must reconstruct their identities in response to the changing emphasis on marketability, performativity and growth of accountability in education. The emphasis on 'competitive performativity' (Ball, 2003, p.219), where maximising performance is privileged over a commitment to social justice as a rationale for teaching (Ball, 2003), means that market levers are used to determine school and teacher effectiveness. This causes tensions for those teachers who value 'the human and personal aspects of day-to-day involvement with individual pupils' (Sikes et al., 2007, p.359) as the performative discourse, with its focus on maximising educational outputs, renders these aspects as redundant or obstructive (Ball, 2003). Teachers' personal identities (Ball, 1972) may conflict with the social identity (Snow and Anderson, 1987) which is assigned to them due to the marketisation of education.

2.4 The Transformative Paradigm

I locate my research within the transformative paradigm. There are several reasons for this which I have outlined below. Although I have not referred to this paradigm in the individual papers, it is clear that my approach to research and the issues that I have researched are situated within this paradigm.

The transformative paradigm is largely concerned with issues of power and the relationship between power, privilege, and the realities of individuals (Mertens, 2007). The central tenant of the transformative paradigm is to highlight discrimination and oppression and to advance inclusion and social justice (Mertens, 2012). My papers are largely concerned with matters of social justice through addressing a variety of themes, including disability, sexuality and mental health in specific populations. In specific papers, there are examples of where I worked in a democratic way with participants and also examples of how the research led to empowerment and improved outcomes for participants. This section focuses primarily on outlining the central principles of the transformative paradigm. This section therefore does not explicitly link to the body of published work. However, Chapter 4 demonstrates the relationship between my research and the transformative paradigm.

The transformative paradigm is credited to the work of Donna Mertens. Her publications both theorise and illustrate the transformative paradigm in practice (Mertens, 2003, 2010a, 2010b, 2012; Mertens et al., 2010). The transformative paradigm builds on the work of Guba and Lincoln (2005) who identified four assumptions that underpin a paradigm. These include axiology, ontology, epistemology and methodology. It is a meta-physical framework that 'directly engages the complexity encountered by researchers working in culturally diverse communities when their work is focused on increasing social justice' (Mertens, 2009, p. 10). Central to its philosophy is the recognition that power is an issue that must be addressed at each stage of the research process (Mertens, 2007). Researchers who position themselves within the paradigm must acknowledge the tensions that arise when unequal power relationships permeate a research context (Greene, 2008) and they must recognise that power and privilege are inextricably linked. Typically, researchers working within this paradigm are concerned with matters related to sexuality, race, ethnicity, disability and economic disadvantage and are motivated by a desire to transform lives through advancing social justice.

2.4.1 Axiology

The transformative axiological assumption requires researchers to direct their work to address issues of social justice and human rights (Mertens, 2015; Mertens & Wilson, 2012). Cultural competency is an integral concept for researchers working within the philosophical assumptions of the transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2009, 2010a, 2012). In addition, it is essential that researchers understand the implications of power differentials and demonstrate an appreciation of the cultural context in which the research takes place.

The transformative paradigm requires researchers to make 'an explicit connection ... between the process and outcomes of research and furtherance of a social justice agenda' (Mertens, 2007, p. 216). Therefore, transformative researchers must take seriously the implications of their research, beyond publication or dissemination of findings, and determine how their research improves the lives of the individuals and communities that they are researching (Phelps, 2021). Community participation is an essential principle of the transformative paradigm and researchers should therefore seek to involve participants at all stages of the research process, including the research design, data collection, analysis and dissemination of the findings (Mertens, 2012).

2.4.2 Ontology

Ontological assumptions are concerned with the nature of reality. The transformative paradigm acknowledges that there are different versions of reality, but it extends the interpretivist paradigm in that it posits that these versions of reality are created from different social positionalities and degrees of power which privilege some realities over others (Mertens, 2016). Researchers working within the transformative paradigm must make considerable effort to moderate their power and democratise the research process (Phelps, 2021). Transformative researchers therefore need to be aware of societal values and privileges

(Mertens, 2007). Within this paradigm, the researcher has a responsibility to interrogate differential access to power and the role of power in creating privilege and injustice.

Transformative researchers are particularly interested in 'placing various viewpoints within a political, cultural, and economic value system to understand the basis for the differences' (Mertens, 1999, p. 5). This supports them to understand how certain perspectives on reality become privileged over others. Through critically analysing power differentials, transformative researchers can identify barriers to social justice in the lives of minoritised individuals, groups and communities so that these issues can be addressed directly by those who hold greater power in society.

2.4.3 Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with what counts as knowledge. The transformative paradigm requires researchers to recognise that knowledge is socially and historically located within a complex cultural context. It assumes that knowledge can be both factual and more subjective, but crucially Mertens (2007, 2009) suggests that a transformative epistemology demands trusting relationships between researchers and participants and therefore respect for culture and awareness of power relations are critical to the research process (Mertens, 2007). According to Mertens 'to know realities, it is necessary to have an interactive link between the researcher and the participants in a study. Knowledge is socially and historically located within a complex cultural context'. (2007, p. 216). Therefore, transformative researchers must seek to understand the historical and social contexts, as well as building relationships that acknowledge power differences and support the development of trust amongst the involved parties.

2.4.4 Methodology

Transformative researchers often use a variety of methods (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed) but 'methods should be adjusted to accommodate cultural complexity, power issues should be explicitly addressed, and issues of discrimination and oppression should be recognized' (Mertens, 2007, p. 216). There are no prescribed approaches within the transformative paradigm. However, the research design should enable researchers and participants to understand the complex factors which influence realities (Mertens & Kakai, 2019) and mixed methods can lead to a deeper understanding of how reality is experienced within diverse communities. The use of qualitative methods is essential because this facilitates the development of trusting relationships between researchers and participants. The use of qualitative approaches also supports researchers to understand the complex power dynamics which influence people's realities. Quantitative methods can support researchers to establish facts and to appreciate the scale of the issues they are researching. Regardless of the methods, the approaches that researchers adopt should support them to develop a conscious awareness of contextual and historical factors which lead to discrimination and oppression. The paradigm recognises that to really understand an issue, a variety of research approaches may be required, but it is important that methods are negotiated with participants (Mertens, 2016).

2.4.5 Using the transformative paradigm to critique the CCF

The transformative paradigm provides researchers with some overriding principles which shape the research processes, including the processes of research design, data collection, data analysis, dissemination and transformation. It requires researchers to highlight discrimination and oppression and to address issues of social justice and human rights. It also places an onus on researchers to interrogate power differentials and to explore how unequal distribution of power influences people's realities.

The content analysis of the CCF identified significant gaps in this framework, specifically related to matters of social justice and human rights. It demonstrated that content relating to sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, disability, race and mental health is absent from the framework, despite the need for teachers to advance social justice and human rights in their own classrooms and the need for teacher educators to address these aspects within the higher education context. Given that I am positioning myself within the transformative paradigm, the absence of this crucial content is likely to lead to further inequality within society because new teachers will not be adequately prepared to both address discrimination and promote social justice with their own students.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has highlighted the important contribution that the teacher education curriculum can make to the development of teacher identity. It has also emphasised the need to place inclusion and social justice at the heart of the teacher education curriculum. This will enable beginning teachers to confidently deliver social justice projects in their own classrooms and support pre-service teachers with minoritised identities to feel more included during their training. Finally, this chapter has covered the theoretical framework that links together the body of published work and the proposed curriculum that is discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter 3 summarises the results from the published work and demonstrates how these findings can support the development of a teacher education curriculum.

CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the published work is presented in its entirety. This section provides a summary of the key findings of each paper. Although not every paper specifically focuses on teacher education, implications from the findings of each paper for teacher education have been identified and summarised. These implications support the development of the proposed model for initial teacher education.

3.2 Summary of key findings from the published work

The key findings from the research papers are summarised in Table 2. The implications for teacher education are summarised in Table 3.

Table 2. Key findings of each paper

Paper	Key findings
1	Teacher mental health adversely impacts on the progress of their students. Teacher resilience operates within a socio-ecological framework, in line with Greenfield's (2015) model of teacher resilience. Teachers with good mental health draw on a range of strategies to manage their mental health.
2	The wellbeing of staff who work within education should be a key policy priority and this has implications for initial teacher education and school leaders. Data indicate that staff resilience during this time can be understood as emerging from a nuanced and complex interaction of internal and external factors, and thus conceptualised within a socio-ecological framework.
3	The government has adopted a clinical response to children and young people's mental health. However, a psychosocial response is required because the

	causes of mental ill-health are complex, multi-faceted and influenced by social circumstances. A systemic response, which addresses the causes of mental ill-health, is required.
4	The findings indicate that resilience operates within a socio-ecological framework and therefore head teacher resilience is supported by access to social networks, maintaining a sense of purpose, engaging in regular review, and reframing and access to external professional supervision.
5	Peer mentoring through physical activity is a useful intervention to support the mental health of learners with social and emotional difficulties. It results in positive impacts on both mental health and physical activity for both mentors and mentees.
6	A mental health curriculum delivered by a community sports organisation resulted in statistically significant improvements in mental health literacy for all groups of students. Qualitative data indicate that this intervention resulted in positive attitudes towards mental health and improved mental health literacy. The data indicate that investment in similar programmes would be beneficial for schools in improving students' knowledge of mental health and reducing stigma.
7	Pastoral care of pre-service teachers is important, particularly for those with minoritised identities. Pre-service teachers who identify as LGBTQ+ are often required to negotiate heteronormative school cultures. In response to this they may conceal their identities by covering them up or passing off as heterosexual.
8	LGBTQ+ teachers experience minority stress. They may intertwine their personal or professional identities, or they may choose to separate their personal identity from their professional identity.

9	This policy review presents a rationale for including LGBTQ+ related content in the school curriculum.
10	Pre-service teachers with dyslexia may experience a variety of difficulties during school placements due to reasonable adjustments not being implemented. They are often exposed to an ableist discourse in teaching which requires them to demonstrate high standards in literacy, but they may not receive the support that they need to demonstrate the professional standards in the teaching of English.
11	There are inconsistencies in the quality of mentor support for pre-service teachers with dyslexia. They may be reluctant to disclose their disability to schools and they may not receive the support they need to achieve high standards in literacy.
12	Early career teachers rapidly internalise notions of what it means to be a good teacher. They quickly learn that they are accountable for the academic progress of their students and there may be a mismatch between the assigned identity and their personal values as an educator. Some early career teachers can subvert the dominant versions of what it means to be a good teacher.
13	This article challenges the research adopted by the government that supports synthetic phonics as the route to reading development. It argues that there is no one best approach to support reading development, provided that the teaching of phonics is systematic.

3.3 Finding a golden thread

The articles focus on mental health, social justice, and inclusion. The findings of the paper are relevant to the initial teacher education curriculum. Table 3 identifies the relevance of each paper to the ITE curriculum.

Table 3. Key implications of each paper for teacher education

Paper	Implications for initial teacher education
1	<p>Mental ill-health in teachers results in teacher attrition due to burnout and poor job satisfaction. It is important therefore to address teacher mental health in the ITE curriculum. The introductory chapter to this thesis highlighted the problem of teacher attrition, particularly for teachers in the early stages of their teaching careers. Teachers with good mental health are less likely to leave the profession. The paper identifies a range of strategies that teachers used to maintain good mental health. The teacher education curriculum should ensure that pre-service teachers are prepared thoroughly for the day-to-day challenges of teaching and beginning teachers know how to look after their mental health.</p>
2	<p>The findings of the paper emphasise that the mental health of school staff should be a key policy priority. Embedding staff mental health and wellbeing into the teacher education curriculum demonstrates that the government is prioritising this aspect. Pre-service teachers need to learn about the internal and external factors which influence teacher resilience.</p>
3	<p>This policy critique argues that clinical interventions only address the symptoms but not the causes of mental ill-health. University teacher education programmes should provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to critically analyse educational policy. A university education should foster the skill of critical thinking so that new teachers can challenge policy rather than blindly accepting it.</p>
4	<p>Although this paper focuses on head teacher resilience, it emphasises the strategies that can be utilised to support resilience. The teacher education curriculum should provide pre-service teachers with a range of strategies to support resilience. The paper also discusses the important role that external</p>

	<p>professional supervision and coaching can have on enhancing resilience. Models of coaching and supervision can be embedded into teacher education programmes to support resilience, particularly throughout periods of professional practice placements.</p>
5	<p>This article evaluates peer mentoring as a mental health intervention for students in school. The teacher education curriculum should be evidence-based. It is important that beginning teachers know which interventions are more likely to be successful in improving the mental health of students in school. The teacher education curriculum should introduce pre-service teachers to a range of evidence-based educational mental health interventions. Teachers are not qualified to deliver clinical interventions, but they should confidently be able to implement educational interventions to support students' mental health. Mental health interventions should therefore be a component of the teacher education curriculum.</p>
6	<p>This article summarises the impact of another mental health intervention. The intervention is a mental health curriculum delivered by a sports organisation. Through the teacher education curriculum, all beginning teachers should be able to confidently design a mental health curriculum for students in school. They should be able to confidently design lessons and sequences of lessons which improve students' mental health literacy.</p>
7	<p>This chapter outlines the importance of pastoral care in teacher education. The teacher education curriculum should empower pre-service teachers to feel confident about their personal identities. They are more likely to experience a sense of belonging if their identities are made visible. Content related to race, gender, sexuality and disability should be visible in the teacher education curriculum. Pre-service teachers should be able to confidently design projects</p>

	<p>in school to develop students' understanding of matters of social justice. The mentor curriculum should address the implications of the Equality Act 2010 for mentoring and placements and the curriculum for teacher education staff with pastoral responsibilities should also address the needs of pre-service teachers with minoritised identities.</p>
8	<p>Pre-service teachers who are LGBTQ+ may need a bespoke teacher education curriculum which addresses the challenges that they may experience working in schools. This will ensure that when they go into schools, they can confidently address those challenges. Although this article does not cover other aspects of social justice including matters related to race and disability, it follows that all trainees with minoritised identities may benefit from a bespoke curriculum which addresses the professional challenges that they will face in the classroom.</p>
9	<p>This article presents a rationale for teaching LGBTQ+ content in the school curriculum. It therefore follows that trainee teachers require specific LGBTQ+ content which empowers them to design and deliver an LGBTQ+ curriculum in schools. The teacher education curriculum in schools should therefore also be designed to provide pre-service teachers with practical opportunities to teach LGBTQ+ content in the classroom. Additionally, although this article does not refer to disability, gender, or race, it is equally important to embed these aspects of social justice into the school curriculum and therefore the teacher education curriculum in both the university and schools should address these aspects.</p>
10	<p>This article has implications for the design of teacher education in the university. Pre-service teachers need to know how to support students with dyslexia and may need an additional bespoke curriculum to develop their confidence and subject knowledge. There are also implications for the design of the mentor curriculum and the curriculum that mentors deliver to pre-service teachers in</p>

	<p>schools. Mentors need to understand about the specific needs of pre-service teachers with dyslexia. They need to know their duties in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and they need to support pre-service teachers to adapt their lessons to meet the need of dyslexic learners in the classroom.</p>
11	<p>As in article 10, the findings of this paper have implications for the teacher education curriculum in the university, the mentor curriculum and the teacher education curriculum that is taught in schools.</p>
12	<p>The teacher education curriculum should focus sharply on developing a strong teacher identity. Teachers who have a strong teacher identity are more likely to be resilient (Greenfield, 2015). Strong teacher identities help teachers to navigate policy change (Dassa & Derose, 2017) and address professional challenges (McKay & Manning, 2019).</p>
13	<p>The CCF mandates synthetic phonics as the only approach to teaching reading. My paper challenges this and presents counter evidence. Pre-service teachers should be introduced to all available evidence on the teaching of reading and the teacher education curriculum should provide opportunities to critically analyse the research and challenge policy.</p>

3.4 Connecting the papers

Figure 2 shows how the papers were grouped together in relation to broad aims.



Fig. 2. Map to show the connections between the papers.

3.5 Summary

Table 3 demonstrates that the findings of each of the papers have relevance to the teacher education curriculum. They can be used to inform a curriculum model for teacher education, and this will be discussed in Chapter 4.

PAPER 1

The impact of teacher well-being and mental health on pupil progress in primary schools

Jonathan Glazzard and Anthea Rose

Abstract

Purpose – *The study was based around the following three research questions: What factors affect teacher well-being and mental health? How does teacher well-being and mental health impact on the progress of students? What resilience strategies are used by highly effective teachers with poor mental health to ensure that their students thrive? The paper aims to discuss this issue.*

Design/methodology/approach – *The research study was qualitative in nature and involved ten primary schools in England. Teachers and head teachers were interviewed. Each school visit also included a pupil discussion group with children from Years 3. In total, the research team interviewed 35 education professionals and 64 pupils.*

Findings – *Teachers reported a number of work-related stress triggers including busy times of the year, such as assessment periods, the pressure of extra curricula activities, the unexpected, keeping up with the pace of change and changes in school leadership. Children were attuned to their teacher's mood and could usually pick up when they were feeling stressed, even if teachers tried to hide it.*

Originality/value – *No studies have used pupil voice to explore pupil perspectives of the impact of teacher mental health on their learning and progress. This is the first study of its kind.*

Keywords *Teachers, Well-being, Mental health, Pupil progress*

Paper type *Research paper*

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Context

The WHO (2014) defines mental health as:

[...] a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

In England, the Green Paper on mental health in schools (DfE/DoH, 2017) identifies that one in ten children and young people has a mental health need and sets out an ambitious strategy to address this. However, it does not give any attention to the mental health of teachers and concerns have been expressed that the strategy will only be rolled out to a quarter of schools (Young Minds, 2019). The Royal Foundation has demonstrated its commitment to addressing the mental health crisis through its Heads Together campaign and it has endorsed the Mentally Healthy Schools website which been developed to support primary schools in addressing this aspect (www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/).

The problem of teacher stress is pervasive; it is evident across all sectors of education and across countries (Gray *et al.*, 2017) and results in burnout and lower job satisfaction. Teachers are consistently reported to experience an increased risk of developing mental ill

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health (Stansfeld *et al.*, 2011; Kidger *et al.*, 2016). It is reassuring that in England, the revised Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) framework (OfSTED, 2019) gives greater emphasis during school inspections to ways in which school leaders have reduced teacher workload. Given the concerns relating to teacher stress this study sought to ascertain the impact of poor teacher mental health on teaching quality and children's learning and progress.

We adopted a multi-dimensional perspective on well-being which acknowledges the different dimensions of health, i.e. physical, social, emotional, mental and psychological. These dimensions overlap and interrelate (Danby and Hamilton, 2016).

The Teacher Well-being Index by the Education Support Partnership in England (ESP, 2018) found that 36 per cent of education professionals believed that taking time off work due to mental health symptoms had a negative impact on their students and a further 15 per cent felt it impacted negatively on their students' results. Furthermore, 40 per cent of both senior leaders and teachers were more likely to believe such absence would have a negative effect on students' studies than colleagues working in other education roles. Senior school leaders and teachers perceived that staff absence due to poor mental health had a detrimental impact on students' studies and their results (ESP, 2018). The study was based around the following three research questions:

RQ1. What factors affect teacher well-being and mental health?

RQ2. How does teacher well-being and mental health impact on the progress of students?

RQ3. What resilience strategies are used by highly effective teachers with poor mental health to ensure that their students thrive?

Literature

Teacher well-being is influenced by factors such as life satisfaction and personal happiness (hedonic perspective) and positive psychological functioning. Teachers are able to demonstrate positive psychological functioning when they are able to form good interpersonal relationships with others, have a sense of autonomy and competence and when they have opportunities for personal growth (Harding *et al.*, 2019). School climate influences teachers' daily experiences in school. It is shaped by the school ethos which is established by the senior leadership team. Limiting teacher agency can result in diminished teacher well-being, which detrimentally impacts on teacher performance (Beck *et al.*, 2011).

Research demonstrates that multiple factors impact on teacher well-being, including school climate (Gray *et al.*, 2017). A negative school climate can lead to high rates of teacher absenteeism and staff turnover (Grayson and Alvarez, 2008). According to the DfE, 2018, "The culture, ethos and environment of the school can have a profound influence on both pupil and staff mental wellbeing" (p. 8). Positive teacher–student relationships support children and young people to be mentally healthy (Kidger *et al.*, 2012; Plenty *et al.*, 2014). These relationships help students to feel more connected to their school (Harding *et al.*, 2019) and improve student well-being (Aldridge and McChesney, 2018) through fostering a sense of belonging. Research demonstrates that teachers with poor mental health may find it more difficult to develop and model positive relationships with their students (Kidger *et al.*, 2010; Jennings and Greenberg, 2009). In addition, higher rates of teacher absence can impact on the quality of teacher–student relationships (Jamal *et al.*, 2013).

Research demonstrates that teachers with poor mental health may have less belief that they can support the well-being and mental health of their students (Sisask *et al.*, 2014), particularly if they are struggling with their own well-being and mental health. Poor teacher

well-being could therefore be problematic for student well-being (Harding *et al.*, 2019). In addition, research demonstrates that teachers who demonstrate “presenteeism” find it more difficult to manage their classrooms effectively (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009) and are less likely to develop positive classroom and behaviour management strategies (Harding *et al.*, 2019). Presenteeism is evident when teachers with poor well-being and mental health continue to work. The quality of their work is reduced and this affects the quality of their relationships with their students (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009), student well-being (Harding *et al.*, 2019) and overall teacher performance (Beck *et al.*, 2011; Jain *et al.*, 2013). There is an association between better teacher well-being and lower student psychological difficulties (Harding *et al.*, 2019). There is also an association between lower teacher depression and better student well-being (Harding *et al.*, 2019). In addition, there is an association between teacher presenteeism and student well-being and psychological difficulties (Harding *et al.*, 2019). Thus, there appears to be a causal relationship between teacher and student mental health (Harding *et al.*, 2019). However, there is limited direct evidence of a causal relationship between teacher well-being and student attainment and thus, this is an area for further research. There is also a paucity of literature which examines student perspectives on how the mental health of their teachers impacts on their learning and progress. This small-scale study therefore extends the existing research on teacher well-being by examining the perspectives of pupils on how they are affected by the mental health of their teachers.

Research design

The research study was qualitative in nature and involved ten primary schools in England. Schools were selected that had well-being and mental health as part of their overall strategic development plans and were working with staff and pupils to raise awareness in this area. The ten participating schools were all at various stages of their mental health and well-being journeys. Due to the sensitive nature of this research, it was important to visit schools that had some level of general awareness around mental health and well-being.

At each school, semi-interviews were carried out, as a minimum, with:

- the headteacher or a member of the senior leadership team;
- a teacher who was considered at the time of the interview to be in good mental health; and
- a teacher who was considered at the time of the interview to have poor mental health.

There was a mix of urban and rural schools amongst the ten participating schools. Five schools were located in Yorkshire and five in the East Midlands. The majority of interviewees were female, reflecting the gender makeup of the primary sector, with just six interviewees being male, two of whom were headteachers.

Each school visit also included a pupil discussion focus group with children from Years 3–6. The teachers and pupils interviewed were selected by the headteacher, or in their absence, a member of the senior leadership team responsible for leading well-being and mental health at the school. In total, the research team interviewed 35 education professionals and 64 pupils. Of the 21 classroom teachers interviewed, 11 considered themselves to be in good mental health at the time of the interview, whilst ten considered their mental health to be poor or variable. Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed and coded to generate themes.

Results and discussion

In this section, the following acronyms are used: TGMH refers to “teacher with good mental health”; TPMH refers to “teacher with poor mental health”. CS refers to case study school.

Triggers

Teachers reported a number of factors that might trigger feelings of anxiety and stress, some of which were directly related to their professional lives, some to their personal lives and some that concerned both. Comments from participants are stated below:

It's never about the same thing. It can be about preparing for registration week, or complaints, it changes. Things change, they can pile on and pile on. Nothing is ever piled off. Things keep on being added. (TPMH, CS1)

I've noticed everyone in my school is at that age where they have parents that are getting older, their children are growing up, so a lot of the mental health issues that you hear about are stemming from other things that they are having to cope with in their personal life. Three years ago, I had a bit of a blip. My dad's got Parkinson's and he deteriorated very quickly and needed support and I was having to go out of school in the day to go and help him. (HT, CS7)

I suffered domestic violence for years. My partner used to stop me from sleeping. He did things like pour water on the bed so that I didn't get a good sleep and in the morning, I was exhausted so it definitely affected my teaching. (TPMH, CS1)

The impact of teacher well-being and mental health on teaching

Effect on teaching from a teacher's perspective

Teachers felt that performance and delivery in the classroom was below par at times of poor mental health with one commenting: "teachers who are not in a good state of mind cannot teach effectively" (TGMH, CS6). Some senior leaders reported that a teacher's confidence might suffer or that pupil behaviour in the classroom might deteriorate. The general consensus was that to be fully effective teachers need to be in good mental health:

I tried my best to put the children first when I was in school. But my mind was elsewhere. I struggled for a couple of weeks. Then the Headteacher pulled me aside and said: "you're not alright are you?" I said no and it was the first time that I actually cried. Then I took some time off. (TPMH, CS4)

Coping strategies

There were two types of strategies in place that helped teachers cope with their mental health and well-being; individual and school-based. Individual strategies included engaging in exercise and other hobbies and one school-based strategy included flexible working:

Making lists, I'm very good at making lists and prioritising. That way I can see that all the things I'm stressing about can actually be achievable and put into some sort of logical order. Sometimes you think I've got this to do and that to do, when am I going to do this and when you actually start and write it down you think, it's not actually that bad. (TPMH, CS2)

It's the realisation that you can't do everything 100%. I think I came into the job 8/9 years ago, thinking, right, I'm going to do everything, 200%, fire it out all of the time, but then it takes over your life so you have to say right, what's the priority? (TPMH, CS8)

Accessing support

Most teachers knew where to go to for support should they need it. Many felt comfortable approaching their headteacher or a member of their senior leadership team. CS2 had recently conducted a psychologically-safe staff survey which found that all staff at the school knew who to go to and felt comfortable going to that person to talk about their mental health should they need to. One teacher stated that: "Professionally, my first port of call

would be my Headteacher, because I respect his opinion. And I think he will actually think about my well-being and the well-being of the children” (TGMH, CS6). However, this was not the case for everyone. One of the teachers with poor mental health at CS1 clearly felt their current Headteacher was not as open or approachable as they could be, and commented that “In terms of leadership, I don’t think anyone dare go and knock on the door and say it is all a bit too much”.

Understanding well-being and mental health: the pupils’ perspectives

The majority of children who took part in the pupil discussion groups were familiar with terms such as mental health, stress and anxiety, even where their school was only at the beginning of their well-being journey. They were less likely to have heard of “depression”; some schools used different terminology calling it “having a grump on” or perhaps “being in a blue mood”:

Mental health is something that you can’t see but that you have. You feel like you are stuck in a wall. (Pupil, CS5)

Pupils talked most about their teachers being stressed. They were able to identify immediately at the start of the day what sort of mood their teacher was in. They picked on their teachers’ facial expressions, particularly whether or not they came in with a smile or, in one case, dancing. Children also picked up teachers’ mannerisms and general attitude towards the class:

Sometimes when you’re doing something wrong, they get angry. Their facial expressions. You can see from their face if they are angry or happy. (Pupil, CS2)

When she can’t find the rubber, “where’s the rubber, I can’t find the rubber”. When people take her white rubber. Sometimes she starts to shout when she is stressed. (Pupil, CS4)

Sometimes they start telling people off more frequently because they are having a hard time so some of the kids get a hard time. (Pupil, CS7)

When they are happy they will shout in a good way like when we win or something like, “yesssss, we did it” [hands up in the air – victory shout]. When they are stressed, it is more of a “what are you doing?” shout. (Pupil, CS6)

At the start of the year they are really energetic, but when it gets later on in the year they get less [energetic]. Towards test times for KS1 and KS2, they get stressed. (Pupil, CS7)

When she’s like frustrated, in the morning I can tell because she’s normally really happy. She’s frustrated because she is trying to hide it. But because I’ve been with her for nearly two years, I can sense it. I’m just like; I know it’s not going to be a good day. (Pupil, CS8)

Pupils proved to be quite attuned to the mood of their teacher. Some pupils felt an obligation to try and make things better for the teacher, the class and themselves:

When our teacher is having a bad day, we just try to help them. We don’t want to make it worse so we just get on with our work. (Pupil, CS9)

When their teachers are happy and in a good mood, pupils said their lessons were more creative, fun relaxed and they were given more interesting work to do. Children were keen to impress their teacher and work hard for them. They all felt they made more progress when their teacher was in a good mood. However, when their teacher was in a bad mood and stressed, children felt it had a detrimental effect on their learning. Children reported that, at such times, they often worked in silence and they tried not to upset their teacher further. Their learning “slowed down”, they found it difficult to concentrate and the quality of their work was not as good as usual. This was because they tried to finish their work quickly:

“it makes me rush. So that I don’t get told off for not finishing it” (Pupil, CS8). When the teacher was stressed, some children were left not knowing what they were supposed to be doing, they became confused or got “a bit muddled” (Pupil, CS4).

Impact on pupils’ progress from the teachers’ perspective

Teachers were asked about the short and long-term impact on pupils as a result of having a classroom teacher who suffers from poor mental health, or indeed from a teacher being off for a substantial amount of time in any given school year, regardless of the reason. Interviewees, especially headteachers, were more likely to report a short-term negative effect on pupil progress as a result of classroom teachers being absent than they were a long-term detrimental impact:

It is a very hard one to measure. But I believe that if a teacher has poor mental health it is going to impact on their work. They’re not going to be in the right frame of mind. (HT, CS4)

When I had poor mental health, I was not able to focus on my teaching. I found it difficult to concentrate on my planning and I struggled to teach with a clear mind. However hard I tried, the other things going on in my life were still there. I couldn’t forget about them just because I had walked into school. They were always on my mind. (TPMH, CS4).

Resilience strategies used to mitigate the effects of poor teacher mental health on pupils

One of the research questions asked: What resilience strategies are used by highly effective teachers with poor mental health to ensure that their students thrive? Evidence from the study showed that this was not usually viewed as the responsibility of the teacher who was experiencing poor mental health. Rather, it was dealt with as part of the school’s strategic approach to general staff illness and absence.

One of the main strategies that teachers used with pupils was not to let the children see that they were struggling to hide their feelings. Some teachers talked about hiding behind a mask once they walked into school, having a “work face” or “work persona”. However, it is clear from the children’s interviews earlier, that this is not usually successful.

Teachers themselves explained how they tried to hide their feelings:

I do try and not let it affect the children at all. I don’t think it is fair on them. They’ve not come to school to think, “Oh, she’s got a problem today”. So, I do try very hard to be my normal jolly outgoing self in the classroom. But when the children have left the room that’s when I might just have a minute’s reflection time or time away. (TPMH, CS2)

The only way I could cope was to go down to three days so that I could focus on my ill parents. When I was doing five days, I wasn’t giving my best because I had no time to plan lessons and mark work. That helped me to stay in teaching otherwise I would not be here. (TPMH, CS4)

There was evidence in the data that teacher presenteeism had a detrimental effect on pupils. This is consistent with research by [Jennings and Greenberg \(2009\)](#). Pupils identified how this impacted negatively on their learning and they responded to the teacher’s mood by negotiating their own behaviour. Teachers also identified how their mental health negatively impacted on the way they managed classes, the quality of their relationships with pupils and their teaching. This is consistent with the literature ([Harding et al., 2019](#)). Pupil data indicate that pupils thought that the use of substitute teachers to cover absent teacher had a detrimental impact on their learning.

There was less evidence of actual impact of teacher mental health on pupil attainment data, although this was evident in one of the case study schools. This is an area for further research.

The teachers identified a range of strategies that they drew on to improve their resilience. These included personal actions (such as exercise), prioritising tasks, support from significant others and colleagues, whole school strategies and accepting that the pursuit of perfectionism is impossible. It has been argued that teacher resilience is a relative, dynamic and developmental process (Day and Gu, 2007), involving interaction between individual, relational and contextual/organisational conditions. Some teachers in this study were able to demonstrate greater resilience than others due to the supportive context in which they worked. This is consistent with literature which demonstrates that resilience varies across contexts rather than being fixed. Bonnet and Bernard (2012) view resilience as the ability to recover from an adverse situation and Taket *et al.* (2012) argue that “resilience is more appropriately conceived of as a human capacity that can be developed and strengthened in all people” (p. 39). For some teachers, their resilience was tested when they experienced a “tipping point”. This was usually an external factor (such as the death of a parent, domestic violence or a family member becoming ill).

Some researchers have defined resilience as a personal quality (Brunetti, 2006) whilst others have raised concerns that a focus on individual characteristics fails to recognise systemic influences on human experience (Johnson and Down, 2013). Greenfield’s model of teacher resilience (Greenfield, 2015) demonstrates how resilient teachers have a sense of hope and purpose and belief in themselves as teachers (self-efficacy). These core beliefs are individual characteristics which play a critical role in resilience. The model also demonstrates how resilient teachers form meaningful relationships with others within their professional context and undertake actions to effect change and mediate challenges. For the participants in this study the support from friends, colleagues, the school and their family members was vital in supporting their resilience.

Conclusion

This small-scale exploratory research into the effects of teacher mental health and well-being on pupil progress in primary schools provides a valuable snapshot of some of the current issues facing teachers and their potential impact on pupils in the classroom. This research study has a number of implications for a range of stakeholders, including those delivering initial teacher-training programmes, senior school leaders and those involved with continuing professional development. Initial teacher training programmes and continuing professional development courses should include practical strategies on managing mental health. Senior leaders should take steps to reduce teacher workload and implement temporary and/or permanent flexible approaches to working for teachers who are experiencing poor mental health.

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PAPER 2



Finding a way through the fog: school staff experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic

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Finding a way through the fog: school staff experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory study reports on interviews carried out with 19 staff in UK schools during the early phase of the global Covid-19 pandemic. The focus of this qualitative study was to consider the impact of the pandemic on participants' mental health and wellbeing, and to identify buffering mechanisms which may have mitigated against adverse effects. Participants were employed in a range of role types (including leaders, teachers and teaching assistants) in different educational settings (primary, secondary and alternative provision), and in different regions of the United Kingdom. A process of thematic analysis identified five key themes from the data set: change and adaptation; loss; impact on wellbeing; risk and protective factors; and opportunities to reflect. Data indicate that staff resilience during this time can be understood as emerging from a nuanced and complex interaction of internal and external factors, and thus conceptualised within a socio-ecological framework.

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Introduction

On 20 March 2020 schools, colleges and early years settings in the United Kingdom (UK) were instructed by central government to close for all but the most vulnerable pupils and the children of keyworkers, as part of measures implemented in response to the global Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, all examinations and inspections were suspended. This sudden and extensive disruption resulted in multiple transitions for children and young people, their families and education staff, who adapted to home-working, remote teaching and ensuring the safety of pupils both at home and in schools. Data from the national charity, Education Support (2020), indicate that aspects of the mental health and wellbeing of education professionals have been adversely affected during this period, although little is understood about the underlying mechanisms.

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 Supplemental data for this article can be accessed [here](#).

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In line with Dodge, Daly, Huyton, & Sanders (2012), this paper conceptualises well-being as a multidimensional construct including physical, social, emotional, mental and psychological health, congruent with the World Health Organisation definition (2014):

[A] state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

The wellbeing of school staff was already a concern prior to Covid-19. For instance, teachers are consistently reported to experience an increased risk of developing mental ill health compared to other professions (Kidger et al., 2016; Stansfeld, Rasul, Head, & Singleton, 2011). Research has demonstrated that the problem of teacher stress is pervasive, resonating across all sectors of education internationally (e.g. Gray, Wilcox, & Nordstokke, 2017), and is associated with lower job satisfaction and burnout (e.g. Kyriacou, 2011). Before the Covid-19 outbreak, 72% of education professionals and 84% of senior leaders described themselves as stressed, most frequently citing excessive workload (Education Support, 2019). Multiple factors within the school climate are also thought to influence teacher wellbeing (e.g. Gray et al., 2017) and according to the Department for Education (DfE, 2018a) 'the culture, ethos and environment of the school can have a profound influence on both pupil and staff mental wellbeing' (p. 8). Negative school climate has been linked to high rates of absenteeism and attrition (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008), particularly if staff are denied agency, feel undervalued and are not consulted (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019). In addition, socio-political factors are thought to be intricately related to personal wellbeing, including availability of resources and extent of government prioritisation of staff needs (Winter, Hanley, Bragg, Burrell, & Lupton, 2020). A lack of coherence between the inherent complexity of school systems (Keshavarz, Nutbeam, Rowling, & Khavarpour, 2010), unrelenting educational policy reform and increasing accountability (Ball, 2003) is thought to negatively influence staff morale and wellbeing (e.g. Buchanan, 2015; Cross & Hong, 2009; Paufler, 2018; Perryman & Calvert, 2020).

Research has explored the factors that enable school staff resilience and protect their wellbeing despite adversity (e.g. Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019; Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011; Gu & Day, 2011). Resilience research has been traditionally associated with the capacity to thrive despite adversity (Masten & Garmezy, 1985), but the lingering assumption that resilience is an innate individual capacity to 'push on through' regardless of circumstances (Brown & Dixon, 2020) does not account for the ways in which the concept has evolved (Luthar, 2006; Masten, 2007). Contemporary research adopts an ecological systems perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), emphasising the influence of individual and contextual factors (e.g. Ungar, 2012). Furthermore, research has highlighted the potential of individuals and communities to overcome or even transform adversity by tackling its causes (Hart et al., 2016).

A review of research on teacher resilience (Beltman et al., 2011) highlights factors that promote staff wellbeing, including contextual factors (e.g. the support of colleagues, mentors and family or friends) and specific individual factors (e.g. self-efficacy, sense of professional purpose and inner altruistic motivation). The resilience of education professionals is thought to be a dynamic construct in which individual and contextual factors interact (e.g. Beltman, 2015; Beltman et al., 2011; Greenfield, 2015; Gu & Day, 2011; Mansfield, Beltman, Price, &

McConney, 2012). For example, Greenfield's (2015) model of teacher resilience identifies the interaction of internal factors (having a sense of hope, purpose and high self-efficacy) and external factors (supportive and positive school culture, positive relationships with colleagues, supportive social networks and supportive policy contexts). This study investigates how the wellbeing and resilience of education professionals has been influenced by the interaction between multiple individual and contextual variables during the pandemic, and considers the implication of findings for research, policy and practice.

Methods

This qualitative study aimed to explore school staff experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic and identify staff perceptions of the factors influencing their wellbeing, responding to a call for rapid qualitative research to better understand the impact of Covid-19 on mental health (Holmes et al., 2020).

Recruitment and sampling

A call for participants was issued via Twitter on 26 May 2020. Inclusion criteria were: (1) adults employed in UK education settings (including Early Years [EY], Primary, Secondary, Further Education [FE] or Alternative Provision [AP]); and (2) access to an internet connection with Skype software.

Nineteen individuals volunteered participation within three weeks of the call. As the sample included a range of role types from different settings (Table 1), and in order to ensure interviews reflected a similar time period (given the fast moving context of change related to the pandemic), those who made contact after this time were informed that the study had recruited sufficiently. Details of existing confidential support services were provided to all individuals who expressed interest in the study irrespective of their decision regarding participation.

The sample included leaders, teachers and teaching assistants from 12 primary schools, 1 middle school, 5 secondary schools (including 1 specialist setting for children with complex needs) and 1 alternative provision (AP) service. The mean number of years of experience in schools was 13.1.

Ethics

The study was approved by the research ethics committee at the University of Brighton. Ethical guidelines for carrying out Covid-19 related research (Townsend, Nielsen, Allister, & Cassidy, 2020) were incorporated into the study design, alongside online research guidance from the ESRC framework for Research Ethics, the British Psychological Society and the UK Data Service. Recruitment materials emphasised that participation should only be considered if it were unlikely to cause distress or anxiety.

Participants were informed of the study aims, duration and procedure, and were assured of their anonymity and the secure storage of their data. All participants provided informed consent and were made aware of their unconditional right to withdraw. A distress protocol was developed based on an existing model used in previous wellbeing

Table 1. Total sample demographics (N = 19).

Variable		N (%)
Setting	Primary*	12 (63.2)
	Middle School**	1 (5.3)
	Secondary***	5 (26.3)
	Alternative Provision****	1 (5.3)
Location ^a	London	6 (31.6)
	South-East England	4 (21.1)
	South-West England	2 (10.5)
	East of England	1 (5.3)
	East Midlands	1 (5.3)
	North-East England	1 (5.3)
	North-West England	1 (5.3)
	South Yorkshire	1 (5.3)
	Northern Ireland	1 (5.3)
	Role type	Senior Leadership Team ^a
Teachers or Middle Leader ^b		9 (47.4)
Teaching Assistant ^c		4 (21.1)
Years working in schools ^b	13.1 (mean)	(Range 3–20 years)

Notes:

*Six primary schools offered Early Years provision, and one was a junior school (years 3–6 only);

**Middle school includes years 5–8 only;

***Four secondary schools included sixth form (16–19) and one school required EHCP;

****Alternative Provision refers to a local authority-maintained service for primary and secondary phase pupils who, due to exceptional circumstances, are not currently attending school; ^a 18 of 19 participants provided their geographical location; ^b 13 of 19 participants provided the number of years of experience in school.

Role types:

^aSenior Leadership Team' includes Head Teachers (3), Deputy/Assistant Headteachers (3);

^b'Teacher' includes 'Middle Leader' positions (3) e.g. Head of Department;

^c'Teaching Assistant' includes Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs).

and resilience research (Cocking, Sherriff, Aranda, & Zeeman, 2018). The protocol for this study included short pre-interview discussions in which participants suggested strategies that would help ensure that the experience was beneficial, normalising reflecting, checking or pausing during the interview. A non-directive, person-centred approach (Rogers, 1942) allowed participants to shape the direction of the interviews and demonstrated empathy. Digital recordings and transcripts were password protected on university secure cloud-based storage, and device recordings were deleted after each interview.

Data collection

Nineteen semi-structured interviews were conducted between 3–29 June 2020 using Skype. Existing research highlights the advantages of using Skype to conduct qualitative interviews and suggests digital video communication platforms as a viable alternative to face-to-face methods (Lo Iacono, Symonds, & Brown, 2016).

All interviews were conducted by the first author and lasted between 45–60 minutes. Audio data were digitally recorded on a separate device with the permission of participants to enable verbatim transcription.

The interviews aimed to address the following research questions:

- 1) *What changes have school staff experienced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic in their own lives, in the school climate or their professional role?*
- 2) *What has the impact of these changes been on school staff mental health and wellbeing?*
- 3) *What factors do school staff perceive to have sustained or improved wellbeing during the pandemic?*

The research questions were sent in advance to participants to enable preparation for a reflective and open discussion, aided by additional prompts to enable further depth and ensure relevance of data. A sensitive and responsive approach to the subtly changing dynamics of the interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) was informed by Brown and Danaher's (2017) principles of connectivity, humanness and empathy.

All participants checked and approved their full transcript for accuracy and anonymity. To ensure confidentiality, the names of the participants, the schools they worked in and any other people they identified were anonymised during transcription and do not appear in this¹ paper.

Analytical strategy

An seven-stage process was implemented (Figure 1) informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2019) model of thematic analysis. The deliberately iterative, reflexive and collaborative process combined inductive and deductive approaches to analysis. Familiarity with the data was achieved by open reading and re-reading of interview transcripts with the research questions actively in mind and codes were generated inductively, with close attention to each line of text. Concurrently, short reflections, interpretations and questions were recorded alongside specific sections of text. These were later developed into longer memos. 'Focused coding' involved analytical and critical reading of the transcripts to combine or create new codes, which were organised into themes and sub-themes to elucidate 'patterns of shared meaning underpinned or united by a core concept' (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 593). Collaborative reflective analysis allowed codes to be compared and the researchers remained open to 'surprises' in the data.

Detailed thematic mapping of findings was produced (see supplementary information), the consistency and contradictions of which were explored in relation to original transcripts. Interpretations of the data were then synthesised to answer the research questions in relation to five categories: adaptation and change; loss; impact on wellbeing; protective and risk factors; and opportunities to reflect and adapt.

Findings

Adaptation and change

Participants experienced extensive and sudden change brought about by the pandemic, both in their personal and professional lives. The nature and intensity of work had changed, resulting in a 'different kind of busy' (ST3) both for staff 'shielding' at home and those in school. Tasks included learning to use online teaching software, adapting the curriculum for home learning, communicating with parents, pupils and colleagues,

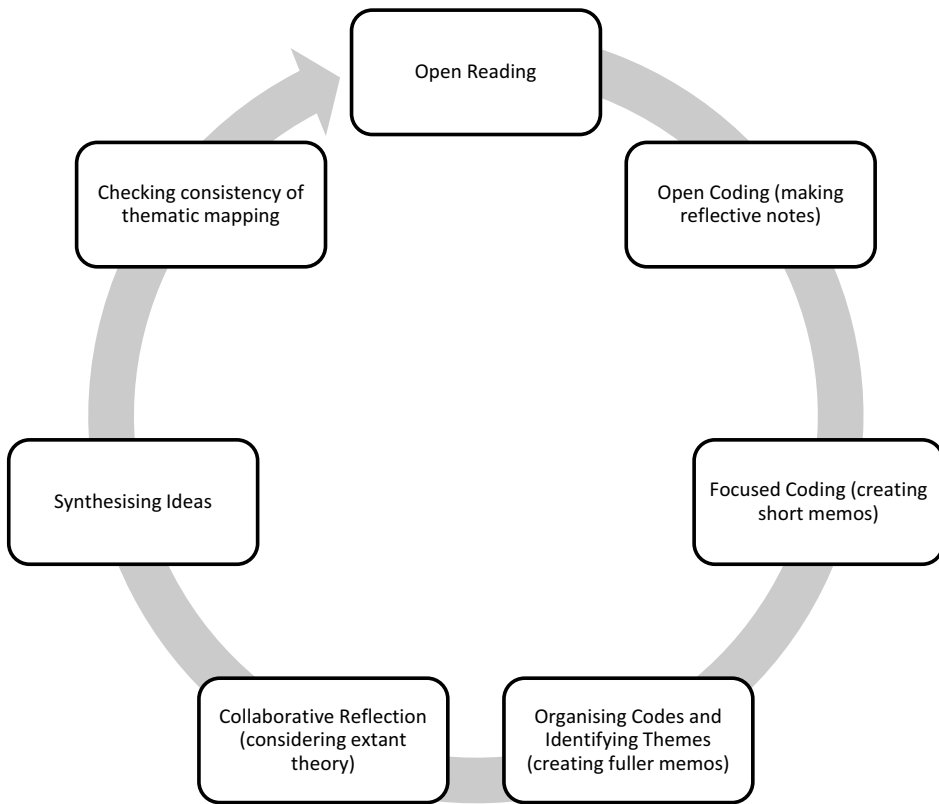


Figure 1. School staff experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic: data analysis process.

supporting the local community (for example, delivering groceries or protective equipment), developing new procedures based on safety guidance and assuming new roles. Most participants felt that they were as busy or busier than usual, with one participant's school opening 6 days a week, 12 hours a day. This increased workload constituted a contextual risk factor, and a high degree of commitment and flexibility was required to keep schools functioning:

[O]ur premises team have been amazing, because all three of them are in the shielding group ... there's a shift that starts at four o'clock in the morning and finishes at seven to make sure that we're safe for opening. (SL1)

The 'merge between work and home' (ST3) resulted in increased vigilance: 'I'm constantly thinking about work ... I might switch off emails, but I can't switch off my mind' (PL5), and an amalgamation of professional and personal stress: 'this constant feeling of guilt ... where can you get away from anything?' (ST2). The challenge of juggling personal and professional priorities was particularly acute for staff who were also parents:

I just felt like I was failing my children, because they were just pretty much sitting in front of screens all day while I went ‘shh I’m in another meeting, shh I’m talking to another parent’ . . . I thrive on being a really successful professional, but I wasn’t really feeling like that was happening much either from the shed. (PL2)

Participants perceived only fleeting public recognition of the vital role of schools (‘it was almost a pivot . . . back to “everyone hates teachers”’, (ST2)) and were aggrieved by public misconceptions that schools had closed:

[P]oliticians kept talking about schools being closed . . . we are not closed, we are working very differently and we are working non-stop. You know . . . we almost are offering a seven day a week service at the moment, and we have through all the holidays. (SL1)

A vicissitudinous process was described, in which participants said they had navigated waves of uncertainty, confusion and feeling overwhelmed: ‘it is like a hazy mist . . . and you don’t know what the other end looks like’ (ST2). Participants found ways to adapt, only to experience rapid further change in their personal or professional lives, including changes to guidance for schools or changing internal perceptions (such as increased acceptance):

[I]t seems to have been quite settled until the re-opening was announced and then I think everyone went into like a bit of panic stations . . . after we’d had a few meetings people were back into their routines again . . . it’s been a bit of a rollercoaster. (PT2)

A sense of frustration was conveyed regarding the timing and communication of central government guidance for schools, alongside what participants considered was limited consultation: ‘[I]t felt like as a profession we were not listened to. Parents weren’t listened to, children were talked about, teachers were seen as a pain’ (PT3). Both leaders and teachers suggested that the DfE’s guidance lacked clarity, resulting in increased anxiety and workload as repeated revisions arrived after school procedures had already been established:

Communication from Government has, I think, antagonised school leaders . . . There seemed to be a clear pattern of making a public announcement at the briefings which would impact directly on education without having told anyone in education beforehand. (PL3)

We were getting guidance throughout the holidays, all hours of the night . . . it was all contradictory, it was hardly readable, it was either patronisingly obvious or not really doable. And it certainly didn’t help us to alleviate any anxieties of safety for staff. (PL4)

Teachers and leaders identified the challenge of managing uncertainty and loss of control, which conflicted with their professional responsibilities: ‘[B]eing a little bit of a control freak, situations like this in general just take any sort of element of control away from you, and it’s sometimes quite a scary place to be’ (APT1). Establishing new routines (both in terms of managing the challenges of home-working and school safety) was considered an important coping strategy: ‘You feel that as soon as you enter our building you are in a safe zone, and you feel it, you feel almost in control, in control of the virus in a way’ (PTA1).

Not all change associated with the pandemic was perceived negatively. Participants regarded reframing the situation to identify positive opportunities as part of adaptation. For staff working at least partially from home, this included spending more time with

family, flexible working and being able to prioritise self-care. Staff working in school enjoyed an intense sense of collegiality and those who taught 'key worker bubbles' enjoyed the pastoral focus of small groups and teaching beyond their usual age range or subject:

I've got incredibly fond of them All their little characteristics I'm really picking up on and actually, on one hand I'm really enjoying this low number and being able to see them every day because I'm not primary-trained I have to say I'm really loving it. (MT1)

Loss

A quarter of participants talked about increased bereavement in their school community, both directly and indirectly related to Covid-19:

A child's mum died because she couldn't get her medication for her underlying condition – not because it wasn't available but because she didn't feel able to go out and get it . . . the next day a child's mum took her own life . . . she was in a pretty difficult relationship with somebody and I think just the whole idea of lockdown proved too much. Since then I have sent out over twenty condolence cards. (SL1)

Several interviewees said that they had accessed online training to help them support children and families through loss, trauma or grief. Loss was also experienced in a broader sense. Staff who had been anticipating imminent exams or inspections felt that they had been denied external validation and the sense of professional achievement. Others expressed profound loss in relation to endings or transitions:

[Y]ou're not only preparing them to leave, you're preparing yourself to let them go I hadn't prepared myself to say goodbye . . . when you say it out loud it almost sounds quite strange but [it was] almost like a grieving process. (ST2)

The loss of face-to-face interaction was challenging for all participants. Communication between staff was maintained through online meetings, emails and the use of WhatsApp. One participant (employed part-time) felt more included in the staff team than ever, in spite of the loss of face-to-face meetings, as they were able to attend online meetings more regularly. Some participants felt that the increased flexibility as a consequence of using digital communication had facilitated increased collegial support:

[W]e've been able to be a lot more honest with each other, a lot closer, and a lot more supportive . . . people have got a bit more time to say: 'well actually, you know, I'm really struggling today'. (ST4)

Teaching assistants and also one teacher in alternative provision reported limited (if any) opportunities for direct contact, suggesting that role type may have been linked to increased loss of contact with pupils in some cases. Furthermore, for staff who were in contact with pupils, participants noted the relational limitation of telephone and online interactions: '[S]ome kids will just give you one word answers' (PT1). The loss of face-to-face contact was seen by multiple staff to conflict with professional identity and altruistic motivation:

[I]t's become a very, very lonely job. And teaching isn't lonely, teaching is collaborative and fun and engaging and talking and based on strong positive relationships, and the fact that I know my students are struggling and I can't do anything to help them really, really is quite emotive to me because I'm a teacher and I'm there for them. (ST1)

Personal sacrifices were made by participants to protect others, including not seeing elderly relatives, being unable to hold new-born grandchildren, having to move to a new house or neglecting personal wellbeing. Participants buffered this loss by focusing on the value of their work or a sense of professional duty:

[T]here isn't actually time for reflection about how I feel, other than occasionally I get this overwhelming feeling of 'will I see my parents again?' But you get up, you go to school and it's fine again, because you know, that's what we're here for and that's what we're meant to be doing. (PTA1)

Most participants suggested that a shared sense of loss had led to increased cohesion ('we feel absolutely bonded to each other' [PTA1]). However, a minority warned that resentment, particularly in relation to personal sacrifice, could result in blame being directed at staff who had been working from home:

It caused a lot of animosity . . . it had all fallen on my shoulders and only because I felt [pause] I felt duty bound to my role . . . I think there's been a lot of bad blood. (PTA2)

Impact on wellbeing

Participants had experienced a range of negative emotions including stress, anger, sadness, guilt, shock and fear, peaking for most participants when schools partially closed and when plans to fully re-open were announced (and later postponed). Furthermore, participants associated uncertainty and stress with lack of sleep, loss of appetite, an inability to concentrate, strained personal relationships or poor physical health:

I found it really difficult to focus on anything. I couldn't read a book, I couldn't really get anything done, because actually that level of anxiety was intense . . . basically learning how to do a new job . . . plus there was a virus that was out there and killing people, all of that just was the pressure, it was the pressure, that's how it felt. (PT3)

Place of work and role type emerged from the data as variables, modifying the impact of the pandemic on staff wellbeing. For example, for those working mostly from home, self-care strategies and spending more time with family (deemed impossible prior to the pandemic) became part of a new routine, resulting in improved physical and emotional health. However, participants worried that wellbeing strategies employed during 'lock-down' would be difficult to maintain. Home-working was also associated with feeling less useful and more disconnected from professional identity and school community, to the detriment of individual wellbeing. Those mostly working in school reported increased anxiety alongside emotional and physical exhaustion ('we're kind of almost running on empty now' [PTA1]), but felt strongly connected to their professional purpose. For leaders, high work-related anxiety was more or less a continual feature of their experience during the pandemic, resulting from increased workload, high-stakes accountability and feeling inadequately informed and therefore ineffectual. Middle and senior leaders questioned how long they could continue to manage 'putting [their] neck on the line' (PL3), whilst feeling inadequately informed and supported themselves: '[T]he mental work is phenomenal at the moment . . . I couldn't do the job in November/December time if things don't change' (PL5).

Most participants considered social stigma associated with mental health to have been reduced as a result of shared adversity: ‘[P]eople are not ashamed now, or worried about saying that, you know, they’re struggling’ (ST4). There was a lack of consensus, however, about the longevity of the prioritisation of wellbeing at school level. Teachers tended to be cautiously optimistic, whereas leaders worried that competing accountability priorities could undermine much needed progress: ‘[W]hat does catch-up look like or what does remote learning look like . . . unfortunately that will be a pressure that’s going to break some of the staff a little bit later on in the year’ (PL5).

Related themes of ‘masking emotions’ and ‘running on empty’ emerged from the data, as participants described trying to buffer stress from family or colleagues whilst struggling themselves: ‘I put a lot of energy and thought into looking after those around me that I’m responsible for and working with, to my own detriment’ (ST3). Some participants suggested that silent suffering might later result in staff burnout:

[I]t was just almost like painting a mask on. They felt they had to appear in a certain way but were quite vulnerable underneath the surface . . . staff have definitely been affected, but the worry is quite by how much, because I don’t know yet. (PL5)

Protective and risk factors

Staff reported a range of individual risk factors influencing their wellbeing including: a need for control; low self-perception of competence; and having existing mental health issues (Figure 2). Limited face-to-face interaction, relentless uncertainty and change, intense workload, competing priorities and the communication of guidance for schools were experienced as the main contextual risk factors (Figure 3).

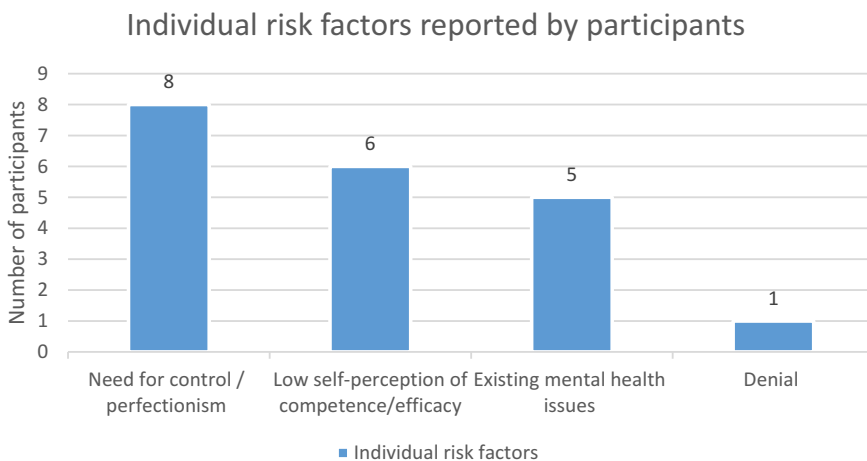


Figure 2. Individual risk factors reported by participants.

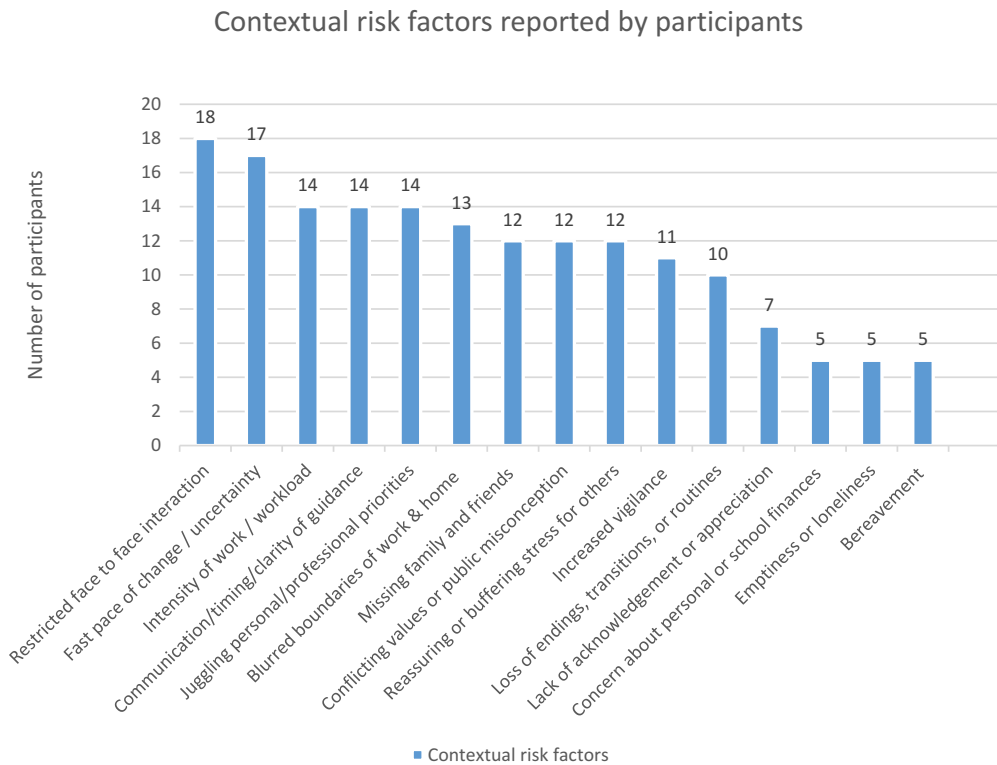


Figure 3. Contextual risk factors reported by participants.

Individual factors perceived to buffer adversity and promote wellbeing (Figure 4) included: internal altruistic motivation; positive reframing of uncertainty; and high perception of competence (both professional efficacy and adaptability):

I do think helping others, yeah, it satisfies me and helps me to keep healthy and it helps me to know that I'm doing – it's my moral purpose. (PL4)

Multiple contextual protective factors were also identified, including collegial support, participative planning, access to exercise and fresh air and establishing new routines (Figure 5). Participants recognised the benefit of seeking support, but some noted the difficulty of finding someone to talk to: 'I don't particularly want to bombard or bring that into my family situation ... I want to try and keep those two separate' (PL1). Others said that their leadership role involved reassuring staff whilst they struggled themselves with limited support: 'So, I fill in a spreadsheet every week of all the staff that I'm responsible for, checking that I've met them. My name isn't on there as somebody to be checking in on me' (ST3). Three headteachers accessed their own external supervision during lockdown, which they said supported their wellbeing by providing a non-judgmental space in which to reflect on professional practice.

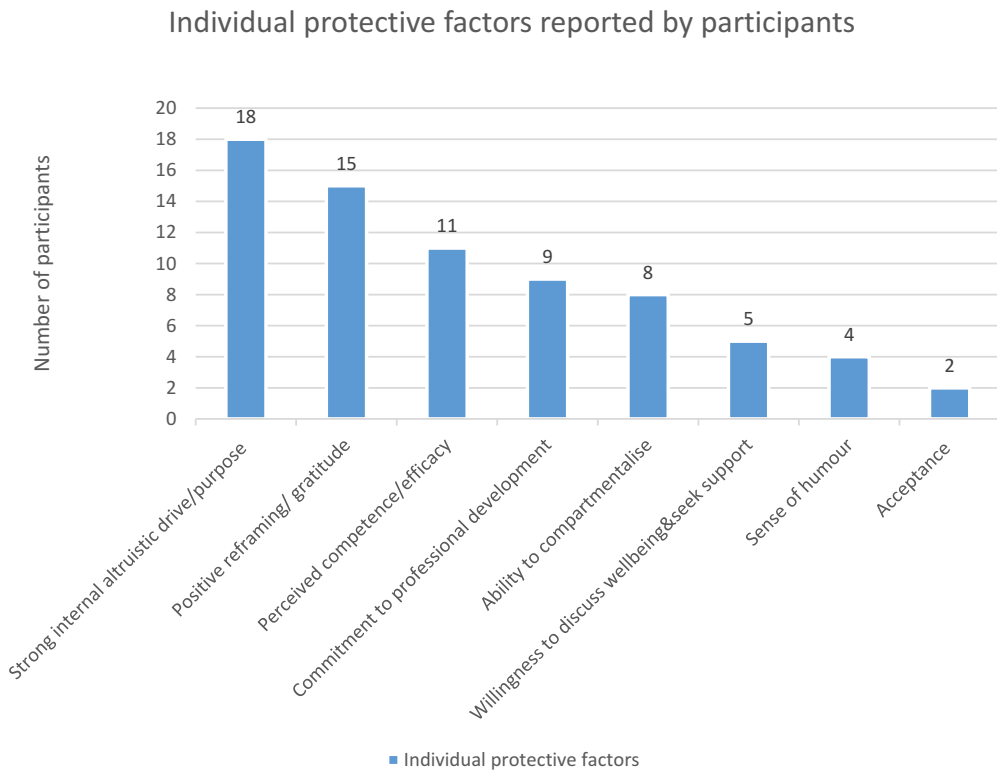


Figure 4. Individual protective factors reported by participants.

Interaction between individual and contextual risk and protective factors was moderated by contextual specificity. For example, leaders reported greater work-related anxiety in relation to policy communication, and participants who were parents were more likely to cite competing priorities as a source of stress; thus for leaders who we also parents, adversity was compounded. Contextual nuance meant that a protective factor for one person could be a risk factor for another, or even for the same person on a different day. A frequently cited example from the data was social media, which provided networks of information and support, but was also experienced as overwhelming, sometimes exacerbating anxiety. Many examples of reciprocity were provided including the benefits of mentoring, which increased feelings of self-worth and competence: ‘[H]elping somebody else has helped me ... it has given me strength and she reflected that it gave her strength as well’ (PL3).

Participants working from home were more likely to report feeling disconnected from the school community and their sense of professional purpose, resulting in loneliness and low self-efficacy: ‘[A] lot of the time you do actually feel quite useless because you’re at home’ (PT4). Leaders had tried to find manageable and meaningful tasks that helped staff to reconnect:

Contextual protective factors reported by participants

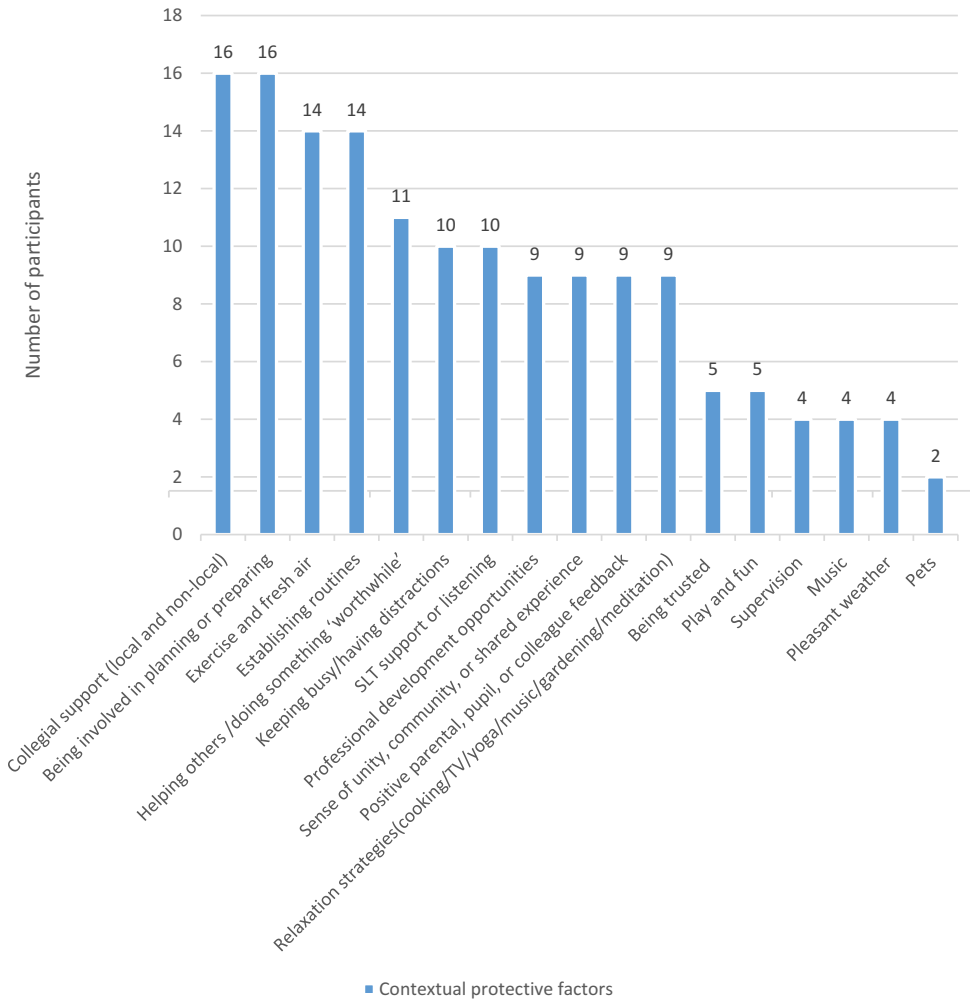


Figure 5. Contextual protective factors reported by participants.

[W]e've got one person sitting at home who can't be in school because she's over 70, so is in the vulnerable group . . . she's creative, so we've sent stuff to home for her to make friendship bracelets for all the new kids who are coming in. (SL1)

Opportunities to reflect and adapt

Underpinned by a sense that 'the world is a different place now, and we need to reset' (PL1), participants described population-wide disruption as an opportunity away from the frenetic pace of school life to reflect, clarify whole school aims and reinforce shared values:

[U]sually just you're on that treadmill and you don't stop running until you get to some holidays ... we're saying 'you know your pupils best and we're going to create this whole school plan but we need your input'. I think that's contributed to the team continuing to be valued and maintaining high levels of wellbeing. (PL2)

Some participants emerged from a period of reflection with a renewed sense of professional purpose ('I think I was a little bit jaded ... now I've sat back and thought about it I think anything you do for children does make an impact' [PTA3]), and increased collegiality ('we're in this together, we're fighting for the same things ... rather than who's going to have the highest SAT results and who's outstanding' [PL5]). Others questioned remaining in the profession after taking time to reflect on poor work-life balance, intense emotional demands and perceived lack of appreciation:

[I]t's affected my family, it's affected my own personal wellbeing. I don't think a day's gone by where I haven't cried. I don't enjoy my job any more ... coming into schools was never about hours or pay, it was about doing what was right ... from a political aspect, the lack of direction and the lack of compassion and empathy – it's made me completely lose sight of why I came into education in the first place. (PL4)

Increased opportunities were identified for participants to attend training, access research and expand professional networks as a result of increased online content and flexible working. This aided critical reflection, resulting in adapted practice and increased competence. Examples were provided in relation to digital and in-person pedagogical strategies, mental health, inclusion, racial equality and trauma.

The cancellation of exams and suspension of school inspection were an opportunity to prioritise wellbeing for pupils and staff and emphasised the need for compassion and differentiated support:

[E]verybody will need their hands held in a different way and at a different time ... they need to know that they've got somewhere to go and that what they've got to say will be respected, listened to and they won't be judged by it. (ST3)

Leaders warned that the return of demands such as testing and inspection could make it difficult to capitalise on the holistic approach adopted during partial school closure 'as soon as we get that notification that testing's all back up-and-running ... teachers will find it really hard not to revert back to that treadmill' (PL2) and 'if your accountability is about scores on the doors in May, it's easy to lose focus of all that important stuff' (PL5). Nevertheless, most staff interviewed for this study remained hopeful that given space and time, schools could harness learning from a time of crisis, leading to meaningful and transformative change.

Discussion

The five key themes outlined in our findings are interrelated. For example, participants' experiences of sudden and excessive change can be considered to constitute a contextual risk factor, whilst opportunities for change brought about during this period of turbulence were also considered by some participants to foster a sense of hope, which can be considered to constitute an internal protective factor. In our discussion, we synthesise data from across all five themes to consider participants' experiences through the lens of a socio-ecological

understanding of resilience. In this discussion, the individual and contextual factors that interacted to influence staff resilience during the pandemic are identified with reference to the existing literature and we propose extending Greenfield's (2015) model of teacher resilience to consider the resilience of all school staff, in the context of change.

Consistent with a multi-dimensional conceptualisation of wellbeing (Dodge et al., 2012), participants' wellbeing was influenced by their psychological, social and physical resources. It is reductive to suggest *only* a negative impact on staff wellbeing, and perhaps more accurate to note that participants found that depending on contextual circumstances, sustaining wellbeing was more difficult in some ways and easier in others during this time. We found that the extent to which participants felt able to adapt in order to sustain or improve their wellbeing was influenced by multiple contextual factors. These included but were not limited to: their capacity to work from home; access to social and professional support; and the changing educational policy context. Thus, in line with previous research (Beltman et al., 2011; Greenfield, 2015), resilience was perceived by participants as more complex and dynamic than a static internal capacity to cope with extreme adversity. Instead, resilience was considered to fluctuate over time and to arise from the interaction between individual factors (e.g. self-efficacy) and changing environmental factors (at school and policy level). Role type and working location appeared to moderate participant exposure to risk and protective factors in complex ways. For example, staff who had worked mostly from home reported improvements in their physical and emotional wellbeing due to increased opportunities for self-care, spending time with family, and professional reflection and development. However, home-working staff (especially parents) also reported increased stress due to a lack of boundaries between professional and personal domains, a reduction in professional self-efficacy and a sense of disconnection. Our data suggest that leaders experienced high work-related anxiety due to their additional responsibilities to others, which emerging research indicates may also be the case beyond our sample (Allen, Jerrim, & Sims, 2020). The danger of leaders falling through the gaps in terms of staff support mechanisms was also highlighted by our participants.

Echoing existing literature, participants of all role types referred to an internal altruistic motivation or sense of professional purpose as an important protective buffer of adversity (Beltman, 2015; Beltman et al., 2011; Drew & Sosnowski, 2019; Gu & Day, 2011) and linked collegial and leadership support to their own wellbeing (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019; Beltman, 2015; Greenfield, 2015; Gu & Day, 2011). Staff of multiple role types reported that participative planning for safety and wellbeing in school had helped them to feel more in control and less anxious, suggesting that distributed leadership and expanded professional networks can help navigate complex change with reciprocal benefit (Littlecott, Moore, Gallagher, & Murphy, 2019; Manning, Brock, & Towers, 2020). Internal values and collegial relationships had increased significance in the context of limited interaction with pupils and disruption to staff–pupil relationships, which have previously been highlighted as strongly protective factors (e.g. Graham, Powell, Thomas, & Anderson, 2017; Milatz, Lüftenegger, & Schober, 2015; Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011).

Parallels can be drawn between individual and contextual risk factors identified by participants in this study, and those identified in prior research. These include rapid change (e.g. Brown, Ralph, & Brember, 2002), loss of control as a result of increased externally imposed regulations (Ball, 2003; Beltman et al., 2011; Williams-Brown & Jopling, 2020;

Winter, 2017), societal cynicism and biased media representation of teachers (e.g. Hester, Bridges, & Rollins, 2020). Due to the pace of change and the scale of uncertainty staff had experienced during the pandemic, these risk factors appeared to have been amplified.

Congruent with Hobson & Maxwell's (2017) research (which extended Self Determination Theory [Deci & Ryan, 2000] in the context of schools), our data suggest that autonomy, relatedness with colleagues and pupils and perceived competence were associated with staff wellbeing, though staff perceived that disruption to their day-to-day role caused by the pandemic had reduced opportunities to meet these innate psychological needs and resulted in a sense of deep loss. Our findings extend existing research that demonstrates that normative transitions within pupils' school careers can significantly influence their wellbeing (Pietarinen, Soini, & Pyhalto, 2010), indicating that disruption to pupils' normative transitions (e.g. the cancellation of 'leaver assemblies' or missed opportunities to say 'goodbye') also impacted detrimentally on the wellbeing of education professionals.

As other empirical research has found (e.g. Drew & Sosnowski, 2019), participants drew on their sense of professional purpose to buffer against emotional exhaustion, stress and personal sacrifice. 'Mattering' has been suggested as a psychological need consisting of 'feeling valued and adding value', a lack of which enhances internal and relational conflict (Prilleltensky, 2020). Participants in our sample were able to connect to a sense of adding value (depending on how closely they were involved in direct communication with parents and pupils, teaching and participative decision making), but felt largely undervalued by central government and in mainstream media. Some participants acknowledged that they did not place sufficient value on their own wellbeing (or masking their own needs), and others warned that feeling undervalued could lead to blame or resentment between staff and mistrust of central government, potentially reducing long-term resilience. As other research has suggested (e.g. Richards, Wilson, Holland, & Haegele, 2020), our data suggest that developing an environment in which school staff both feel that their work adds value, and in which staff feel inherently valued, is likely to improve professional satisfaction and personal wellbeing.

Re-framing uncertainty is thought to help sustain teacher wellbeing during challenging times (e.g. Beabout, 2012; Drew & Sosnowski, 2019), and our data showed that staff had created new routines and were planning for the future, re-framing the crisis as a catalyst for change. Disruption to the education system has presented a unique opportunity to pause and critically reflect, which could lead to valuable insight. A careful balance between harnessing this potential for change whilst minimising unnecessary 'turbulence' for staff (Beabout, 2012) can be fostered through participatory policy development, attentiveness to contextual needs and protected time and space for professional reflection and development.

Recent policy drives (DfE, 2018b) to improve staff wellbeing in schools through reducing workload and developing positive workplace cultures are a step in the right direction. Staff in our sample suggested a range of supportive strategies, including access to professional supervision and creating a whole school culture that prioritises wellbeing. However, some participants anticipated a swift return to a hectic pace and a revival of intense accountability pressures, which they worried could negatively influence wellbeing in the absence of structural support.

The results of this study echo previous findings by Manning et al. (2020) that wellbeing support should be matched to diverse staff needs. Staff wellbeing is not connected simplistically to workload or change, but is influenced by staff perceptions of the value they add through their work, the extent to which they feel valued and supported, and their involvement in the process of change. To ensure support for staff is helpful, this contextual nuance must underpin efforts to improve staff wellbeing at multiple system levels.

A model of school staff resilience in the context of change

In line with Greenfield's (2015) model of teacher resilience, our data suggest that participants' resilience can be conceptualised within a socio-ecological framework. Congruent with Greenfield's model, participants' beliefs influenced their personal wellbeing and capacity to adapt. This included maintaining a sense of hope, vocational purpose and self-efficacy. Greenfield identifies taking positive action as playing a critical role in facilitating resilience. Taking action to help others (including staff, pupils and parents), drawing on strategies to reduce stress (for example, exercise) and utilising increased opportunities for reflection, reframing and professional development enabled some participants to navigate challenges posed by the pandemic.

Support from colleagues, interactions with pupils and their families, and supportive personal relationships were significantly protective contextual factors for participants, often building on existing school culture and communication between stakeholders. These supportive relationships buffered the effects of the day-to-day challenges that participants experienced. Challenges included ongoing and relentless uncertainty in participants' personal and professional lives, intense workload and competing priorities. For some, the effects of these challenges resulted in negative emotions, including high levels of work-related anxiety. In line with Greenfield (2015), we found that the extent to which participants were negatively affected by the day-to-day challenges was influenced by broader political, cultural and economic factors. For example, lack of clarity and guidance from the government, alongside insufficient resourcing and funding, was perceived by participants to have created an unsupportive policy context which increased work-related anxiety and resulted in a deterioration of trust between school staff and central government. Some participants also described dissonance between a strong sense of vocational values and negative portrayals of school staff in the media, which they perceived as indicative of a lack of public support.

The experiences of participants (of all role types) can be understood within a socio-ecological conceptualisation of resilience. We therefore suggest that whilst Greenfield's initial model relates to *teacher* resilience, the factors included in Greenfield's model are relevant for all school staff and could constitute the basis of a *school staff* resilience model.

Furthermore, staff of different role types appeared to experience these risk and protective factors in different ways. For example, senior leaders experienced high levels of work-related anxiety as a result of relentless uncertainty, loss of professional autonomy and loss of control. They felt disconnected from decision-making processes and often masked their emotions to enable them to more effectively support colleagues, parents and students, in the context of receiving little or no support themselves. We therefore suggest that there may be factors relating specifically to job role which influence participants'

resilience, and that job role could therefore be considered an important aspect of the model that helps to determine helpful strategies. For example, leaders experienced high levels of work-related anxiety and lacked access to networks of professional support which negatively impacted on their resilience. We therefore suggest that networks of support for this role type could include access to external professional supervision that is available continuously, not just in times of crisis. Our proposed model is shown in Figure 6.

Change is a continual feature of schools due to their inherent complexity (Keshavarz et al., 2010). However, the Covid-19 pandemic can be understood as a sudden external shock to the system, an event that had significant impact at multiple system levels, exposing and exacerbating existing individual and contextual risk factors associated with poor staff wellbeing. In order to acknowledge the continuous nature of change in the school system, and the importance of understanding staff resilience as a dynamic and malleable concept, we propose an addition to the model that indicates change over time

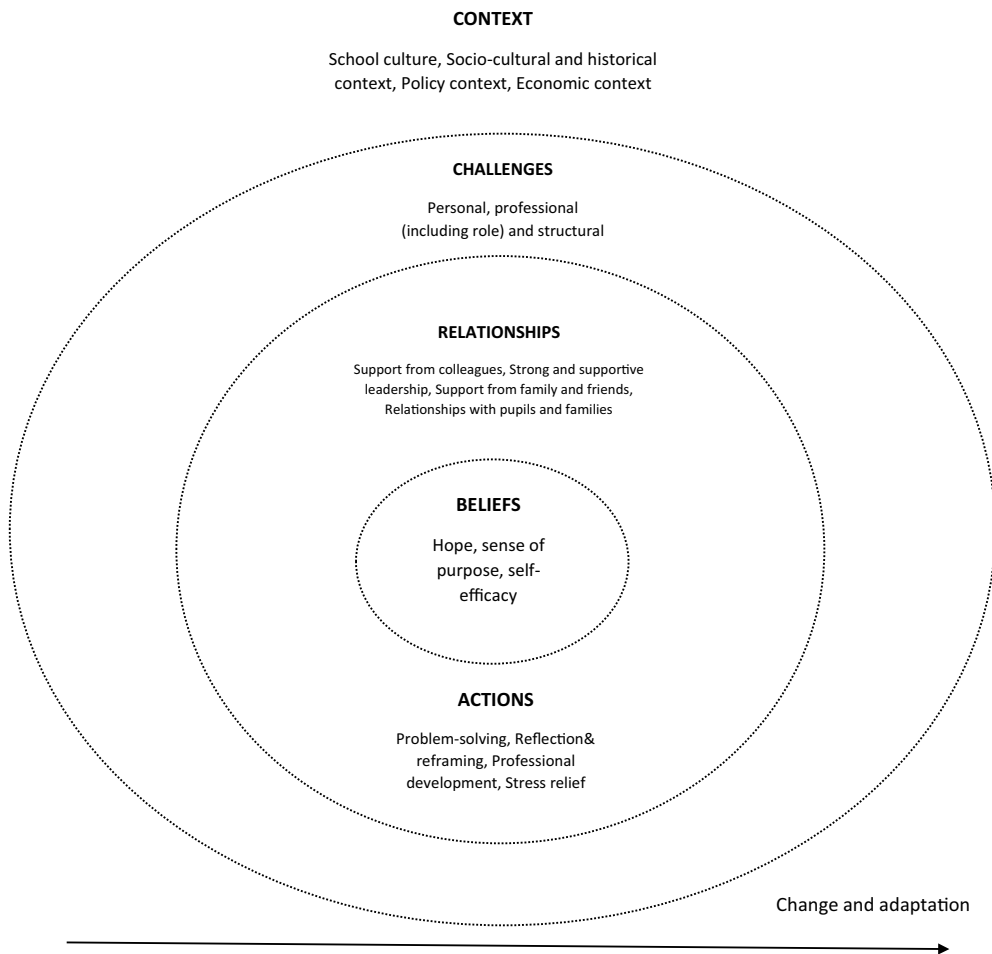


Figure 6. Proposed Model of School Staff Resilience.

and adaptation in response to changing socio-cultural, historical, political and economic contexts. We have adapted Greenfield's (2015) model to indicate these additional factors (Figure 6).

Limitations and further research

Data were generated from a relatively small sample and relied on self-reports in the form of in-depth participant interviews. Whilst this exploratory study explored the experiences of staff in a range of role types and across different school settings, the data set represents the perspectives of a small number of self-selecting staff, at a moment in time and within a rapidly changing context. Experiences of the pandemic have been nuanced and personal, and the views of participants may not be generalisable to the heterogeneous and complex contexts of other school staff. Despite these limitations, the data provide rich and valuable insights about the nuanced and complex nature of staff resilience in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, highlighting the interaction of multiple internal and external factors. Due to the dynamic and contextual nature of resilience and the rapidly changing landscape of education, further research is required to establish how initial teacher-training providers, schools and policy makers can prioritise the wellbeing of school staff to foster resilience across the school system in the face of ongoing and future adversity. This should include larger samples of cross-cultural comparison, mixed method and quantitative data collection, including longitudinal studies that examine the long-term impact on staff wellbeing and retention across multiple role types. Furthermore, research suggests that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a disproportionately negative impact for those who, prior to the crisis, were already facing socio-economic disadvantage (e.g. Kirby, 2020; Patel et al., 2020). Thus, whilst beyond the scope of this study, further research is required to explore the moderating influence of existing health and inequalities on school staff experiences.

Key findings of this multiple role-type study were consistent with existing literature on teacher stress and burnout, teacher mental health, teacher wellbeing and teacher resilience. Future research could consider how these concepts overlap and could be applied to or adapted for staff of multiple role types and in the context of adversity associated with system 'events' such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Conclusion

Significant turbulence caused by Covid-19 has both increased adversity for school staff and offered a unique opportunity to pause and reflect. The immense pace of change necessary to address the global pandemic has resulted in seismic disruption for staff, both in their personal and professional lives. Our data set indicated a range of individual and contextual risk and protective factors which have dynamically interacted in different ways for our participants during this time, and which can be understood within a socio-ecological framework of staff resilience. Contrary to a conceptualisation of resilience as an innate individual capacity (which shifts the responsibility from the structural to the individual member of staff), our data were congruent with existing research (e.g. Beltman, 2015; Beltman et al., 2011; Greenfield, 2015; Gu & Day, 2011; Mansfield et al., 2012) that has highlighted the

importance of both internal *and* external and contextual protective factors as the foundation for staff resilience, thus suggesting the need for structural change as opposed to individual ‘responsibilisation’ (Hart et al., 2016).

One participant described their experience of this uncertain time as being lost in a ‘hazy mist’. To continue their apt metaphor, weather conditions remain unstable and ongoing change in schools is inevitable. As the fog begins to clear, there is an opportunity for lessons to be learned from the crisis to better support staff wellbeing in the future. There are several implications arising from this research. Firstly, school leaders should prioritise developing whole school cultures that prioritise wellbeing for all stakeholders. The global pandemic has resulted in multiple academic, social and psychological transitions for educators, students and families. These transitions are continual, and individuals may therefore also require ongoing additional support to enable them to flourish. Secondly, school leaders may benefit from access to external professional supervision to support individuals to buffer the effects of the challenges they are experiencing in their professional lives. Finally, policy makers should engage in thorough consultation with school staff to ensure that future educational policy effectively prioritises staff wellbeing and preserves existing strengths of the school system, and that guidance for schools is clear and practical to implement.

Note

- 1 A coding system is used to indicate school setting (P = primary, S = secondary, AP = alternative provision, M = middle school) and role type (L = senior leader, T = teacher, TA = teaching assistant). For example, PL1 = the first primary school senior leader interviewed.

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PAPER 3



Supporting Young People's Mental Health: Reconceptualizing the Role of Schools or a Step Too far?

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This article provides an overview of the United Kingdom government's strategy for children's mental health in schools. Critique of the mental health policy document demonstrates that the government has adopted a clinical approach to resolving the mental health "crisis" among children and young people. We argue that a clinical solution, implemented in schools, is not based on robust evidence and that the policy reflects a medical model which positions children and young people with mental ill health through a deficit lens. We argue that the government should, instead, adopt a systemic response which directly addresses the underlying factors which cause mental ill health rather than implementing a clinical approach in schools. We argue that a clinical response at the level of the individual is not appropriate for most children and young people with mental ill health and that there needs to be an urgent review of policy.

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INTRODUCTION

This article provides an overview of the policy context in England in relation to the role of schools in supporting children and young people's mental health. In this article, we adopt the World Health Organisation (WHO), (2014) definition of mental health which focuses on mental health rather than mental illness: [...] a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Throughout this article we adopt the term "mental ill health" rather than "mental health problems" because we do not believe that mental health should be conceptualized as a problem. It is our belief that describing mental health as a problem perpetuates stigma in relation to mental health and we hold the view that mental health should not be stigmatized.

We conceptualize mental health as existing in a state of flux along a continuum which ranges from being mentally healthy to being mentally ill. Mental ill health is situated at the opposite end of the spectrum from being mentally healthy and individuals can move in both directions between both ends of the spectrum. Based on the WHO definition, individuals who experience mental ill health or mental illness are not able to cope with the usual stresses of life and are not able to be productive and make a contribution. However, this can be a temporary rather than a permanent state.

After outlining the mental health context in England, this article outlines the key strategies that the United Kingdom government has introduced to reduce the prevalence of mental ill health in England. The article then develops a critique of the policy, drawing on the biopsychosocial model of health and the literature on causation. Finally, we suggest some solutions to the mental health "crisis" which are underpinned by the theory and literature.

THE MENTAL HEALTH CONTEXT IN ENGLAND

Statistics suggest that approximately 850,000 children and young people have a clinically diagnosable mental health need (DfE/DoH, 2017) in the United Kingdom (United Kingdom). A clinically diagnosable mental health need is one which has been diagnosed by a health professional using agreed criteria. This equates to approximately one in ten. The prevalence of mental ill health increases as children move into adolescence and the types of mental ill health experienced can vary according to gender (DfE/DoH, 2017). For example, girls are more likely to experience anxiety and depression than boys and boys are more likely to demonstrate conduct disorders (DfE/DoH, 2017). Evidence suggests that young people who are living in care, those who are not engaged in education, employment or training and those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans are at increased risk of developing mental ill health (DfE/DoH, 2017).

The prevalence of mental health is not specific to the United Kingdom. It is a global concern. However, in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, the destigmatization of mental health in recent years, along with increased awareness and understanding of mental health, may account for the increases in diagnoses, resulting in a crisis discourse. Regardless of statistics, attempts by governments to eradicate the stigma can be viewed positively because it has resulted in better identification and a willingness from individuals to reach out for support.

The causes of mental ill health in children, young people and adults are multifaceted. The biopsychosocial model of health (Engel, 1980) (see **Supplementary Figure S1**) demonstrates the contribution of biological, social and psychological factors which influence a person's health. Mental health is a component of overall health but overlaps between these factors can result in mental ill health. Individuals with disabilities are more likely to experience mental ill health (DfE/DoH, 2017). Risk factors are also present in schools, homes and communities (Glazzard, 2019). Children and young people who reside in areas of social deprivation experience greater likelihood of developing mental ill health (Mental Health Foundation, 2016). Those who experience parental conflict and abuse are also at greater risk (House of Commons, 2018) and attachment theory (Bowlby, 1958) is a seminal theory which has also contributed to our understanding of the relationship between insecure or non-existent attachments between a child and their primary carer and their mental health (Bowlby, 1958). School-related factors also play a role. There is a link between examination-related stress and specific mental health needs, including anxiety and depression (House of Commons, 2018). Additionally, the narrowing of the curriculum in secondary schools in recent years because of narrow measures of school effectiveness is also a contributory factor (House of Commons, 2018). Finally, bullying in schools is associated with poor mental health (Bradlow et al., 2017), with some young people being more at risk than others (Glazzard, 2019), particularly those who represent marginalized groups who experience often experience prejudice and discrimination as part of their daily lives (Meyer, 2003). These include young people with disabilities,

those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans and those with minority racial or ethnic identities.

Given the prevalence of research which has led to a better understanding of the causes of mental ill health, it is surprising that the United Kingdom government's mental health strategy does not appear to take causal factors into account. The problem of mental ill health can only be addressed if there is an understanding of causation. This point will be addressed later in this paper but suffice to say at this point that addressing the symptoms rather than the causes is a short-sighted policy. The government's Green Paper (DfE/DoH, 2017) emphasizes a range of within-child interventions rather than outlining the government's strategy for addressing the social factors which can cause mental ill health, including social deprivation and other adverse childhood experiences.

It is also important to emphasize that there is no magic bullet which will solve the mental health "crisis." The multiplicity of factors which cause mental ill health mean that a variety of solutions will be required which target the biological, social and psychological factors which result in mental ill health. In addition, given that the factors which cause mental ill health span various disciplines (for example, education, psychology, sociology and biology), it is likely that the solutions to mental ill health will not be found in a single discipline and therefore a single sector of the workforce. Instead, the solutions to mental ill health require a multidisciplinary approach which addresses the underlying factors which cause it in the first place.

MENTAL HEALTH POLICY IN ENGLAND

Back in 2017, the United Kingdom government released its five-year strategy for mental health, through the publication of its Green Paper, *Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision* (DfE/DoH, 2017). This was an exciting publication because it marked the government's commitment to addressing the mental health "crisis" in children and young people. The Prime Minister at the time, Theresa May, had referred to the problem of children's mental health as "one of the burning injustices of our time" (DfE/DoH, 2017, p.3), and the Green Paper was an attempt to correct this.

The Green Paper outlined a three-pillared approach to addressing children and young people's mental health. Firstly, the introduction of the role of designated senior leads for mental health in all schools marked the government's determination to ensure that mental health provision in schools was appropriately led and managed. Secondly, the government planned to introduce mental health support teams which would work directly in schools. This new group of health professionals would work alongside teachers by providing children with low-level clinical interventions, such as counseling and cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) within schools. The aim of this strategy was to ensure that young people receive swift clinical intervention within a non-clinical setting, thus ensuring that they gain access to rapid support and also helping to reduce already lengthy waiting lists to access National Health Service (NHS) clinical interventions. This strategy is currently being operationalized through the

introduction of professional training courses for “Education and Mental Health Practitioners.” These were the mental health support teams that were outlined in the government’s mental health strategy. However, this strategy is effectively a clinical model with focuses on interventions at the level of the individual child or young person. The strategy addresses the symptoms of mental ill health rather than the causes of it and perpetuates the view that there is a deficit within the child which needs to be addressed. Teachers are not trained to implement clinical interventions, so this approach provides children and young people with access to professionals who are trained to implement a range of low-level clinical interventions in school settings. However, this approach is potentially damaging because it is reflective of the medical model which locates the “deficit” or “problem” within the individual rather than locating the issues within broader social, cultural and political contexts. The argument in support of the model is that by reducing the pressure on already over-stretched mental health services, children and young people can gain access to support more rapidly within the context of their educational setting. Thirdly, the final pillar was to pilot reduced waiting times for specialist NHS services for children and young people with persistent and severe mental health needs.

The policy was a bold step in the right direction. It underlined the government’s commitment to mental health, and it acknowledged the role that schools and colleges already played in supporting young people’s mental health. However, there was a clear expectation that schools and colleges could take an even greater role:

Informed by widespread existing practice in the education sector and by a systematic review of existing evidence on the best ways to promote positive mental health for children and young people, we want to put schools and colleges at the heart of our efforts to intervene early and prevent problems escalating (DfE/DoH, 2017, p. 3, p. 3).

It is debatable whether schools should be required to plug the gaps in NHS services by extending their remit from education to health. Schools in the United Kingdom have, in recent years, broadened their remit from providing solely an education service, to focusing also on matters related to social care. Discourses in relation to safeguarding have reconceptualized the role of schools from merely providing children with a curriculum and supporting them through examinations, to institutions which serve to protect young people from societal risk. In addition, schools have also demonstrated a broader remit through developing initiatives which support parental literacy and numeracy and through developing community-related projects. At the same time, schools have also operated within a strict regime of accountability (Glazzard, 2019) through which measures of school effectiveness have been reduced to narrow performance indicators such as examination results (Glazzard, 2013). Schools and teachers are required not only to raise academic standards, but also to protect young people from harm and reduce the prevalence of mental ill health. This reconceptualization of the role of the teacher and the role of the school is necessary because Maslow’s seminal work has highlighted how children and young people cannot learn effectively if their holistic needs are not met (Maslow, 1943) and more recent research has highlighted how children

cannot thrive academically if they have mental ill health (Kieling et al., 2011). Addressing mental ill health in schools through clinical interventions will not necessarily guarantee that children and young people will not experience mental ill health given that they spend a greater proportion of their time in homes and communities which may be the sources of their mental ill health. In addition, it is important to remember that the primary role of schools is to educate the next generation. It seems ironic that, at the same time as supporting children’s wellbeing, schools are being required to deliver a narrow curriculum (House of Commons, 2018) which privileges academic forms of knowledge, and subject children to high-stakes examinations, even though these can have a detrimental impact on young people’s mental health.

Schools are therefore placed in a paradoxical situation. They are required to support children’s mental health at the same time as subjecting young people to pedagogical approaches which can have an adverse effect on it. At the same time, the increased marketization of education through inspections, league tables, the public shaming of schools within a discourse of performativity (Ball, 2003) and a heavy emphasis on behaviourist approaches to regulate children’s behavior (Glazzard, 2019), has not created an environment which supports positive mental health. Those most at risk within this neoliberal marketized system of education are, of course, those representing minority groups (Glazzard, 2019) and those from areas of social deprivation. Too often, these children become excluded from a mainstream system of education which does not meet their needs. Exclusion from mainstream environments can have a long-lasting adverse effect on young people’s mental health (IPPR, 2017). It is therefore ironic that the United Kingdom government view schools as the solution to mental ill health, when in reality, at least for some children, their mental health needs arise because of their participation in education. The effectiveness of clinical models of mental health intervention which are outlined in the Green Paper may be reduced if children and young people are exposed to a narrow curriculum and an assessment system which labels too many as educational failures. In addition to models of clinical intervention, a systemic response is also required. This must include a broadening of the curriculum in all schools and a more inclusive assessment model which enables all young people to experience success. In addition, schools should prioritize developing positive school cultures which engender a sense of belonging and which positively affirm difference. In the absence of a systemic response, schools will continue to produce rather than solve mental ill health.

To survive within the marketized education system, teachers must focus on their core responsibilities, which include teaching the curriculum and assessing learning. It could be argued that policy initiatives which re-position teachers as mental health experts is just one step too far, on top of the educational responsibilities that a teacher must bear. Teachers are not health professionals. They are educators, first and foremost. Providing teachers and school leaders with training to support them to more effectively identify children and young people with mental health needs could be irresponsible and potentially dangerous. Teachers are not qualified to make a diagnosis of

mental ill health, but by identifying it, they are placing the child on the first step to diagnosis. Labels can have a detrimental effect on young people's sense of self and the adverse effects of negative labels can last a lifetime. In addition, labeling children as having "social, emotional and mental health needs" can adversely influence the way others view the child because labels can be stigmatizing even if they are accurately assigned. This is particularly significant during transitions when children move to new teachers or new schools. Viewing children through the lens of a label can be particularly damaging and placing children on clinical intervention programmes to support mental health can also be risky.

The Education Inspection Framework (Ofsted, 2019) also influences policy in schools. The latest version of the framework emphasizes the importance of schools providing children and young people with a mental health curriculum which supports them to be mentally healthy. This appears to be a wise decision, but guidance is currently lacking from central government in relation to what this curriculum might look like, who might be best to deliver it and when it should be introduced. It is our view that this curriculum is best delivered within the context of a whole-school approach to mental health which addresses aspects such as the role of a positive school culture and both for young people and for staff.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE POLICY

It is disappointing that the Green Paper (DfE/DoH, 2017) does not offer a definition of mental health. We conceptualize mental health as a dynamic attribute which falls along a continuum which ranges from being mentally healthy to mentally ill. There are numerous references throughout the document which conceptualize mental health as a "problem." However, framing mental health as a problem rather than acknowledging that mental health exists along a spectrum perpetuates, rather than eradicates, the stigma that is associated with mental health. The approach adopted by the government reflects a medical model of health. Within the Green Paper there are 26 references to the word "treatment" and 75 references referring to mental health as a "disorder." The government's positioning of mental health at the level of the individual is deeply problematic because this shifts the focus onto individual deficits and detracts attention away from the broader systemic factors which cause individuals to experience mental ill health. It also demonstrates a lack of understanding of the interaction between biological, social and psychological factors (the biopsychosocial model of health) which results in mental ill health. By situating mental health at the level of the individual, the government is effectively absolving its responsibility for addressing the social and environmental factors which result in children and young people experiencing mental ill health.

There are contradictions within the policy document. For example, the commitment to equality which is affirmed through the first statement below is effectively canceled out by the second statement which indicates that intervention and support will not be universal:

All young people deserve the best start in life. But too often, young people with a mental health problem are not able to fulfill their potential (p. 2).

We will roll out our new approach . . . to at least *a fifth to a quarter* of the country by the end of 2022/23 (p. 4).

We have used italics to add emphasis to the policy contradictions. It might be argued that the government's goal is less than ambitious although it could also be argued that this tentative approach reflects the need to roll out additional training to all teachers, which might not be realistic by 2022-23.

The emphasis on clinical interventions or treatments throughout the document is clear. However, clinical intervention at the level of the individual is not necessarily an appropriate form of intervention within educational settings. Most young people will benefit from a psychosocial approach which recognizes the important role that social connections and positive school environments can make to mental health. Children and young people thrive when they experience a sense of belonging and when they can learn in safe environments which are free of bullying, harassment and other forms of discrimination. Clinical interventions can result in deficit thinking and may cause individuals to believe that the problem resides in them rather than in the structures to which they are exposed. Removing young people from lessons to receive clinical interventions can also result in internal exclusion, negative associations and stigma.

Rather than focusing on treatment at the level of the individual, the government should urgently address the social and environmental factors which result in children and young people experiencing mental ill health. This includes taking urgent action to address poverty, child abuse and negative parent-child interactions. In addition, the government should, as a matter of urgency, review the curriculum offer in schools so that young people have an opportunity to access a broad, balanced and rich curriculum. Given the link between physical activity and mental health, school leaders should ensure that all young people have access to inclusive physical education and a mental health curriculum which helps them to develop their mental health literacy. Finally, the government should take urgent action to address the effects of examination stress by developing an approach to assessment which provides young people with a variety of modes of assessment and recognizes a broader range of achievements. Children in primary schools, whose strengths and talents lie outside academic disciplines, must have opportunities to demonstrate their achievements in a broader range of subjects so that they do not start their secondary education with low self-esteem and diminished confidence. A clinical model of intervention which operates at the level of the individual is likely to be ineffective if these broader systemic factors which cause poor mental health are not addressed.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we have argued that the United Kingdom government policy in relation to the role of schools in

supporting children's mental health reflects a clinical approach. We have argued that a clinical approach, which operates at the level of the individual, is not appropriate for most children with mental health needs. We have argued that the government should, instead, adopt a systemic response which directly addresses the underlying factors which cause mental ill health. Given that mental ill health is largely rooted in social circumstances, we have argued that the United Kingdom government should urgently address childhood poverty and other adverse childhood experiences which are linked with mental ill health. In the absence of a systemic response which addresses these social factors, schools can only hope to achieve limited progress in relation to mental health because children will continue to be influenced by factors in their homes and communities which are responsible for adversely affecting their mental health.

It is important to emphasize that we do not uniformly reject the tenets of the Green Paper. We have argued in this paper that the causes of mental ill health is rooted in individual/biological, social and psychological factors. We have argued that when these factors interact this can result in mental ill health. On the basis of

this, it would seem reasonable to argue that different government agencies need to work together to address some of the serious, systemic problems in society which can result in mental ill health. Greater collaboration between education, health and social care departments at the level of policy and strategy would seem to be a logical recommendation, given the complex range of factors which are responsible for causation.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

JG introduced the policy context and reviewed existing policy in England. SS and JG critiqued this policy in order to identify implications and offer discussion.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

The Supplementary Material for this article can be found online at: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2020.607939/full#supplementary-material>.

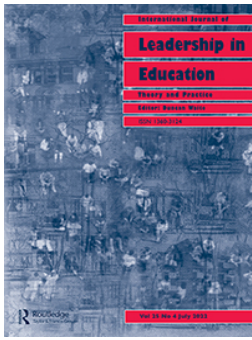
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Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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PAPER 4



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'Nothing fazes me, I can do it all': developing headteacher resilience in a complex and challenging educational climate

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'Nothing fazes me, I can do it all': developing headteacher resilience in a complex and challenging educational climate

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ABSTRACT

Headship (School Principal) is a challenging role within a complex and ever-changing policy climate. This article explores the factors which influence headteacher resilience and their mental health. Existing research focuses on teacher resilience but there is a paucity of literature exploring the factors which influence headteacher resilience. This study was conducted in the United Kingdom (UK). Headteachers (n = 16) participated in a semi-structured telephone interview. Participants were asked to categorize their mental health as either good or poor at the time of the interview in relation to the World Health Organization definition of mental health. Participants represented the primary and secondary phases of education and the research included those who were new to the role and those who were more experienced. Male and female participants were represented in the sample. Participants identified a range of factors which influenced their resilience and mental health. These included individual factors, social/relational factors, implementing actions, exposure to challenges, professional learning and systemic factors. Systemic factors included pressures of managing restricted school budgets and external inspections and policy priorities. Participants emphasized the importance of coaching and access to external professional supervision both to support resilience and professional development. Although external professional supervision is common in health and social care professions, it is less common in the education sector, particularly in the UK. A model of teacher resilience has been adapted to address the factors which influence headteacher resilience. In conclusion, the study supports the use of external professional supervision and professional coaching for head teachers to support both their mental health and resilience.

Introduction

The terms Head Teacher, School Principal and Headship are interchangeable terms which are used to refer to individuals who are employed to lead schools. Although these individuals are members of a school leadership team, the accountability for overall school effectiveness rests with them. The 2019 Teacher Wellbeing Index (Education Support, 2019) published in England identified that 84% of senior leaders in schools

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considered themselves to be stressed and 28% worked more than 61 hours per week, with 11% working more than 70 hours per week. The findings also indicated that senior leaders experienced more behavioral, physical and psychological symptoms compared with teachers and staff working in other roles.

Working as a senior leader, and specifically as a headteacher, is undoubtedly challenging but often deeply rewarding. Schools operate within a discourse of performativity which requires school leaders to do all they can to raise academic achievement. Schools in England are evaluated by inspectors on the basis of student outcomes, irrespective of the fact that varying school contexts and student diversity can influence these. At the same time, headteachers are often required to manage extremely tight budgets, deal with contracts of employment and manage parental complaints. Constant changes to education policy can create instability in schools and headteachers are often required to address new frameworks with minimal notice.

Head Teachers are not unprepared for the challenges of school leadership when they take on the role. Many do not embark on this role lightly. They are aware that it will be stressful, time-consuming and that they will face resistance (Kelly & Saunders, 2010; Stephenson & Bauer, 2010). However, they are often motivated by a desire to improve educational outcomes and therefore the life chances of children and young people. However, although this sense of moral purpose can strengthen their resilience (Greenfield, 2015), lack of access to support networks, negative school cultures and the broader educational policy context can also have a detrimental impact on their resilience and mental health (Greenfield, 2015). We therefore conceptualize both resilience and mental health as dynamic traits which are not just innate, but also influenced by a range of external factors which operate outside the individual.

Research demonstrates that multiple factors impact on staff wellbeing, including school climate (Gray et al., 2017). A negative school climate impacts on staff retention, absence and relationships between students and staff (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). A positive school climate can support resilience (Greenfield, 2015). This study sought to examine the factors which influenced the resilience and mental health of headteachers. It elicited the perspectives of both primary and secondary headteachers in one local authority on factors which influenced their own resilience.

Resilience

As a concept, resilience is not specifically tied to headteachers, or even at times to leadership. This is because aspects of resilience can be applied to all individuals facing challenging circumstances, including headteachers. Most literature on resilience comes from the field of psychology (Bosworth & Earthman, 2002; Seligman, 2011) and originates from the United States.

There are many perspectives on resilience. Liebenberg et al. (2012) describe it as the 'ability to thrive in the face of adversity' (p. 219) whilst Low Dog (2012) suggests resilience is the 'the ability to gather up our strength and all of our resources and overcome adversity' (p. 178). According to Arias (2016), resiliency in education leaders comes from self-efficacy, personal agency, optimism, the building of relationships with others, support from family and friends and even through seeking out spiritual guidance. Thus, resilience has been conceptualized as a relational characteristic rather than being

innate within individuals. Resiliency can be influenced by the macro and micro contexts in which school leaders operate, including access to support from others, school climate and educational policy. We therefore adopt an ecological perspective on resilience which takes into account the individual, relational and contextual factors which serve as protective or risk factors.

According to Luthans (2002), at its most simple, 'resiliency is the positive psychological capacity to rebound, to "bounce back" from adversity, uncertainty, conflict, failure or even positive change, progress and increased responsibility' (p. 702). However, for some (see Zautra et al., 2008; Ledesma, 2014;; Lawton Smith, 2017) there is more to resilience than simply bouncing back. Allison (2011) believes that leaders in particular bounce forward: 'not only do resilient leaders quickly get their mojo back, but because they understand that the status quo is unsustainable, they also use it to move mountains (p. 80).

Zautra et al. (2008) suggest there are two aspects or stages to resilience, 'recovery' and 'sustainability' (p. 42). Recovery enables an individual to overcome a stressful event, whilst sustainability is the capacity of an individual to 'continue forward in the face of adversity'. They argue that survival alone is not enough to ensure an individual's well-being. Rather, focusing on moving forward and on new, positive goals is what is both needed and essential for building future resilience and maintaining health and wellbeing. For headteachers, maintaining a good work-life balance can support recovery. However, having a clear vision, goals and a sense of purpose can enable school leaders to continue moving forward in the face of adversity (Day, 2011, 2017; Day et al., 2011). Events which are stressful for school leaders, such as school inspections, can re-energize them by providing them with a clear goal to focus on achieving.

Ledesma (2014) in her article, *Conceptual Frameworks and Research Models on Resilience in Leadership*, suggests there is actually a four-cycle phase to resilience: deteriorating; adapting; recovery and growing phases. Ledesma believes that where an individual is positioned in the cycle is largely determined by their capacity for resilience for that particular event or crisis at the time. Some will be unable to function as result of their experience. Others will adapt but not ever fully recover. Some will recover and return to their pre-event condition. However, according to Ledesma (2014) a small minority of individuals will reach the growing phase. For these individuals their resilience levels will be strengthened; they will thrive as a result of their experience.

The literature suggests that some individuals, especially effective leaders, embrace stress and challenges. Indeed, they might even be said to thrive at such times (Pearsall, 2003); they do more than merely bounce back. They see difficult situations as a learning opportunity and use them to tackle future challenges. Once a resolution is found, it can have the effect of re-energizing them. According to Allison (2011) the most successful leaders remain optimistic, cultivate networks, see patterns that they use as insights to effect change, swiftly mitigate the impact of setbacks, use words carefully and engage in personal rewards, 'making time for activities that revitalize them physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually' (p. 81). In other words, they re-fuel.

This theme of resilience as a fuel that needs replenishing, and good leaders recognizing this to be the case, is strongly evident in the literature. Often the metaphor of resilience as a 'fuel' source (Lawton Smith, 2017; Ledesma, 2014) is used. According to Ledesma, the literature identifies three types of resilience fuel – personal values, personal efficacy, and

personal energy. Together they account for building resilience capacity and help determine an individual's response to adversity. However, there are times when individuals, even the most resilient, need their 'fuel tank' of resilience topped up and Lawton Smith's (2017) study of the coaching of eight senior leaders, from different sectors, which looked at their experience of being coached, had numerous examples of this. The senior leaders interviewed talked metaphorically about 'fuel', using it to describe resilience as a resource that needed to be 'topped up' from time to time; be that by switching off, taking a holiday or seeking support from others.

Values is a relatively new aspect of resilience that has started to appear in the literature. According to Lawton Smith (2017) senior leaders in her study found it difficult to be resilient when their values were compromised or when they clashed with others, finding they 'clearly felt that their ability to be resilient was influenced by their values' (p. 16).

Resilience then is something that is fluid and contextual, it evolves and changes over time for every individual, regardless of whether they are a leader. Individuals can be resilient in one context and less so in another and resilience can be strengthened over time. Sometimes the critical event that tests an individual's resilience can have a detrimental impact on their health and wellbeing, but for some it can be beneficial and lead to an individual's growth and change that they can then use as 'fuel' to build their resilience and help steer their future direction. Resilience in this way can be closely linked to individuals having a growth mind-set. However, there is little, if any, literature on this in relation to leadership roles per se, and none in relation to school leaders specifically. Most of the growth mind-set literature in education, focuses on student (Yeager & Dweck, 2012) to improve their resilience and learning outcomes.

Conceptual frameworks

This study draws on Greenfield's (2015) model of teacher resilience. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study which has specifically applied this conceptual framework to headteachers. Greenfield's (2015) model is shown in [Figure 1](#).

The model demonstrates how resilience is affected by individual, relational and contextual factors. Individual factors include having a sense of hope, purpose and high self-efficacy. According to the model these are protective factors which enable teachers to stay resilient. Radiating outwards from the center, the model demonstrates that resilience is relational. Positive relationships with colleagues, family, friends and students can support teachers to be more resilient. In contrast, negative relationships can have a detrimental impact on resilience. A school climate which is characterized by positive relationships with colleagues and students can therefore support resilience. The model also demonstrates that positive actions (problem solving, reflection, reframing, professional development and stress relief) can also support resilience. Contextual factors include the challenges that teachers experience in both their personal and professional lives and the broader policy context which influences education. We were interested in how this model might be used to support our understanding of headteacher resilience.

Professional learning and development as well as strong, relational professional learning communities that support teachers and headteachers can strengthen resilience

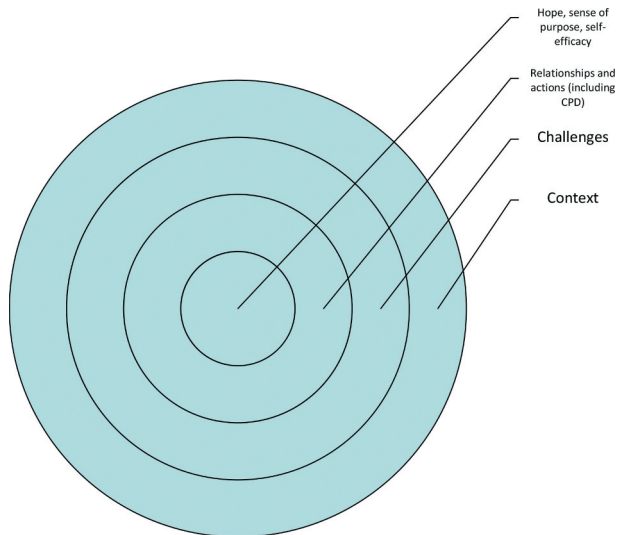


Figure 1. Greenfield's (2015) **model of teacher resilience.**

and support good mental health. Greenfield (2015) identifies professional development as a mechanism for supporting resilience but does not specify forms of professional development that may be useful to teachers. We were interested in exploring whether the use of coaching and external professional supervision specifically might have a positive impact on resiliency and mental health in relation to the participants.

This study also draws on self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) which explores the role of autonomy, competence and relatedness to human motivation. We have used this theory as a conceptual lens to analyze the experiences of head teachers based on our assumption that all of these three factors also influence resilience, given that they are identified, albeit using different terms, within Greenfield's (2015) model. We therefore assume that if these three conditions are not met, there will be a negative impact on both head teacher resilience and their mental health.

Finally, this study uses Locus of Control theory (Rotter, 1966) as an analytic tool to make sense of the participants' experiences. The theory posits that individuals with an internal locus of control attributes successes or failures to their own efforts and abilities. In contrast, an individual with an external locus of control attributes their successes or failures to external factors and are more likely to experience poor mental health and demonstrate low levels of resilience because they believe that events are out of their control. More recently, locus of control has also been described as a coping resource facilitating certain coping styles (Van den Brande et al., 2016). Thus, it has been assumed that individuals with an external locus of control avoid situations or resign themselves to failure and experience greater stress and poor mental health (Gore et al., 2016). Conversely, those with an internal locus of control are associated with help-seeking and positive thinking, as well as lower levels of work stress in general (Gore et al., 2016).

Research questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

- What are the challenges of headship and how do these challenges influence their mental health?
- What factors influence headteacher resilience?

It is our assumption that resiliency in head teachers is a dynamic trait that is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors, including access to personal and professional support networks and the extent of the challenges that they are required to face.

Method

This was a qualitative study and data were collected using semi-structured interviews. An e-mail was circulated to all headteachers in one local authority to invite their participation in the project. The e-mail included information for participants and a consent form which participants e-mailed back to the researchers, thus assuring that informed consent was obtained (Cohen et al., 2018). The four elements of informed consent i.e. competence, voluntarism, full information, and comprehension (Cohen et al., 2018) were addressed through the participant information and consent forms and the professional status of the participants. In line with advice from Hammersley and Traianou (2012) participants were assured of their rights to anonymity and confidentiality. Due to the positions of authority held by the participants and the sensitive nature of the research, it was particularly important to uphold confidentiality and anonymity (Cohen et al., 2018). Ethical approval was also secured through the university ethics committee prior to any data being collected. 16 participants agreed to participate in the research. None of the participants were known to the researchers. Participants were not named in the research and were referred to using a code (HT1 representing Head Teacher 1). Names of schools or other organizations have not been included in this article to protect participants' anonymity. Participants were signposted, from the outset, to external organizations which could offer support if this was required after participating in the research. It was important to take into account the power relations which were immanent within this research (Brooks et al., 2014). Within their professional contexts the participants hold a significant amount of power. However, within a research context arguably the balance of power was tipped in our favor. Regardless of this, it was important to us to ensure that we demonstrated through our interviewing techniques that we valued the professional status of the participants, that we respected them and that we viewed them as individuals with authority. Given their professional positions of power, it was critical that we protected their anonymity at all costs (Cohen et al., 2018).

Interviews provide opportunities for participants to interpret and make sense of their own experiences (Cohen et al., 2018; Sikes & Goodson, 2017). Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with headteachers.

Each participant was interviewed once, and each interview lasted between 20 and 40 minutes. 16 interviews were conducted in total. Participants were selected from both

the primary and secondary sectors of education. Participants were asked to declare their current mental health status using the definition of good mental health provided by the World Health organization:

Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.

(WHO, 2018)

Participants were asked to use this definition to decide if they had good or poor mental health. The breakdown of participants is shown in Table 1.

The trustworthiness of qualitative research should be evaluated through applying the concepts of credibility and transferability of the data (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility relates to the believability of the findings and therefore the confidence in them. In this study credibility was assured using interviews with multiple participants and member checks. Transferability was more difficult to achieve because the participants represented one local authority. However, the inclusion of male and female participants, with varied years of headship experience in both primary and secondary school, ensured that there was a degree of transferability.

Greenfield's (2015) model of resilience was used to shape the interview questions. The interviews explored factors that influenced the participants' resilience. These questions are listed below:

- What do you understand by resilience?
- What personal factors influence your resilience?
- What actions do you take to improve your resilience?
- What school-related factors influence your resilience?
- What are the challenges of headship?
- How does the wider context (for example, policy) influence your resilience?

Table 1. Participants.

Participant	Gender	Years of Headship	Number of Headships	School phase	Mental Health status	Length of interview audio recording
HT1	Female	1–5 years	1	Secondary (11–16)	Good	30 minutes
HT2	Female	1–5 years	1	Primary (4–11)	Poor	36 minutes
HT3	Male	1–5 years	1	Primary (4–11)	Poor	20 minutes
HT4	Male	6–10 years	2	Junior (7–11)	Poor	27 minutes
HT5	Male	21–30 years	1	Primary (4–11)	Good	32 minutes
HT6	Female	11–20 years	2	Junior (7–11)	Poor	31 minutes
HT7	Female	6–10 years	3	Infant (4–7)	Good	29 minutes
HT8	Female	6–10 years	1	Primary (4–11)	Good	26 minutes
HT9	Male	6–10 years	2	Secondary (11–16)	Good	23 minutes
HT10	Female	11–20 years	2	Primary (4–11)	Poor	30 minutes
HT11	Female	6–10 years	1	Primary (4–11)	Good	32 minutes
HT12	Female	1–5 years	1	Primary and secondary (4–16)	Good	30 minutes
HT13	Female	6–10 years	1	Infant (4–7)	Poor	25 minutes
HT14	Male	6–10 years	2	Primary and secondary (4–16)	Good	23 minutes
HT15	Female	6–10 years	2	Secondary (11–16)	Good	26 minutes
HT16	Male	1–5 years	1	Primary (4–11)	Good	31 minutes

Table 2. Assigning themes to data.

Theme	Data
Understandings of resilience	<i>My resilience goes up and down depending on the challenges (HT5) – Dynamic</i> <i>I draw on my family and friends when I am experiencing challenges (HT7)- Relational</i>
Internal and external factors	<i>I know that I am doing a good job (HT 1)- Self-efficacy: internal motivator</i> <i>I have secured two successful inspection outcomes (HT12) – External motivators</i>
Relationships	<i>But the biggest thing is humor, we have such a laugh at work. It's a bit like a hobby now, I look forward to coming to work. (HT5)</i>
Challenges	<i>My budget was cut and I had to issue redundancy notices. That was a difficult time and my resilience was rock bottom. (HT5)</i>
Performance Management	<i>Performance management has been ineffective. I had targets but these were not revisited until after Easter. This didn't motivate me, and it did not support my resilience. There should be on-going dialogue. We have revised it for next year. (HT14)</i>
Professional development	<i>I've been coached and found it very effective. (HT6)</i>

The telephone interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Audio recordings were transferred from the recording device and held securely on password protected software alongside the transcripts. Thematic analysis was conducted on the transcripts using Braun and Clarke (2006) six-step framework. Firstly, we became familiar with the data through reading and re-reading the transcripts. We then generated the initial codes and searched for themes. We checked the themes against the data before finally defining and naming them. We then used these to structure the findings.

Findings and discussion

The key findings are presented below under themes. The themes have been organized into participants' understandings of resilience, internal and external factors, actions, relationships, challenges, performance management and professional development. An example of assigning themes to data is shown in Table 2.

Understandings of resilience

Rather than viewing resilience as a fixed trait (Masten & Garmezy, 1985), participants with good mental health conceptualized resilience as fluid (Luthar, 2006; Roffey, 2017; Stephens, 2013). They recognized the relational aspect of resilience through drawing on networks of support to increase their capacity to respond to difficult professional challenges:

My resilience goes up and down depending on the challenges I face and the support that is available to me. (HT5)

I draw on my family and friends when I am experiencing challenges. They help me to get through difficult times. (HT7)

We support each other in school. We are a strong team. We get through most things together. (HT9)

The ability to 'push through' regardless of circumstances is a dominant theme in the literature on resilience (Reyes et al., 2015) but this 'bounce-back' perspective only offers a partial understanding of resilience. The participants (particularly HT7 and HT9)

demonstrated that resilience is not just about ‘pushing through’ adversity or ‘bouncing-back’ from it. They recognized that reaching out for support from family, friends and colleagues is a fundamental aspect of resilience. Some (for example, HT5) recognized the dynamic nature of resilience in that it is influenced by a variety of factors, including the extent of the challenges that one is faced with.

Internal and external factors

In line with Greenfield’s (2015) model, participants with good mental health were more likely to draw on their own sense of hope or sense of purpose to increase their resilience than participants with poor mental health:

I have great faith. I use prayer a lot, particularly in the car on the way to work, and this gives me a lot of comfort and fortifies my strength for the day ahead. (HT11)

For me, one of the lucky things is that we are a church school, so we can come back to church values as to why we are doing the job. (HT5)

I am guided by my purpose of wanting the very best for the children in my care. (HT7)

Some participants with good mental health also drew on their high self-efficacy to maintain resilience:

I have secured two successful inspection outcomes, so this helps me to stay resilient when things get tough. (HT12)

I know that I am doing a good job. The staff are happy, the children are happy, and we get great results. We have no complaints from parents. (HT1)

McIntosh and Shaw (2017) identify internal factors which influence resilience. Internal factors include emotional control, goal setting and a positive outlook. The concept of ‘growth mindset’ (Dweck, 1999) is helpful here in relation to positive thinking, learning from experience and moving forwards. Participants with good mental health were more likely to demonstrate these characteristics:

I always try to respond to challenging situations by staying calm. I think that it is my role as a leader to stay calm, especially during inspections. (HT7)

Focusing on achieving small goals helps me to deal with challenges. If I can go home each day knowing that I have achieved something, then I can cope with my job. I try to focus on how I can improve in my job and what I am learning rather than focusing on the negatives. I apply the same principle to my staff too. We focus on how to improve rather than obsessing on what we are not as good at. (HT9)

In contrast, those with poor mental health tended to focus on the challenges that they faced, thus focusing more on the external factors which influenced their resilience. Participants demonstrated an understanding that resilience is not solely an internal characteristic but is influenced by external factors such as heavy workloads associated with the job of being a headteacher. Participants with poor mental health focused more on the challenges associated with headship and the effect of these on their resilience:

Usually I'm quite a resilient person. I have bounced back several times. But this is one of the worst years I think I've ever had. I don't know how I'm still here, still smiling. It just shows we are a very resilient group of people as Headteachers. It's not that we don't have the passion, but its other people's jobs we have to do that's not our main purpose. Management continually takes over the leadership. I can't get into the classroom to monitor and ensure the children's learning is the standard that I want it to be. (HT2)

Criticism from parents, Ofsted and the local authority have taken their toll on my resilience. (HT4)

Personally, there seems to be this concept that you can teach resilience, most headteachers are resilient but it's just not manageable what we are being asked to do. Therefore, our health, life, relationships suffer. We become ill and people assume that we are not resilient. I've seen some really resilient teachers go under. We are told what to do by the powers above and have little control or not as much control as people assume. But it's the job, not that people don't have resilience. (HT6)

My resilience is low. We are a requires improvement school, we have high staff and pupil turnover and I get no support from the local authority. (HT4)

This year we have had numerous parental complaints. It wears you down. (HT6)

It appears that participants with poor mental health demonstrated an external rather than an internal locus of control. Locus of control theory (Rotter, 1966) suggests that individuals have either an internal or external locus of control. Individuals with an internal locus of control believe that they have control of their own destiny and that they have the capacity to influence things that happen to them. In contrast, individuals with an external locus of control believe that external factors largely influence their lives. Participants with good mental health focused on setting and achieving goals and this was supported by ongoing reflection and review. In contrast, participants with poor mental health focused on the factors which were often outside of their control (for example, school inspections, parental complaints and restrictions to school budgets) rather than focusing on the actions they might take to address the challenges which they were experiencing.

Actions

Participants with good mental health identified various actions that supported their resilience. In the main, these focused on relaxation activities (HT7), professional development (HT9) and strategies to reduce workload (HT16).

My main one is yoga. I do it twice a day, I get up really early in the morning and when I come in on a night. I spend a lot of time thinking about being healthy, eating well, I drink very little alcohol, things like walking the dog are good stress busters. (HT7)

The induction process for new Headteachers is fantastic, it has improved. It wasn't good before but the local authority has listened to previous Headteachers. I have received professional development on health and safety and Ofsted, governance. In the induction programme we meet once a term for a year. (HT9)

I have a good relationship with my previous head so I can speak to them and it helps because they are in a different local authority. (HT16)

Greenfield's (2015) model identifies a broader range of strategies which were utilized by the participants with good mental health, but not by those with poor mental health. These include problem-solving, reflection and reframing:

We use the last staff meeting of each half-term to reflect on what we have achieved and what we need to do next. (HT9)

Every time I experience something challenging, I try to put it into perspective. Often issues seem bigger than they really are, and I try not to let small things grow out of all proportion. I always try to learn from challenging experiences by thinking what can I take from this to make me more effective in the future? (HT11)

Participants with good mental health tended to reach out to others to support the process of reflection. For example,

I have a weekly reflection session with my Chair of Governors, and this really helps me to pinpoint what is going well and what I need to focus on. (HT5)

In contrast, participants with poor mental health tended to become absorbed in challenging situations to the extent that they could not see beyond these. Sometimes the challenges that they experienced had a paralyzing effect:

Complaints from staff and parents grind me down. They stop me from focusing on my job and I take them home with me. I can't sleep at night because I think about them too much. (HT10)

When we are due for an inspection, that is all I can think about. I lose sight of what really matters. (HT6)

If I switch my e-mails on and there is a complaint from a parent, I take it personally and it ruins my day. It is all I can think about. (HT4)

Most participants identified protecting personal time as a key strategy for increasing resilience and improving wellbeing, for example:

I try to switch emails off at weekends. I don't have them 'on tap'. If I need to send e-mails on a weekend, I put them on a timer so they only go out during work time. (HT16)

Relationships

In line with Greenfield's (2015) model, participants identified how relational factors impacted on their resilience. Participants with good mental health talked about the importance of talking to other colleagues openly, maintaining humor and being open with colleagues about their own strengths and weaknesses:

I'm a very open Headteacher and I have experienced staff. I have no problem saying, 'at the moment I am tired or I'm finding difficulty with this.' I can talk to colleagues. I don't pretend I'm this, "nothing fazes me I can do it all", kind of guy. I pick up the phone to the advisors and the hub. I will ask for help when needed. (HT1)

I have a strong, large team and we meet every Friday morning to talk about school issues. It keeps me on track. It makes me very secure in what we are doing. But the biggest thing is humour, we have such a laugh at work. It's a bit like a hobby now, I look forward to coming to work. (HT5)

Social capital theory focuses on the ways in which individuals establish and maintain social relationships (Putnam, 2001). Social capital is defined as the ‘resources embedded in a social structure which are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive action’ (Lin, 2001, p. 12) Social networks are vitally important to individuals because humans are hard-wired for social connection (Roffey, 2017). Individuals are interdependent beings and social networks can strengthen resilience, reduce stress and anxiety, particularly in times of adversity (Roffey, 2017). Participants with good mental health valued the social connections that they had formed within their schools and they drew on these heavily to support their resilience. They also emphasised the importance of a broader range of social relationships in supporting their resilience, including support from friends, family and positive relationships with students. Conversely, participants with poor mental health tended not to reach out for support from others:

I worry that if I talk to others about my challenges, that people will think I can't cope. I would never reach out for support from the local authority. I could lose my job. (HT10)

I must be strong. I can't show any sign of weakness, especially to my staff or to parents. It would undermine my credibility as a leader. I don't always talk to my family, because if they knew I was struggling, they would worry about me. (HT13)

I would never talk to other Heads about my weaknesses. It would spread like a wild fire. (HT6)

Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) posits that relatedness is a key psychological need. Greenfield (2015) also identifies relational factors which influence resilience. Building connectedness in the workplace therefore not only influences resilience, it influences wellbeing. Participants with good mental health demonstrated higher levels of connectedness and increased levels of than those with poor mental health. Restricting opportunities for headteachers to develop connections with other headteachers therefore seems counter-productive. Developing workplaces which embrace human connectivity is therefore a logical way of increasing headteacher resilience.

Challenges

Jameson (2014) provides one of the few accounts of resilience from a systemic perspective. Headship is a challenging role which requires leaders to navigate external pressures (legislation, inspection, policy, finances etc) as well as responding to the pressures from governors, parents, students, staff and other key stakeholders. The broader educational policy climate can also influence headteacher resilience.

Experience within school leadership roles prior to headship was identified as a key factor which supported heads to address challenges:

I've been quite fortunate in coming through a route to headship that has given me a considerable amount of training. I've moved through the school system, up through a range of leadership roles and this has made me feel a bit more resilient. I've seen either first or second hand most situations. Whereas a lot of Headteachers are coming straight out of the classroom, and that can be quite shocking and difficult. Very few schools have an assistant head or are in a position where you can get a taste for things. (HT2)

Challenges associated with school inspection dominated participants' accounts:

You are only as good as your last inspection. If you have a bad inspection it can seriously affect your resilience because you can lose your job. (HT4)

One minute the school is outstanding. Then the goalposts change and suddenly it is given a notice to improve. That can really knock you down. (HT8)

The stress of managing a school budget was also identified by over half of the participants:

All of a sudden you are in charge of a budget and people's livelihood and contracts, and that's where a lot of the stress comes from. My budget was cut and I had to issue redundancy notices. That was a difficult time and my resilience was rock bottom. (HT5)

The experiences of the participants can be analyzed using self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In cases where autonomy was restricted the participants demonstrated an external locus of control. For example, both HT4 and HT8 positioned themselves as passive rather than active agents in relation to school inspection. Their comments suggest that they felt that they had no control over the outcomes of the school inspection outcomes. Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) posits that autonomy is a key psychological need which is a pre-requisite for learning, motivation and wellness. HT5 also demonstrated a lack of autonomy in relation to the cuts to the school budget, again reflecting an external locus of control. Lack of ability to act and effect change is also an aspect that Greenfield (2015) links to teacher resilience. Improving headteacher autonomy could therefore influence resilience and should therefore be a key consideration of governors, local authorities and leaders of Multi-Academy Trusts.

Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) also identifies competence as a key psychological need. If there is optimal challenge, individuals can thrive within the workplace but if there is insufficient challenge or the challenge is too great, this can lead to poor wellbeing. Greenfield's (2015) model also identifies a relationship between the level of challenge and an individual's resilience. Getting the level of challenge just right therefore increases learning, motivation and wellness (Deci & Ryan, 1985) but also resilience. This has implications for headteacher performance management, a process through which challenges are often established.

Performance management

The terms 'performance management', 'appraisal', 'evaluation' and 'review' are often used interchangeably (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019). However, irrespective of terminology, headteacher performance management generally encompasses two dimensions: the development of headteacher capacity and accountability for performance (Davis et al., 2011; James & Colebourne, 2004).

All participants highlighted the role of performance management in supporting their resilience but their experiences of it were mixed. They emphasized the importance of performance management being an on-going process rather than a one-off event:

Performance management has been ineffective. I had targets but these were not revisited until after Easter. This didn't motivate me and it did not support my resilience. There should be on-going dialogue. We have revised it for next year. (HT14)

In addition, participants with good mental health tended to emphasize the need for the process to offer support and challenge. In England, school Governing Bodies perform a significant role in the management of headteacher performance. It has been emphasized that ‘striking the right balance between support and challenge highlights the importance of the underpinning relationships’ (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019, p. 178). Effective performance management hinges on a combination of robust challenge and support, both of which are accompanied by constructive dialogue, relational trust, situational awareness and a systems perspective (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019).

From our perspective, it’s really tight, but I brought it with me. It involves three governors and an external consultant, it’s quite rigorous but supportive and that support helps me to stay resilient. (HT7)

I expect to be challenged, otherwise I won’t improve. However, the combination of support and challenge is also important. (HT1)

Although no participants resented being challenged, those with poor mental health tended to emphasize the need for contextual factors to be considered when setting targets:

Often, I am set targets which are not realistic. I have been told to get 92% of my Year 6 cohort to age-related expectations. It is impossible, given their starting points. (HT6)

I am not afraid of being challenged. I challenge my staff every day. But when it comes to being set targets by people doing my performance management, I expect them to consider my knowledge of the school, its context and my knowledge of the staff. (HT3)

Despite the widespread implementation of teacher and headteacher performance management in the UK education system, international research has identified a lack of understanding of the processes and outcomes of the performance management of senior school leaders (Davis et al., 2011; Goldring et al., 2009; Radinger, 2014). Some participants (for example, HT5) questioned the role of governing body involvement in the process of performance management and opened up debate about whether the process should be led by headteachers who understand what the role entails:

I’ve always found it very strange that the governors are the ultimate ones that do my appraisal as they know nothing about my job. They do buy in an advisor, but at the end of the day they are the decision makers. You wouldn’t get that in another industry. You wouldn’t get three people off the street and talk about targets; it doesn’t make sense. It should be done by our peers. (HT5)

Participants acknowledged that although checks and balances would need to be implemented to ensure that the process is sufficiently robust, they wanted their performance to be managed by other headteachers rather than by colleagues from the governing body. Some participants identified the relationship between effective performance management and their own resilience and the need for ongoing dialogue. Although some participants had experience of external consultants being involved in the process, this was not the case for all. Several participants thought that performance management should be conducted by a serving headteacher, employed in a similar school and dealing with similar day-to-day challenges. Although research has identified the importance of taking into account the situational context (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019) which headteachers are working in,

there is limited emphasis in the existing literature on what this entails, particularly for headteachers who are working in challenging schools or where staffing issues are a concern.

Professional development

All participants agreed that high quality professional development which is led by other headteachers, rather than external consultants, was critical to supporting their resilience:

Professional development is on and off at the moment. It's high on everyone's agenda. There have been some changes but not enough. It needs to be quadrupled. I want it to be led by other heads who have been there and done it and have addressed the challenges that I am facing. (HT10)

Some participants identified the value of coaching as a professional development tool to support resilience.

I've been coached and found it very effective. At the same time, you're conscious you're putting more work onto another Headteacher. However, that's the kind of workload you don't mind. (HT6)

I'm a big supporter of coaching. The art of conversation is about growth, it is important to have professional conversations even when people are really busy. It gives you time to reflect. It is a positive experience. My coach reflected back what I was thinking and gave me professional endorsement. (HT9)

One participant (HT11) emphasized the importance of external professional supervision. This approach is common in other professions including health-related and social care professions, but it is not common in education. This is despite the fact that headteachers are required to address complex child and family circumstances and sometimes have to make decisions which have far-reaching consequences:

Access to resources such as external professional supervisors is the best option because if you have someone to talk to face-to-face it is more powerful than e-mail support and other forms of support. However, it has to be non-judgemental and non-threatening. (HT11)

The term 'coaching' is used in a variety of professions and is typically associated with promoting professional reflection and growth without guided instruction (Sardar & Galdames, 2018). It is an ambiguous term which means various things to different people. However, it is generally accepted that the process of coaching involves self-learning (Lane, 2010) and self-development (Coates, 2008).

Currently, it has been well reported that headteachers face a range of challenges including isolation, work-life balance, task management and stress during the implementation of change (Stephenson & Bauer, 2010). According to Kelly and Saunders (2010) 'contemporary headship is a complex, demanding and multifaceted job with wide-ranging accountabilities' (p. 129). Challenges such as loneliness (López et al., 2012), work-life balance (Bisschoff & Watts, 2013), stress and frustration, task and time management (Hobson, 2003) and rapid change in educational policies (Starr, 2011) can result in demotivation.

It was clear that the participants attributed significant value to coaching. It was also evident that access to coaching was variable across the participants. Although some had

benefitted from coaching, this was mainly due to the fact that they had sourced the opportunity themselves rather than it being offered to them. As the relationship between coaching and headteacher resilience has been established in research (Sardar & Galdames, 2018), the provision of coaching as an entitlement, rather than a choice, for headteachers, is likely to improve resilience, motivation and retention.

Greenfield (2015) locates professional development under actions within his conceptual model of teacher resilience. However, this places the onus on the individual to access opportunities that support professional learning. In contrast, our participants emphasized the importance of professional development through coaching, supervision and other forms of professional learning being provided rather than having to seek such opportunities.

Reconceptualizing the model

Our data demonstrate that Greenfield's (2015) model of teacher resilience can be adapted to produce a revised conceptual framework which outlines the factors which influence headteacher resilience. This is presented in Figure 2.

The participants' resilience and mental health was influenced by a range of factors. These included:

- Individual factors (hope, sense of purpose; self-efficacy and actions).
- Relational factors (personal and school-related) and the extent of the challenges the leaders faced.
- Access to high quality continuing professional development (CPD) through coaching, external professional supervision and other forms of professional learning led by peers was also viewed as being essential in supporting resilience. We have separated this out in the model to emphasize its importance.

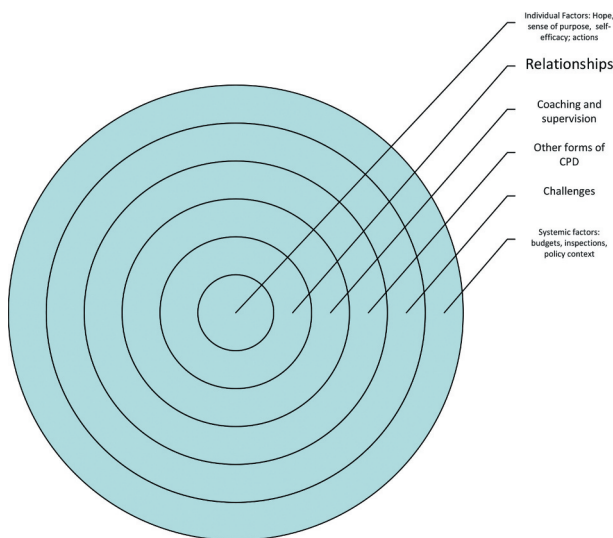


Figure 2. Headteacher resilience: a suggested model.

- The challenges that they faced (for example, parental resistance).
- Broader systemic factors (school inspections, budgets and educational policy) also impacted on the participants' resilience.

Each layer in [Figure 2](#) can have a positive or negative impact on mental health. For example, having a sense of purpose, high self-efficacy and taking action can result in high levels of resilience and good mental health, a lack of these can also have a detrimental impact on both. Access to supportive social networks can increase resilience and result in good mental health but exposure to negative relationships with colleagues or an inability to access support from others (personally or professionally) can lead to a decline in both resilience and mental health. Access to high quality professional development can have a positive impact on resilience and mental health whilst lack of opportunities to access professional development can impact detrimentally on both. Where challenges in relation to parental resistance, school budgets, schools inspections and the broader educational policy climate are considered too great, this can impact negatively on mental health and resilience but reasonable levels of challenge might also have a positive impact on both.

Although the model in [Figure 2](#) has similarities with the model in [Figure 1](#), this revised model separates out CPD as a separate protective layer which supported the resilience of the participants. To the best of our knowledge this is the first adaptation of Greenfield's (2015) model. [Figure 2](#) therefore represents our contribution to knowledge.

Conclusion

This study has explored the factors which have influenced resiliency in headteachers. Drawing on the work of Deci and Ryan (1985) we have explored the contribution of autonomy, competence and relatedness to resilience. We have argued that when headteachers have autonomy (internal locus of control), optimal challenge (competence) and when they experience relatedness through connections, these conditions allow them to thrive.

The data demonstrate that access to professional learning is a protective characteristic which supports resilience. To emphasize the important role of coaching and professional supervision in supporting headteacher resilience, we have included this as a separate layer within our proposed model of resilience. The use of coaching, external professional supervision and professional development led by headteachers are strategies which participants particularly valued in this study. Participants emphasized the importance of performance management processes being peer-led rather than being implemented by governors or other professionals who have a limited understanding of the role. We have emphasized the importance of the performance management process being conducted by headteachers who are employed in similar school contexts so that they understand the challenges that headteachers are experiencing. However, we have also emphasized the need for the process to be rigorous. As far as we are aware, this is the first study to apply Greenfield's (2015) model of teacher resilience to headteachers and we believe that this is the first adaptation of Greenfield's (2015) model.

In this study participants with good mental health tended to demonstrate a sense of hope and purpose. They were focused on achieving goals and moving forward. In

contrast, those with poor mental health often became absorbed in the challenges that they faced, and this prevented them from focusing on school improvement. Participants with poor mental health often blamed external factors for negatively impacting on their resilience. In contrast, participants with good mental health often engaged in regular reflection and review and sometimes this was a collaborative activity with the whole staff team. Participants with good mental health often reached out for support from others and were more willing to talk to colleagues and family members about the challenges they were experiencing in their professional roles. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to have explored resilience in headteachers with good and poor mental health.

In conclusion, the study supports the use of external professional supervision and professional coaching for head teachers to support both their mental health and resilience. We recognize that this was relatively small sample of participants from one local authority and consequently this means that the findings may not be generalizable. With hindsight, we also acknowledge that the decision to ask participants to categorize their mental health into either good or poor was too simplistic, given that mental health exists along a spectrum, is dynamic and dependent upon the contexts in which individuals operate. For school leaders and teachers, it also fluctuates at specific points during the academic year, and is particularly adversely affected during times when there are spikes in workload.

Data availability statement

The data set is held on Leeds Beckett University's password protected electronic storage system. www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Disclosure statement

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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PAPER 5

The impact of peer mentoring on students' physical activity and mental health

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Abstract

Purpose – A peer-mentoring scheme was implemented in a secondary school using a physical activity (PA) intervention to improve mental health outcomes of students who were at risk of developing mental ill health. These students are referred to as mentees. The evaluation was a qualitative design using focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The participants reported an increase in PA in both peer mentors and mentees. By the end of the project many of the mentees recognised that they had increased their levels of PA, they were more aware of the benefits of PA and the relationship between PA and their mental health. In addition, mentees reported feeling more confident and were more confident in forming social relationships. Peer mentors reported developing many leadership skills during the project. These included improved communication, confidence, empathy for others, relationship building and improved self-awareness. The paper aims to discuss these issues.

Design/methodology/approach – Qualitative data were primarily collected from nine case study schools. Each visit included interviews with peer mentors, mentees and the Wellbeing Champion.

Findings – Mentees developed improved social confidence and were generally more positive after completing the intervention. Mentors developed leadership skills and greater empathy for their peers.

Originality/value – There is limited research on school-based PA interventions using peer mentoring to improve students' mental health.

Keywords Mental health, Physical activity, Peer mentoring

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

There is evidence that links declining physical and emotional wellbeing of young people with an increasing tendency for the development of mental health issues (MHF, 2016a, b). This is particularly so when facing the increased burden of exam-related stress and anxiety, the prospect of paid employment or further education and the expectations placed on young people by parents and schools. Physical activity (PA) and good mental health are therefore interlinked, as are higher levels of academic achievement and overall wellbeing.

It is currently estimated that 10 per cent of children in England aged 5–16 have a clinically diagnosable mental health problem, (MHF, 2016a, b). The World Health Organisation (2014) defines mental health as:

[...] a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

The project adopted this definition of mental health by focusing on the role of PA in improving mental and social wellbeing through the use of peer mentors.

This article summarises the literature on PA and mental health and presents some key literature which examines the role of peer mentoring in improving mental health in young

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people. Following this, a school-based intervention which combined PA with peer mentoring is described and the outcomes of the intervention are reported.

Literature

Arguably, addressing mental health in isolation from other aspects of wellbeing is at best limited. A more effective approach is to combine PA with good mental health and wellbeing practices. Both the physical and mental benefits of engaging in PA for adults as well as children and young people, are well documented and widely and internationally accepted (Chekroud *et al.*, 2018; McMahan *et al.*, 2017).

The link between PA and wellbeing has long been established in many countries. For example, Chen *et al.* (2005) found that Japanese children were more likely to possess higher health-related quality of life (HRQOL) or what we might also term wellbeing. More recently, Breslin *et al.* (2016) who explored connections between moderate to vigorous intensity physical exercise (MVPA) and the wellbeing of 673 children aged 8 and 9 in Ireland from socially disadvantaged backgrounds found:

Children who met the MVPA guidelines had higher wellbeing scores than those children who did not. Specifically, every dimension of wellbeing was significantly associated with MVPA; physical wellbeing, psychological wellbeing, parent relations and autonomy, social support and school environment. (Breslin *et al.*, 2016, p. 12)

Further, McMahan *et al.* (2017, p. 120) in their study looking at European adolescence and PA concluded “[...] that moderately increasing activity in inactive adolescents could result in a meaningful improvement in well-being”. Much of the recent work in this area highlights the benefits of PA on children’s wellbeing (Vella *et al.*, 2016; Tyler *et al.*, 2016).

Peer mentoring and mental health

Peer support is neither a new concept nor is it specific to the UK (UK). It was first employed in the USA in the 1970s, and it has been used in countries such as Canada and Australia since the 1980s. Peer support is now used widely in several countries across the world, including the UK, Italy, Spain, Finland, Japan, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Norway, the Netherlands and South Africa (Coleman *et al.*, 2017). Research on its effectiveness is inconclusive, largely because a wide range of models exist, which are operationalised differently, and programmes are established to measure a variety of outcomes (Coleman *et al.*, 2017). Programmes of peer support can range from one-to-one, group and online support. Although the evidence on the effectiveness of peer-mentoring schemes is largely inconclusive (Weare and Nind, 2011), research on the use of peer mentoring in PA demonstrates that it can improve outcomes (Smith and Petosa, 2016).

Structured peer-mentoring programmes focus on skill-building across several sessions (Karcher and Hansen, 2014). Sessions are typically led by older peers who have demonstrated positive character traits including strong interpersonal skills, strength of character, empathy of others, the ability to be supportive and flexible, and the ability to demonstrate a commitment to projects and people (Karcher, 2012). Peer mentors must be able to establish friendships, have good communication skills, strong listening skills and good problem-solving skills (Karcher, 2012). Structured peer mentoring provides mentees with opportunities to interact with others outside their immediate peer group (Smith and Petosa, 2016). It has been argued that:

For adolescents lacking exercise self-efficacy, the social support, guidance, and role modelling provided through structured peer mentoring and the broader friendship social networks resulting from mentoring groups strengthens their personal beliefs about their own capacity to begin and ultimately sustain daily physical activity and exercise. (Smith and Petosa, 2016, p. 316)

Evidence suggests that while peer-mentoring programmes have been implemented to strengthen interpersonal connectedness between young people, their friends, and schools (Karcher, 2012), peer-mentoring programmes are more effective when the mentors are not drawn from their immediate friendship group. It has been emphasised that peer mentors should be at least two years older than their assigned mentee; this age gap is important for maintaining boundaries in the relationship (Karcher, 2012).

According to Smith and Petosa (2016, p. 316):

Peer mentors provide personal support and guidance to these overcoming environmental, social, and psychological barriers, leading to improved adherence to physical activity and increased peer resources to sustain physical activity [...] Through structured peer mentoring, physical activity behaviour as a social norm is strengthened by connectedness with others who care about being physically active.

Literature suggests that peer mentoring is an effective tool to increase PA in young people. Studies have found that the use of trained peer mentors leads to increased PA and improved health outcomes in mentees, compared to teacher-led sessions (Smith, 2011; Smith and Holloman, 2013). In the study conducted by Smith and Holloman (2013), a randomised control trial was conducted which compared the effectiveness of peer-led sessions compared with teacher-led sessions. The peer-led group increased their PA behaviours, compared with the teacher-led group, which resulted in no improved behavioural or health outcomes. Research has also demonstrated that peer mentoring improves both attitudes and self-efficacy towards PA (Smith, 2011).

Research also suggests that there are several key characteristics of effective peer support programmes, specifically those which focus on mental health and wellbeing. First, commitment from the senior leadership team is essential (Houlston and Smith, 2009) to the success of programmes. Thus, where senior school leaders demonstrate a strategic commitment to improving mental health outcomes for young people, programmes are more likely to be effective. Second, the programme needs to be led and managed by a dedicated member of staff (James, 2011), who can monitor the quality of the programme, ensure that it is running smoothly and provide support to the peer mentors as well as the mentees. However, Cowie and Wallace (2000) and Smith and Watson (2004) have also highlighted that it is a risk for a scheme to rely on a single coordinator. Third, peer-mentoring programmes are more likely to be effective if they are integrated into other school activities rather than being implemented separately (Weare, 2015). Finally, effective marketing of the scheme and celebration events for participants, which include rewards, can give the scheme status and overcome stigma (MBF, 2011).

Other aspects which make programmes effective have also been identified in the literature. The importance of investing funding into the scheme has been noted (Cowie and Wallace, 2000). Additionally, the benefits of developing schemes which have been co-produced with young people have been highlighted by Houlston and Smith (2009). The importance of monitoring and evaluating peer-mentoring schemes has also been emphasised by Parsons *et al.* (2008) to support continual improvement of the scheme. In addition to providing structured training for peer mentors (Cowie and Hutson, 2005), it is important for scheme organisers to ensure that support is offered to peer mentors throughout the duration of programmes (James, 2011).

Methodology

A peer-mentoring scheme was implemented across secondary schools nationally in England during 2017–2018. Peer Mentors were selected to lead small groups of younger peers (mentees) through engaging them in PA. They were required to complete a training session with an athlete coach. The peer mentors were recruited to the project based on their maturity and/or their experiences of mental ill health. The mentees were selected to

participate in this intervention because they had been identified as having social, emotional and/or mental health needs. The evaluation adopted a qualitative design and data were gathered using focus groups with mentors and mentees and semi-structured interviews with teachers who led the intervention. Data were collected over a six-month period between February and July 2018.

Participants

A total of 1,067 young people participated in the intervention; 346 peer mentors and 721 mentees. Peer mentors were more likely to be girls than boys (57 per cent compared to 43 per cent). In total, 22 per cent of peer mentors were also from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups. The peer mentors were aged between 15 and 18. The mentees were twice as likely than the peer mentors to have special educational needs and/or disabilities (44 per cent compared to 22 per cent). The mentees were aged between 12 and 14. In total, 29 secondary schools from across England took part in the project. Some ran the project in the spring term, some in the summer term and some (at least three schools) ran it in both terms with two sets of young people.

Qualitative data collection

Qualitative data were primarily collected from nine case study schools. Each school received two visits from a member of the research team, one near the start of the project and one near the end. Each visit included interviews with peer mentors, mentees and the Wellbeing Champion. The case study schools were selected for geographical convenience; three were located in the East Midlands, three in the North East and three in the North West. Two focus groups were conducted in each school; one with the peer mentors and one with the mentees. In addition, the teacher who was responsible for leading the project was interviewed using a semi-structured interview. Interview schedules are shown in [Appendix](#). The focus groups and individual interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were coded to identify key themes.

Research questions

The evaluation sought to ascertain:

- What was the impact of the intervention on the mentees?
- What were the benefits (if any) to peer mentors?

Contribution

Whilst studies have examined the relationship between PA and mental health and separate studies have examined the role of peer mentoring in mental health, this study combines the two by examining the role of peer mentoring in PA to support young people with mental ill health.

Results

The data indicate that the intervention had positive effects on both the mentees and the mentors. Mentors identified how it had led to increased confidence and the development of leadership skills and mentees reported increased social confidence. The themes resulting from the analysis are presented below.

Leadership

The evidence suggests that for the majority of peer mentors taking part, the project had led to the development of leadership skills. Qualitative data from the focus groups reveal a

range of benefits to peer mentors, including improved social confidence, empathy and the development of leadership skills:

It has helped me to talk to people more because I was not good at talking to people. I was not very good at talking to people at home and this has helped to improve my confidence. (Peer Mentor)

This is an amazing project to take part in that should be run across multiple year groups. It has not only helped me to develop my mentoring and leadership skills but has helped different year groups to integrate and connect in a positive way. (Peer Mentor)

When I see their achievements, it gives me a bit of a buzz. I enjoy watching my group succeed. (Peer Mentor)

I am enjoying being a coach. I have become better at making sure they follow my instructions by demonstrating a task and giving them clear instructions. (Peer Mentor)

Qualitative data from the interviews demonstrate that mentees had understood the role of PA in managing and supporting their own mental health:

I feel so much better after doing physical activity that I have started to do a lot more of it. I enjoy it now a lot more than before the project. Sometimes, now when I feel sad I go for a walk or I go out on my bike and I feel a lot better. Before I just used to sit in my room and continue being sad. (Mentee)

I have realised that doing physical activity makes me happier. It lifts my mood. In the last few weeks since I have done this project I have started to do a lot more physical activity and I am happier. It stops me feeling stressed and worried. (Mentee)

Physical activity can make you feel better. If you feel bad about your body because you are fat, then you can do some physical activity, and this will make you feel better about your body. (Mentee)

When you are feeling lonely sport is good because you have to mix with other people and work as part of a team. (Mentee)

Confidence

It was evident through the focus groups with mentors and the semi-structured interviews with lead teachers that confidence was one attribute that the intervention helped to develop in mentors and mentees. For mentors, they gained confidence in planning and organising activities, building relationships with others and managing behaviour. The mentors felt that they would benefit from this improved confidence in the future. The mentees felt more confident to try new activities and talk about their feelings with their mentors:

I have seen them all grow in confidence and it is lovely to see this. The mentors are now developing the confidence to use their own initiative. The mentees are more confident to try out activities and are more willing to take risks. (Lead Teacher)

I intend to train to become a teacher. I am now confident in planning activities and managing behaviour and this has made me feel more confident about going to university for a teacher training interview. (Peer Mentor)

Mood

The interviews and focus groups with the mentees and lead teachers demonstrated that the mentees felt happier as a result of the intervention and they had a better awareness of how

to influence their own mood. Some talked about how their own self-concept had improved as a result of their participation:

If I'm feeling sad, I now just go for a run or a walk. I sometimes play my music to take my mind off things but I don't just sit there feeling sorry for myself. (Mentee)

I used to feel sorry for myself a lot but now I know that I can achieve something. I am really pleased with myself and I know that I can be good at sport now. (Mentee)

I have seen a big difference in the mood of some of these mentors. They are generally happier around school and because of this their behaviour has improved and they are not getting into trouble. (Lead Teacher)

Relationships

The interviews and focus groups with the mentees and lead teachers indicated that they had become better at forming relationships as a result of the intervention:

I have enjoyed being mentored by someone who is just a bit older than me. I have made new friends. Now I know loads of people but before I hardly knew anyone. (Mentee)

The mentees have really bonded with their group. They have developed friendships with people who they didn't know and some of them meet together outside of lessons and even after school. (Lead Teacher)

Facilitators

The lead teachers commented on the importance of the project being properly led and managed in the school and the necessity to gain "buy-in" from other members of staff:

This project has worked so well because I have been released from teaching. This has enabled me to plan and coordinate the project properly and to make sure that training sessions and meetings take place. (Lead Teacher)

Some of the peer mentors also highlighted the importance of whole school "buy-in" to the project:

We missed a few classes to attend training but luckily the teachers went through the work we had missed at another time so we didn't get behind. (Peer Mentor)

Challenges

The lead teachers identified several challenges which impacted on the project:

- finding a mutually convenient time for peer mentors to meet to plan activities was challenging;
- there was a delay in starting because the funding did not come through;
- teachers were reluctant to release peer mentors and mentees from timetabled classes; and
- the need for continued mentor training not being accounted for by other members of school staff.

Discussion

The findings were consistent with the literature in that in schools which prioritised the scheme as part of whole school improvement the scheme were more successful. Where the senior leadership team was invested in the programme this resulted in the programme being more

successful (Houlston and Smith, 2009). Where programmes were effectively led and managed by a dedicated member of staff who was able to monitor the quality of the programme, ensure that it was running smoothly and provide support to the peer mentors as well as the mentees, programmes were more effective (James, 2011). The training of the peer mentors was critical to the quality of the scheme and this resulted in increased PA and improved health outcomes in mentees (Smith, 2011; Smith and Holloman, 2013). The mentees in particular demonstrated improved attitudes and self-efficacy towards PA (Smith, 2011).

The project led to several benefits for peer mentors and mentees. The mentors developed leadership skills as a result of the autonomy they were given for planning and organising activities. However, initially, they needed greater support from the lead teacher to assist them in completing their role. Once they had gained confidence the support was gradually withdrawn to provide them with greater ownership of their work. It was clear that the peer mentors were responsible, highly committed and conscientious. This has implications for the criteria which schools establish for recruiting peer mentors. It was also evident that some peer mentors experienced a change of identity. By the end of the project, some clearly saw themselves as future leaders within the children and young people's workforce. Whilst this project did not specifically explore identity development, subsequent research could explore this aspect.

The mentees valued the project. They gained confidence, particularly in relation to forming social relationships. Their self-worth also improved. They enjoyed being mentored by a peer who was similar in age and they formed social networks which operated beyond the scope and remit of the project.

Conclusion

The evaluation found evidence that the project did address inactivity, especially in the mentees who demonstrated increased levels of PA. The evaluation also provided some evidence that the project provided a safe environment where mentees could share their personal concerns and access valuable support in terms of mental health. Indeed, one of the main benefits of the project was reported to be the relationships that mentees and mentors established as a direct result of the project, especially with those they would not normally come in contact with. Further, there was evidence that some of these relationships would continue beyond the project. Mentees developed improved social confidence and were generally more positive after completing the intervention. Mentors developed leadership skills and greater empathy for their peers.

There are implications for schools wishing to replicate this project. First, it is crucial that clear criteria are established by the school for recruiting peer mentors. They need to be able to demonstrate a good level of commitment and maturity. Second, training for peer mentors is essential so that they know how to establish relationships with mentees, how to manage their behaviour, how to deal with safeguarding disclosures and when to refer cases to a teacher. They also need training in planning sessions and developing a bank of ideas for activities. Third, the role of the lead teacher is critical to ensure that the project is properly led and managed. Additionally, a whole-school commitment to the intervention is essential to ensure that teachers are willing to release young people from classes to attend training sessions. For this reason, the intervention is best conducted with young people who are not taking high-stakes examinations.

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Appendix. Qualitative data collection tools

Post-project interview: lead teacher

1. What aspects of the project worked well?
2. What worked less well?
3. How effectively did the young people engage in physical activity?
4. What were the outcomes of the project?
 - on physical wellbeing? (how did the project influence levels of physical activity?)
 - on social wellbeing?
 - on mental wellbeing?
1. How will you ensure a sustainable commitment to using physical activity to prevent mental health problems?
2. How will you ensure that the school's commitment to physical activity is reflected in the school's culture and governance?

Post-project focus group: peer mentors

1. What parts of the project worked well?
2. What worked less well?
3. How do you think physical activity affects someone's mental health?
4. How has the project changed the amount of physical activity that you do? (Explore whether or not they very active before taking part in the project)
5. How do you think being part of the project has changed your own mental wellbeing?
6. What social skills have you gained from the project?
 - Explore their relationship with the nurture group and how this had/ or as not developed and if it will continue.
7. What leadership skills have you gained?
8. Has the project improved your academic performance/ are you doing better at school? How, Tell me about this.
9. What other skills have you gained from being part of the project that you will keep on using in the future?

10. How will you use your new skills?
11. What are your hopes for the future? (Explore: employment/modern apprenticeships/going to college/University . . .)
12. Do you think this project will improve your life in the future? Explore how.
13. What do you think makes a good peer mentor and why?
14. How should schools select peer mentors?
15. Would you take part in other mentoring projects and why?

Post-project focus group: mentees

1. What parts of the project worked well?
2. What worked less well?
3. How do you think physical activity affects someone's mental health?
4. How has the project changed the amount of physical activity that you do? (Explore whether or not they very active before taking part in the project)
5. How do you think being part of the project has changed your own mental wellbeing?
6. What social skills have you gained from the project?
7. Has the project helped to improve your academic performance/school work? How? Tell me about this.
8. What skills have you developed/learnt from being part of the project that you will continue to use in the future?
9. Do you think this project will improve your life in the future? Explore how.
10. What do you think makes a good peer mentor and why?
11. Did you each get out of the project what you wanted/thought you would get?
12. What are your hopes for the future? (Explore employment/modern apprenticeships/going to college/University. . .)

Individual interviews: mentees

1. How do you feel about being on the project?
2. What did you enjoy most about being part of the project?
3. What did you find challenging or difficult about the project and what did you do about them?
4. How has the project changed your physical wellbeing?
5. On a scale of 1–10 (1=inactive, 10=very active) how active were you before the project and how active are you now?
6. How has the project changed your skills in interacting with others?
7. How has the project change your mental wellbeing?
8. Do you think being part of the project has increased your confidence? Yes/No
9. What have you learnt from the project that you will keep on using in the future?
10. What are your hopes for future employment or study/ what job would you like to do?
11. Is there anything else you would like to say about the project?

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PAPER 6

MENTAL HEALTH

Developing students' mental health literacy through the power of sport

JONATHAN GLAZZARD and BEN SZRETER

This research is an evaluation of a six-week mental health literacy programme, referred to as the Cambridge United Community Trust's 'Mind Your Head' programme, which was delivered by sports professionals to secondary school students (11-16) in Cambridge, England, during 2017–18. A Mental Health Literacy Scale was used to measure students' knowledge of mental health issues pre- and post-intervention. Statistical data from these surveys were analysed using an independent samples *t*-test. Focus groups were held with students in each school, and individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with one lead teacher in each school. The statistical data indicate that statistically significant improvements in mental health literacy were achieved, and this occurred across all genders and ethnicities. The qualitative data suggest that this programme resulted in positive attitudes towards mental health and improved knowledge of how to seek help. The data indicate that investment in similar programmes would be beneficial for schools in improving students' knowledge of mental health and reducing stigma.

Key words: mental health, well-being, physical activity, sport, schools.

Introduction

This article presents an evaluation of a school-based mental health intervention that was implemented in Cambridge, England, in 2017–18. The intervention involved the delivery of a short mental health curriculum to students in Years 8 and 9 by sports coaches employed by a football community trust. The evaluation included both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The quantitative aspect involved measuring participants' mental health literacy using a pre-and post-test. The qualitative aspect involved focus group interviews with the participants. The findings demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in participants' mental health literacy, confirmed by qualitative analysis. This paper begins by outlining our conceptualisation of mental health. It then examines the role of physical activity in mental health and explores the term 'mental health literacy'. Following this, the findings of the evaluation are presented.

Background

The World Health Organisation (2014) defines mental health as:

‘a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.’

It is important to acknowledge that mental health exists along a continuum which ranges from being mentally healthy to being mentally ill. Thus, mental health is more than the absence of mental illness (Keyes, 2002). The World Health Organization (2013, p. 6) has stressed that ‘there is no health without mental health’. Thus, one's mental health is an essential element of being healthy, alongside their physical and social health.

Improving people's mental health has been identified as one of the most critical public health priorities (Kieling et al., 2011; Knifton and Quinn, 2013). Data from the UK Child and Adolescent Mental Health Survey published in 2004 estimated that 10% of children and young people aged 5 to 16 had a clinically-diagnosable mental health problem. In 2017–18, 18,870 children under the age of 11 were referred for specialist mental health support. This represents a rise of 5,183 (or one-third) since 2014–15 (BBC, 2018). Research suggests that half of all psychological disorders

begin before the age of 14 years (Kessler et al., 2007), thus highlighting the need for early intervention. Mental health problems can reduce the likelihood of successfully completing education, securing employment and engaging productively as a member of society, thus detrimentally impacting quality of life (Kieling et al., 2011). Worryingly, females represent the group at greatest risk of developing mental illness in one-third of developed countries (World Health Organisation, 2014). According to the Mental Health Foundation (MHF) (2015), one in four people in the UK will experience mental ill health in any given year. In addition, ten per cent of children and young people (aged 5-16 years) experience mental ill health (MHF, 2015) and parental separation and single parent homes, is strongly associated with poor mental health in adults and children (MHF, 2015).

The problem is not unique to England, or even to the UK. Rather, the causes of mental ill health are multi-faceted:

‘A growing body of evidence, mainly from high-income countries, has shown that there is a strong socioeconomic gradient in mental health, with people of lower socioeconomic status having a higher likelihood of developing and experiencing mental health problems. In other words, social inequalities in society are strongly linked to mental health inequalities’ (Mental Health Foundation, 2016, p. 57).

Thus, socio-economic disadvantage acts as a psychosocial stressor and can have a detrimental impact on young people’s mental health and well-being. It reduces the ability of young people to participate in activities with their peers. It is also associated with worse parental mental health, which is, in turn, a strong risk factor for poor child mental health and well-being (Education Policy Institute, 2018). Additionally, adverse childhood experiences have a known and significant effect on children and young people’s mental health. These include trauma, poor attachment, parental alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence, neglect and abuse (House of Commons, 2018). School factors also play a role. Evidence suggests that young people who are excluded from school or in alternative provision are more likely to have a mental health need than children not in alternative provision (IPPR, 2017). High-stakes exams can also have adverse effects on young people’s mental health and well-being (House of Commons, 2018). Additionally, lack of curriculum choice, particularly in secondary school, can increase stress and reduce self-esteem (House of Commons, 2018).

The Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health (DoH) recently published a joint Green Paper entitled *Transforming Children and Young*

People's Mental Health Provision (December 2017). Within the Green Paper, both departments express a commitment to working together to improve mental health services for children and young people, especially within the school environment. The role that schools and colleges can play is also highlighted:

‘There is clear evidence that schools and colleges can, and do, play a vital role in identifying mental health needs at an early stage, referring young people to specialist support and working jointly with others to support young people experiencing problems’ (DfE/DoH, 2017, p. 4).

According to the Green Paper, the two departments ‘want to put schools and colleges at the heart of our efforts to intervene early and prevent problems escalating’ (DfE/DoH, 2017, p. 3). To help them do this they have committed £1.4 billion over the next five years to young people’s mental health. The Green Paper proposes that every school and college should have a Designated Senior Lead who is responsible for mental health. Additionally, there are proposals to introduce Mental Health Support Teams into schools to provide support with identifying needs and intervention. Specific risk groups are identified. These include those who are looked after; those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT); those in gangs; and those not in education, employment or training (DfE/DoH, 2017). According to the Green Paper, ‘Children with a persistent mental health problem face unequal chances in life. This is one of the burning injustices of our time’ (DfE/DoH, 2017, p. 6). It is estimated that 850,000 children and young people experience a mental health need (DfE/DoH, 2017). Access to support is variable across the country and, for many, the support comes too late. Additionally, many children and young people do not meet the threshold criteria for a successful referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, and within this context the role of schools in identifying needs early and providing early intervention is critical.

This paper provides an evaluation of a school-based mental health curriculum intervention programme which was implemented across secondary schools in Cambridge during 2017–18. The specific research question was: *What was the impact of the intervention on students’ mental health literacy?*

The relationship between physical activity and mental health

The inter-relationship between physical, social and psychological well-being has long been established in the literature, although the relationship between mental

health and well-being is sometimes unclear. For example, in some studies, well-being is viewed as a component of mental health (Huppert, 2005; Keyes, 2005; Hanlon & Carlisle, 2013), but in other publications, mental health is viewed as a component of overall well-being (World Health Organization, 1946; Lehtinen et al., 2005). It is generally accepted that the different components of well-being are not mutually exclusive, but rather support each other. Common attributes of well-being in children and adolescents include self-esteem, subjective well-being, quality of life, and psychological resilience (Lubans et al., 2016). Additional attributes may also include confidence and motivation.

Both the physical and mental health benefits of engaging in physical activity for adults as well as children and young people are well documented and widely accepted (Ahmed et al., 2016; Hyndman, et al., 2017; McMahan et al., 2017; Yun et al., 2017). Physical activity can enhance social and emotional functioning, health-related quality of life, and develop protective factors, including self-esteem, positive social relationships and well-being (Fraser-Thomas and Côté, 2009; Holt, 2016; Holt *et al.*, 2017). Breslin et al. (2016) explored connections between moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity (MVPA) and the well-being of children aged 8 and 9 in Ireland from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. They concluded that:

‘Children who met the MVPA guidelines had higher well-being scores than those children who did not. Specifically, every dimension of well-being was significantly associated with MVPA; physical well-being, psychological well-being, parent relations and autonomy, social support and school environment’ (Breslin *et al.*, 2016, p. 12).

This intervention focused specifically on the power of sport to improve mental health literacy. The inter-relationship between physical, social and mental well-being positions sport as an effective intervention for improving overall well-being. Sport enables young people to participate in a meaningful activity with a clearly defined goal. This helps to focus the mind and increases well-being. Research by McMahan et al. (2017), in their study looking at European adolescence and physical activity, concluded ‘that moderately increasing activity in inactive adolescents could result in a meaningful improvement in well-being’ (p. 120).

Whilst Cambridge United’s Mind Your Head project was not a physical activity intervention per se, the Mind your Head programme was designed to highlight

the role of physical activity in improving mental health. The programme was delivered by sports professionals from Cambridge United Community Trust and included the perspectives of well-known sports people who talked about how they had managed their own mental health. Significant sports people included male and female athletes from Cambridge United Football Club in bespoke videos and other content about nationally recognised athletes who have publicly discussed their mental health. Using athletes as champions of mental health in this way helps to break down stigma and increase young people's motivation to engage in physical activity. Recent research of this nature has focused on the role of elite athletes as mental health champions (Coyle et al., 2017). However, Swann et al. (2018) has highlighted the need to increase the participation of grassroots sport in supporting young people's mental health, including community sport organisations. This project was designed to address this research gap.

Mental health literacy

The term mental health literacy was first introduced in 1997 by Jorm *et al.*, and is defined as 'knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders which aid their recognition, management and prevention' (p. 182). It is known that young people in particular have low levels of mental health literacy; that is, they have difficulties in identifying mental disorders and their underlying causes, risk factors and associated protective factors, and can develop incorrect beliefs about the effectiveness of therapeutic interventions (Jorm et al., 2006; Kelly et al., 2007). Additionally, the stigma associated with mental health problems becomes apparent to people at an early age (Campos *et al.*, 2018). However, research suggests that the attitudes of young people can be changed more easily than those of adults (Corrigan and Watson, 2007). Therefore, school-based interventions can play a critical role in improving young people's mental health literacy through the introduction of programmes which are specifically designed to develop young people's knowledge about mental health and shape the development of positive attitudes towards it, thus reducing stigma.

Methods

The Mind Your Head programme consisted of six one-hour lessons delivered in schools over six weeks to students by coaches from Cambridge United Community Trust. In five of the six schools selected, the programme was compulsory for students – full year groups participated – and therefore the students did not necessarily have any prior history with mental health problems.

The themes of the six lessons in Mind Your Head are:

1. Introduction to mental health, resilience and well-being
2. Recognising the signs of mental health concerns
3. The benefits of talking
4. Social media and its impact on our well-being
5. Coping with stress
6. Collaboration and community.

The first session explored the difference between mental health and mental illness. Participants were introduced to groups that are vulnerable to developing mental ill health and to the concept of resilience. In session 2, the students were introduced to the signs of stress, anxiety, depression, self-harm, substance abuse and eating disorders. In session 3, students were introduced to the importance of talking to and listening to others, and were given strategies to help them to talk and listen. They rehearsed strategies such as ‘listening with empathy’ using role-play. In session 4, the students discussed the advantages and disadvantages of social media and ways of keeping themselves safe online. In session 5, students watched videos of athletes talking about their own experiences of managing stress and how they had overcome this. In the final session, the students were introduced to different ways of seeking help if they developed mental ill health.

The opportunity to strengthen partnerships between a grassroots organisation (Cambridge United Community Trust), the football club and local schools arose during 2017–18. The Mind Your Head programme was designed in partnership with Centre 33, a Cambridge-based youth counselling and mental health charity, and Cambridge United Community Trust. Centre 33 staff trained the coaches from Cambridge United Community Trust and the coaches were responsible for programme delivery. The Mind Your Head intervention used active and collaborative learning as well as incorporating video content from Cambridge United’s professional men’s and women’s footballers, as well as Cambridge United scholars (16–18 year old aspiring professionals). This video content involves the footballers talking about the main issue of the lesson with regards to their own experiences, helping to provide a relatable role model discussing mental health issues in a relaxed environment.

Table 1 shows the schools and students who participated in Mind Your Head from January to July, 2018.

Table 1. Number of pre and post-programme surveys by school type

<i>School</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>Year Group</i>	<i>Pre-surveys (N)</i>	<i>Post-surveys (N)</i>
CUFC Scholars	Scholars	Age 16-18	14	11
School 1	Whole Year	Year 8	177	174
School 2	Whole Year	Year 9 & 10	133	127
School 3	Whole Year	Year 8	49	41
School 4	Targeted	Year 8 & 9	16	10
School 5	Whole Year	Year 8	109	91
School 6	Whole Year	Year 8	59	53
Total			557	507

Source: All tables and graphs are from Cambridge United Community Trust Data unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Evaluation design

The monitoring and evaluation of Mind Your Head consisted of both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the effectiveness of the programme in meeting its key short-term measurable goal of increasing young people’s mental health literacy.

The quantitative evaluation consisted of identical pre- and post-programme Likert-scale questionnaires with programme participants. The anonymous questionnaires gathered data on demographic information including gender, age and ethnicity, self-reported well-being (measured using the Warwick-Edinburgh wellbeing scale) (Tennant al., 2007) and mental health literacy.

The mental health literacy of participants was measured using an adaptation of the Mental Health Literacy Scale developed by O’Connor and Casey (2015). This aims to assess both stigma measures and knowledge measures around mental health. The adaptations to O’Connor and Casey’s work have removed questions asking about specific and often complex mental health disorders, as well as questions that were inappropriate for the age-group (for example, around employment). Questions were added asking about the participants’ sense of their own resilience, strategies for stress and social media use to link the questionnaire to the programme of lessons. The surveys can be seen in Appendix 1. Quantitative results were analysed through descriptive statistics and some *t*-tests.

Measuring mental health literacy

The measurement of mental health literacy, a 14-question Likert scale, produces 14 data-points per survey that were marked between 1 and 5, with 1 showing the lowest degree of mental health literacy and 5 the highest. One aspect of the mental health literacy survey is that seven of the questions were 'reversed' (for example, a low Likert score indicated high mental health literacy; these were reversed before scores were given).¹ Fourteen questions therefore produced scores between 14 and 70. To transform this into a meaningful measurement, the score between 14 and 70 was expressed as a percentage of the possible score. The calculation for this is listed below, and, for example, a score of 42 would produce a mental health literacy percentage of 50%:

$$\text{Mental health literacy percentage} = \frac{\text{Likert Scale Score} - 14}{(70 - 14)} \times 100 \quad (1)$$

The well-being scores were similarly transformed into well-being percentages.

Qualitative data were collected using focus groups with students in each of the participating schools. Individual semi-structured interviews were also conducted with teachers within each school. 570 young people aged 12-15 participated in the intervention. Eight focus groups with young people were conducted across all six participating secondary schools in Cambridge. 64 young people participated in the focus groups. One focus group was also conducted with the Cambridge United Scholars (aged 16-18) who were also included in the intervention. Six teacher interviews were conducted with the lead teacher, who had responsibility for coordinating the intervention in each school. All schools were based in central Cambridge, with some schools situated in high areas of social deprivation; still, overall, Cambridge is a city which is listed as the most unequal in the UK.²

Interview questions (see Appendix 2) in the focus group explored the students' understanding of mental health, resilience and strategies for managing anxiety, stress and depression. The interview questions in the focus group also explored their understanding of the benefits and limitations of social media. Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed and analysed thematically. The transcripts were coded to identify the themes. The teacher interview explored what aspects of the intervention had worked well and which aspects were less effective.

Key findings

Quantitative Data

The number of surveys administered and included in the data analysis below was 1,064. Of these, 557 were pre-programme surveys and 507 were post-programme surveys. The discrepancy between the two figures is mainly due to a higher preponderance of invalid post-programme surveys, as well as students who had not attended all the sessions not completing post-programme surveys. Furthermore, in one school (School 5), several students were unfortunately not present in the final lesson.

The different schools, groups of students and age-groups are listed in Table 1.

The gender and ethnicity profile of the data is displayed in Table 2.³ It shows that 69.2% of the respondents self-identified as white, 30.8% non-white, with the most common categories being 'Asian/Asian British' (14.9%) and 'Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups' (9.5%). Of all valid surveys completed, 49.5% (527) listed their gender as female, 50.2% (534) were male and 0.3% (3) as 'other'.

Programme effect on mental health literacy

The overall change in mental health literacy from pre-programme surveys to post-programme surveys was 66.7% (N = 557) to 72.4% (N = 507). On average, this represents an improvement of 5.6 percentage points in mental health literacy, or

Table 2. Ethnicity and gender of survey respondents

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>M Pre N</i>	<i>M Post N</i>	<i>F Pre N</i>	<i>F Post N</i>	<i>% Total</i>
Any other	1	0	5	6	1.1%
Asian/Asian British	43	41	37	37	14.9%
Black/African/ Caribbean	11	13	13	14	4.8%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic groups	26	17	27	31	9.5%
None Entered	2	0	2	1	0.5%
White	204	176	184	170	69.2%
Total	287	247	268	259	

an 8.4% increase from baseline.⁴ A further way of understanding this change is to compare the maximum possible improvement with what the programme achieved. From a baseline of 66.7% mental health literacy on average, the programme could have achieved a maximum 33.3 percentage point increase in mental health literacy, were all students to achieve perfect scores after the programme. Given the 5.6 percentage point increase achieved, 16.9% of the maximum possible increase in mental health literacy was achieved through this programme (on average).

An independent sample *t*-test indicated that the difference between the means for the pre-programme mental health literacy score and the post-programme mental health literacy score was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$); this is true whether equal variances are assumed or not.⁵

The distribution of mental health literacy scores can be seen in Figure 1. This shows that, before the programme, 12.0% of students scored above 80% for mental health literacy, whereas after the programme, this figure rises to 30.2%. This means that the programme increased the proportion of students scoring above 80% for mental health literacy by 2.5 times. Similarly, those scoring above 90%

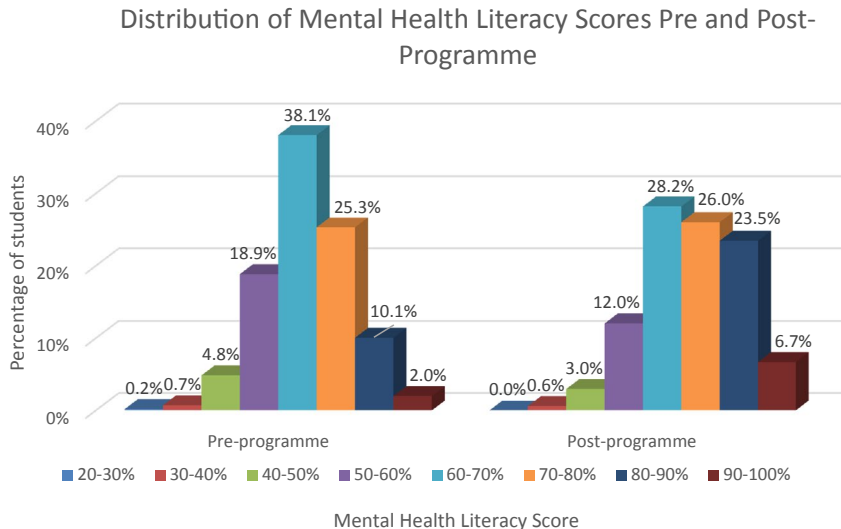


Figure 1. Distribution of mental health literacy scores pre and post-programme [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

Table 3. Mental health literacy scores by gender and ethnicity^a

<i>Gender/Ethnicity</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>% Point Change</i>	<i>% of Max Change</i>
Female (F)	67.4%	73.4%	6.0%	18.5%
Asian/Asian British F	67.3%	71.3%	4.0%	12.1%
Black/African/Caribbean F	64.0%	70.0%	6.0%	16.7%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic groups F	66.5%	72.5%	5.9%	17.7%
White F	68.0%	74.4%	6.3%	19.8%
All Non-white F	66.1%	71.9%	5.7%	16.9%
Male (M)	66.0%	71.2%	5.3%	15.4%
Asian/Asian British M	66.1%	71.3%	5.2%	15.3%
Black/African/Caribbean M	59.3%	61.0%	1.7%	4.3%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic groups M	64.3%	72.3%	8.0%	22.4%
White M	66.6%	71.9%	5.3%	15.8%
All Non-white M	64.4%	69.6%	5.2%	14.7%
All Genders				
Asian/Asian British	66.7%	71.3%	4.6%	13.8%
Black/African/Caribbean	61.8%	65.7%	3.8%	10.1%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic groups	65.9%	72.4%	6.6%	19.3%
White	67.3%	73.1%	5.8%	17.7%
Non-White	65.4%	70.9%	5.5%	15.9%

^aNote that N for each category can be seen in Table 2.

increased from 2.0% pre-programme to 6.7% post-programme – an increase by a factor of greater than 3.3 times.

The impact of the programme can also be analysed by gender and ethnicity. The data is provided in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that female participants started with a higher mental health literacy score than male participants on average (67.4% vs. 66.0%, respectively). Female participants also saw a greater increase both in percentage point change

(6.0% compared to 5.3%) and in proportion of maximum change achieved (18.5% compared to 15.4%).

Table 3 also shows that students who identified as white start with a higher mental health literacy percentage (67.3% overall) than other ethnicities; this is true both overall and for both genders listed. The improvement from pre-programme to post-programme occurred relatively evenly for both white and non-white ethnicities. Overall, those identifying as white increased 5.8 percentage points, and those identifying as non-white by 5.5 percentage points. Males were more similar between white and non-white categories (5.3 and 5.2 percentage points, respectively) than females, where the gap was a 6.3 percentage point improvement for those identifying as white and a 5.7 percentage point improvement for those identifying as non-white as an aggregate group. The scores of boys identifying as 'Black/African/Caribbean' were particularly relatively low, both initially (59.3%) and at the end of the programme (61.0%), representing the lowest percentage point increase across all gender and ethnic groups from pre- to post-programme (1.7 percentage points). This contrasts with boys identifying as 'Mixed/Multiple Ethnic groups', starting slightly low on 64.3% but increasing significantly to 72.3% (8.0 percentage points), the highest increase of all gender and ethnic groups across the programme delivery.

The data displayed in Table 3 shows that Mind Your Head provides effectiveness across both genders listed, and all ethnicities. The programme seems to be marginally more effective with those identifying as white and those identifying as female. The reason for the lower scores of those identifying as 'Black/African/Caribbean' is uncertain. The qualitative data suggest that the intervention per se led to the improvements in mental health literacy rather than other factors. The students engaged with the content of the programme due to the delivery model; the use of sports coaches and the informal delivery approach adopted by the coaches resulted in students engaging with the content of the sessions. However, since the programme only lasted for six weeks, it seems plausible, and indeed likely, that a student's mental health literacy is unlikely to have changed much over this period without participation in the programme.

As we expected for a six-week programme, the movement in self-reported well-being was minimal and statistically insignificant. The average movement was from 62.9% to 62.8%, which is statistically insignificant. Females moved from 61.7% to 61.0%, and males from 64.0% to 64.6%; neither of which is statistically significant. Those identifying as white moved from 63.0% to 62.4% and non-white from 62.4% to 63.7%; both are also statistically insignificant.

Table 4. Average change in mental health literacy question response sorted by percentage of maximum change achieved

<i>Question Number</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Percentage Point Change</i>	<i>% of Maximum Change</i>
4	I know strategies for dealing with stress	15.1%	36.8%
1	I am knowledgeable about the causes of poor mental health	12.3%	35.1%
3	I recognise the signs of poor mental health	12.4%	31.5%
14	I am confident that I know where to seek information about mental illness	12.4%	30.8%
2	I know strategies to help me to be resilient when faced with difficult situations	9.5%	26.6%
5	I understand how social media impacts on my well-being	4.6%	17.0%
7	A mental illness is a sign of personal weakness	8.8%	13.4%
8	People with a mental illness are dangerous	7.5%	10.4%
9	I am willing to make friends with someone with a mental illness	1.6%	7.0%
13	People with a mental illness could snap out of it if they wanted	5.0%	6.9%
12	Seeing a mental health professional means you are not strong enough to manage your own difficulties	4.1%	5.3%
10	If I had a mental illness I would not tell anyone	2.6%	4.3%
6	A mental illness is not a real medical illness	1.6%	2.5%
11	If I had a mental illness, I would not seek help from a mental health professional	-1.8%	-2.8%

Individual mental health literacy questions

Changes in the average response to individual questions in the mental health literacy questionnaire can also be analysed. Knowledge-related questions in particular scored large-differences. This can be seen in Table 4.⁶ All questions move in the anticipated direction: towards greater mental health literacy on average, apart from question 11. The one question with a change not in the anticipated direction was around seeking help from a mental health professional if the individual responding believed that they had a mental health illness. This is an interesting response and could be caused by participants not wanting to see a medical professional. However, it could also be due to a new understanding of mental illness

and when medical help is needed as a result of the programme. Either way, the impact is relatively small.

The overall quantitative impact may be small, but is subjective. It is possible that participants overestimated their understanding at the start of the programme, thus reducing the differential between the pre- and post-scores. This makes the qualitative findings of this study more important.

Qualitative Data

The qualitative data were taken from focus groups conducted after the conclusion of the Mind Your Head programme. These data were coded, and key themes were identified. These are summarised below.

What is mental health?

Student participants demonstrated a good understanding of the differences between mental health and mental illness. They also understood that mental health exists along a continuum and can change depending on one's circumstances:

'Everyone has mental health and it is not the same as mental illness'
(Student, Y9).

'Mental health is good and bad. Poor mental health for example is when someone is feeling depressed. But depression is not the same as just feeling a little bit sad. When you are depressed it can stop you doing things, like you might not want to get out of bed' (Student, Y9).

'Depression is not the same as sadness. I have been depressed and it stopped me from going into school. It made me have anger problems. My grades went down. Depression is a form of mental illness' (Student, Y9).

Teachers who had observed the delivery of Mind Your Head highlighted that the programme was particularly valuable in terms of raising students' general awareness of the extent of mental ill health:

'Students now understand that the majority of people experience mental health issues at some point in their lives. They know they are not the only one to feel like this' (Teacher, School 1).

'They are now aware there are many people in the same situation and that they are not the only person to have experienced how they are feeling'
(Teacher, School 4).

Ways of improving mental health

Student participants demonstrated an understanding of how they could influence their own mental health. They recognised that poor mental health is not a fixed attribute and had learned some simple yet effective strategies to support them in becoming mentally healthy. Some students highlighted a distrust of teachers. They felt that teachers would not uphold confidentiality and would pass the information on to other teachers or their parents. The majority of student participants preferred to speak to their friends about their feelings. Many students were able to articulate the relationship between physical activity and mental health:

'There are ways to improve your mental health. You can talk to people who are close to you. If you have a schedule, then it keeps you more organised. Then you don't get stressed' (Student, Y9).

'It is really important to talk to other people. If you don't let your emotions out it will just get worse. Sometimes it is easier to talk to parents than a teacher or you can talk to people that you trust. You can also talk to your siblings. You don't have a deeply personal connection with your teachers like you have with your friends, so it is easier to talk to friends' (Student, Y9).

'Listening to music and taking walks helps to de-stress me' (Student, Y8).

'I don't want to talk to a teacher because they might tell your parents. Everyone will find out. I would rather talk to a friend. Young people are going through changes like puberty which can be stressful' (Student, Y8).

'Being able to open up within my peer group and to be approachable to others who are not coping' (Student, Y9).

One teacher commented that

'students now have a bank of strategies to help them to manage stress and anxiety and I have seen them using them at school. They have also told me that they use them at home' (Teacher, School 3).

Stress

Student participants were able to identify a range of strategies to alleviate stress. These included listening to music, engaging in physical activity, meditation and watching television. Some students recognised that stress is not always a negative attribute. They were able to identify ways in which stress helped them to be productive and to achieve goals. Students recognised that stress was a normal part of daily life and that eliminating stress from their lives might lead to a lack of productivity. Some students were also able to differentiate between stress and anxiety. Some students explained how they were more able to manage stress and how this had enabled them to perform better in assessments:

‘There are things that you can do to manage stress. Stress can be a good thing. It can help you to improve your performance. If you think of stress in a negative way, then it can start to affect your sleep’ (Student, Y9).

‘If you are feeling stressed, you can do things to help. You can talk to a teacher, go for a walk, listen to music. Stress can be good and bad at the same time’ (Student, Y8).

‘If you use your energy through exercise it can help you to manage your stress. You can do something else like watch TV to take your mind off it. Sometimes you can be stressed when there are too many deadlines, but you can try to get things done rather than letting things stack up’ (Student, Y9).

‘I don’t get stressed with revision or exams. I now organise and plan my workload better and I am doing better in exams’ (Student, Y9).

Vulnerable groups

The retention rate of participants in this study was excellent due to the fact the intervention was delivered in a compulsory school setting, with the exception of the participants from the CUFC Scholars group. After participating in the programme, all students could identify vulnerable groups who are at risk of developing mental ill health. They were also able to discuss why individuals in these groups are vulnerable. For example, they recognised that the pressures on athletes to perform to a high standard might result in stress and anxiety, and that athletes who are injured and unable to participate in their sport might be at risk of

developing depression. The students were all able to identify the LGBT + group as a vulnerable group due to prejudice and discrimination which exists within society. Some students were able to articulate ways in which gender stereotypes might prevent males from expressing their feelings; for example, the expectation that males should be ‘tough’ and ‘hard’ rather than ‘soft’:

‘There are some groups that are more prone to developing poor mental health such as LGBT, males and athletes’ (Student, Y8).

‘It is harder for men because if they get too emotional they might feel like they should not be doing that. Men sometimes think they have to be strong. This comes from stereotypes’ (Student, Y8).

‘There are different kinds of people who are vulnerable to mental illness. For young people, things are challenging because everything is new to us like building relationships for the first time’ (Student, Y9).

‘Athletes can get injured and this can make them stressed and they may worry they are letting down their team and supporters. They have a lot of pressure to perform so they can get stressed. LGBTQ people are at risk because some people think they are different’ (Student, Y9).

Resilience

Student participants had developed a good understanding of the concept of ‘resilience’ through the programme, although nearly all students needed support to recall the ABC model of resilience to which they had been introduced. Student participants had understood the benefits of being resilient to adverse situations and the relationship between resilience and mindset. There was also evidence that students were beginning to demonstrate improved resilience in academic subjects as a result of the programme:

‘Resilience is how well you get through obstacles or your ability to cope with problems by getting help from others. You also have to be resilient in lessons when you are dealing with complex material’ (Student, Y9).

‘Facing a situation that may be difficult by talking to others but being able to see it through with the best outcome’ (Student, Y9).

‘Resilience is when you don’t give up and you keep going with help from others. You can bounce back from things like failing a test. Resilience helps you to achieve things. It changes your mindset into a positive mindset’ (Student, Y8).

‘I have just found out that I am not being taken on by the Club to play professionally. I am disappointed. However, these sessions have helped me to be resilient and I know that I will end up doing something useful. I will use my skills in other ways. I am going to go to University instead’ (CUFC Scholars).

Teachers commented:

‘Students are now, as a result on the programme being more resilient in other lessons when they find things difficult’ (Teacher, School 5).

‘Resilience does not just mean ‘stickability’. It means knowing how to get help when they have problems and they are now talking to each other and to teachers about how they feel’ (Teacher, School 6).

Social media

The students had developed an excellent understanding of the benefits of social media and the relationship between social media use and mental ill health, including sleep deprivation, cyberbullying and low body-esteem. They had also developed a better understanding of how to keep themselves safe online:

‘You can talk to your friends and family on social media. The disadvantages are that you can get stalked. People can create fake accounts. You can get cyber-bullied. People can hack into other people’s accounts and you might not know who is communicating with you. People can become jealous of other people’s lives and this can make you sad and depressed’ (Student Y9).

‘Some of the pictures can be fake so people can make out that they are leading an exciting life but really they are not and this can make others feel worthless’ (Student Y8).

‘Social media results in an expectation to show the good part of your life. It can impact on others because they think you are having a good time and they might not be having such a good time’ (Student Y9).

'People make mean comments and it makes you feel bad. The bullying can be anonymous, and it reaches a larger audience. You can ignore the insults and carry on with your life. You can report the person or block them' (Student Y9).

'Men are expected to be muscular. You get upset because you think 'why don't I look like that?'' (Student Y8).

'Social media has its advantage that you can talk to other people positively about how you feel. Its disadvantages could be when someone is being stalked, snapchat maps shows your locations and cyber bullying through text messages' (Student Y8).

Knowledge of how to help others

The student participants identified ways in which the programme had enabled them to support their peers:

'Being approachable and supportive. Just being there to listen to their problems can help their mental health' (Student, Y8).

'Listening to your friends without interrupting them is important. Even if I do not understand what they are going through I can just be there for them and listen to them' (Student, Y9).

'I know how important it is to listen to others. If I don't know how to help them I can take them to someone else in the school who might be able to help them' (Student, Y9).

Discussion

The results demonstrate the beneficial impact that sports coaches and athletes can have on students' mental health literacy by delivering a short, focused mental health curriculum. The fact that students could articulate how to seek help and how to manage their own mental health at the end of the intervention was encouraging, and this is likely to lead to improved mental health in the long-term. Schools should prioritise supporting students to be mentally healthy given the

extent of mental ill health in young people. However, this is not without its challenges, given that schools are tasked primarily with raising students' academic attainment.

Our data demonstrate that improvements in students' understanding of resilience were evident by the end of the programme. Students could articulate how their knowledge of resilience could support their academic development. We do not perceive a tension between mental health and attainment. Students who are able to manage their mental health are more likely to succeed academically, and this was evident in our data. The students characterised resilience as the ability to '*keep going*' and '*get through obstacles*'. Interestingly, they also linked resilience to help-seeking behaviours. This is a logical link because the ability to seek help can enable individuals to thrive in the face of adversity. To date, the literature on resilience has associated resilience with 'bouncing back' and the ability to thrive in the face of challenges (Mohamed and Thomas, 2017). However, the existing literature insufficiently emphasises the role of help-seeking behaviour in bouncing back from challenging situations and in persevering with difficult tasks.

The quantitative analysis demonstrated statistically significant improvements to students' mental health literacy across all genders and ethnicities ($p < 0.01$), although there were some slight variations in the degree of improvement between different ethnic groups. Females demonstrated marginally greater increases in mental health literacy than males. The qualitative data indicate that the young people valued the delivery model, specifically the deployment of sports coaches to deliver lessons rather than teachers. This resulted in student engagement with the intervention. The students valued the informal approach to delivery, the use of videos and the opportunity to discuss issues in sessions. The combination of these factors is likely to have resulted in increases in students' mental health literacy. Changes in well-being were not statistically significant.

The qualitative data revealed a range of interesting findings. The adolescents broadly understood mental health to exist along a continuum from being mentally healthy to mentally ill. They perceived a range of mental health benefits from engagement in physical activity and they recognised other ways of improving their own mental health. Their mental health literacy improved as a result of participating in the programme. They were able to identify the signs of mental illness and they could describe ways of supporting others who experience mental ill health. They were able to identify population groups at risk of developing mental ill health. They could talk about the importance of being resilient in the face of

adversity and were able to identify the negative effects of social media as well as ways of keeping themselves safe online. They valued the opportunity to develop their awareness of mental health through listening to athletes speaking about their own issues. Sport participation was reported to have both positive (e.g., therapeutic) and negative (e.g., stressful) effects on mental health (pressure to perform, performance slumps and having less time to socialise with friends). Whilst these benefits are acknowledged, the programme did not have a significant effect on well-being in the short-term.

The schools were unanimously positive about the programme and its benefits on pupils' mental health literacy. In view of these findings we are confident that the programme could be replicated successfully in other schools.

Conclusions

Considering the research, which demonstrates that improvements to mental health literacy can lead to an increased likelihood of engaging in help-seeking behaviours for mental ill health as well as greater willingness to help others with mental health needs (Campos *et al.*, 2018), it is possible that the programme delivered in Cambridge will lead to improvements in students' help-seeking behaviours in the future. Overall, Mind Your Head was clearly valued by both pupils and educators and delivers measurable, statistically significant improvements in Mental Health Literacy across all genders and ethnicities. This research has implications for schools seeking to develop collaborations with grassroots organisations such as community sport organisations. The clear benefit of schools working in partnership with community organisations is that these partnerships facilitate a non-stigmatising setting for mental health discussions and awareness-raising. The students attributed the success of the programme to the delivery model. They valued the opportunity to learn about mental health from sports coaches and they enjoyed listening to authentic accounts of mental health from athletes whom they held in high regard. These factors resulted in high levels of student engagement within the sessions.

¹The Mind Your Head Programme has continued to be delivered by Cambridge United Community Trust. In March 2020 it was announced that Mind Your Head had won the English Football League's Community Project of the Year Award for League Two.

Declarations

Ben Szreter worked for Cambridge United Community Trust during the time that this research was conducted.

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Data Availability Statement

The datasets used and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

NOTES

- ¹ The possibility that reversed questions would affect the validity of the mental health literacy score was assessed and any effect was deemed very small.
- ² See <https://www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/18-01-12-Final-Full-Cities-Outlook-2018.pdf>.
- ³ Note that the discrepancy in total numbers of surveys is due to three respondents (two pre-programme and one post-programme) indicating that they did not want their gender recorded.
- ⁴ Slight discrepancies are due to rounding.
- ⁵ Due to the data not being matched between pre- and post-programme surveys, a paired sample *t*-test is inappropriate.
- ⁶ The data in Table 4 have been calculated so an increase in score is always associated with increasing mental health literacy, even when the Likert-scale was reversed in the raw question.

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Appendix 1 - Surveys used with participants

1. **School:**

2. **Form group**

3. **Date of birth:**

4. **School Year:**

5. **Gender, please circle one:**

- a. Female
- b. Male
- c. Any other, please describe:

6. **Ethnicity, please circle one:**

- a. White
- b. Mixed / Multiple Ethnic groups
- c. Asian / Asian British
- d. Black / African / Caribbean
- e. Any other ethnic group, please describe:

Well-being

Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts. Please tick the box that best describes your experience of each over the last 2 weeks.

STATEMENTS	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
I've been feeling optimistic about the future.					
I've been feeling useful.					
I've been feeling relaxed.					
I've been feeling interested in other people.					
I've had energy to spare.					
I've been dealing with problems well.					
I've been thinking clearly.					
I've been feeling good about myself.					
I've been feeling close to other people.					
I've been feeling confident.					
I've been able to make up my own mind about things.					
I've been feeling loved.					
I've been interested in new things.					
I've been feeling cheerful.					

Mental Health Literacy

Please tick the box that best describes to what extent you agree with the following statements:

STATEMENTS	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am knowledgeable about the causes of poor mental health.					
I know strategies to help me to be resilient when faced with difficult situations.					
I recognise the signs of poor mental health.					
I know strategies for dealing with stress.					
I understand how social media impacts on my wellbeing.					
A mental illness is not a real medical illness.					
A mental illness is a sign of personal weakness.					
People with a mental illness are dangerous.					
I am willing to make friends with someone with a mental illness.					
If I had a mental illness I would not tell anyone.					
If I had a mental illness, I would not seek help from a mental health professional.					
Seeing a mental health professional means you are not strong enough to manage your own difficulties.					
People with a mental illness could snap out of it if they wanted.					
I am confident that I know where to seek information about mental illness.					

Appendix 2 – Focus group questions

Students

1. Did the sessions improve your knowledge of mental health? If so tell me how.
2. What did you learn about resilience?
3. Have you benefitted from learning about resilience? Say how.
4. What did you learn about social media and mental health?
5. Have you benefitted from learning about social media and mental health? Say how.
6. What did you learn about coping with stress and how has this helped you?
7. What did you learn about the value of talking to others?
8. What did you learn about the role of collaborating with others as a way of improving mental health?
9. What were the best sessions?
10. Which aspects of the programme could be improved and why?
11. Was there anything missing from the programme?

Focus group with the teachers / workshop leader:

1. What did the students learn from the programme?
2. Which aspects of the programme worked well? What were the best sessions?
3. Were there any sessions that were less effective? Say why.
4. Was anything missing from the programme?
5. What challenges did you face in delivering the programme?

PAPER 7

10 Supporting student teachers with minority identities

The importance of pastoral care and social justice in initial teacher education

Jonathan Glazzard and Samuel Stones

Introduction

Social justice in teacher education promotes the values of care and respect, equality and democracy so that student teachers not only understand the diverse needs of the students that they teach but are able to respond to these positively, thus empowering them to achieve their full potential.

Consideration of issues of social justice in teacher education requires critical engagement with Philpott and Poultney's (2018) discussions about evidence-based teaching and Philpott's work on pastoral care of student teachers (Philpott, 2015). The implications for course design are stark, and this is where Philpott's (2015) call for initial teacher education to address the non-cognitive aspects associated with learning to be a teacher proved particularly helpful and insightful.

Teacher educators play a critical role in facilitating the development of positive attitudes and inclusive social values in their student teachers so that they enact these in their own classrooms. In addition, teacher educators who model these attitudes and values also treat student teachers with respect by demonstrating empathy and care towards them. This is particularly important for student teachers with minority identities because it helps to mitigate their vulnerability to prejudice, harassment and discrimination whilst studying on their teacher education programme and on school placement.

However, finding time for discussions about social justice can be challenging on busy initial teacher education programmes which are designed to address performance standards which can be easily measured. In addition, standards-driven initial teacher education programmes can also result in insufficient attention to student teachers' pastoral needs, including those with minority status.

This chapter will explore what we understand by social justice in evidence-informed teaching by engaging with the work of Philpott and Poultney (2018). It will examine the discourse of performativity and how this influences teacher identity. It will then explore the need for pastoral care in teacher education by engaging with Philpott's (2015) arguments. Finally, it will discuss the theory of minority stress, drawing on the work of Meyer (2003) before examining the specific needs of student teachers who identify as disabled or those with non-normative gender identities and sexual orientations.

Identifying social justice in evidence-informed teaching

Philpott and Poultney's (2018) book *Evidence-based Teaching: A Critical Overview for Enquiring Teachers* makes several critical arguments, notably that there is a need to develop a deeper understanding of the value of practitioner investigation. This is crucial for research-informed teacher learning because it enables teachers to critically engage with evidence from their own practice to negotiate not only policy ideas about 'what works' in specific school contexts but also what they could be doing, including fashioning themselves as a teacher.

Teacher education policy in England over many years has emphasised the role of student teachers in raising academic standards in schools following a decree by former Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove (DfE, 2011). This places quite some responsibility on novice teachers and situates teacher education squarely within a school improvement agenda. However, although student teachers do play an important role in facilitating the academic progress of their students, they also have an important role to play in considering the purposes of schooling and education, which might include advancing social justice through shaping the development of positive attitudes and values about diversity in the students they teach. They also play a crucial role in empowering their students to believe in themselves.

Although current discourse on evidence-based teaching focuses uncritically on 'what works' in classrooms, this may reduce teaching to aspects which become measurable. What 'works' in one educational context may not 'work' in another. This reductionist approach prioritises academic interventions which advance academic attainment because the impact of these can be quantified. We argue that education serves a broader role in advancing social justice through fostering the development of inclusive values. Student teachers can play a critical role in this through implementing inclusion projects in schools and analysing their effectiveness through conversing with students and gathering data. However, if their own pastoral needs are not met, they are not well positioned to implement this important work.

This is where Philpott and Poultney (2018) prove useful because they argue that practitioner research has a central role to play in the health of a school and that career structures should be developed that value higher-level study and reward teachers. Through practitioner research, teachers can explore 'what works' within their own educational contexts rather than uncritically adopting top-down evidence-based interventions. Philpott and Poultney (2018) highlight the importance of university-school partnerships in developing teachers as researchers and they argue that a single research method is unlikely to be the best way of investigating practice-based issues.

Negotiating policy ideas

Gove's preferred policy on teacher education in England positioned student teachers within a discourse of performativity in which they are held accountable

for the progress of the students they teach (DfE, 2011). In his seminal work, Stephen Ball (2003) defines performativity as ‘a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change...’ (p. 216). Notions of what constitutes ‘effective teaching’ and the ‘good teacher’ are shaped by the discourse of performativity, which values and rewards educational outputs above a commitment to social justice. It results in ‘inauthentic practice’ (Ball, 2003, p. 222) which marginalises some of the most vulnerable students. These are often students who struggle to achieve narrow, academic performance indicators but possess talents which go unrecognised and unrewarded, one reason to negotiate the policy emphasis to do with driving up educational standards over and above deep, rich and meaningful learning.

Here it is important to acknowledge that teacher education plays a critical role in advancing social justice for student teachers and the students that they teach. It should seek to shape the development of socially just attitudes for all and promote the values of care and respect. This helps to contribute to the development of a more socially just society. Although closer attention to the pastoral care needs of student teachers with minority identities facilitates inclusion, the pervasive discourse of performativity which regulates both teacher education and schools can result in the ethics of care being marginalised in favour of driving up academic standards. In England, the current emphasis on grading student teachers against a set of prescribed teacher standards which hold them accountable for student progress can result in issues of social justice being marginalised in their own teaching.

In his article *Creating an in-school pastoral system for student teachers in school-based initial teacher education* (Philpott, 2015), Philpott argues that ‘some student teachers are not comfortable with the teacher identity they begin to feel it is necessary to adopt’ (p. 9).

The discourse of performativity can result in student teachers adopting specific pedagogical approaches that do not align with their values. Negotiating their personal values with the socially assigned identity of what is considered to be a ‘good’ teacher within the discourse of performativity can be challenging. Ultimately, student teachers must comply with the policies of their placement schools and do everything they can to ensure that they complete their school placement successfully. They may feel that their creativity and agency are restricted through being advised by their mentors not only *what* to teach but also *how* to teach and *which* students to focus on. Although this may initially result in frustration, student teachers must learn to also negotiate their own values and beliefs whilst complying with the values of the school.

Despite the discourse of performativity, it has been argued that teachers have an ethical obligation to reflect on and claim their identity (Clarke, 2008). Indeed, Tickle (2000) argues that ‘we should not think of induction simply as if novices are to be socialised into some well formulated and accepted practices which exist on the other side’ (p. 1). Development as a teacher involves a considerable degree of identity work. Robin Smith (2007) argues that there has been a move

away from coherent and stable identities towards those which are multiple, fragmented and prone to change. They are continually reconstructed to reflect changing and sometimes conflicting discourses and practices (Day et al., 2006a; Day, et al., 2006b; Sikes et al., 1985). Thus, identity is ‘always deferred and in the process of becoming – never really, never yet, never absolutely there’ (MacLure, 2003, p. 131).

Given that teacher identity is always in a state of flux, teacher education providers should provide frequent opportunities for student teachers to reflect on their beliefs and values at different stages in the teacher education programme. They need to be given multiple opportunities to reflect on their values at the start of the programme, before and after placements and at the end of the programme. Student teachers need opportunities to discuss the extent of the synergy between their own values and the values of their school after each placement and opportunities to reflect on how they negotiated any tensions which arose from this. Engaging student teachers in identity work is critical if they are to develop a sense of what kind of teacher they want to be. Assessment tasks should also support this process of on-going critical reflection.

The need for pastoral care in teacher education

In his article on pastoral care, Philpott (2015) makes a critical contribution to the field of teacher education. He argues that schools need to give greater consideration to the pastoral needs of student teachers during school placements and that these needs require a proactive rather than a reactive response. Philpott highlights the need for providers of teacher education to give greater emphasis to the non-cognitive aspects of teaching so that student teachers are supported to develop coping strategies to help them manage stress, anxiety and to develop their resilience.

Philpott (2015) argues that the management of student behaviour can be a source of stress for student teachers. He highlights that the mentor may not be the best person to provide pastoral support for student teachers given that they undertake responsibility for assessing their performance in relation to the teaching standards. Providing student teachers with access to an informal network of pastoral support via colleagues who are not responsible for assessing their performance is one solution which schools should seriously consider. Student teachers may feel that interpersonal difficulties which may arise in their relationship with their mentor may have a detrimental impact on their overall performance (Philpott, 2015) and thus they may invest time into establishing an effective relationship with their mentor. However, when relationships break down this can result in significant risks for student teachers, including potentially failing a placement, stress and anxiety.

Philpott (2015) makes a convincing argument for planning to address the pastoral needs of student teachers proactively so that support is not just provided when things go wrong. Learning to be a teacher is not just an intellectual activity; it is an emotional task which requires non-cognitive as well as cognitive skills.

Student teachers need to learn how to manage relationships and emotions. They need to learn how to manage stress and anxiety and be resilient to the challenges which they will inevitably experience on a daily basis in schools. Philpott argues that teachers are often seen as providers of pastoral care rather than recipients of it. However, without adequate pastoral care, teachers are not able to thrive. He argues that teachers who are new to a school, including student teachers, may need emotional support as well as professional development and that the school's culture and practices can influence how well they acclimatise to the workplace.

Minority stress

Meyer's (1995) and Meyer and Dean's (1998) seminal research highlights three processes which lead to stress for minorities: external events experienced by the individual; an expectation of negative events, regardless of their occurrence; and general stressors. Meyer's model of minority stress emphasises that people from minority groups experience discrimination and prejudice which result in stress. Additionally, the expectation that they may experience prejudice and discrimination can result in individuals from minority groups experiencing psychological distress and negotiating their behaviour to enable them to 'fit in' to a normalising society. Meyer (2003) referred to these as proximal stressors. For student teachers with disabilities, and those who have non-conforming sexual and gender identities, proximal stressors comprise an additional layer of stress above and beyond the usual stressors that are experienced on an initial teacher education programme. Teacher educators and mentors should be aware of the existence of minority stress and develop proactive approaches for alleviating it. Philpott's (2015) argument about the need for pastoral care is particularly pertinent for student teachers representing minority groups.

Disability

Although current teacher education policy can be situated in the broader Conservative education policy landscape, it is important to also pay attention to the pastoral needs of student teachers with minority identities, including those who are disabled and those with non-normative gender identities and sexual orientations. This section addresses the challenges experienced by student teachers with disabilities on school placements. It focuses specifically on those with dyslexia, but also considers the needs of student teachers with autism.

Student teachers with minority identities can thrive in schools provided that they are accepted and experience a sense of belonging. Experiences of marginalisation during school placements can result in psychological distress and reduce their capacity to teach with due consideration to the purposes of schooling and education. Our own professional experiences of working with student teachers with dyslexia suggests to us that they are empathic towards students with disabilities and are skilled in breaking down subject-specific concepts, skills and knowledge. They do this automatically and are proficient in adapting tasks to meet students' diverse needs. These experiences are reflected in the literature (Griffiths, 2012).

In his article on pastoral care, Philpott (2015) draws attention to the fact that, unsurprisingly, school mentors can be a significant source of stress for student teachers because although they are responsible for providing pastoral care, they are also responsible for assessing the student teacher.

Student teachers with disabilities, such as dyslexia, experience the usual forms of stress that all student teachers experience. However, they can experience additional stress and anxiety as a result of the difficulties associated with their disability. Griffiths (2012) found that student teachers with dyslexia were empathic towards children's learning difficulties; their own experiences of dyslexia placed them in a unique position to support children with literacy difficulties. For these student teachers, the process of differentiating their teaching was automatic; they were able to draw on the strategies they had been taught to support their learners to develop self-efficacy, thus helping their students to overcome *learned helplessness* (Peterson et al., 1995). Previous research has also identified the strengths that student teachers with dyslexia can bring to the profession (Duquette, 2000; Riddick, 2003).

However, despite these strengths, research also demonstrates that student teachers with dyslexia may experience discrimination on school placements (Glazzard, 2018; Griffiths, 2012). The fear of being misunderstood, labelled, stigmatised and misjudged is a consistent theme in the general literature on dyslexia (Beverton et al., 2008; Illingworth, 2005; Morgan and Burn, 2000; Morris and Turnbull, 2006; Pollak, 2009; Riddick, 2003; Sanderson-Mann and McCandless, 2006; Stanley et al., 2007). Griffiths argues that:

Within the teaching profession, a paradoxical situation exists where trainees and teachers with dyslexia can feel being dyslexic confers advantages and offers unique insights into difficulties experienced by the children they are teaching, yet are undervalued, unsupported and regarded by peers as being detrimental to the profession.

(Griffiths, 2012, p. 60)

It would appear that we live in an 'ableist society' (Griffiths, 2012, p. 60) which values performance. The Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011) can therefore act as a deterrent to the disclosure of disabilities rather than identifying reasonable adjustments as required by equality legislation (Fuller et al., 2009). School mentors are therefore placed in a difficult position in that they are required to balance their responsibility to provide pastoral support for student teachers against their responsibility to act as gatekeepers to their profession. They have a duty of care both to the student teacher and their students, and within an educational climate which privileges performativity, they must ensure that high standards in teaching are being upheld.

Tension within mentor-mentee relationships can affect student teachers (Pillen et al., 2013) as mentors have a direct impact on the development of the professional identity of student teachers (Maguire, 2001; Shields and Murray, 2017). Research has specifically explored the power imbalance between mentors and mentees (Maguire, 2001; Sewell et al., 2009). We also live in a society where

literacy ability is associated with intelligence. This outdated view of intelligence can be extremely damaging to individuals with dyslexia who may struggle with reading and writing but, nevertheless, have unique talents which may go unrecognised. Despite their strengths, student teachers with dyslexia may hold deficit views about themselves (Griffiths, 2012), particularly in relation to their literacy skills which are exposed within classrooms.

Philpott (2015) argues that systems of pastoral support for student teachers need to be proactive rather than reactive in order to prevent ‘casualties’ (p. 15) from occurring. He argues that there is a need for school mentors to predict when student teachers may require pastoral support so that systems of support do not reflect a model of ‘first aid’ (p. 15). The pastoral needs of student teachers have often been overlooked in terms of the planned organisation and structure of school placements (Philpott, 2015) and this has implications for student teachers with dyslexia and other forms of disabilities. It is critical that tutors, school mentors and student teachers meet jointly prior to placements to plan for reasonable adjustments that need to be made to school placements to enable students’ teachers with disabilities to experience equality of opportunity.

Although student teachers with disabilities on university programmes are often well supported by central disability services in relation to the academic elements of a teacher education programme to meet the requirements of equality legislation, reasonable adjustments to school placements tend to be lacking (Glazzard, 2018). Planning the adjustments in advance of placements will provide student teachers with the best chance of completing their placements successfully. Universities play a critical role in supporting school mentors to understand their legal responsibilities towards supporting student teachers with disabilities. Tutors can discuss with mentors the types of adjustments that would be considered to be ‘reasonable’ and the forms of scaffolding that may need to be available to provide the student teacher with the best opportunity to complete the placement successfully.

For student teachers with autistic spectrum conditions, their needs need to be discussed very carefully with schools prior to placements starting. The difficulties associated with autism include impairments in social interaction, social communication and rigidity of thought (Wing, 1980). In addition, student teachers with autism may experience difficulties with sensory sensitivity and executive functioning. Often, they have perfectionist traits which may make it difficult for them to accept and learn from mentor feedback on their teaching, which they may interpret to be critical rather than developmental. We have experienced this. This can cause relationships to break down between the student teacher and the mentor. In such cases, mentors may interpret their behaviour to contravene the professional standards, resulting in unsuccessful placements, rather than specific character traits that are consistent with autism.

However, if adjustments are not provided to support the student teacher, this could be considered to be a form of direct discrimination, and thus a breach of equality legislation. Student teachers with autism may struggle with changes to routines and timetables in schools. They may find it difficult to organise their own professional development time and may need support with this. They may struggle

to demonstrate empathy and may require a social and emotional intervention programme prior to school placements. At the same time, it is critical not to overlook the strengths which they can bring to the teaching profession. They may respond well to rules, be extremely conscientious and may be extremely skilled in identifying minor details which others would overlook. A strengths-based approach, combined with high-quality pastoral care (Philpott, 2015), will provide optimum conditions to support these student teachers to thrive. Philpott's (2015) argument that pastoral care should be proactive rather than reactive is particularly important for both of these groups of student teachers.

Student teachers who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer

The pastoral care needs of student teachers who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) need to be carefully considered when it comes to pastoral care. Research demonstrates that they may conceal their sexual and gender identities due to internalised stigma (Meyer, 2003) and this can result in psychological distress. Some teachers who identify as LGBT may choose to adopt the strategies of 'passing' (Goffman, 1963, p. 73) off as heterosexual and 'covering' (Goffman, 1963, p. 102) up their sexual and gender identities due to fear of rejection or discrimination.

Initial teacher education programmes in England have, in recent years, embedded content to support student teachers in addressing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying among children and young people. This is partly because initial teacher education inspections have focused on this since 2012. However, greater consideration needs to be given to the needs of student teachers themselves who identify as LGBT, given that they may experience several barriers. They may be unsure about whether they can be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity with their mentors or other colleagues in school. They may try to predict the reaction of their mentors should they choose to be 'out' and they may decide not to take the risk, given the power imbalance between the student teacher and the mentor. They may be concerned about the reactions of the students they are responsible for teaching and they may need additional guidance to prepare them for how to respond should pupils ask them about their sexuality or gender identity. If they are placed in a faith school, they may be concerned about how well they will 'fit in' to the school, given the religious values that the school is seeking to promote. Student teachers may be worried about how parents of the students they teach will respond to them if they discover that they have non-normative gender identities and sexual orientations and they may anticipate parental resistance and prejudice. Philpott's (2015) argument for pastoral care is particularly important for student teachers who identify as LGBT because of the correlation between non-normative gender and sexual identities and poor mental health outcomes (Meyer, 2003).

Both heterosexual and gay male student teachers who teach younger children are particularly vulnerable to parental prejudice. They may feel that they are scrutinised more than other teachers. It is deeply concerning that male teachers who

work in the Early Years Foundation Stage still continue to be subjected to parental prejudice; their motives for wanting to teach young children may be questioned and they may have to protect themselves to a greater extent than others to safeguard them from false allegations. We have experienced all of these issues in our roles as teacher educators.

Student teachers who identify as LGBT may have to negotiate their sexuality due to the heteronormative culture that still exists in some schools. They may be forced to conceal their identity so that they do not become a victim of discrimination. Whilst they are protected under the law by the equality legislation, subtle forms of discrimination which exist in some schools can result in them masking their private truth and adopting a false identity. For example, student teachers who identify as transgender may not be referred to using their correct pronouns and gay and lesbian student teachers may be particularly vulnerable to false allegations (Piper and Sikes, 2010). Again, we have experienced all of these issues in our professional practice.

Teacher educators who espouse inclusive social values are likely to proactively support student teachers who identify as LGBT to be proud of their sexual and gender identities and encourage them to be openly 'out' with their mentors. It would be useful if LGBT inclusion was embedded into programmes of professional development both for mentors and link tutors who support student teachers within school contexts. Content of training programmes should address the pastoral needs of LGBT student teachers and the relevant equality legislation which providers and schools must comply with.

Philpott (2015) argues that the non-cognitive aspects of teaching are important and must not be overlooked on a teacher education programme. In addition, teacher education providers should not only support mentors to understand their legal duties in relation to the equality legislation but also highlight the importance of a strengths-based approach rather than a deficit approach when working with student teachers with disabilities and non-normative identities and sexual orientations.

Rethinking initial teacher education programmes

Philpott (2015) recommends the introduction of non-assessed placements which are less high-stakes than formal assessed placements so that student teachers have the opportunity to develop non-cognitive skills in a school context. Whilst this approach has value, it is important that student teachers are able to critically reflect on the approaches they observe in school and also that they are able to recognise that some approaches may work in some schools and not others. Opportunities to develop the skills of resilience, self-regulation, organisation, working effectively with parents and colleagues and managing workload can be nurtured during a short non-assessed placement at the start of a course. Student teachers cannot learn all of these skills through lectures and thus effective university-school partnerships are critical in supporting robust programme design.

However, it is critical that initial teacher education programmes do not emphasise ‘tips for teaching’ above theoretical content. University teacher education makes an essential contribution to providing student teachers with important theoretical underpinning through academic research. Without this contribution, student teachers do not have a strong understanding of the research base which underpins teaching. Recently, policy discourse in England has positioned teaching as a craft to master. This is evident through the growth of school-led routes into teaching, introduced by Michael Gove. We argue that this is reductionist and teaching must be conceived as a practice which is theoretically underpinned by educational theory and research. Without theoretical underpinning, there is no clear rationale for why specific approaches are adopted in the classroom. A doctor would never be allowed to practice without extensive academic study and in our view teaching is no less important or less complex than the practice of medicine.

The role of the teacher education provider is currently reduced to a quality assurance role. It is now common practice for university teacher educators to visit student teachers in school simply to quality assure the assessments of the mentor rather than to develop the student teacher. This devalues the experience, knowledge and academic credentials of the university teacher educator. It is also common for school mentors to focus more on assessing the student teacher rather than developing their knowledge and skills within the context of the classroom. Both the university teacher educator and the school mentor should play a critical role in developing the professional identity, knowledge and skills of the student teacher and this can be highly effective when it is done using a coaching approach. More informal opportunities for mentors and university teacher educators to coach student teachers, including opportunities for team teaching, would support them to develop their skills in the cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of teaching. All of this should take place within a context in which the pastoral care needs of the student teacher are addressed proactively rather than reactively (Philpott, 2015).

Conclusion

Philpott and Poultney’s (2018) work on evidence-based teaching and Philpott’s (2015) work on pastoral care in teacher education makes an important contribution to the professions of teaching and teacher education. Philpott’s (2015) argument is certainly convincing. There is so much more involved in learning to be a teacher than focusing on the development of subject knowledge, assessments, and the regimentation of Standardised Assessment Tests, examinations and accountability. Caring for student teachers’ personal, professional and academic needs provides them with the conditions which will support them to thrive. Introducing the non-cognitive aspects of teaching into initial teacher education programmes provides them with the skills that they need to succeed as teachers.

However, increasing the content on a programme which is already full to capacity is not the solution. If teacher education providers are to give greater emphasis to the non-cognitive aspects of teaching, a rethinking of the content of initial teacher education programmes is almost certainly required.

This chapter has outlined the contribution that initial teacher education can make to developing teachers as researchers. It has emphasised the importance of critically reflecting on evidence that emerges out of daily practice in schools and classrooms to shape the development of students' emerging identities as teachers. In addition, it has highlighted the need for teacher educators to give serious consideration to the pastoral needs of student teachers with disabilities and those who identify as LGBT.

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PAPER 8



Tales From the Chalkface: Using Narratives to Explore Agency, Resilience, and Identity of Gay Teachers

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Existing literature is dominated by accounts which position gay teachers as victims. We were concerned that this only presented a partial insight into the experiences of gay teachers. This study researched the personal and professional experiences of four gay teachers in England. It builds on existing research by presenting positive narratives rather than positioning gay teachers as victims. We use the term “chalkface” to illustrate that all were practicing teachers. The purpose of the study was to explore their experiences as gay teachers throughout their careers. The study used the life history method to create narratives of each participant. Semi-structured interviews were used. The study found that the repeal of Section 28 in England in 2003 did not have an immediate effect on the identities, resilience, and agency of the participants. The 2010 Equality Act in England and changes to the school inspection framework had a greater influence in supporting their agency, resilience, and willingness to merge personal and professional identities. All but one participant managed to use their identities as gay teachers to advance inclusion and social justice through the curriculum. Although the narratives that we have presented do illuminate some negative experiences, the accounts are largely positive, in contrast with existing literature which positions gay teachers as victims.

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INTRODUCTION

This study explores the experiences of four gay educators who taught in schools during Section 28 and following its repeal. We were interested in exploring the ways in which Section 28 impacted on the agency, resilience and identities of these teachers during the time that the legislation was in force and following its repeal. Homosexuality was partially decriminalized in England and Wales in 1967. Despite this, the government of the United Kingdom introduced Section 28 in 1988 which prevented schools from promoting homosexuality or its acceptability as a “pretended family relationship” (Local Government Act, 1988). Research demonstrates that the legislation continued to impact and influence teachers’ practice and identities for many years after its repeal in 2003 (Greenland and Nunney, 2008; Edwards et al., 2016). This study explores the participants’ experiences of teaching during and after the repeal of Section 28. It explores the international literature on the experiences of teachers who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, or queer (LGBTQ+). It explores theoretical perspectives on stress, resilience, identity, and agency. The complete narratives of the participants are presented because we wanted to privilege their stories.

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The narratives are subsequently analyzed using the theoretical frameworks that are outlined earlier in the paper.

The Experiences of LGBTQ+ Teachers

Homosexuality was decriminalized in England and Wales in 1967. Prior to this, individuals engaging in homosexual acts faced a maximum sentence of life in prison. Despite decriminalization, official, and legal disapproval of homosexuality continued for many years with inequality remaining prevalent (Epstein, 2000; Nixon and Givens, 2007). Introduced by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government in 1988, Section 28 (Local Government Act, 1988) signaled this disapproval by seeking to impose upon local authorities and their schools a prescribed view which sought to repress and restrict public debate of sexuality (Nixon and Givens, 2007). It has been argued that:

Section 28 (part of the Local Government Act of 1988) was a notorious piece of legislation that sought to prevent local education authorities in the UK from 'promoting homosexuality'. The effect of Section 28 was to create uncertainty and fear among teachers as to what was (and what was not) permitted in schools. (Greenland and Nunney, 2008, p. 243)

Recent research demonstrates the powerful and long-lasting cultural effect of Section 28 (Edwards et al., 2016). It contributed to a climate of fear through the normalization of heterosexuality, thus resulting in marginalization, oppression, and regulation of those with deviant sexual identities (Neary, 2013). It has been emphasized that:

Most research referring to [Section 28] has been highly critical, viewing it as symbolic discrimination that institutionalizes a hierarchical relationship between heterosexuality and homosexuality, and it is held up as a prime example of the exclusion of lesbians and gay men from full cultural citizenship. (Burridge, 2004, p. 329)

Teachers held several misconceptions about Section 28, especially in relation to what was legal and what was not, and this uncertainty and confusion caused difficulties (Warwick et al., 2001). For example, teachers were often unable to draw distinctions between promoting homosexuality and simply providing students with advice (Greenland and Nunney, 2008). In addition, many teachers were unsure about the legality of discussing homosexuality, and this often led to an avoidance of the subject entirely (Buston and Hart, 2001). This meant that schools avoided discussion of LGBTQ+ topics and any related curricula (Epstein et al., 2003). Research also demonstrates that Section 28 supported the growth of homophobic bullying through creating school cultures which failed to challenge and address homophobia and homophobic harassment (Epstein, 2000; Warwick et al., 2001).

Section 28 prohibited schools from promoting homosexuality or its acceptability as a "pretended family relationship" (Local Government Act, 1988). This normalized heterosexual marriage (Nixon and Givens, 2007) and sustained cultures of heteronormativity in schools, despite the partial decriminalization of homosexuality over 20 years earlier. Thus, Section 28 reinforced the marginalization of people with

LGBTQ+ identities. As demonstrated by Foucault (1978) and Ellis (2007), homo sexuality has been historically associated with disease and mental illness. Through condemning difference, Section 28 effectively positioned teachers with non-heterosexual identities as patients and sufferers (Ellis, 2007) whose divergence and difference left them feeling at risk and in need of help (Quinlivan, 2002).

Section 28 was repealed in England and Wales in 2003. Research demonstrates that the act continued to impact and influence teachers' practice for many years after its repeal (Greenland and Nunney, 2008; Edwards et al., 2016). Researchers have also argued that this repeal was a superficial change in legislation which only went a small way in challenging the deep heterosexist discourse and gross inequality already embedded in schools (Nixon and Givens, 2007). In part, this research study will explore the effect of Section 28 on teacher agency, resilience and identity and whether this has changed since its repeal in 2003.

Some research has demonstrated the harassment and discrimination of teachers with LGBTQ+ identities (Cooper, 2008; Neary, 2013). Dominant heteronormative discourses in schools often situate teachers with LGBTQ+ identities within exclusionary spaces (Gray et al., 2016). Research has linked these experiences of bullying, violence, invisibility, and alienation with elevated risks of mental ill health, self-harm, and suicidality (Maycock et al., 2009; Bryan and Maycock, 2017). Eliason (2010) conceptualizes the "suicide consensus" (p. 7) that has emerged from over 30 years of research. This research compared the experiences of individuals with LGBTQ+ identities with those of peers whose identities were normative (Bryan and Maycock, 2017). LGBTQ+ teachers are required to negotiate complex personal and professional boundaries (Vicars, 2006; Gray, 2013) and decide whether or not to be visible and open about their private truth (Grace and Benson, 2000). This isolation has deterred teachers from assuming positions as visible role models in schools (Russell, 2010; Gray et al., 2016). To conceal and reduce stigmatizing labels, individuals with LGBTQ+ identities will often pass off and cover up their sexuality in order to seek acceptance and equivalence. Through doing so, these teachers can conform to the heteronormative and heterosexist discourses that prevail in schools (Gray et al., 2016; Reimers, 2017).

According to Røthing (2008), teachers' experiences are influenced by "homotolerant" (p. 258) school cultures. Although heteronormativity might be less overt than it was previously (Berry, 2018), it still exists in subtle forms (Gray et al., 2016). These include bias and microaggressions (Francis and Reygan, 2016). Despite microaggressions originally emerging from race-based research (Lynn, 2002; Yosso, 2005), they have been explored in recent years in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity (Nadal et al., 2011; Francis and Reygan, 2016). Microaggressions therefore appear in a range of settings and contexts and can be understood as:

...brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults towards members of oppressed groups. (Nadal, 2008, p. 23)

Research has demonstrated that the LGBTQ+ community, including staff and students in schools, is exposed to microaggressions and subtle bias which perpetuate heterosexism and exclude those with LGBTQ+ identities (Walls, 2008; Nadal et al., 2011). Francis and Reygan's (2016) research has summarized the microaggressions facing those in the LGBTQ+ community. These include: heterosexist language; heteronormative and gender normative discourses; exoticising the identities of LGBTQ+ individuals; outright disapproval of those with LGBTQ+ identities; denying homophobia and pathologising those within the LGBTQ+ community. Minikel-Lacocque's (2013) research also characterizes the contested microaggressions which occur when aggressors deliberately and purposefully deny their actions.

Research demonstrates many of the factors contributing to the oppression of teachers with LGBTQ+ identities, including negative comments from students, peers, colleagues, lack of promotion, being forced to conceal their personal identities and heteronormative discourses in schools (Vicars, 2006; DePalma and Jennett, 2010; Piper and Sikes, 2010; Ferfolja and Hopkins, 2013; Gray, 2013; Gray et al., 2016). In addition to this research, teachers with LGBTQ+ identities have also been viewed with suspicion by parents and other adults (Rudoe, 2010) and recent safeguarding discourses has meant that a teacher's disclosure of their sexuality might be considered inappropriate (Gray et al., 2016).

Although there is a paucity of literature available (Ferfolja and Hopkins, 2013), research does demonstrate that the experiences of LGBTQ+ students have improved in very recent years with more students now self-identifying as LGBTQ+ to resist bigotry and discrimination (Berry, 2018). Despite this, research demonstrating the positive accounts of teachers in England remains sparse. Reflecting on the scarcity of this research, it is also important to consider the advances in international LGBTQ+ inclusion.

The International Context

However, despite more liberal attitudes in some contexts, it has been argued that heterosexuality is embedded in the practices of institutions and the encounters of our everyday life (Epstein and Johnson, 1994). Although the rights of individuals with LGBTQ+ identities have been strengthened across Europe (Lundin, 2015), international research continues to demonstrate that heteronormative and heterosexist cultures are entrenched within schools (Kjaran and Kristinsdóttir, 2015). There is also evidence that these normative values are inculcated within schools in countries where homosexuality is legal, including Australia (Gray et al., 2016) and the United States (Lineback et al., 2016).

Even in countries known for their liberal attitude toward sexuality, such as Sweden, heteronormative attitudes continue to prevail within schools (Lundin, 2015). Furthermore, in countries where homosexuality is illegal or disapproved of, including some Asian and African countries, strict cultural values are used as a "yardstick" (Amoah and Gyasi, 2016, p. 1) to disregard the rights of those with LGBTQ+ identities (Po-Han, 2016).

Regardless of the legal status of homosexuality, religion, and culture shape public opinion on its acceptability (Adamczyk and Pitt, 2009). Research demonstrates that teachers with LGBTQ+ identities from across the globe continue to experience discrimination and marginalization (King et al., 2008; Hardie, 2012; Marris and Staton, 2016). Together, these factors restrict the willingness and ability of teachers to declare their sexuality in professional settings (Wright and Smith, 2015). This study will reflect on this and research the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ teachers in England.

The recognition of same-sex relationships in the United States has increased, though many individuals with LGBTQ+ identities continue to face discrimination (Lineback et al., 2016). Despite this societal tolerance, research has demonstrated that some schools in the US provide discriminatory environments for lesbian and gay individuals and that teaching is one of the most homophobic professions in parts of the US (DeLeon and Brunner, 2013; Lineback et al., 2016). According to DeLeon and Brunner (2013), attempts have even been made to exclude LGBTQ+ teachers from the profession to lessen the risks of sexual abuse, pedophilia, molestation, and the recruitment of children into queer lifestyles (Jackson, 2007; Mayo, 2008; Lineback et al., 2016). Individuals with discriminatory views have accused LGBTQ+ teachers in the US of attempting to influence students' identities and this illustrates the problematic and homophobic school cultures which some teachers in the US are exposed to (Jackson (2007).

Recent research by Reimers (2017) draws on data from a Swedish teacher training programme and demonstrates how sexuality norms produce spaces of heteronormativity in which one body can be more vulnerable than another. According to Reimers (2017), Sweden provides an environment for "queers" (p. 92) which is better than in many other places, although identifying as LGBTQ+ is still seen as deviation. Therefore, it can be argued that whilst attitudes in Sweden are generally more liberal toward sexuality, heteronormative discourses still dominate their schools and the experiences of queer teachers within them. To address the vulnerabilities of those within the LGBTQ+ community, Reimers (2017) suggests investigating homonationalism. This involves intersecting LGBTQ+ rights with a country's democracy and ideology (Puar, 2013). Reimers (2017) therefore argues that homonationalism can be used as a vehicle to advance an inclusive agenda within Swedish schools by favorably associating the country's ideology with the rights of those within the LGBTQ+ community.

To be LGBTQ+ and to work as a teacher is to occupy a complex terrain and exist within a "space of exclusion" (Gray et al., 2016, p. 286). This draws on Vicars' (2006) concept of "problematic terrain" (p. 351). Although state schools in Australia protect those with LGBTQ+ identities, Gray et al. (2016) highlights that such protection is not offered by independent and religious schools and that teachers within these schools are obliged to uphold any religious ethos. Ferfolja's (2008) research demonstrates that within the Australian Catholic schooling system, contractual obligations and the threat of dismissal are used to silence those with LGBTQ+ identities.

Even in countries where homosexuality is legal, teachers with LGBTQ+ identities are still likely to be victims of institutional apathy and there is a disconnect between the recognition of LGBTQ+ rights by societies and the recognition of these rights within education (Gray et al., 2016). Research also demonstrates this disconnect in the healthcare sector with one in every eight of the 5,000 LGBTQ+ people surveyed reporting experiences of unequal treatment from healthcare staff (Bachmann and Gooch, 2017). There appears to be limited research presenting any correlation between the prejudice-based bullying in these sectors.

Minority Stress

Meyer (2003) Minority Stress model has been used by mainstream psychologists to explain how minority status can impact on mental health outcomes for individuals who identify as part of a minority group. It is a particularly useful model for understanding the experiences of LGBTQ+ teachers because it identifies the various stressors to which they might be exposed to.

The model identifies different types of stress that minority individuals experience. Environmental circumstances such as poverty can produce general stressors (for example, financial stress). General stressors could also include the loss of a job, experiences of bereavement, or changes in family circumstances, such as divorce (Meyer, 2003). Distal stressors relate to the experience of stigma, prejudice, discrimination, victimization, and bullying by others based on an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity produces distal stressors (Meyer, 2003). These experiences can be shaped by structural forces (for example, racism, heteronormativity/heterosexism) which result in structural disadvantage for minority groups. Proximal stressors relate to an individual's perception or appraisal of situations. The expectation or anticipation that a person with a minority status may experience rejection, discrimination, victimization, or stigmatization based on one's previous experiences of this can result in self-vigilance and identity concealment (Meyer, 2003). LGBTQ+ teachers may anticipate negative reactions to their sexual orientation or gender identity from students, parents, or colleagues. To reduce the likelihood of negative experiences occurring, self-vigilance and concealment are employed but these tactics can result in fear of discovery, psychological distress, internalized shame, guilt, anxiety, and social isolation. Internalized negativity is where LGBTQ+ people internalize negative messages from others about their identities. It is a product of social prejudices. It can result in feelings of shame and self-disgust and can lead to adverse mental health outcomes (Herek et al., 1998; Herek, 2009). This can affect an individual's sense of self, resulting in detrimental impacts upon academic achievement, confidence, and social connectedness. Intersectional identities (for example, someone who is LGBTQ+ and has a disability) can result in multiple forms of discrimination.

Meyer (2003) identified social support systems as a vital factor in protecting minority groups from adverse mental health. Individuals may therefore choose to participate in sexual

minority communities to enable them to enter into a non-stigmatizing environment (Cohen, 2004; Shechner et al., 2010). LGBTQ+ teachers may choose to join an LGBTQ+ network or they may form online social networks to gain support and positive affirmation. More recently, Meyer (2015) has argued that community resilience is an aspect of the minority stress model. LGBTQ+ people might access the queer community to benefit from community resilience. Meyer (2015) argues against a focus on resilience within individuals because it focuses attention on the individual's response to stress rather than the stressor itself, which is the social environment which the individual is exposed to. Research by Baams et al. (2015) found that feeling like a burden to significant others in their lives is a critical mechanism in explaining higher levels of depression and suicidal ideation among LGB youth. They found that although girls experience lower levels of stress in relation to coming out than boys, they felt more of a burden to family and friends and were therefore more likely to experience depression and suicidal ideation.

Resilience

It is essential to consider the theme of resilience when exploring the capacities of LGBTQ+ teachers to navigate personal and professional transitions. Evidence suggests that resilience influences an individual's ability to adapt to transitions (Jindal-Snape, 2016). We conceptualize resilience as a characteristic that is not just individual but one that is relational. We draw on Greenfield's (2015) model of teacher resilience which examines the impact of relationships, institutional cultures, challenges, and the broader policy context on the resilience of teachers. This ecological framework of resilience is applied to the data to understand the factors which influence the resilience of the participants. This will address the final research question.

Traditional perspectives on resilience have conceptualized it as a fixed trait within individuals (Masten and Garmezy, 1985). However, more recent perspectives conceptualize resilience as a dynamic attribute which is influenced by social, cultural, and political contexts (Luthar, 2006; Roffey, 2017). Although some perspectives on resilience emphasize positive adaptation following adversity or trauma (Gayton and Lovell, 2012) and the capacity to grow in response to adversity (Stallman, 2011), these perspectives are not sufficient because they place emphasis on the individual to overcome adversity rather than exploring the systemic factors which directly influence a person's resilience (Meyer, 2015). Traditional perspectives emphasize resilience as the ability to rebound (McIntosh and Shaw, 2017), the ability to problem solve and to return to the previous state (McIntosh and Shaw, 2017; Sanderson and Brewer, 2017). This ability to push through regardless of circumstances is a dominant theme in the literature (Reyes et al., 2015) but these perspectives only offer a partial understanding of resilience because they do not acknowledge that resilience is relational and influenced by societal structures.

Literature has started to present models of resilience which identify the interdependency between the individual and broader contexts which intersect with their lives and the significance

of these contexts in shaping resilience (Hartley, 2011). For example, Jameson (2014) provides one of the few accounts of resilience from a systemic perspective. In addition, Greenfield (2015) model of teacher resilience emphasizes the way in which teachers are positioned within social and broader contexts which impact on their individual resilience. Although this framework will be used as a conceptual lens within this study to analyse the factors which shape the resilience of the participants, the model fails to identify the specific contexts which shape teachers' lives. Examples of these include political factors which restrict or support teacher agency and religious discourses which may impact on teacher resilience for teachers who are working in schools with a strong religious affiliation or which serve religious communities. However, the model is useful in that it identifies the individual, relational, and contextual factors which can serve as both risk and protective factors in relation to a teacher's resilience. These include a sense of hope, purpose and self-efficacy (individual factors), relationships with family and friends (relational factors), relationships with leaders and other colleagues (contextual factors), the extent of the challenges which teachers face and the broader policy context in which teachers operate (Greenfield, 2015).

Agency

In analyzing the lived experiences of the participants, this study will examine the extent to which their agency is restricted or otherwise by systemic factors and discourses which regulate their working lives. Evidence suggests that individuals with greater agency experience smoother transitions (Bandura, 2000, 2001). Although agency has been conceptualized as the ability to take initiative (Jindal-Snape, 2016) and make choices, it is important to emphasize that agency is context-specific (Jindal-Snape, 2016) and also influenced by one's self-efficacy (Bandura, 2000). The concept of teacher efficacy is particularly relevant to this study. Specifically, this study will draw on Pantić's (2015) model of teacher agency which identifies four factors that influence teacher agency. These include sense of purpose, competence, autonomy, and reflexivity to mediate or overcome barriers which restrict agency (Pantić, 2015). The model is useful because it positions teacher agency within the broader socio-cultural contexts in which teachers operate and therefore acknowledges the role of systemic factors in influencing teacher agency.

Identity

Literature suggests that LGBTQ+ teachers navigate their personal and professional identities (Gray, 2013). Some participants may be in the process of coming to terms with their gender identities or sexualities and will make decisions about whether to separate or intertwine their personal and professional identities. Within the context of this study, identities will be viewed as multiple and exist within a state of flux rather than being conceptualized as unified, coherent, and static. LGBTQ+ teachers have personal and professional identities which can intertwine or collide. Research demonstrates that some choose to maintain a distinction between their personal and professional identities and others mesh them together by using their personal

identities to advance LGBTQ+ inclusion in schools (Stones and Glazzard, 2019). In addition, some teachers may adopt Goffman's (1963) techniques of "passing" (p. 73) or "covering" (p. 102) to conceal their non-normative identities.

Seminal work on teacher identity has illustrated how the occupational and personal selves become integrated to produce a coherent self (Nias, 1989) whereas other work has highlighted the tensions that exist between substantial and situational selves (Sikes et al., 1985; Woods and Jeffrey, 2002). However, more recent work suggests that teacher identity is not a stable entity but continually reconstructed as a product of conflicting discourses and practices (Sikes et al., 1985; Day et al., 2006). It is always deferred and in the process of becoming: "never really, never yet, never absolutely there" (MacLure, 2003, p. 131). Thus, identity formation is a continual process of negotiation and "a potential site of agency" (Clarke, 2009, p. 187).

Research Gaps

Existing research has considered the experiences of LGBTQ+ teachers. A synthesis of this literature highlights recurrent themes including marginalization, bullying, harassment, discrimination, and isolation. There is research from countries where homosexuality is illegal or disapproved of, including some African and Asian countries (Amoah and Gyasi, 2016; Po-Han, 2016), as well as in countries where homosexuality is legalized, such as Australia (Gray et al., 2016), the United States (Lineback et al., 2016) and throughout parts of Europe (Lundin, 2015).

Despite this international literature, there is a paucity of research capturing the experiences of LGBTQ+ teachers and who currently teach or have taught in schools in England. Much of the existing research positions those within the LGBTQ+ community as victims (Gray et al., 2016) who are exposed to suffering and violence (Devís-Devís et al., 2017) and there appears to be limited research presenting positive accounts despite the field of positive psychology which has grown significantly in recent years (Lytle et al., 2014; Pawelski, 2016).

Research Aims and Questions

The broad aim of the research was to explore the experiences of gay teachers who taught during and after Section 28 in England. We wanted to explore the ways in which the legislation impacted on them and whether their experiences changed following the repeal of the legislation in 2003.

This research study addressed the following research questions:

- What have been (and currently are) the experiences of LGBTQ+ teachers?
- What factors affect their resilience?
- How do they negotiate their personal and professional identities?

Much of the existing literature positions queer teachers as victims who lack agency and are forced to conceal their identities (King et al., 2008; Hardie, 2012; Marris and Staton, 2016) or maintain a separation between their personal and professional identities

(Wright and Smith, 2015). This study sought to offer counter-narratives to the victimized narratives which are dominant in the existing literature.

METHODS

This research study explored the lived experiences of four gay teachers. We sought to capture the unique nature of people's experiences (Goodson, 1992; Goodson and Sikes, 2001) in a form that was both engaging and compelling. Within a narrative methodology, we used the life history method to illuminate the unique and rich experiences of an individual's life (Webster and Mertova, 2007; Riessman, 2008). This method places informants' stories within the broader context of public issues and in doing so highlights the social and cultural discourses which intersect with the lives of individuals. Each teacher participated in a semi-structured interview.

Participants

Participants were recruited to the study using our personal social media platforms. We were interested in representing the stories of queer teachers and we put out an open call to invite participation. The criteria for inclusion were that the participants needed to identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans, that they must be practicing teachers and that they must have taught during Section 28. Unfortunately, we did not secure participation from teachers who identified as lesbian or bisexual or trans and we recognize that this is a methodological weakness of the study. We have reflected on our own positionality within the research (Berger, 2013). It is possible that our own status as two gay male researchers impacted on the diversity of the sample. None of the participants were known to us. The breakdown of participants is included in **Table 1**.

Procedures

We used semi-structured interviews in which we simply invited each participant to tell us about their experiences of being a queer teacher. Interviews were conducted via video conferencing software and audio recorded. We did not use a schedule but decided to follow the lead of the participants' (Alasuutari et al., 2008). Data were captured using digital recordings and transcribed to create life narratives for analysis.

The study gained ethical clearance from the university ethical approvals committee. Informed consent was gained prior to collecting any data and participants were assured of their rights to confidentiality and anonymity.

As Laurel Richardson has pointed out, writing about and re-presenting lives carries a "moral responsibility" (Richardson, 1990, p. 131) and consequently "it is not to be embarked on lightly" (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p. 99). We were committed to using our "narrative privilege" (Adams, 2008) wisely by jointly interpreting data with participants and using member checks after the accounts were constructed.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used using an established framework (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to identify key themes arising from across the four narratives. Firstly, each narrative was analyzed individually to identify emergent themes. A cross-sectional analysis was then carried out to identify common themes from across the narratives. The outcomes of the cross-sectional analysis are presented in **Table 2**.

A table of themes arising from the analysis is presented in **Table 3**.

RESULTS

The following narratives were produced using the interview transcripts. The narratives have been developed from the transcriptions and do not include all aspects of the transcriptions.

Tom

September 1990 had arrived. It had been mid-day on the first day of a new school year and the high-pitched chime of the lunchtime bell had reverberated through the corridors. Tom was in his third year of secondary school and his routines had been well-rehearsed. He often left school to buy his lunch and flee the terror of the school canteen. Although he hadn't realized, his efforts to escape one horror had been exposing him to an even greater evil. Tom had always known that one day he would feel like he was

TABLE 2 | Cross-sectional analysis.

Tom	Jack	William	Oliver	Final themes
Teacher agency	Teacher agency	Teacher agency	Teacher agency	Teacher agency
Violence	Power	Teacher identity	Religion	Teacher identity
Teacher identity	Teacher identity	Resilience	Teacher identity	Resilience
Being outed	Geographic displacement	Deep inclusion	Resilience	Stress
Resilience	Stress	Stress	Stress	
Stress	Resilience	Stress		
	Stress			

TABLE 1 | Participants.

	Sexuality	Gender	Teaching sector	Type of school	Role	Years of experience
Tom	Gay	Male	Primary/higher education	State	Teacher/lecturer	25
Jack	Gay	Male	Primary	State	Head teacher/principal	22
William	Gay	Male	Secondary	Independent	Senior leader	23
Oliver	Gay	Male	Secondary	State	Senior leader	20

TABLE 3 | Aligning themes with the data.

	Examples from the data
Identity	<p><i>When I started teaching in 1996 under Section 28 the culture was very different. I felt it might be an issue for staff and children, so I didn't say anything. My first school was in Leeds. I lived in Manchester, so it was easy to keep my personal and professional lives separate. I made a conscious decision to look for jobs on the other side of the Pennines (Jack).</i></p> <p><i>When I first started teaching in the 1990s the law hadn't changed. I didn't lie but I only came out to some colleagues. I got the sense that if I pushed too far I would be pulled in for a conversation. I could have got the sack (William).</i></p> <p><i>Tom knew he could separate his personal and professional life and that he would not need to discuss his sexuality with colleagues and students. Hiding the truth gave Tom a safety net. He felt a sense of protection (Tom).</i></p> <p><i>My sexual orientation does not come into my teaching. Our focus is to educate and teach. My ethnicity has shaped my career more (Oliver).</i></p>
Agency	<p><i>The repeal of Section 28 has changed things, but it has been a delayed reaction. Much of the change didn't happen in 2003 and it took time, but the repeal resulted in changes to equality legislation in 2010 and changes to the Ofsted framework after that (Jack).</i></p> <p><i>I don't feel able to be open. My Vice Principal is a lesbian and she isn't out either. I would not be comfortable being out in the role I'm doing with the community that I serve. It is a predominantly Muslim community which makes it more difficult to prioritize a culture of acceptance ... I know students suspect and have said things behind my back and some of the male staff of a particular ethnic faith have some issues about sexual orientation (Oliver).</i></p> <p><i>When I got my job in 2011, a small group of evangelical Christians said to the Head, we think you have just appointed a gay and we are not happy about it. The Head was horrified. I decided I wasn't going to edit myself out, partly because heterosexual staff don't edit their lives, but also partly to watch the fear behind their eyes (William).</i></p> <p><i>I was open about my sexuality from day 1 in my current school. I'm the Head so there is no one higher than me (Jack).</i></p> <p><i>I have freedom in the university to be open with students and colleagues about my sexual orientation. As a teacher educator I feel able to teach my students about issues pertaining to sexuality or gender identity in schools because this is a requirement of the Equality Act and school inspection frameworks (Tom).</i></p>
Resilience	<p><i>I told him about the law and said to him, if you are not happy you can take your child elsewhere (Jack).</i></p> <p><i>If I get backlash from parents, I just say, it's the law (William).</i></p> <p><i>If I can wrap LGBTQ+ issues up with the Equality Act, I will. I find it easier to talk about LGBTQ+ alongside other protected characteristics. I won't say things that will identify me. Comments were made about me by a colleague in the junior team which were hurtful. I am not out to all staff. I was told by my [line manager] not to go flaunting it around (Oliver).</i></p>
Stress	<p><i>In 2005 it was the early stages of my headship. The local authority had shortlisted the applications and I went to the teachers' center to collect them. One of the applications had a big star in the corner. I questioned this and was told that the feedback from the shortlisting panel was that this candidate was obviously gay. The local authority officers were endorsing homophobia after the repeal of Section 28. I thought, well I'm gay, I'd better be careful (Jack).</i></p> <p><i>I came out to colleagues but not explicitly to pupils ... I got the sense that if I pushed too far I would be pulled in for a conversation (William).</i></p>

trapped inside a burning building. In his nightmares, he saw a building with no exit and no escape route. Tom became visibly upset when he recalled the incident described in this vignette.

The weather was bitterly cold and my hands and feet were freezing. The sky was dull and the air was thick. The pounding rain was not enough to block out the smell of noxious smoke oozing from the tall chimneys of the long rows of terraced houses. It was overbearing. We lived in a former mining community—this was a place where men were meant to be men! Oliver and I were walking back to school. Going into town for lunch was a way of escaping the pain and misery that we would have endured had we eaten in the school canteen. I had lost count of the number of times I had been called “a fucking gay faggot.”

Suddenly, Simon ran up behind us. I didn't see him coming and I certainly didn't expect it. I thought that the bullies congregated and ate together at school. He was short and spotty but he held a reputation for being tough. He began punching me in the head and I crashed to the ground. My head hit the pavement and I blacked out. I gained consciousness but I could not see Oliver. Perhaps he had gone to get help. Blood was streaming down my face like a gushing waterfall. I could feel my eyes swelling as Simon continued to kick me repeatedly in the stomach.

Simon started stamping on my head. “Die you fucking queer, you deserve to get AIDS.” The pain was unbearable, and I used

my hands to protect my head. My head began to throb as though I had been hit by a car. I pleaded with him to stop and let me go but he was wound up and roaring at me like a caged tiger. I curled into a tight ball trying to protect my body. I could hear the traffic screeching past, but no-one stopped. It lasted all of a few seconds, but it felt like hours. He crouched down and screamed right into my face. “Queer! Arse-fucker, cock sucker, stay away from me.” The abuse continued. I felt trapped and Oliver had not returned. He had run off when Simon began punching me.

I felt dirty and ashamed. At one point, I wanted him to kill me. After all, I knew that I could not tell my parents what had happened because I wasn't out to them. My father would have been disgusted. He had made his feelings clear. I knew my mother would be more understanding because she worked in a gay nightclub, but I could not be sure she would accept me being gay. I knew I couldn't report it to the police, because they hated people like me.

All of a sudden a woman raced over the road and yelled at Simon. He stopped and cowardly ran away toward the school. She checked I was conscious, and I got up and made my way back to school, terrified that he would be waiting round the next corner to finish what he had started.

The thought of meeting him again in school and of what he might do to me made me feel sick to the pit of my stomach. I decided to tell my form tutor, Mr. Orange, what had happened.

Mr. Orange was a decent man and a good English teacher. He once jokingly chastised me for writing “chocolate” on the front of my English book in front of his surname. He could have ripped me to pieces but he didn’t. I knew he liked me. I edited the bad language out of my account but told him the rest of what had happened. He knew I wasn’t lying because my face was still covered in dried blood and dirt from the pavement. He listened patiently and his reply shocked me to the core. “Tom, there is nothing we can do because this took place outside of school. Just watch where you go and stay away from him.” I had never felt safe in school, and I now knew that this would never change.

After years of suffering as a student, Tom wanted to make a difference. He wanted to be able to empower young children and make sure that they did not suffer throughout their own schooling, like he had. Tom knew he needed to train and become a teacher. After a 4 year course Tom was excited at the prospect of having his own class. It was 1998 and Tom had secured his first interview for a teaching post. He had completed his teaching practice placements in large schools located in sprawling council estates. However, Tom’s interview was at a village primary located in a beautiful rural area. Immaculately maintained lawns fronted large detached houses, with luxury cars sat prominently on their drives. He was not used to places like this and already felt out of his depth. His sexuality strengthened these anxieties and he feared that his identity would impede his success. Tom was walking down a dark alley and knew nothing about what was waiting for him ahead. In the following vignette, he recounts his vivid memories of the recruitment and selection experience.

It was a hot and sunny day in May. I had to catch a train and a bus to get to the school as I didn’t drive. The interview was one of those grueling scenarios. It involved meeting the staff, having lunch and talking to other candidates while sitting around all day waiting to be interviewed. The lunch was a disaster because it was dairy and meat. I am vegan but was too scared to say anything in case it made me stand out or look odd. I couldn’t afford this at interview and I ate the meal. Sat opposite a panel of 12 interviewers, I then began to answer questions as they were fired at me one-by-one.

“Why have you applied to be a Reception teacher?” The question took me by surprise. There was an emphasis on why I wanted to teach young children and not why I wanted to teach. The Chair of Governors was a fat, obnoxious man with dark rimmed spectacles and a receding hair line. “I want to teach kids to read and write and give them a really good foundation.” When chatting to other candidates, I realized that they hadn’t been asked this question. That realization made me feel uneasy.

After the interview there was a torturously long wait. Suddenly, I was startled out of my thoughts. “Tom, the Head is ready to see you.” Walking toward his office, thoughts raced through my mind. “Your application for this post has been unsuccessful.” I didn’t get the job. “We don’t think you will fit into a school like this. We’re in a very middle-class area and the parents here are really fussy.” My mind was flooded with emotions. Was it because they knew I was gay? Did they think I was too camp? Did they dislike the way I walked or talked? Why had the Chair of Governors asked me that question? Did they think I was a pedophile? I was the best student on my

4-year teacher training degree. I achieved distinctions in all of my teaching practices and I won the course prize for academic achievement. Why would I not fit in? I had never experienced rejection like this before.

Then came an about-turn. Dianne contacted me 3 days later. She had been one of the teachers who had interviewed me. “Tom, that job was yours. You scored the highest points in the interview.” The Chair had blocked my appointment. “We cannot have a homosexual teaching in this school. What will the parents think?” Dianne thought that I should know.

I was absolutely furious. I was not taking this news lying down. I wasn’t going to let someone who knew nothing about education ruin my career. A career that I deserved! I contacted the local authority and asked for the interview records to be recalled and scrutinized. I had been discriminated against and I had to make a stand. I felt it was my duty to all the other teachers like me. Teachers who wanted to commit their working lives to education. I eventually received an embarrassed apology from the local authority and was offered the job. I didn’t want to work there but I needed the job so reluctantly I accepted. There must have been some serious hand slapping that week although to my dismay no one lost their job.

Despite the challenges he faced in securing a teaching post, Tom felt reassured. He knew he could separate his personal and professional life and that he would not need to discuss his sexuality with colleagues and students. Hiding the truth gave Tom a safety net. He felt a sense of protection. He remained in that school for a decade and only disclosed his sexuality to colleagues he felt he could trust. He then moved into an academic career in higher education where he was able to openly disclose his sexuality and merge his personal and professional identities.

Jack

It was 1996 and Jack was looking to secure his first teaching post. He had lived in Manchester for most of his life though he knew he could never work there. He was only applying for posts in Leeds. It was an easy decision for Jack to make. He felt he needed a role on the other side of the Pennines so that he could separate his personal life from his job. He felt unable to bring the two together. When he had been looking for jobs, he never considered any in Manchester. After several years of working as a primary teacher, he moved schools and became a senior leader. He did not come out in his new school. The thought of doing so made his heart race. He feared that members of staff and governors might have an issue with it. He couldn’t afford that. In 1996, the culture was very different under Section 28. He felt that his sexuality might be an issue for staff and children. He never told them. As a Deputy Headteacher and Headteacher, Jack had responsibility for staff recruitment. In this vignette, he describes an incident he will never forget.

Early in my career as a Head we used a local authority pool system for teachers to apply for jobs. Teachers applied to a pool and could be recruited to work in any school in the authority. The local authority did the shortlisting and then the Heads looked at the application forms of those who had been shortlisted and offered interviews in their schools. I remember in 2005 going down to the teachers’ center to look at a batch of shortlisted

application forms. We needed a newly qualified teacher and I was desperate to appoint someone to the role. I pulled out one application form and I was puzzled why someone had drawn a big star and a circle on it. I questioned what this meant. “What do these annotations mean?” The local authority officer replied straight away without hesitation. “The candidate was worthy of being interviewed but the shortlisting panel felt it necessary to draw attention to the fact that the candidate was obviously gay.”

In a heartbeat, memories and feelings came flooding back to me. It was 2005 and the local authority officers were endorsing homophobia. Section 28 has been repealed but its legacy still cast a shadow. I was appalled and scared. I am gay. I need to be careful. Section 28 was repealed in 2003 and I saw very little in terms of change. There was very little change at that time anyway, but I knew that Ofsted would not have prioritized LGBTQ+ inclusion without Section 28 being repealed. Some changes did happen, though these took many years. Equality legislation and the revisions to the Ofsted framework provided some momentum. When Section 28 was repealed, people were still scared. Schools could now talk about gay people, but many were too frightened to do so for several years.

Jack has now led his current school as Head for 10 years. He decided to come out to staff and students immediately after his appointment. At that time, he had never anticipated being able to drive an agenda to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion. He knows that attitudes have changed significantly in recent years although the fear of parental backlash has stayed with him for 10 years. He now seeks protection through his role as Head. He knows that there is no one higher than him to halt the work he is doing to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion. Jack describes his work in this vignette.

We started this work 5 or 6 years ago. Back then, things were different. “You’re gay.” “That’s so gay.” The word “gay” was used by students as the insult of choice. It meant rubbish, bad, broken, and stupid. Boys who were not interested in football were often subjected to homophobic bullying. The culture was toxic. The bullying was endemic. We had to act. I felt the weight of responsibility. I had to lead this change and I was now responsible for its success. We worked with an LGBTQ+ charity to develop staff confidence. Our work raised the profile of LGBTQ+ inclusion and some bullying stopped although I continued to drive change with commitment and momentum. Kids stopped using the word “gay” because they knew that there would be consequences. We tried to normalize LGBTQ+ identities as much as possible. The governors were on board and they believed in our final destination. They shared my vision and they had responded well to LGBTQ+ training. Initially, we didn’t highlight this work to parents. It was on our website, though I was too scared to make a thing of it.

We are now building a snowball. Each generation is more accepting than the previous generation. LGBTQ+ visibility in society continues to improve and this drives further advancement. People are beginning to understand how LGBTQ+ identities can exist within family structures. Parents are less likely to complain. My school is in an area of social deprivation. Some parents come from black African heritage and wanted me to explain the work we were doing. Some of my parents are racist. They know it is not acceptable to be racist on school grounds

and it is exactly the same for LGBTQ+. I am not going to stop advancing inclusion simply because they do not like it.

Jack now collaborates with other schools who are developing their LGBTQ+ inclusion policies. Although he has developed and advanced LGBTQ+ inclusion in his own setting, he knows that the national picture remains variable and inconsistent. His work with other schools continues to reveal staff resistance and that many schools are facing challenges. In this final vignette, he describes the fear factor.

I work in other schools. There is still some apathy from staff. “We don’t have a problem here.” Getting some staff to see the value of this work can be a challenge sometimes. It can be difficult to get them to realize that it is not just about doing a one-off lesson. It is about the ethos, culture and the curriculum of the school. It is not about ticking a box. I ask big questions to support their thinking and reflection. “What challenges do you face in relation to LGBTQ+ inclusion.” “The parents.” It is in the Ofsted framework yet there is still a fear factor.

In 2018 we ran a rainbow day. We showed the children videos of Pride and we hosted a whole school Pride parade. We had posters and banners. I was worried at the time that it would end up in the Daily Mail. A couple of parents came into school to complain about our “themed days.” One of them said he had an “issue” with it. I told him about the law and Ofsted. “If you are not happy then you can take your child elsewhere.”

William

It was late 1990s and William was teaching in the independent sector. It was a boarding school and he lived in the boys’ boarding house. He didn’t lie about his sexuality if people asked him although he did try to keep it low key. He came out to some colleagues and he knew he could never tell pupils. His school was supportive though he sensed that if he pushed it too far the school would pull him in for a conversation. Everything was always at stake. He constantly worried that he could be dismissed for being gay. The secrecy was always there. In this vignette, William describes his move into middle leadership.

I moved into a middle leadership role after 9 years. It was another independent school and the year was 2010. I just thought to myself “this isn’t good enough; I’m not going to edit myself”. When I got the job a small group of evangelical Christians had spoken to the Head about my appointment. “We think you have just appointed a gay and we are not happy about it.” The Head was horrified and ordered them out of the office. When I arrived, I treated them kindly. I wanted to watch the fear behind their eyes. I am from a faith background and my husband is from India so I want people to understand that you can have a religion and also be gay.

I am completely open about my sexual orientation and this school has been wonderful. My husband and I got married in the school. I sometimes experience a little bit of homophobia. It is the casual language that pupils use. “That’s gay.” “This is gay.” I pick up on it calmly. “As a gay man I find that offensive and I’d rather you didn’t say it.” One boy spent a whole week trying to apologize to me. I have experienced a bit of resistance from staff. Some have implied that I have a personal agenda. It doesn’t bother me because I have support from the Head and Deputy.

I talk about my personal life with my husband in school. If it is acceptable for a heterosexual colleague to bring their personal lives in to school, it is also acceptable for me to do the same. Our personal and professional lives overlap because this is a boarding school. We spend a lot of time with our pupils and they like to get to know us. Some colleagues have told me to keep my private life separate from my work life. I always give the same response. “You don’t, why should I?” Sometimes I get excluded from heterosexual conversations, so I tell people straight that they are excluding me. I often tell people that it is okay for them to ask me questions about my life. Sometimes they treat my life as a taboo subject, which it isn’t.

William now leads LGBTQ+ inclusion in his school. He’s led surveys with parents, pupils and staff and he implemented an LGB policy and a separate transgender policy. He believes that the repeal of Section 28 made no difference to LGBTQ+ inclusion. In this vignette, he explains how the Equality Act (2010) gave him opportunities to advance inclusion.

The Equality Act in 2010 reversed the damage of Section 28, not its repeal. As a result of the Equality Act I have done a lot of work on LGBT inclusion in the school. We have embedded LGBT identities into the curriculum to increase visibility. I have invited LGBT role models into the school. I am a Stonewall school champion now and I support other schools with LGBT inclusion. Sometimes I get backlash from parents. I always refer to equality legislation during my conversations with parents. We introduced a gender-neutral dress code and one father complained. “All the boys will be wandering around in fishnet tights.” “That says more about how you feel about women than anything else.” I have organized a knowledge-exchange conference for schools to come together and share ideas and I invited LGBTQ+ students.

We don’t do things that are over the top, such as launching a drag show! We have not created an LGBT group because this just becomes a gay ghetto and excludes those who are not ready to come out. Instead, we have set up an equality group which includes LGBTQ+ pupils. We write an annual report to governors and audit school policies to make sure they are LGBTQ+ inclusive. We have trained all staff in how to respond to LGBTQ+ bullying and we have included books in the library that are written by LGBTQ+ authors, address LGBTQ+ experiences and LGBTQ+ identities. We don’t do drop-down days as we embed it through the whole school. We have changed application forms to make them gender neutral and we create opportunities for LGBTQ+ role models to visit the school. I want it to be boring, routine, and humdrum so that it is ordinary and just run of the mill. You need someone in the school to drive it. It doesn’t have to be an LGBTQ+ person, but it kind of does! You need someone to lead it who understands the issues. It has to be part of their lived experiences. You can do it hypothetically but there is an emptiness to it. It would be a bit like having men trying to organize a women’s rights movement.

William knows he’s lucky to work in a school that proactively promotes LGBTQ+ inclusion. In this final vignette, he describes the current challenges that many schools still face.

The biggest issue is lack of time and finding the space to do this essential work. I have spoken in Muslim schools, schools in areas of social deprivation or schools where there are gypsy

pupils. In those schools I have faced higher levels of resistance and aggression. I know a colleague who works in a Catholic school and they [senior leadership team] have told her not to speak about her sexuality. They have forced her into the closet. She has experienced homophobic abuse from pupils because they [senior leaders] are covertly condoning it. Some people think that addressing issues of sexuality is teaching pupils about sex. We are not sitting kids down and telling them to have gay sex. We are teaching them about identity.

Oliver

Oliver started teaching in the late 1990s. His identity as a gay man doesn’t come into his work and he has never been open about his sexual orientation. In this vignette, Oliver vividly recounts some painful memories.

When I was appointed as a Deputy, I filled in the equal opportunities form and identified as gay. I was then asked directly in the interview if I was gay. Another colleague told me that I should have walked out at that point. In 2015 I was appointed in an interim Head role and both Executive Head Teachers were black. “I noticed on the form that you are gay, don’t go flaunting it around.” I didn’t last long in that role because her values clashed with my own.

In my current school I am not able to be open. My Vice Principal is also a lesbian and she is not out. We are not a faith school, but the pupils are predominantly Muslim, and there are cultural traditions in the community. It is an area of high crime so we must prioritize other things such as behavior and safety. It is a small school so the capacity of the staff to do things is seriously stretched.

My sexual orientation does not come into my teaching. My focus is to educate and teach! As a Head I would not be comfortable being out, due to the role I’m doing and the community that we serve. One pupil came into our school and he was openly gay. He was teased and taunted. There was a lack of respect toward him. We have a high percentage of Muslim students. It is fine to be gay as long as you are not practicing the faith. I have never been out with my students. I’m happy to do LGBTQ+ history and LGBT Pride but that is about it. I am not out to all staff. There are some staff who I would not trust.

I experienced homophobia in my first middle leadership role in an independent school. I once went for an interview and there was one Asian candidate, one black African candidate and one white British candidate. It made me think about whether I was being judged for the role on my merits or whether they were just trying to tick boxes. I wonder how many Heads are LGBTQ+ because that is never talked about. However, we need to represent diversity in school leadership teams.

I know that my students suspect and have said things behind my back. Some of the staff in my school see LGBT as a taboo topic and are not happy to teach it. Some of the male Muslim staff have some issues with specific protected characteristics which they are not prepared to promote. I am not prepared to lead on LGBTQ+ inclusion. The Vice Principal leads on it. Sometimes it is done through a token gesture by addressing LGBT history month or doing an assembly on it. The curriculum has to serve the context

of the school so LGBT inclusion is not a priority for me. The focus is on keeping the children safe!

DISCUSSION

The themes of identity, agency, and resilience were identified as common themes across the four narratives. Four decades ago, Goodson (1980) stated that “in understanding something so intensely personal as teaching, it is critical we know about the person the teacher is” (p. 69). It has been argued that ‘professional work cannot and should not be divorced from the lives of professionals’ (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p. 71).

Teacher Identity

It has been argued that teacher identity is neither static nor coherent but that it is fragmented and always in a state of flux (Smith, 2007). Thus, teacher identity is not a stable entity. Instead, it is continually reconstructed as a product of conflicting practices and discourses (Sikes et al., 1985; Day et al., 2006). It is “always deferred and in the process of becoming—never really, never yet, never absolutely there” (MacLure, 2003, p. 131).

Tom, Jack, and William’s had actively chosen to intertwine their personal and professional identities and had decided to use their personal identities to advance LGBTQ+ inclusion within their schools. However, Jack, William, and Tom all separated their personal and professional identities when they started teaching in the 1990s. In the initial stages of their careers, they felt restrained by the force of the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990) which was upheld by Section 28. They experienced a culture of compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1980) and their stigmatized identities were displaced (Vicars, 2006). They negotiated their sexualities in school in various different ways. These included being selectively out to colleagues but not students (William) or covering up (Goffman, 1963) their sexuality and personal identities (Tom and Jack).

They made a deliberate decision to intertwine their personal and professional identities later in their careers, following changes to legislative and other regulatory frameworks which provided them with protection and permission to advance LGBTQ+ inclusion within their educational contexts. Literature has highlighted how teacher agency and identity are inter-related (Barcelos, 2015). Tom, William, and Jack were able to allow their personal and professional identities to overlap. They used their identities to support their efforts to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion. In contrast, Oliver maintained a division between his personal and professional identities which restricted his agency.

Seminal work on teacher identity has illustrated how the professional and personal selves become integrated to produce a coherent self (Nias, 1989) whereas other work has highlighted the tensions that exist between substantial and situational selves (Sikes et al., 1985; Woods and Jeffrey, 2002). Although Tom, Jack, and William had integrated their personal identities to produce a coherent teacher identity, this was not the case for Oliver who felt compelled to hide his personal identity due to strong religious community that his school served. Teaching assigns on educators a social identity which links teacher effectiveness with the ability to maintain a commitment to improving educational

outcomes (Jeffrey and Troman, 2012). For Oliver, this social identity was more significant to him than his sexuality. Oliver believed that his primary role as a leader was to focus on raising educational standards rather than focusing on his own sexuality and advancing LGBTQ+ inclusion. Clarke (2009) argues that teachers have an ethical obligation to reflect on their identities and to engage in identity work by “claiming” their identity. However, this is not always possible, and this was evident with Oliver who, despite legislation which offered him protection, felt it necessary to maintain a clear separation between the different aspects of his identity, resulting in a fragmented and non-authentic identity during his work as a teacher.

Webb and Vulliamy (2006) have demonstrated how teachers are able to subvert, reject, and recast the dominant political versions of what it means to be a teacher, thus enabling them to assert their own professional values on their identity. Clarke (2009) argues that it is possible for teachers to author their own identities and William, Jack, and Tom each managed to do this successfully, despite having their identities constrained in the early stages of their teaching careers. The equality legislation and inspection framework supported their confidence in disclosing their personal identities in school, advancing LGBTQ+ inclusion, and negotiating parental resistance. It therefore seems that identity formation is a continual process of negotiation and “a potential site of agency” (Clarke, 2009, p. 187) but the extent to which teachers are assigned agency is influenced by the contexts in which teachers work.

Agency

Pantić’s model of teacher agency (Pantić, 2015) includes four factors that influence agency. Firstly, the teacher’s sense of purpose is critical to their agency. Tom, William, and Jack all demonstrated a clear sense of purpose which was centered on promoting equality and social justice. Secondly, teacher competence facilitates or restricts agency. All participants had achieved senior or middle leadership positions in education. Although Oliver’s agency was restricted by religious discourses, William, Jack, and Tom were assigned agency because they were competent teachers who were capable of developing whole institutional approaches to LGBTQ+ inclusion. Thirdly, autonomy was identified as a critical aspect of teacher agency. Tom, William, and Jack were given considerable autonomy to develop their work on LGBTQ+ inclusion. They were trusted by their line managers and the degree of autonomy which they were assigned allowed them to be agentic. This was not the case for Oliver. Finally, the model includes reflexivity which denotes the ability of the teacher to mediate or overcome barriers that obstruct their sense of purpose. This emerged strongly in William’s narrative when he encountered staff and parental resistance to his work. His ability to resist these obstacles meant that his agency was not restricted. Jack also skilfully challenged parental resistance to his agency so that his sense of purpose was not detrimentally affected.

Resilience

Greenfield (2015) model of teacher resilience demonstrates how resilient teachers have a sense of hope, purpose, and belief

in themselves as teachers (self-efficacy). These core beliefs are individual characteristics which play a critical role in resilience. The model demonstrates how resilient teachers form meaningful relationships with others within their setting and undertake actions to effect change and mediate the challenges they face. The model demonstrates how wider systemic factors also influence resilience.

Tom, Jack and William demonstrated a deep commitment to equality and social justice. This motivated them to advance LGBTQ+ inclusion within their contexts. All four participants were highly successful educators and in relatively powerful positions. Their teacher-efficacy was high, and this supported them to be resilient to the challenges they faced. Relationships with colleagues were critical to their resilience and the work they undertook (actions) within their schools was critical to sustaining their motivation. Jack and William both faced challenges from parents and William also faced challenges from other staff with strong religious views, but the protection they were provided by the Equality Act (2010) and by the Office for Standards in Education Ofsted (2018) Framework enabled them to be resilient to these challenges. In contrast, Oliver's resilience was detrimentally affected by the religious context of the school in which he worked.

Minority Stress

All participants had experienced a degree of minority stress at specific points in their careers. In some cases, distal stressors were caused by the actual experience of prejudice or discrimination. Tom was bullied for being gay and experienced direct discrimination during his interviews for teaching posts. Oliver was directly asked about his sexual orientation during a teaching interview and instructed to repress it. William experienced discrimination from other staff upon his appointment and Jack had experienced prejudice from parents. All participants had experienced the pressure to negotiate their sexuality during their early teaching careers and anticipated negative reactions to disclosures of their personal identity (proximal stressors).

All participants drew on the support from family, friends, or other networks to mitigate the effects of stress. The Equality Act (2010) and the Ofsted inspection framework resulted in Tom, William, and Jack feeling confident in merging their personal identities with their teacher identities. All participants had secured leadership positions in various sectors of education, and this gave them high levels of teacher efficacy which mitigated the effects of minority stress. The protection offered by the legislative context increased their resilience and reduced the effects of minority stress, with the exception of Oliver who experienced minority stress as a result of the religious context in which he worked. The positive institutional ethos and culture which Tom, Jack, and William experienced mitigated the effects of minority stress.

The findings suggest that it may be possible to adapt Meyer (2003) model of minority stress by including a wider range of coping strategies which mitigate the effects of minority stress. Meyer (2003) included social support as a coping mechanism but the data suggest that legislative and other policy frameworks

(for example, inspection frameworks) can increase resilience and mitigate stress. The data also suggest that high levels of self-efficacy and positive institutional cultures can also mitigate stress.

CONCLUSION

The narratives demonstrate that Section 28 had a detrimental impact on the teacher agency of all participants. Consequently, in the early stages of their teaching careers, the participants were forced to conceal or negotiate their sexualities in school. The repeal of Section 28 did not immediately result in greater teacher agency, nor did it allow them to intertwine their personal and professional identities to produce a coherent teacher identity. Greater agency was assigned following the introduction of equality legislation and regulatory frameworks for school inspections. These developments supported Tom, Jack, and William to author their own identities as teachers by merging their personal and professional identities. They also enabled them to stay resilient in the face of hostile reactions from parents or colleagues, either in relation to their sexuality or in relation to the work they were doing in school to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion. In contrast to the others, Oliver's account demonstrates the tensions between religion and sexuality and highlights how these tensions can constrain teacher identity, agency, and restrict resilience.

Existing literature is dominated by accounts which position queer teachers as victims. We were concerned that this locates them within a victimized framework. Although the accounts that we have presented illuminate negative experiences, the narratives are largely positive, in contrast with existing literature. There is a need to re-conceptualize queer teachers to by locating their experiences within positive narratives which re-position them as resilient, skilled professionals who are active agents with potential to contribute to the advancement of inclusion and social justice within education. The repetition of victimized accounts which dominates existing literature only presents a partial account of the experiences of queer teachers. There is a need to create stories of empowerment which highlight the contribution that queer teachers can make to inclusion and social justice rather than repeating narratives of discrimination and prejudice.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding authors.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by Leeds Trinity University Research Ethics Committee. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors worked together to prepare and format the study for this publication. Together, the authors approved and agreed the final draft.

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PAPER 9



Running Scared? A Critical Analysis of LGBTQ+ Inclusion Policy in Schools

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This article provides an overview of the UK government policy in relation to relationships and sex education in schools. It focuses on the latest statutory guidance which requires primary and secondary schools in England to teach pupils about different types of relationships, including same-sex relationships. We outline the current policy frameworks and present a rationale for why Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer (LGBTQ+) identities and relationships should be present in the curriculum. We critically interrogate the government response and we present a framework to support the implementation of a whole school approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion. We draw on Meyer's model of minority stress to explore risks to children and young people if they are not provided with an LGBTQ+ curriculum.

Keywords: sexual orientation, LGBTQ+, schools, education, relationships and sex education

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INTRODUCTION

In 2019 the UK government released statutory guidance for relationships and sex education in schools (Department for Education, 2019) following a period of consultation. The guidance was a radical update of previous guidance which was issued in 2000 to more accurately reflect societal issues in the twenty-first century. The guidance included a requirement for primary and secondary schools to teach children about LGBTQ+ identities and different kinds of relationships, including same-sex relationships. Although societal attitudes in relation to same-sex relationships have improved in recent years, and even though some countries have taken steps to legalize same-sex relationships, the inclusion of this content in the school curriculum was considered by some to be controversial. For example, in 2019 parental opposition in Birmingham and other cities to LGBTQ+ curricula in primary schools dominated the media headlines in England. The apparent tensions between religious beliefs, sexual orientation and gender identity fueled parental protests outside primary schools that had adopted an LGBTQ+ curriculum. Subsequent government guidance in England to support schools with the advancement of LGBTQ+ equality has been weak and arguably this has demonstrated a lack of political commitment to equality.

This paper uses Meyer's model of minority stress (Meyer's, 2003) as a conceptual lens to support the analysis of the policy. As a conceptual lens, this model is particularly useful in that it helps to frame the experiences of individuals with minority identities. For example, LGBTQ+ youth may be exposed to a range of stressors both in society and in school and these can impact on their ability to thrive within educational environments and lead to mental ill health (Meyer's, 2003). The model identifies that individuals with minority identities are exposed to two additional stressors in addition to the general stressors that everyone experiences; distal stressors are the direct experience of prejudice and discrimination as a direct result of one's minority identity. Proximal stressors occur when

individuals anticipate that they will be exposed to distal stressors which can result in concealment of one's identity and internalized homophobia (Meyer's, 2003). This paper argues that an inclusive relationships and sex education curriculum, which provides validation and positive affirmation of different identities, has the potential to reduce minority stress in young people who have non-normative gender identities and sexual orientations. In addition, we argue that government policy of delaying the introduction of inclusive relationships education will potentially increase minority stress in young people with these minority identities. We therefore argue that a curriculum which addresses inclusive relationships and sex education is a useful tool for reducing the effects of minority stress in LGBTQ+ youth.

POLICY CONTEXT IN ENGLAND

Sexual orientation and gender identity are two crucial components on an individual's identity, although the Equality Act (2010) in England specifically refers to "gender reassignment." In England, sexual orientation and gender reassignment are identified as "protected characteristics" in the Equality Act (2010). Schools and other public institutions must therefore ensure that LGBTQ+ individuals are protected from both direct and indirect forms of discrimination. In addition, the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act, 2010) requires schools to advance equality of opportunity between individuals with and without protected characteristics and to foster good relations between these two groups.

In 2017 the UK Prime Minister, Theresa May, delivered a keynote speech at the Pink Awards:

Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia have still not been defeated and they must be. Bullying in schools and on social media is still a daily reality for young LGBTQ+ people, and that has to stop. Trans people still face indignities and prejudice when they deserve understanding and respect... being trans is not an illness and it shouldn't be treated as such.

She emphasized the importance of introducing inclusive relationships and sex education into Britain's schools. Of course, 2017 also marked 50 years following the partial decriminalization of homosexuality through the 1967 Sexual Offences Act. The direction of travel was a stark contrast to Section 28 in 1988 which was introduced by the former Conservative Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. Section 28 was a controversial piece of legislation which stated that local authorities "shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality or promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship." It silenced schools from discussing homosexuality and forced LGBTQ+ teachers further into the closet. Section 28 was eventually repealed in 2003. However, its existence demonstrated the role of educational policy in maintaining a dominant heteronormative discourse, thus leading to the marginalization of LGBTQ+ people.

The parental protests in England in 2019 also demonstrated how religious beliefs can also seek to maintain discourses of heteronormativity and also highlighted the ways in which one protected characteristic (religion or belief) can clash with other protected characteristics (gender reassignment and sexual orientation). During these protests, parents objected to LGBTQ+ curricula in primary schools on the grounds that this curriculum was in direct conflict with religious beliefs. Following a protest at a school in Birmingham, these were repeated in other schools in other parts of the UK. These examples of resistance serve to demonstrate the controversial nature of this topic and in particular the apparent tensions between religion, sexuality and gender identity. However, despite these objections it is important that schools leaders respect different opinions, and religious beliefs, but also explain to parents why it is necessary for all young people to learn about different types of relationships and family structures.

It should be emphasized that the statutory guidance for relationships and sex education (Department for Education, 2019) does not seek to promote a particular lifestyle. An effective LGBTQ+ curriculum enables children and young people to know that LGBTQ+ people exist and that it is legal to be LGBTQ+. It supports them to understand different family structures and to know that under the rule of British law it is legal to both enter into same-sex relationships and get married. It is critically important that all children are taught to respect all forms of difference. It is also important to acknowledge to young people that although LGBTQ+ identities and relationships may not be permitted within the context of a religion, in the UK they are permitted under the rule of law. Given that LGBTQ+ people exist within all walks of life (in families, schools, colleges, universities, the workplace, and the community) it is important that young people learn to respect people's differences, regardless of personal or religious beliefs. Education should play a critical role in supporting all children and young people to understand that prejudice and discrimination are wrong, both from a legal and a moral perspective. Critical pedagogy serves a powerful role in advancing social justice through educating young people about all forms of discrimination. It offers hope for creating a better and more equitable society in the future and supports young people to be responsible future citizens.

Research has found that LGBTQ+ policies and initiatives in schools which promote queer-straight alliances are distinctly and mutually important for fostering safer and more supportive school climates for young people and may reduce prejudice-based bullying (Poteat et al., 2013; Ioverno et al., 2016; Day et al., 2019). Lessons which address inclusive relationships and sex education are one example of these alliances. Creating safe spaces in which all young people can discuss inclusive relationships may therefore play a critical role in fostering positive attitudes, creating positive school cultures and reducing homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying. Research by Russell et al. (2009) found that safe queer-straight alliances led to three inter-related dimensions of empowerment: personal empowerment, relational empowerment, and strategic empowerment. When these three dimensions are experienced in combination, teachers of inclusive relationships and sex education can facilitate

individual and collective empowerment which can lead to social change in schools.

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE STATUTORY GUIDANCE

In 2019 the Department for Education (DfE) published statutory guidance for the teaching of inclusive relationships and sex education in schools in England. The DfE is a government organization that enforces policy in schools. The guidance replaced previous guidance which was published 20 years earlier and schools in England are required by law to implement the guidance from 2020. Schools which do not implement the statutory guidance will face penalties during school inspections. The guidance was refreshed to address current societal issues and addresses topics such as consent, domestic abuse and online relationships. It also explicitly mandates the teaching of LGBTQ+ identities and relationships in primary and secondary schools. However, in relation to LGBTQ+ content the guidance might be interpreted in ways which effectively permit schools to opt out of delivering this content, particularly to younger children. The quotations from the guidance below particularly provide schools with a rationale for not delivering LGBTQ+ related content, despite the statutory nature of the guidance. We argue that these opt-out clauses are not acceptable and may potentially result in LGBTQ+ identities not being validated or positively affirmed.

The Relationships and Sex Education States:

- In all schools, when teaching these subjects, **the religious background of all pupils must be taken into account** when planning teaching, so that the topics that are included in the core content in this guidance are appropriately handled. Schools must ensure they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act (2010), under which religion or belief are amongst the protected characteristics (Department for Education, 2019, para, 20, p. 12).
- In particular, **schools with a religious character may teach the distinctive faith perspective on relationships**, and balanced debate may take place about issues that are seen as contentious (Department for Education, 2019, para, 21, p. 12).
- Schools should ensure that all of their **teaching is sensitive and age appropriate** in approach and content (Department for Education, 2019, para, 37, p. 15).

In response to the parental protests, the Department for Education (DfE) introduced the following guidance for schools:

- In all schools, when teaching Relationships Education, **the age and religious background of all pupils must be taken into account** when planning teaching (Department for Education, 2020a, p. 11).

We have added emphasis to the text to draw attention to some key concerns. Schools will not be compliant with the Equality Act (2010) if young people are not taught to respect different religious

beliefs. However, there is a danger that schools with a religious character will use these statements to avoid including LGBTQ+ identities and relationships into the curriculum. It is worrying that the policy permits schools with a religious character to teach “distinctive faith perspectives on relationships” given that some of these perspectives may not align with the principles of the Equality Act (2010). It is also a concern that the teaching of LGBTQ+ relationships and identities is acknowledged within the policy framework as a “sensitive” aspect of the curriculum. This phrasing is unhelpful because it further stigmatizes LGBTQ+ individuals whose identities should be validated and celebrated. The phrase “age-appropriate” is also potentially damaging. It suggests that younger children need to be somehow protected from this content, thus suggesting that it may be potentially harmful and damaging. LGBTQ+ people exist within families and communities. Young children in nursery schools may have same-sex parents, siblings or members of their wider family who are LGBTQ+. To deliberately avoid addressing this in the early years is likely to lead to young children in same-sex families or those with LGBTQ+ family members feeling excluded. This does not foster a sense of belonging and it does not provide validation of children’s families particularly in cases where children have LGBTQ+ parents or siblings.

From 1 September 2020, relationships education is compulsory for all primary school pupils and relationships and sex education (RSE) is compulsory for all secondary school pupils (Department for Education, 2020b). However, as a result of the impact of Covid-19 schools have been given additional time to implement the statutory guidance. The government has insisted that secondary schools will risk negative inspection reports if the statutory guidance is not implemented from the start of the summer term 2021. In stark contrast, primary schools will not be penalized for avoiding the teaching of LGBTQ+ content, provided that they can demonstrate that appropriate consultation has taken place with parents:

Before the start of summer term 2021, if a primary school does not teach about LGBT relationships, and does not yet have adequate plans in place to meet the requirements of the DfE’s statutory guidance by the start of the summer term 2021 (for example, if it has not consulted parents and has no plans to do so before then), inspectors will comment on this in the inspection report. This will not, however, impact on the leadership and management judgement except when inspectors consider it relevant to the effectiveness of the school’s safeguarding arrangements (Department for Education, 2020b).

From the start of summer term 2021, if a primary school does not teach about LGBT relationships, this will not have an impact on the leadership and management judgement as long as the school can satisfy inspectors that it has still fulfilled the requirements of the DfE’s statutory guidance. If it cannot do this, for example if it has failed to consult with parents, inspectors will consider this when making the leadership and management judgement. The school will not ordinarily receive a judgement for this better than requires improvement (Department for Education, 2020b).

Before the start of summer term 2021, if a secondary school does not teach about LGBT relationships and does not have adequate plans in place to meet the requirements of the DfE’s statutory guidance

by the start of the summer term 2021, inspectors will comment on this in the inspection report. This will not, however, impact on the leadership and management judgement except when inspectors consider it relevant to the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements (Department for Education, 2020b).

From the start of summer term 2021, if a secondary school does not teach about LGBT relationships, it will not be meeting the requirements of the DfE's statutory guidance. Inspectors will consider this when making the leadership and management judgement. For state-funded schools, this only applies to section 5 inspections. For independent schools, this only applies to standard inspections. The school will not ordinarily receive a judgement for this better than requires improvement (Department for Education, 2020b).

Given that prejudice is often established before children start the secondary phase of their education, we feel that it is critical that the teaching of LGBTQ+ content in primary schools should be mandatory. This latest “opt out clause” permits parental beliefs (and parental prejudice) to determine curriculum content. This is not only selling LGBTQ+ pupils in primary schools short, it is also selling all pupils short. It effectively provides schools that are reluctant to address this content with a license not to address it. Large-scale survey data from Stonewall in 2017, the organization which champions equality for the LGBTQ+ community, demonstrates the extent of homophobic bullying in Britain's schools. The data demonstrated the large prevalence of homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying in Britain's schools. We argue that inclusive relationships and sex education in primary and secondary schools which provides positive affirmation of different identities will reduce the prevalence of prejudice-based bullying.

THEORETICAL CRITIQUE

Meyer's (2003) minority stress model has been used by mainstream psychologists to explain how minority status can impact on mental health outcomes for individuals who identify as part of a minority group. The model has been applied to individuals who identify as LGBTQ+.

The model identifies different types of stress that minority individuals experience. These are summarized below:

- General stressors apply to all individuals as a result of environmental circumstances.
- Distal stressors: the direct experience of stigma, prejudice, discrimination, victimization and bullying by others based on an individual's minority status produces distal stressors. These experiences can be shaped by structural forces (for example, racism, heteronormativity/heterosexism) which result in structural disadvantage for minority groups.
- Proximal stressors: these relate to an individual's perception or appraisal of situations. The expectation or anticipation that a person with a minority status may experience rejection, discrimination, victimization, or stigmatization based on one's previous experiences of this can result in self-vigilance and identity concealment. People who identify as LGBTQ+ may anticipate negative reactions to their sexual orientation or

gender identity in specific situations due to their previous negative experiences. To reduce the likelihood of negative experiences occurring, self-vigilance and concealment are employed but these tactics can result in fear of discovery, psychological distress, internalized shame, guilt, anxiety, and social isolation.

Not addressing LGBTQ+-related content in the primary curriculum is likely to result in exposing children to distal and proximal stressors. If their identities are not discussed and not made visible through the school environment and the curriculum, they are more likely to conceal their identities and to internalize the homophobia to which they are exposed. The aim of an LGBTQ+ curriculum is to validate identities of difference and to teach children the importance of respect. If this validation of identities is not evident, there is a risk that children with non-normative identities in primary schools will be exposed to prejudice, violence and other forms of discrimination.

International research continues to demonstrate that heteronormative and heterosexist cultures are entrenched within schools (Kjaran and Kristinsdóttir, 2015). Even in countries known for their liberal attitude toward sexuality, such as Sweden, heteronormative attitudes continue to prevail within schools (Lundin, 2015). The revision of policies and legislation signal the UK government's commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion (DePalma and Jennett, 2010). However, despite this, research continues to evidence the scale of homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying in Britain's schools (Bradlow et al., 2017). Whilst the reasons for this are complex, multifaceted, and often misunderstood (Formby, 2015), research by Bradlow et al. (2017) does illuminate the disconnect between the government's expectations and the lived experiences of those within the LGBTQ+ community.

CONCLUSION

Data from Stonewall (Bradlow et al., 2017) demonstrates the prevalence of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools in Britain. Nearly half of lesbian, gay, bi and trans pupils (45%)—including 64% of trans pupils—are bullied for being LGBTQ+ at school. The majority of LGBTQ+ pupils—86%—regularly hear phrases including “that's so gay” or “you're so gay” in school. Nearly one in 10 trans pupils (9%) are subjected to death threats at school. Seven in 10 LGBTQ+ pupils (68%) report that teachers or school staff only “sometimes” or “never” challenge homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic language when they hear it. Two in five LGBTQ+ pupils (40%) are never taught anything about LGBTQ+ identities at school. Three in four LGBTQ+ pupils (77%) have never learnt about gender identity and what “trans” means at school. More than half of LGBTQ+ pupils (53%) say that there isn't an adult at school they can talk to about being LGBTQ+. Two in five pupils who have been bullied for being LGBTQ+ (40%) have missed school because of this bullying. Half of bullied LGBTQ+ pupils (52%) feel that homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying has had a negative effect on their plans for future education. More than four in five trans young people (84%) have self-harmed.

For lesbian, gay, and bi young people who aren't trans, three in five (61%) have self-harmed. More than two in five trans young people (45%) have attempted to take their own life. For lesbian, gay, and bi young people who aren't trans, over one in five (22%) have attempted to take their own life (Bradlow et al., 2017).

Avoiding teaching LGBTQ-related content in primary schools is likely to result in a worsening of these statistics. In addition, many young children in primary schools have same-sex parents or they may have siblings or know other people who are LGBTQ+. Silencing LGBTQ+ identities is likely to alienate these children if they start to feel that their daily realities are not reflected in the school environment or through the curriculum that they are taught. Avoiding teaching LGBTQ+ related content to young children is likely to result in minority stress and mental ill health (Meyer's, 2003), especially if queer identities are not recognized, not provided with validation and not positively affirmed.

ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are aimed at school leaders:

- All primary and secondary schools should provide children with an inclusive relationships education curriculum which addresses LGBTQ+ identities and same-sex relationships.
- All primary and secondary schools should teach children to respect LGBTQ+ people.
- All schools should consult with parents in relation to LGBTQ+-related content but consultation should not lead to a veto on the curriculum.
- Penalties should be applied by the school inspectorate to primary schools that do not teach children about LGBTQ+-related content.
- All schools should ensure that their legal obligations in relation to the Equality Act (2010) are met.
- All schools should have a clear policy which addresses LGBTQ+ inclusion.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

JG outlined the policy context and offered a theoretical critique. SS contributed the review of statutory guidance. All authors identified recommendations and edited and approved the article.

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PAPER 10

Trainee Teachers with Dyslexia: Results of a Qualitative Study of Teachers and their Mentors

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Abstract. This study explored the perceptions of trainee teachers with dyslexia, and their mentors, of their placement experiences during their initial teacher training course. The research was conducted within one initial teacher education partnership in the north of England. Data were collected through two focus groups; one of trainees and one of mentors. Trainees described the difficulties they experienced with teaching literacy (particularly phonics), difficulties with memory and difficulties with the administrative demands of placement. Mentors emphasised trainees' weaknesses and although some mentors wanted to recognise and support the strengths of the trainees, they felt responsible as gate-keepers to the profession.

Keywords: Dyslexia; Literacy; Initial teacher training; Placements.

1.0 Introduction and Literature Review

1.1 Focus of the study

All initial teacher training courses must provide trainees with structured, supervised time in schools in order to develop the practical skills of teaching. This is referred to as 'placement'. This qualitative study examines the perceptions of a group of trainee teachers with dyslexia of their experiences of school placements. Additionally, the study examines the perspectives of a group of mentors who had experience of mentoring trainees with dyslexia. The term 'mentor' is used to refer to teachers who work in placement schools and who assume responsibility for the direct supervision of trainee teachers during placement. Data were collected from participants representing one initial teacher education partnership in the north of England. The university provider, its trainees and mentors from partnership schools represent the 'partnership'. The author of this study, at the time of collecting the data, was programme leader for all primary education initial teacher training courses in this partnership.

1.2 Context

The Equality Act (HMSO, 2010) places a legal responsibility on higher education providers to ensure equality of opportunity for students with recognised disabilities by removing barriers to participation and achievement. Universities need to ensure that students with disabilities have not been subjected to direct or indirect discrimination and have had equality of opportunity to achieve their potential.

However, competing policies result in the marginalisation of people with disabilities. Professions such as teaching, nursing and social work are subject to fitness to practice regulations and teacher training providers have a responsibility to ensure that all trainees meet the minimum expectations as set out in the teachers' standards (DfE, 2011). Thus, providers face the challenge of meeting the individual needs of trainees with disabilities at the same time as maintaining the integrity of their teacher training programmes. Additionally, the introduction of a more rigorous National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) in schools has meant that primary teacher training providers must now ensure that all trainees are able to demonstrate higher standards of literacy than was previously the case.

The focus on raising standards in schools has resulted in a political focus on the quality of initial teacher training courses. Inspection frameworks for initial teacher training have become increasingly rigorous over the past decade with a sharper focus on how effectively trainees teach subjects, for example, literacy. This can present trainees with disabilities with significant challenges if they experience barriers to learning in specific areas of the curriculum. In order for providers of initial teacher training to demonstrate that they are compliant with the Equality Act, they need to be able to demonstrate that reasonable adjustments have been provided for trainees with disabilities. The implementation of reasonable adjustments aims to ensure that barriers to achievement are removed, thus enabling equality of opportunity. This reflects the principles of the social model of disability.

1.3 Students with dyslexia in higher education

Research on the experiences of students with dyslexia during their higher education suggests that academic staff lack knowledge or understanding of dyslexia or have not been trained to support students' needs (Hanafin et al., 2007; Mortimore & Crozier, 2009; Riddell & Weedon, 2006). Students with dyslexia have reported unsympathetic attitudes from lecturers (Madriaga, 2007) and lack of flexibility in the way they are assessed through an over-emphasis on written assessments (Fuller et al., 2004). Riddell and Weedon (2006) found that academic staff were sceptical about dyslexia and did not consistently agree with making reasonable adjustments. More recent research indicates that the quality and quantity of support and reasonable adjustments to students with dyslexia in higher education is inconsistent (Fuller et al. 2009; Pavey et al., 2010) and amounts to little more than a 'lottery' (Griffiths, 2012). All of these studies are qualitative and involve small numbers of participants, thus reducing their reliability.

1.4 Challenges for trainee teachers with dyslexia

Dyslexia is classified as a disability under the Equality Act (HMSO, 2010). Despite the introduction of the Equality Act trainee teachers with dyslexia still fear discrimination and this results in a reluctance to declare their disability (Griffiths, 2012). There is an expectation that all trainee teachers are able to demonstrate high standards in literacy in order to safeguard standards in schools. Consequently, trainees with dyslexia are often viewed as a threat to standards rather than a valuable resource to the teaching profession (Ferri et al, 2001; Griffiths, 2012; Riddick & English, 2006).

The requirement for teachers to demonstrate high standards of literacy has been seen as central to raising standards of literacy in schools and this raises questions about the suitability of those with dyslexia as teachers (Riddick, 2003; Riddick & English, 2006). Implicit within this is the assumption that trainees with dyslexia are not able to teach reading and writing skills to a sufficiently high standard.

Research has indicated that trainees with dyslexia are viewed as a burden in that they may require additional support and may threaten the standards which schools aspire to achieve (Griffiths, 2012). Riddick and English (2006) have questioned the focus on standards by asking:

Do teachers' own standards impact on the literacy standards of the children they are teaching? ... How many children have left school unhappy (or poorly educated for that matter) because their teacher misspelled the odd word?

(p. 206)

The focus on literacy standards in schools presents trainees with dyslexia with a significant barrier and diverts attention away from curriculum areas or other attributes which may be significant strengths. Additionally, the political focus on teaching children to read through synthetic phonics (DfE, 2010; DfE, 2016; Rose 2006) has resulted in the development of inspection frameworks for schools and initial teacher training providers which emphasise this aspect of the curriculum above others. For the past decade inspections of schools and initial teacher training have focused on how effectively teachers and trainees teach phonics and for trainees and teachers with dyslexia this is a skill which does not develop automatically. This is because dyslexia arises from a phonological deficit affecting the processing of speech sounds in words (Snowling, 1995; 1998; Snowling, 2013). Trainees who are placed with children aged 5-6 years are likely to find that a significant proportion of curriculum time is invested into preparing children for the phonics screening check and for trainees with dyslexia this presents them with an additional barrier in comparison to other trainees who may develop phonics knowledge and skills with greater automaticity.

1.5 Placement experiences of trainee teachers with dyslexia

Although there is some research on the effect of dyslexia on pupils' self-esteem (Glazzard, 2010; Humphrey, 2002; Humphrey & Mullins, 2002b), there is a paucity of research on the experiences of trainee teachers with dyslexia during their initial teacher training course, specifically in relation to placements. Evidence suggests that training experiences, particularly experiences of placements, can impact on trainees' self-esteem (Hobson & Malderez, 2013).

Whilst there is some literature on teachers' experiences of dyslexia (Burns & Bell, 2010; 2011), only one study has been located which specifically discusses the experiences of trainee teachers with dyslexia of their initial teacher training placements (Griffiths, 2012). This was a small-scale study in which data were collected from six student teachers in one higher education institution. No information has been provided on how these participants were selected and the sample size was small. These factors reduce the reliability of the study. Additionally, the study did not explore mentor perceptions and therefore lacked triangulation. This reduces the validity of the research. The literature which does exist focuses more on the selection process onto initial teacher training courses in relation to those with dyslexia (Riddick & English, 2006) or the general experiences of trainee teachers with dyslexia of their university courses (Cameron & Nunkoosing, 2012; Morgan & Burn, 2000). Consequently, little is known about the challenges that trainees with dyslexia face on placement and how they overcome these.

Furthermore, research has found that the transfer of support from the university to school placements for trainee teachers with dyslexia is variable (Griffiths et al. 2010). Whilst many universities now have central departments which are responsible for assessing students' needs and determining reasonable adjustments for students on campus, insufficient consideration is often given to planning reasonable adjustments for students on placement (Griffiths et al., 2010; Griffiths, 2012). The cognitive impairments associated with dyslexia may have detrimental effects upon attainment in reading, writing, numeracy, oral fluency, organisation, attention and self-esteem (Pavey et al., 2010; Pollak, 2009) but the profile of impairments is unique to each individual. Reasonable adjustments needed to help students achieve on placement may be different to those adjustments which are provided to students on campus and careful planning is required to ensure that the correct adjustments are put in place when students undertake a placement. One study concluded that placements and mentors are often not carefully matched to individual students' needs resulting in impaired confidence and self-esteem and stress (Timmerman, 2009). This was a small-scale study in which data were collected from 13 teacher-educators. The validity of this claim could have been strengthened had the perspectives of student teachers been explored in addition to the perspectives of the teacher-educators.

As a result of the challenges which have been highlighted, trainees with dyslexia fear being misunderstood, stigmatised, labelled and misjudged because colleagues in school lack awareness of dyslexia (Beverton et al., 2008; Pollak, 2009). Research has indicated that students with dyslexia may not perceive any tangible benefits of disclosing their disability to their placement setting (Morris & Turnbull, 2007) and disclosure to the mentor has been considered high risk (Griffiths, 2012). The focus on high performance results in their unique strengths being ignored and their differences being undervalued (Onken & Slaten, 2000).

1.6 Strengths of trainees with dyslexia

Trainees with dyslexia have many strengths which they can bring to the teaching profession (Duquette, 2000; Riddick, 2000; 2001; 2003). Research has

indicated that trainees with dyslexia feel that they unique insights into the difficulties experienced by the children they are teaching (Glazzard & Dale, 2013; Griffiths, 2012). Burns and Bell (2010) found that trainees with dyslexia demonstrated empathy and sensitivity towards children with disabilities as a result of their own experiences of educational exclusion. Often, they developed their own compensatory coping strategies to make their professional lives easier (Burns & Bell, 2010), such as purchasing technological aids to help them with spelling. Other research has demonstrated how trainees with dyslexia were particularly skilled at developing highly effective relationships with pupils with behavioural difficulties (Burns & Bell, 2011). Griffiths (2012) found that trainees with dyslexia had strengths in curriculum areas such as art, drama and physical education and were able to develop skills such as differentiating the curriculum for children with special educational needs and disabilities more automatically than trainees without dyslexia.

1.7 Strategies for supporting trainees with dyslexia

The ICF model provides a useful framework for understanding the impact of dyslexia on an individual's ability to perform a task or participate in a life situation. In relation to trainee teachers with dyslexia, impaired *bodily functions* (i.e. difficulties with phonological processing) can affect specific *activities* such as reading and writing. This can affect a trainee's ability to *participate* in teaching these aspect of the curriculum. *Environmental* factors (i.e. the attitudes of mentors and provision of reasonable adjustments) can alleviate or exacerbate the difficulties which are experienced and *personal* factors, such as self-concept and self-esteem must also be taken into account.

The literature makes clear recommendations for ways in which schools and universities can more effectively support the needs of trainee teachers with dyslexia. Examples of recommendations from Griffiths (2012) include: proactively planning placement support; placing the student at the centre of the planning process; applying a model of placement support which is flexible and responsive to trainees' individual needs; pairing trainees with dyslexia with dyslexic mentors and developing alternative ways of presenting portfolio evidence. Whilst these recommendations are important and will potentially improve trainees' placement experiences, there is insufficient consideration given to the type of support that may be required to enable trainees with dyslexia to develop their knowledge and confidence in relation to teaching phonics on placement. Given that the core deficit in dyslexics appears to be phonological processing (Snowling, 2013) and the political emphasis on phonics, it seems logical to suggest that universities and schools should further consider what support may be required in this area before, during and after placements.

1.8 Theoretical framework

Building on the medical and social models of disability this study is framed within the bio-psycho-social model of disability. The World Health Organization released the bio-psycho-social model for disability, the International Classification of Functioning, disability and health (ICF) (WHO, 2001), which aims to provide a holistic definition of health by essentially merging the medical and social models. The model recognises the complex inter-relationships

between biological and contextual factors which influence how disability is experienced by the individual. These are identified below:

Body functions and structures: the body functions and structures of people; problems with the integrity of structures or their functions are termed impairments (functioning at the level of the body).

Activity: the activities/tasks people undertake; difficulties undertaking those are termed activity limitations (functioning at the level of the individual).

Participation: the participation/involvement of people in life situations; difficulties are termed participation restrictions (functioning of a person as a member of society).

Environmental factors: the external factors (physical, social and attitudinal) which affect people's experiences (and whether these factors are facilitators or barriers).

Personal factors: these are the internal factors which affect people's experiences (and whether these factors are facilitators or barriers).

(WHO, 2001)

The ICF was created to define/describe health, but recognizes that a breakdown/problem with any of the components can affect health experiences. For instance, an impairment of a body function may exist, but the impact of that is only seen when we consider how it affects an individual's ability to perform a task or participate in a life situation, and that the degree to which that participation is affected is moderated by contextual factors (personal and environmental) that acts as barriers/facilitators.

Often the models of disability are represented as though they are distinct and the critical literature on the medical model (Thomas & Loxley, 2001; 2007) underplays the role that a person's biological impairments can play in restricting access to goods and services. However, the implementation of interventions which address biological and contextual factors can potentially have a greater impact than operating within the principles of one model in isolation to the others.

1.9 Research aims and questions

Trainees with dyslexia have much to offer as students and future teachers, but require support in order to develop their skills. Universities have an obligation to support trainees, but it is unclear whether this is happening in the most effective way. One of the key reasons is that trainees undertake significant learning away from universities; when on placement. Yet the beliefs and skills of mentors who support trainees with dyslexia on placement is not known and their need for further training and capacity-building to support these students is also unclear. This study explored the following research aims:

- What were the collective experiences and perceptions of dyslexic trainee teachers of their initial teacher training placements?
- What were the collective experiences and perceptions of mentors in relation to trainee teachers with dyslexia?
- What benefits do trainees with dyslexia bring to the teaching profession and what are challenges are associated with being a teacher with dyslexia?

2.0 Methodology and Methods

Given that the aims of the study focused on eliciting the *perceptions* of mentors and trainees a qualitative, interpretive approach was deemed to be suitable. Two focus groups were conducted; one with trainees and one with mentors.

Each group comprised six participants. Each participant in the mentor focus group was female. Each mentor had been mentoring trainees for ten years or more. Two of the mentors had mentored four trainees with dyslexia, three had mentored two trainees with dyslexia and one mentor had mentored one trainee with dyslexia. All mentors had experience of mentoring a trainee with dyslexia within the last two years. In the trainee focus group there was an uneven split of males and females (males $n = 2$; females $n = 4$). All trainees were in their second year of an undergraduate degree in primary education and had completed two six-week placements in a primary school prior to their participation in this study. The trainee sample was a purposive sample and consequently 'it does not pretend to represent the wider population; it is deliberately and unashamedly selective and biased' (Cohen et al., 2011, p.104). All of the trainee participants volunteered to be part of the study because each of them had negative experiences of placements that they wished to share. The mentor sample was purposive in that it only included teachers who had experience of mentoring trainees with dyslexia. Both focus groups were digitally recorded to reduce the potential for data loss which happens when researchers only take notes from interviews. Data were later transcribed and analysed using *Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis* (IPA) (Smith et al., 1997).

3.0 Results

3.1 Overview of results

The themes that emerged from the transcripts focused difficulties trainees experienced with literacy, specifically in relation to teaching phonics and writing. Trainees also identified difficulties with memory and managing the administrative requirements of placement. Mentors concurred with many of these difficulties. Additionally, trainees associated criticism from mentors as discrimination. Trainees highlighted specific strengths in their teaching which they attributed to their personal experiences of dyslexia. In the following sections, each theme will be discussed with excerpts from the focus groups used to illustrate the experiences of the trainees and mentors.

Data analysis revealed that all trainee participants had experienced challenges whilst on placement, particularly in relation to the teaching of early reading, spelling, grammar and punctuation. Detailed analysis indicated each individual had unique experiences, but all identified challenging situations, caused by their condition, the requirements of their role and the context in which they worked. This included the attitudes and support of their mentors. The challenges which they experienced reflected the interaction between the medical and social models of disability. Some trainees were scared about the prospect of not passing, some were disappointed about the perceived lack of support they received and others questioned whether to continue. Mentors confirmed some of these challenges but also expressed concerns about the impact that trainees' literacy difficulties had on children's development and progress, thus

illustrating the complex nature of the issues. Part of the complexity arises from the fact that the mentors *created* the environment in which the trainees worked and which impacted on the degree of disability they experienced. However, the mentors also *existed* within an environment which impacted on them. They were influenced by the curriculum standards and the expectations of their stakeholders, to which they were accountable.

Pseudonyms have been used throughout this section as shown below:

Table 1: Names of participants

Trainees	Mentors
Sally	Dorothy
Kate	Shirley
James	Fran
Tom	Jane
Alice	Sarah
Ayesha	Susan

3.2 Literacy difficulties

All trainee participants experienced difficulties with teaching literacy and these difficulties were categorised into either 'difficulties with teaching phonics' or 'difficulties with teaching writing'. Mentors confirmed that these specific difficulties were problematic in the context of a standards agenda in schools.

3.2.1 Difficulties with teaching phonics

Although all trainee participants acknowledged their difficulties with phonics individual participants emphasised different issues in relation to this theme. Whilst Tom focused on the limitations of his own subject knowledge, Alice and Sally emphasised the criticism that they had encountered by their mentors. Kate emphasised the anxiety that she experienced prior to an assessment of her teaching capability:

'I find it difficult to hear the sounds in words. I know that a word like 'dog' has three sounds (d-o-g) but when I have to break down a more complex word like 'cornflakes' I find it difficult to identify the units of sound.' (Tom).

'My mentor criticised my phonics teaching because I could not identify and address children's misconceptions.' (Alice).

'I just can't seem to grasp the complex alphabetic code and my mentor became very frustrated with me because I kept needing to ask for her support when planning lessons' (Sally).

'Every time I taught phonics I was nervous. I was terrified that I would make a mistake.' (Kate).

Mentors all expressed concerns about the difficulties that trainees with dyslexia experience when teaching phonics. However, individual mentors acknowledged different issues in relation to this. Whilst most mentors focused on the detrimental impact on pupils' learning (Sarah, Jane), Jane also emphasised that she felt torn between supporting her trainee and ensuring that her pupils

achieved highly. Some mentors resented the increase in workload that was created by providing trainees with dyslexia with additional support (Sarah).

'I resent providing additional support to those trainees. My energies need to be directed towards supporting my pupils.' (Sarah).

I had a trainee with dyslexia who taught brilliant, creative lessons. Her lessons were fun and exciting and when she was teaching phonics she focused on planning interesting activities which engaged the children...I had to pull her up on her subject knowledge and I felt terrible for doing this when she had worked so hard in planning interesting lessons. But at the end of the day the children are tested and if they are not taught correctly they will not pass' (Jane).

Dorothy commented that her trainee experienced difficulties in teaching phonics but that he had also interpreted any criticism of his teaching as a form of discrimination. Fran also failed two trainees with dyslexia because they were *'not able to teach phonics'*. Shirley prevented her trainee from teaching phonics because the trainee's subject knowledge was weak. Sarah, Jane and Shirley all emphasised their commitment towards their pupils achieving highly. Susan highlighted how she had to provide additional support to enable her trainee to plan phonics lessons.

3.2.2 Difficulties with teaching writing

All participants reported difficulties with spelling. However, individual participants emphasised different issues arising from difficulties with writing. Some participants reported difficulties with memorising grammatical rules and the rules of punctuation (Tom, Alice). Two trainees emphasised a lack of confidence in relation to teaching as a chosen profession as a result of their difficulties with writing (James, Tom). Some trainees emphasised mentor criticism arising from their writing difficulties (James, Tom). One trainee reported that her difficulties with spelling were exacerbated when she felt under pressure (James). Some trainees questioned the value of teaching grammar and punctuation through tasks which are decontextualized (Tom, Alice):

'I hate writing on the board because I am terrified that I will make a spelling mistake. I try to avoid it as much as possible. I dread shared writing lessons where I have to model the writing process. I once modelled some writing using the computer but my mentor pulled me up for that because she said I wasn't modelling letter formation. It made me question whether I should be going into teaching'' (James).

'We now have to teach so much spelling, grammar and punctuation and the children are tested on it in Year 2 and Year 6. I find all of this very difficult and it makes me nervous when I have to teach it. I want children to enjoy writing. I am good at developing creative ideas which hook children into writing but my mentor said there was no substance to it because I was not teaching children the skills they needed to become better writers. After she said that I thought- I'm crap, I should not be teaching' (Tom).

'I find the rules about grammar and punctuation difficult because I wasn't taught those rules at school and I can't see the point of asking children to underline a noun, verb or adjective in a sentence. How does this make them better writers?' (Alice).

All mentors expressed considerable concern in relation to the teaching of writing but individual mentors emphasised different issues. Some mentors emphasised the importance of teachers being accountable to children, parents and official agencies such as the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). Dorothy's feedback to her trainee was interpreted by her trainee as *'discrimination'* rather

than constructive help. One mentor emphasised the tension between supporting the needs of the trainee at the same time as being a teacher of children (Susan). Another mentor focused on how her trainee could support the weaker writers very effectively but was less effective at challenging the more-able writers (Fran). Most mentors emphasised the difficulties that trainees had with spelling:

'I had a trainee with dyslexia who kept making spelling mistakes on the board. I had to intervene and I felt terrible for doing so. Yes, they were upset, but surely it is more important to make sure the children are taught correctly. I am a teacher first and a mentor second' (Susan).

'He [trainee] kept making spelling mistakes in the children's books and on the children's reading records. How do I explain that to parents and to Ofsted?' (Sarah).

'She sent home a list of spellings with words which were incorrectly spelt. How embarrassing! The parents came into school and complained I had to speak to her [trainee] and she responded by saying I was discriminating against her because she had dyslexia.' (Dorothy).

'I had a trainee with dyslexia who was very good at supporting the weak writers. She was able to address the needs of these pupils quite well. However, she was hopeless at stretching the more able writers because she did not grasp the skills herself' (Fran).

3.3 Difficulties with memory

All trainee participants reported having difficulties with working memory, specifically in relation to literacy. However, memory difficulties resulted in different problems for individuals. Some participants emphasised difficulties with memorising phonemes (Sally), others focused on grammar, spelling and punctuation rules (Kate) and one trainee reported difficulties in memorising letter joins in handwriting:

'I could not remember the phonemes and their corresponding graphemes. This was more difficult for me because I have a poor memory because of my dyslexia but I was teaching the complex code and I just could not remember all the different variations' (Sally).

'I am hopeless at remembering spelling rules. I find spelling difficult anyway and I learn spellings by visualising the whole word. The rules for spelling in English are so inconsistent that I just cannot remember them all' (Kate).

'I could not remember all the different things I had to do outside my teaching. I forgot to do record keeping. Writing lesson evaluations was just too much effort. I wanted to do it all electronically but my mentor said everything had to be in a ring binder and available to see' (Kate).

Mentors emphasised difficulties with working memory but tended to emphasise non-subject specific issues. Individual mentors focused on different issues that related to the category of 'difficulties with memory'. Some mentors emphasised how problems with memory resulted in problems with personal organisation (Sarah) whilst others emphasised ways in which memory difficulties impacted detrimentally on their teaching (Susan). There was no mention by trainees or mentors of additional support from mentors to help trainees retain important information.

'I told him every day what the class routines were and he still mixed them all up. One day I was completely exasperated and I said to him – 'how many times do you need to be told?' I mean, routines are important for young children' (Susan).

'He would forget his resources and his lesson plans. I started to question whether he had really planned his lessons at all. I told him loads of really important stuff about each child that he needed to know but he just forgot everything' (Sarah).

3.4 Administrative difficulties

All trainee participants reported difficulties with paper work. The nature of the difficulties varied but all related to the general administrative duties that teachers are required to complete in their day-to-day work. Although trainees provided insights into the views of mentors in relation to these difficulties, this was not an issue that mentors addressed in the focus group:

'My teaching file was a total mess and my tutor criticised it. It was so disorganised that she could not track through it and get a sense of my development. She told me to improve it between her visits' (Ayesha).

'I hate filling in lesson plan forms. My mentor told me that my lesson plans were not good enough. I could not remember what to put in all the boxes'. (Tom).

'I just could not organise myself to get everything done. My mentor had a massive go at me because I had not completed some assessments of the children' (Sally).

Although the issues raised by participants all related to administration, individual participants emphasised different aspects of administration. Whilst some trainees focused on the organisation and presentation of files (Ayesha), others emphasised difficulties with understanding how to complete the required paperwork which they needed to do to pass the placement (Tom). Some trainees focused on the criticism of their paperwork by tutors and mentors (Ayesha, Tom, Sally) and others questioned the value of the documentation in the files and the value of other general administrative tasks that had been assigned to them. One trainee had suggested an adaptation to help with the burden of administration but this was not accepted by her mentor. There was no mention of any specific support or adjustments which might have been provided to make the administration easier.

3.5 Criticism and 'discrimination'

Most trainees highlighted different ways in which they felt they had experienced discrimination. The nature of the perceived discrimination varied across the participants but all implied that the initial teacher training partnership had not fulfilled its obligation to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act. Trainees mentioned specific adjustments which would have been beneficial to them, yet were not provided:

'I hated it. My mentor was totally unsupportive. It has damaged my confidence. They wouldn't do that to kids. No-one asked me before the placement started what help I needed to help me to complete the placement successfully. I passed but I could have passed with a much higher grade if some simple adjustments had been made. If I had been allowed to set out my lesson plans as mind maps that would have helped me for example' (Tom)

'There was no joint meeting with my, my link tutor and mentor prior to the placement starting. This would have been helpful in that it would have given me an opportunity to explain my specific needs' (Kate).

'I had to buy a spell-checker but I feel this should have been provided' (Ayesha).

'I asked if I could verbally record my lesson planning and evaluations on a Dictaphone and my mentor said this was not allowed. If I had been allowed to do this I could have

concentrated on providing children with exciting lessons. The paper work took me so long to complete that it definitively impacted on my teaching. Being constantly criticised for my teaching of literacy was demotivating and I nearly gave up. She discriminated against me.' (James).

'I took so much criticism that now I have broad shoulders. It just bounces off me. Yes, I feel it was discrimination.' (Sally).

Some trainees emphasised the issue of mentor criticism and where this was discussed it was associated by the participants as a form of discrimination (Sally, James). Whilst it is possible that criticism could constitute discrimination, it is important to emphasise that criticism of performance is not in itself discriminatory but perhaps reflects a lack of understanding by the mentors on how to effectively support a trainee with dyslexia. This could be due to inadequate mentor training. It could also reflect the pressure on mentors to maintain high standards of pupil achievement. These themes were identified by the mentors:

'I felt inadequately prepared for my role in supporting a trainee with dyslexia. The university did not cover this in mentor training' (Jane).

'I was so worried that my pupils would not make the expected rate of progress that half term when my trainee was in. I criticised his teaching but it was because the Head is breathing down my neck to get the results up'. (Shirley)

3.6 Strengths

All trainee participants were able to identify ways in which their dyslexia impacted positively on their teaching. Individual participants emphasised different strengths. Some focused on how their experiences of dyslexia had made them more empathic towards children who have learning difficulties (Kate, Sally, Alice). Others emphasised how their own learning difficulties had enabled them to automatically differentiate tasks for less-able learners and support them in overcoming barriers to learning (Kate). Some trainees emphasised their skills in teaching creative subjects (James, Tom), whilst others emphasised their ability to think laterally (James):

'I love working with the children who struggle with literacy. I find it easy to differentiate the tasks for them. I understand the difficulties they have because I have also experienced the same difficulties.' (Kate).

'I am more caring, particularly towards children who find learning difficult. I love working with children with special educational needs.' (Sally).

'I am a more creative teacher because of my dyslexia. I am a creative person and I am able to think outside the box.' (James).

'I have my weaknesses but I am a creative teacher. I love teaching subjects such as art and drama and this is what has kept me on the course.' (Tom).

'The amount of criticism of my teaching made me question – 'do I really want to teach if teaching is like this?'. But in another way it has made me more determined to help kids with difficulties. I know I'm good at that. I think I will go into special needs.' (Ayesha).

'If children don't understand something I am able to show them other ways of approaching it. I love working with children with special needs and I think having dyslexia makes me more caring towards them' (Alice).

The mentor participants highlighted the strengths of trainees with dyslexia but often commented on corresponding weakness at the same time:

'My trainee was creative and he was able to excite the children through drama. But at the end of the day he could not teach literacy and children are tested in that, not in drama' (Jane)

'Yes, she was brilliant with children with special needs but she could not stretch the more-able ones and that is a skill that is identified in the teachers' standards' (Fran).

'It's all well and good being able to teach art, which she did very well, but she could not teach phonics and I have to balance this against the expectations of the Year 1 phonics screening test' (Sarah).

'It is no good being able to teach children with special needs. He was brilliant with this group. However, these children will not make any difference to our results. If he is going to survive as a teacher he needs to be able to push the top end' (Shirley).

4.0 Discussion

Although the findings are grouped into broad themes individual participants emphasised different experiences in relation to each theme. Thus, rather than generating collective experiences it must be recognised that the experiences of individual mentors and trainees are unique.

The findings were largely consistent with previous research in that all trainee participants reported literacy difficulties, particularly in relation to spelling, grammar and punctuation (Griffiths, 2012). These difficulties varied across individuals but included gaps in their own subject knowledge and problems with memorising rules. Trainee participants also reported difficulties with memory and administration. Trainees felt unsupported by their mentors in addressing their difficulties with literacy, memory and administration. These difficulties are consistent with previous research and are well-documented in the literature (Griffiths, 2012; Hatcher et al., 2002; Mcloughlin et al., 2002; Mortimore & Crozier, 2009; Pollak, 2009).

An emergent theme in the data specifically related to difficulties with phonics. This specific difficulty was also confirmed by the mentor participants. Trainees reported limitations in their own phonic knowledge and difficulties in the teaching of phonics. This specific issue had not been identified in previous research on trainee teachers' experiences (Burns & Bell, 2010; 2011; Griffiths, 2012; Morgan & Burns, 2000). It is perhaps unsurprising that trainees reported difficulties in phonics given the research on causation which indicates that dyslexia is caused by difficulties in phonological processing (Carroll & Snowling, 2004; Velluntino et al., 2004; Snowling & Hulme, 2012). However, irrespective of these difficulties, the teaching of phonics in primary schools is 'high-stakes' following the introduction of the phonics screening check in Year 1 and revisions to school and initial teacher education inspection frameworks over the past decade. In view of this wider policy context, supporting all teachers to develop good subject and pedagogical knowledge in this curriculum area must be a priority for every initial teacher education partnership.

There is a clear need for initial teacher training partnerships to consider carefully how they support trainees with dyslexia both to develop good phonemic and pedagogical knowledge so that they are able to teach phonics effectively. Whilst there is a paucity of literature on how trainee teachers with dyslexia can be better supported to teach phonics, there is literature on how children and young people with dyslexia can be better supported in learning to read (Rose, 2009). It

is possible to draw out of this research aspects of effective practice which could be used to support trainee teachers with dyslexia in higher education.

According to Barber and Mourshed (2007, p.6) 'the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers'. Initial teacher training partnerships therefore need to consider what types of interventions will best support the needs of student teachers with dyslexia to teach phonics more effectively. Brooks (2007) highlighted the need for intensive interventions for children and young people with dyslexia and this may also be appropriate for trainee teachers in higher education. In relation to supporting children and young people with dyslexia, it is considered to be good practice to provide a multisensory, structured, daily programme of phonics which provides opportunities for consolidation and reinforcement (Rose, 2009). Trainee teachers with dyslexia may also benefit from exactly this type of intervention through which they can gradually develop their phonic knowledge through a process which provides them with opportunities to revisit prior learning. Intensive one-to-one tuition (Rose, 2009) may also benefit trainees in addition to the phonic training which they receive as part of their regular training. Regular on-going assessment of trainees' phonic knowledge and skills is critical to effective progress, as is the case when planning interventions for children and young people (Rose, 2009). In addition, trainees' progress should be regularly monitored during the intervention and teaching should be flexibly adapted in response to misconceptions. Explicit training in the skills of phoneme addition, phoneme deletion, phoneme substitution, blending and segmenting will also help trainees to systematically develop the skills they will be required to teach in schools.

The need to place trainee teachers at the centre of any intervention is critical to ensure that they have ownership of their training. Initial teacher education partnerships will need to decide which interventions are implemented by specific partners. It is perhaps more appropriate for the university to take ownership of the systematic intervention which is carefully designed to develop trainees' phonological skills. Trainees might benefit also from timely intervention prior to a placement to revise some of the knowledge and skills they have developed during the intervention. This could be delivered by the university. The university intervention programme could then be supplemented by a well-planned programme of school-based intervention which takes place during placements. Again, trainees should be involved in planning such interventions. Examples of school-based interventions could include coaching by an expert mentor who is skilled in teaching phonics. The trainee participants in this study were left 'floundering' on placement and might have benefitted from joint planning, team teaching and guided observations of phonics lessons by expert teachers.

Bassey (1999) emphasised the need for effective communication across initial teacher education partnerships. The trainee participants in this study struggled to teach literacy but some of the issues could have been addressed more proactively had a joint planning meeting taken place between the trainee, mentor and tutor prior to the start of the placement. Kate mentioned there had been no joint meeting between herself, the mentor and the university tutor prior to her placement. These meetings are useful in highlighting potential difficulties

at the start of placements and identifying reasonable adjustments which can be put into place quite quickly (Riddell & Weedon, 2006).

What was clearly evident within the data was that the mentors adopted a medical model which focused on discussing trainees' deficits rather than embracing an affirmation model of disability (French & Swain, 2000). Sarah's use of language - '*those trainees*'- also creates an othering effect. The trainee participants felt that they had many strengths to bring to the teaching profession. They highlighted personal traits such as their empathic and caring nature and their skills in building children's self-efficacy. In addition, they emphasised their skills in supporting children with special educational needs through effective differentiation and their ability to think laterally. Creativity was also identified as a strength. Data were consistent with previous research which has highlighted the strengths that trainees with dyslexia bring to the teaching profession (Chih Hoong et al. 2006; Duquette, 2000; Riddick, 2003). Despite the fact that the mentors also acknowledged these strengths they emphasised their weaknesses, thus indicating a focus on their deficits rather than focusing on their skills.

It would appear that we live in an 'ableist' society (Onken & Slaten, 2000: 101) which does not tolerate weaknesses. Although the mentors emphasised the trainees' weaknesses, they had not considered how they might more effectively support their trainees in order to help them achieve to a higher level. Some of the trainee participants (Tom / James) felt that they could have achieved a higher grade if they had been given more support. The trainees talked about being criticised (Alice / James) and humiliated by mentors stepping in and 'rescuing' lessons (James) but there was no indication across the data that mentors had put strategies (reasonable adjustments) in place to enable trainees to achieve their full potential. The trainees perceived criticism as a form of discrimination which impacted detrimentally on their confidence, self-concept and self-esteem. As a result of mentor criticism some trainees experienced feelings of stress and anxiety and even questioned whether teaching was a suitable career option. For others, it made them more resilient. However, the data from the mentors also illustrate that there are complex issues at stake. Some mentors expressed concerns about trainees' weaknesses in relation to the competing demands that the mentors experienced. Some mentors emphasised that they wanted to recognise and support the strengths of the trainees, but felt responsible as gate-keepers to the profession, and were conscious of meeting the needs of the key stakeholders to which they were responsible - the children, senior leaders, parents and Ofsted. Some mentors felt torn between meeting the needs of their trainee and meeting the needs of their pupils. Although the trainees associated mentor criticism with discrimination, criticism of performance does not in itself constitute discrimination but perhaps reflects mentors' limited understanding of how to more effectively support trainees with dyslexia. Mentors commented that this was not addressed in mentor training. Criticism of trainee performance could also reflect the pressures that mentors experienced in relation to accountability.

The trainees' automatic association of criticism with discrimination also reflected a lack of understanding on the trainees' part of the function of criticism. Criticism of performance can be a powerful tool in improving teacher

development if it is constructive (Pearson, 2012). The trainees did not appear to recognise the conflicting demands on their mentors in relation to balancing the needs of their trainee against the needs of other stakeholders. Since an important part of teacher development is to understand accountability it would appear that the university could have done more to support the trainees in understanding the competing priorities of their mentors. Woodhouse and Woodhouse (2012) emphasised the importance of trainees learning from experience to improve the quality of their own performance. Whilst some trainees were quick to criticise mentors who did not help them to improve, they also did not acknowledge explicitly their own responsibility for improving their professional development.

5.0 Conclusion

The medical model was the dominant model adopted by the mentors who tended to focus on trainees' weaknesses. The principles of the social and affirmative models of disability were not embedded during the placements of the trainees who participated in this study. The trainees who participated in this study had many strengths, as a result of having dyslexia, which they brought to the teaching profession. However, it would seem that they did not experience a positive affirmation of their disability. This led to trainees feeling unsupported, undervalued and feeling that they were detrimental to the profession. This is consistent with previous research (Griffiths, 2012). The data indicate that the role of a mentor as a teacher of teachers, i.e. as a coach, had not been understood by the mentors who participated in this study. This is an important skill in mentoring (Carter, 2015). There was no evidence that mentors had provided explicit coaching to trainees to help them develop their subject knowledge, memory and organisation and there was no evidence that trainees' strengths were harnessed so as to develop their confidence. Until the principles of the affirmative model of disability are fully embedded into schools and applied equally to all members of the school community then schools cannot develop inclusive cultures. Additionally, there was no evidence across the data that reasonable adjustments had been embedded during the trainees' placements. However, whilst the trainees criticised their mentors for these issues, it was also apparent that the mentors had not been provided with adequate training by the university to enable them to understand more comprehensively the role of the mentor as a teacher of teachers. Instead, they focused on assessing the performance of their trainees and making judgements on that performance. Aspects of teacher development, such as teacher modelling and coaching, were not discussed either by trainees or by mentors. In order to develop the capacity of mentors to more effectively support the professional development of trainees, including those with disabilities, the university has a pivotal role to play. It would appear that the university had not fulfilled its obligations towards its mentors who participated in this study and consequently the blame cannot be placed solely on them.

6.0 Recommendations

In relation to the ICF model (WHO, 2001) the trainees demonstrated functional difficulties at the level of the *body*. Examples of these included difficulty with understanding phonics and difficulties with memory. Intervention was not

made available to address the difficulties with these functions. The trainees demonstrated *activity limitations* in relation to teaching literacy and difficulties with administration. For some, their *participation* was restricted through mentors preventing them from teaching specific curriculum areas. The attitudes of mentors and the wider policy context (i.e. the curriculum and assessment structures that they had to work within) constituted *environmental barriers* to trainees' participation and achievement and training for mentors did not address these issues. For some, *personal* strengths, such as creativity and differentiation, acted as facilitators rather than barriers to achievement, although their strengths were not used to address their difficulties.

If initial teacher education partnerships start to recognise the multi-dimensional nature of disability and the interaction between the biological and contextual factors which affect the experiences of individuals with disabilities, interventions can then be applied to address each of these factors. Partnerships could then use the ICF model to plan reasonable adjustments that specifically target different aspects of this framework. Schools and universities should work collaboratively to plan reasonable adjustments to placements prior to trainees commencing periods of school-based training and trainees should be included in this process so that their perspectives are taken in to account.

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PAPER 11



Research paper

"I've got something to tell you. I'm dyslexic": The lived experiences of trainee teachers with dyslexia

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Secondary school trainees with dyslexia have unique experiences.
- Trainee teachers with dyslexia bring strengths to the profession.
- University based challenges include lectures and accessing learning support.
- Placement based challenges include marking and unsupportive mentoring.

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ABSTRACT

Literature has explored the placement experiences of primary school trainee teachers with dyslexia but there is a scarcity of research on secondary school trainees or university-based experiences. This study examined the experiences of three primary and four secondary school trainees with dyslexia, encompassing both their university and placement-based experiences in England. This research highlighted the similarities in experience across training in a primary and a secondary school but found there are specific challenges associated with training to teach at secondary school level. We also captured the strengths trainees brought to the profession. Implications for initial teacher education providers are discussed.

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1. Introduction

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) recognises the lack of diversity in the teaching profession internationally (Schleicher, 2014). Literature suggests that this extends to initial teacher education (ITE) programmes across the globe and that those with disabilities are under-represented (Keane, Heinz, & Eaton, 2017). In the United Kingdom (UK), under the Equality Act (2010), dyslexia is legally considered a disability, meaning that educational institutions and workplaces must make reasonable adjustments for people with dyslexia to protect them from discrimination. There is, however, contention as to dyslexia's

definition and characteristics (Elliot & Grigorenko, 2014). This study adopts the Rose (2009) definition of dyslexia:

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed. Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities (p.10).

Bunbury (2019) argues that legal interventions such as the Equality Act (2010) are based on a medical model of disability that label a disability as a problem in need of a solution. They contend this approach reinforces the societal mechanisms that result in discrimination against disabled people, arguing that reform should focus on re-framing disability through a social model, where the focus is on transforming attitudes and removing social barriers to promote inclusion (Bunbury, 2019). The concept of re-framing

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'disability' as a 'functional diversity' has been used to begin changing attitudes and mechanisms within education. As [Campoy-Cubillo \(2019\)](#) argues, terms such as 'disability' mean 'less able' whereas the term 'functional diversity' indicates a "diverse way of doing things" (p.2). If we are to promote diversity in the teaching profession and address this global issue ([Schleicher, 2014](#)), then attempting to reframe 'disability' in the workplace as a 'functional diversity' may be a way to achieve this.

Across the four nations of the UK, there is a devolved approach to teacher training. This leads to greater national divergence in approaches, with teaching in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland promoted as a research based profession, while training in England situates teaching as a practical, craft-based occupation ([Beauchamp, Clarke, Hulme, & Murray, 2015](#)). In England, trainee teachers can take an undergraduate route in to teaching, or they can train in service. Initial teacher education (ITE) can also be completed through a higher education institution (HEI) where, upon successful completion of the course, a trainee teacher will receive a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE; [Swain, 2019](#)). Throughout the course, trainees divide their time between university and school-based placements ([Foster, 2019](#)). Upon successful completion, trainees obtain qualified teacher status (QTS).

[Griffiths \(2012\)](#) acknowledges, with regard to ITE, that it is unclear where a training provider's responsibility to provide reasonable adjustments to those with disabilities stops and a placement school's responsibility begins. However, to ensure the successful completion of ITE, it is vital that trainees with dyslexia are catered for so that they are not disadvantaged in relation to their non-dyslexic peers ([Griffiths, 2012](#)). This may ultimately increase the diversity of the teaching workforce.

Existing literature has explored the experiences of dyslexic primary school trainees ([Morgan & Burn, 2000](#); [Riddick, 2003](#); [Griffiths, 2012](#); [Glazzard & Dale, 2013](#); [Glazzard & Dale, 2015](#); [Glazzard, 2018](#)). However, there is a scarcity of research into secondary school trainees where the demands, routines and subject content are vastly different; teachers will teach different age groups and a limited amount of subjects in comparison to the one class and multiple subjects taught by primary teachers ([TES, 2019](#)). There is also a scarcity of research on PGCE students' university-based experiences. In view of this knowledge gap, we wanted to provide an original contribution to knowledge by investigating the experiences of both dyslexic primary and secondary school trainees. This was intended to bridge the gap in the current knowledge of experiences in the two sectors, particularly when being awarded a PGCE and QTS qualifies a graduate to work in either the primary or secondary sector, regardless of the setting in which their training took place ([DfE, 2020](#)). This paper also aimed to begin the discussion of the experiences of secondary trainees and determine whether there are any experiences unique to the primary or secondary sectors.

We used interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA: [Smith & Osborn, 2008](#)) to explore the lived experiences of seven PGCE trainees with dyslexia in the UK and gain an in-depth insight in to how each trainee made sense of their own unique, ideographic experience as both teachers and learners. We examined their journey throughout their PGCE course, encompassing their experiences learning with their ITE higher education institution and with their placement schools. To address these objectives, the study explored the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1) What are the placement-based experiences of trainee primary and secondary school teachers with dyslexia enrolled on a PGCE in England?

RQ2) What are the university-based experiences of trainee primary and secondary school teachers with dyslexia enrolled on a PGCE in England?

RQ3) Are there experiences unique to being a dyslexic trainee teacher in either the primary or secondary sector?

In line with the recommendations in [Dunn and Andrews \(2015\)](#), we used person-first and identity-first language interchangeably. We wanted to reflect some of the participants' own preferences as they frequently referred to themselves as 'dyslexic' and respect the concerns of disability advocates who also promote the use of identity-first language ([Dunn & Andrews, 2015](#)). This extends into the authors' use of language throughout the paper.

1.1. Literature review

Internationally, literature acknowledges that past life experiences for qualified teachers with a specific learning disability (SLD) shapes and influences their professional identity and practice. In one study of Israeli teachers, participants viewed their disability as an asset, citing their negative lifelong experiences as the reason for their entry into the profession. They expressed a desire to create safe and empowering learning experiences for their students ([Bencheitrit & Katz, 2019](#)).

This positive view of disability is also consistent with the literature on qualified teachers with dyslexia, specifically. One study demonstrated that some fully qualified teachers see their dyslexia as a strength, acknowledging that they have a greater empathy with students, prioritising inclusion within their own classroom ([Burns & Bell, 2010](#)). In addition to these strengths, literature also acknowledges that dyslexic teachers can face barriers at work. [Burns, Poikkeus, and Aro \(2013\)](#) found that fully qualified teachers faced adversity in the workplace but employed resilience strategies which contributed positively to self-esteem, self-efficacy and job commitment. One study argued that their participants accepted their own strengths and weaknesses as part of their own professional identity and took opportunities to disclose their dyslexia to their students, reframing their difficulties so that they were viewed positively ([Burns & Bell, 2011](#)).

In relation to primary school ITE, dyslexia has proven a significant barrier for some trainee teachers. Those placed with children under six years old will spend a substantial portion of time preparing them for the phonics screening check ([Glazzard, 2018](#)). Government policy in the UK prioritises the role of synthetic phonics in early reading development and trainee teachers must develop mastery of synthetic phonics to meet the teachers' standards ([DfE, 2011](#)). Trainee teachers in England are assessed regularly on their knowledge and teaching skills in relation to synthetic phonics. The ITT Core Content Framework ([DfE, 2019](#)) provides a framework for ITE programmes and synthetic phonics therefore forms part of the ITE curriculum. As dyslexia arises from phonological deficits in the processing of speech sounds ([Rose, 2009](#); [Snowling, 2013](#)), this may present a barrier for some trainees with dyslexia in comparison to their peers.

Whilst secondary trainees may not have to teach synthetic phonics, they may be expected to teach and read aloud texts which will be more challenging than those taught at a primary school level. In lessons such as English, the current texts taught as part of national qualifications in England include 19th century novels such as *Great Expectations* ([AQA, 2014](#)). Indeed, the increase in challenge does not relate simply to English, but since 2010 it has been government policy to increase the level of challenge across all subjects studied as part of national qualifications ([Ofqual, 2018](#)). Furthermore, in secondary schools there is an increased emphasis on disciplinary literacy. This involves using subject specific, academic terminology and portraying confidence in the skills of reading, writing, and speaking and listening within each individual subject ([EEF, 2019](#)). The focus on developing high levels of literacy amongst pupils at secondary school could pose challenges for dyslexic

secondary trainees.

Literature has shown how for successful completion of ITE courses, support services offered by training providers need to be effective. Morgan and Burn (2000) highlighted how the support offered by the ITE provider to one dyslexic primary school trainee was instrumental in allowing them to complete the course and obtain QTS. Griffiths (2012) found primary school trainees held feelings of inadequacy and deficit views of themselves, although they acknowledged they brought strengths to the profession, such as a greater degree of empathy and understanding with disabled pupils (Griffiths, 2012). The study claimed these feelings could have been alleviated by greater communication between placement schools and the ITE provider, allowing trainees to be on an equal footing with their non-disabled peers (Griffiths, 2012).

Riddick (2003) concluded that trainees with dyslexia performed well in the classroom but had low confidence in their own abilities and were fearful of being 'found out' by experienced teachers. Participants would also have benefitted from mentoring by a teacher with dyslexia (Riddick, 2003). This desire to have a positive role model was also reflected in Glazzard and Dale (2013). Their participants with dyslexia training in a primary school were inspired by some practising teachers, but this positivity was outweighed by teachers who lacked empathy and patience (Glazzard & Dale, 2013). Furthermore, the trainees in this study acknowledged how their personal experiences of dyslexia had influenced their professional identities, referring to themselves as caring and empathetic teachers (Glazzard & Dale, 2013). Similarly, Glazzard, 2018 found that when training primary school teachers, mentors acknowledged the trainees' strengths which included being skilled in teaching children with special educational needs and greater pedagogical creativity but were quick to counterbalance these strengths with weaknesses such as teaching phonics or literacy.

Whilst trainee teachers do have 'placements' where they develop their teaching practice, they are also still learners within a university setting. Although not a full master's degree, a PGCE is equivalent to master's level study and is accredited by an HEI (gov.uk, 2020). Current literature acknowledges barriers to learning in HE for students with dyslexia. Often, students use compensatory strategies for example, recording lectures, using assistive technology or accessing support services at their institution (Pino & Mortari, 2014). Literature has also suggested university support services are not tailored towards dyslexia, catering for physical disabilities and general learning disabilities (MacCullagh, Bosanquet, & Badcock, 2016). Furthermore, research has shown how some academic staff lack enough knowledge to effectively differentiate for students with dyslexia (Ryder & Norwich, 2019).

Despite research into the experiences and identities of primary school trainees with dyslexia in their 'placement' schools, to the authors' knowledge, there are no studies that look at the experiences of dyslexic secondary trainees, or the experiences of primary or secondary trainees as master's level learners in UK HEIs. We aimed for this study to begin the discussion of secondary school trainees by taking a holistic view of ITE provision across both primary and secondary sectors. This was intended to begin the discussion of the experiences of secondary school trainees in their placement schools and begin the discussion of both primary and secondary trainees as learners within their HEIs. We intended to bridge the knowledge gap and determine whether there are experiences unique to either sector.

2. Methodology

2.1. Design and participants

This study used purposive sampling. The study was advertised

during lectures on a PGCE course and through word of mouth. Students were invited to register their interest in participating by emailing the lead researcher. Inclusion criteria required participants to self-identify as dyslexic. Seven participants took part in a semi-structured interview. The mean age of the participants was 24.7 years (SD = 2.49, 23–29 years). Open ended questions were used to encourage participants to relay detailed, considered accounts. Data were transcribed verbatim and analysed using the principles of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA; Smith & Osborn, 2008).

Participants were recruited from two HEIs in England. The participant group was composed of three trainees currently enrolled on the secondary PGCE course at a higher education institution and one newly qualified teacher previously enrolled on the same course at the same institution (HEI A) and three PGCE primary trainees currently enrolled at a different institution (HEI B). All but one participant was diagnosed with dyslexia as an adult. Whilst exploring this was not within in the scope of this study, without an earlier diagnosis, the participants diagnosed as adults may not have had access to support services or the awareness of dyslexia to develop coping strategies earlier in life. This may have affected their experience as a trainee. All identifiable information was removed, and participants were asked to choose their own pseudonyms (Table 1) to protect anonymity.

2.2. Data collection

Individual interviews were conducted between September 2019 and May 2020. Ethical approval was granted by both host institutions. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before any data collection took place and it was made clear that participants would be asked about their experiences as a trainee teacher with dyslexia. Participants from HEI A were interviewed within a private, comfortable room on the ITE university campus. Interviews that took place in May 2020 were conducted on an online conferencing software as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. Given the sensitive nature of the interview, all participants were reminded they did not have to answer any questions they did not wish to, were offered breaks and reminded of their right to withdraw.

Questions were open ended and written to be respectful and sensitive whilst being clear and concise. For example, "Tell me about your experience of your first day in a placement school." The interviewer's questions were guided by the participant's previous answers to ensure that participants controlled the direction of the interview where possible. Each interview lasted on average 51 min, totalling 5 h and 57 min. After the interviews were concluded, all participants were debriefed and given the opportunity to ask questions.

2.3. Data analysis

Data were analysed in accordance with the principles of IPA (Smith & Osborn, 2008). This methodology is contingent on a small sample size which enabled a thorough exploration of each case before commonalities were identified across all data. IPA acknowledges that the communication between researchers and findings is not a direct one (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Not only does it rely on participants making sense of their own experiences, but also the researchers attempting to make sense of a participant making sense of their own experience, a phenomenon termed double hermeneutics (Smith, 2015).

IPA derives from phenomenology, the study of experience and consciousness (Smith & Osborn, 2008). This research takes an interpretivist approach to data analysis and the presentation of

Table 1
Participant information.

Name	Age	Gender	Age of Dyslexia Diagnosis	Higher Education Institution	Subject	Teacher Status
Emily	23	Female	21	HEI A	English (Secondary)	Part time PGCE. 2nd Year.
Marie	24	Female	18	HEI A	English (Secondary)	Newly Qualified Teacher
Andromache	24	Other	19	HEI A	Classics (Secondary)	Full time PGCE.
Kevin	23	Male	Key Stage 2 (ages 7–11)	HEI A	Music (Secondary)	Full time PGCE
Chloe	22	Female	Second year of university	HEI B	Primary Education (5–11)	Full time PGCE
Harley	28	Female	Final year of university	HEI B	Primary Education (3–7)	Full time PGCE
Sally	29	Female	27	HEI B	Primary Education (3–7)	Full time PGCE

findings. Ontologically, IPA derives from relativism (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006). Subsequently, we acknowledge that there is not a single truth to human experience and that both researchers and participants play a role in the construction of this truth. In using IPA, the researchers are at the centre of the interpretative process and their own life experiences will influence the findings. For example, one of the researchers in this study identifies as dyslexic. However, whilst we acknowledge that individual bias will have affected the interpretation of data, authors made active attempts to maintain epistemological reflexivity. We continually returned to interview data to support interpretations so that any of these biases were controlled. This subjectivity is seen as central to the research process rather than an epistemological limitation (Shaw, 2010).

The analytic process consisted of a number of stages. Firstly, each interview was transcribed verbatim by the researchers. Transcriptions totalled 50,097 words. At this stage, the authors wanted to capture the ideographic experiences of participants. Secondly, transcripts were read repeatedly by the researchers to develop familiarity with their content, with initial notes made on the transcripts and attempts to summarise and paraphrase what the participant had said. Thirdly, data were explored methodically to identify emergent themes across the dataset. However, in clustering data into superordinate themes we aimed “to respect convergences and divergences in the data – recognizing ways in which accounts from participants are similar but also different” (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 73). In other words, we acknowledged that different participants may have individual variations in how a theme manifested. Final themes and associated data that represented that theme were shared and agreed between researchers to enhance inter-rater reliability. Three superordinate themes are presented in this paper.

3. Findings

This section presents the essence of participants’ training experiences. Researchers determined and agreed upon three superordinate themes: “Experiences of managing disclosure”; “Experiences of receiving support from mentors” and “Adapting to learning environments and professional demands.”

3.1. Experiences of managing disclosure

This theme encompasses how trainees managed disclosing dyslexia. Having the autonomy to manage when and to whom they disclosed gave them agency in building their own professional identity and, in some cases, supporting their pupils.

All participants reached a point in their training where they felt the need to disclose their dyslexia. Sometimes this was to the senior management of a placement school, their school-based mentor, their university, the classes they taught, or individual pupils with dyslexia who needed support. Participants thought about who they were disclosing to and how. For example, Andromache decided to pre-empt their arrival at their placement secondary school with

what they termed “the email of doom” where they carefully explained their needs. Similarly, in her placement primary school, Chloe felt the need to take control over the process of disclosure to avoid being forced to disclose. She explained how she disclosed her dyslexia to her pupils’ parents, telling them “I’ll be extra careful in my planning.” Chloe reassured the parents that her dyslexia would not negatively impact the pupils she taught. Chloe still approached disclosure from a deficit perspective; she feared that she would be perceived as potentially damaging to pupils’ education. Chloe also chose to disclose to her class:

Extract 1 – There was a child who was very knowledgeable, and I found that in some of my presentations there may have been a comma that might not have been in the right place, but the child would pick it out. I said to the children [...]if you need to go and look in a dictionary or you need to ask for help that is fantastic because that’s something I have to do too and then they were like ‘why?’ and I said ‘because I’ve got dyslexia’ and I felt the children were more allowing of me. (Chloe, 22, primary).

Chloe wanted to maintain control over the disclosure to avoid any questions about her suitability to be a teacher, providing a legitimate justification for any grammatical mistakes or omissions. Chloe perceived that the class were “more allowing” of her implying that, despite being young children, they were more understanding and accepting of the fact that she may make grammatical errors as a result of her dyslexia.

Similarly, Emily implied that she was concerned with making a good impression at her placement secondary school and conveying a persona of professionalism and expertise. She viewed her dyslexia as something that could potentially harm this professional persona. Being able to choose when and to whom to disclose, allowed Emily control over the construction of her professional identity. Emily expressed how she chose to disclose her dyslexia to her mentor and placement school early, stating “I didn’t want to go in and shoot myself in the foot.” She was self-conscious of publicly displaying her own literacy skills and felt the need to disclose “in case I was missing out words in lessons.” Emily did not want her grammar and sentence construction to be confused with incompetence or a lack of subject knowledge. Whilst Emily was very forthright about disclosing her dyslexia to her school and colleagues, she did not believe in taking the same approach with her classes:

Extract 2 – I wouldn’t have a problem with it [telling her classes about her dyslexia] if there was a need for it. I don’t think it’s something that you need to go in and be like wearing a big flashy sign [...] I would happily stand there [and say I have dyslexia]. I’m not one for trying to cover anything up. I think it’s still a bit taboo. But I think if I weren’t teaching English it would be fine but it’s like ‘but you’re a dyslexic English teacher’ and I’m like ‘yep, I know.’ I know there were maths teachers and stuff at the school that were openly dyslexic with the children, but I think because it was English, it’s really hard. Because I was training it wasn’t like they were my classes once they’re actually my classes then it might be

something that I would do [...] it depends like if they would then like use that to cause an issue in your class. (Emily, 23, secondary).

Despite not being “one for trying to cover anything up” Emily expressed caution about disclosing to her classes. The decision of whether to disclose to her classes is something she rooted in her professional identity, carefully considering the impact her disclosure would have on how her classes perceived her. Emily felt torn; the classes she taught were not her ‘real’ classes. As a trainee, Emily was gradually expected to take more ownership over a class as the year progressed. However, the class remained the responsibility of a fully qualified teacher and she would never become solely responsible for them. Emily wanted her class to trust her competence, before revealing something that she believed may inhibit the development of that trust. Emily’s lack of official ownership over the class meant that she was unable to make meaningful relationships with them that would have allowed her the time and space to disclose. Furthermore, Emily’s decision to disclose to her classes appeared to be rooted in her status as a trainee English teacher. She perceived a workplace discourse associated with both having dyslexia and being an English teacher where the two are viewed as incompatible. Emily noted how the school environment made it acceptable for mathematics teachers to be open with pupils about having dyslexia. Emily believed that this binary between English teaching and dyslexia could potentially be damaging to her professional identity as disclosure to her classes “would be fine” if she was not teaching English.

Dyslexic trainees acknowledged that they brought strengths to the profession. This included a greater emotional empathy towards pupils with dyslexia; trainees perceived themselves as role models for these pupils. Sometimes, in instances whereby trainees disclosed their dyslexia to their class, it was to support pupils with dyslexia. In a secondary placement, Marie said that she “did mention it to one class in a light-hearted way. I just said I’ve got something to tell you, I’m dyslexic [...] it was nice for them [pupils with dyslexia] to see that.” Similar sentiments were also expressed by Kevin:

Extract 3 - I've talked to specific students. So there's a Year 10 student he got quite flustered because he's quite severely dyslexic and I just got to his level and I said 'I'm dyslexic' and then it was like being a positive role model for students with dyslexia because I can show them that no matter how you are feeling everything is not impossible and that they can still do it. (Kevin, 23, secondary).

In order to become a teacher in the UK a person must hold, at least, an undergraduate degree; they need to have been successful in education. Kevin was aware of his power to portray himself as someone who has successfully dealt with similar challenges and implies that he finds this a rewarding experience. In this example, he was able to allay the fears of a pupil with dyslexia and act as part of an effective support structure for them. He acted with the intention of motivating the pupil so that they “can still do it” (Kevin). Kevin chose to do this on a 1:1 basis, rather than in front of the class. These participants highlighted that disclosing their dyslexia can be important when they perceive a child in need of support.

3.2. Experiences of receiving support from mentors

Throughout the PGCE, trainees are placed under the tuition of a school-based mentor (SBM). This is a fully qualified teacher, who can offer professional guidance and support. They may also have a

university-based mentor (UBM) who offers both practical and academic support. This theme encompasses trainees’ experiences of receiving support from both university-based mentors and school-based mentors. Although all participants had different experiences of this support, they all fundamentally agreed that having a UBM and an SBM who understood their needs as a trainee with dyslexia was integral to the success of the PGCE.

Whilst on placement in a secondary school, Andromache expressed how they appreciated it when their SBM celebrated the things they got right. They say, “I keep getting positive feedback [...] they tell me the kids are engaged, they tell me my subject knowledge is great which it doesn't feel like it is.” Like all participants, Andromache expressed how having their strengths highlighted by a mentor was encouraging. For Andromache, to have some of their fears, that their subject knowledge was not adequate, allayed by their mentor gave them confidence. However, despite positive experiences of their SBM in their first school placement, Andromache expressed concerns about their second placement:

Extract 4 - My fear for the next placement is I just need to get lucky basically and get just one more mentor that's gonna be understanding because if the mentor's not then the placements gonna die a death because there's no way it's gonna function. (Andromache, 24, secondary).

Andromache explained how fundamental a supportive mentor was to the success of a school placement. Andromache expressed a feeling of powerlessness; they needed to “get lucky” to obtain effective support from their mentor at their second placement. Andromache accepted that if they are not supportive “there's no way it's [the placement] gonna function.” Their placement success and subsequent success as a teacher, hinged on the supportiveness of their mentor.

Andromache’s narrative highlights the importance of supportive and understanding mentoring. Unfortunately, the experience of mentoring varied between participants. With some SBMs being less understanding than others. Marie explained:

Extract 5 - My first mentor was a very busy man, but we would have our weekly meetings. He knew I was dyslexic, and he was unsure how I could be an English trainee and dyslexic. So I had to explain to him that I had strategies in place to cope and I assured them that it would be only small things that they wouldn't really notice. (Marie, 24, secondary).

Marie’s decision to disclose that she has several coping strategies in place, comes from recognizing a power imbalance between herself and her mentor; she does not want to seem a nuisance, aware that he has other priorities. Marie’s mentor put her in a position where she had to reassure him that being a person with dyslexia would not inconvenience him and she has developed coping strategies to do her job effectively. For Marie’s mentor, being both an English teacher and dyslexic were incompatible. Whilst Marie stressed her independence, having a mentor who did not understand how to support a dyslexic trainee meant that she was at risk of not receiving adequate support.

As a result of a mentor’s limited understanding of dyslexia, Harley was made to feel as if her dyslexia was going to be detrimental to the children’s learning in primary school. She said how her mentor “made her feel this overwhelmed responsibility that if I don’t make sure every single word I write is correct, I’m really going to deter these children from learning.” Harley explained that mentoring was more beneficial when issues such as grammar and spelling were addressed in a light-hearted way by a mentor in a

previous placement. One of Sally's mentors did not understand the difficulties Sally faced and did not offer her any reasonable adjustment:

Extract 6 - In my first placement they wanted to know about us and help us [...] in my second placement I did not get any help. It was just expected that I could do everything that they could do in the same time [...] It took me longer to write a lesson plan and it just wasn't acknowledged. I spent a whole weekend doing lesson plans. I got everything done for the Monday and explained to my mentor that I'd not done one thing and I'm gonna do it tonight and she was like 'you should have done it by Sunday night' [...] I was trying my best it just took me a lot longer than if she was doing it. (Sally, 29, primary).

Sally's account highlighted how trainees can be supported. She valued how her first placement school wanted to know about her to give her tailored, individualised support. However, at another placement, Sally's mentor judged her against the standard of a fully qualified teacher, rather than a trainee. The demands placed on her in a new setting were excessive and not considered to adequately support someone with dyslexia. Sally felt as if her mentor lacked empathy and was unable to see Sally's perspective. Sally explained how her mentor "understood that the children couldn't get there but I don't think she understood that I couldn't get there." Sally used the idiom "get there" to represent achieving learning goals and outcomes. Her mentor empathised with children and understood how it would take time for them to develop skills and knowledge but would not empathise with Sally and adopt the same viewpoint for someone learning to teach.

Similarly, participants expressed how it was important that their university-based mentor understood the potential impact dyslexia may have on their training. When trainees found things difficult on placement, it was important they had someone, separate from the school, to discuss their issues with. Emily explained how their UBM "just gets it." She added:

Extract 7 - [UBM] has been brilliant to be fair and has been really supportive with it [dyslexia]. [UBM] keeps an eye on me and she gets me. She just checked I was doing okay and when I went on my placement and started to struggle [UBM] was like 'I'll come in and do this, we can do this, I'll talk to your mentor' all that sort of thing but I had a really good mentor as well which really helped anyway. So yes, between them the support was really good. (Emily, 23, secondary).

Emily explained how she was grateful for her university-based mentor's support; she valued their reassurance and guidance. Emily cited her UBM's support as integral to the success of her course as they understood her needs as a trainee with dyslexia. Emily was thankful for the open line of communication she had with her UBM. When she started to struggle with her training on placement, Emily went to her university-based mentor before approaching her school-based mentor for support. The UBM was key to unlocking the in-school support for her when she felt she could not address these issues with her placement school directly. Similarly, Chloe explained the importance of having successful role models with dyslexia in her primary school and how her training was best supported when all her mentors worked together. Chloe claimed that working with a fully qualified teacher and a UBM who

both had dyslexia gave her "confidence to celebrate it more because I saw people in similar positions to where I wanted to be."

3.3. Adapting to learning environments and professional demands

This theme explores participants' experiences of adapting to both their university learning environment and the professional demands of being a teacher.

Participants found the lecture format a barrier to learning. Harley explained how she would "feel physically sick sometimes if there was a lot of information at once." Students would attempt to use assistive technology in the lectures to type notes. However, as a result of other students misusing their laptops to access social media, lecturers would ask all students to stop using their assistive technology. This meant that dyslexic students were unable to utilise assistive technology to aid their learning.

The structure of the primary PGCE also posed challenges. Harley was given one evening to prepare a presentation on content she had learned in a lecture that day. She described the experience as "overwhelming" as she was expected to present and answer questions on subject material she had little time to learn. She did, however, defy her lecturer's instructions, opting to use cue cards to aid her presentation. The structural challenges of the PGCE went beyond the sequencing of tasks and lectures. Some participants claimed the secondary PGCE structure made it extremely difficult to access university-based learning support when they were only on campus one day a week:

Extract 8 - I can't come in and book an appointment with learning support because I'm teaching from half eight in the morning till four and support services close at five. I finish my lectures at half three and I've got to compete with all the 120 other people and all the undergrads that want to get an appointment. It doesn't work. (Kevin, 24, secondary).

Kevin's frustration comes from the fact that the structure of the PGCE course meant he was unable to access appointments with learning support services that could help them both on placement and with academic assignments. On the one day each week he is on the university campus, he had to contend with the undergraduates who can easily access support. On his four days in school, he could not reach the university campus before support services close.

In adapting to the school as a learning environment, secondary school trainees expressed difficulty in the delivery of written feedback or 'marking.' They received little support or guidance on how to provide written feedback to pupils and were often expected to mark whole class sets of books very early on in their placement. Participants were often criticised for grammatical errors and the speed with which they were expected to have completed the feedback itself. Kevin explained how he was often spoken to about "handwriting inaccuracies." Marie felt a sense of "dread" when faced with the prospect of marking books and believed it to be a significant barrier to her professional development. This feeling is particularly strong when she marked the books of high-achieving GCSE groups as "it takes me such a long time to read through blocks of texts." The amount of time marking takes has caused her to take shortcuts and "put a tick" instead of writing feedback. Similarly, for Emily, written feedback was a negative placement experience:

Extract 9 – I'm looking at words and I'm thinking 'this felt wrong' but I don't know how to spell it' [...] I'd sit there and think this is how I would spell it but I know it's wrong. I honestly used to sit there with my laptop like typing to check that it's spelt right and I think that was overwhelming when I had 33 books to do and I just couldn't get my head around seeing if things like words are in the wrong places [...] It was fine and I did get used to it but that was when I really started to question if I could really do it because everyone was like 'quick turnaround' with marking and I was thinking I can't do it. (Emily, 23, secondary).

Emily initially found writing feedback on children's work difficult. She acknowledged that she "did get used to it" but had to do so without support, having to find ways to adapt herself. Whilst Emily was resilient, we do not know how quickly she could have adapted with additional support. Emily experienced unnecessary pressure from her teacher colleagues and claimed that "everyone was like 'quick turnaround' with marking." This led to anxiety about her ability to manage the workload expected when she became a fully qualified teacher. Furthermore, the number of books she had to write feedback on was daunting. This, coupled with a self-consciousness about any grammatical mistakes she may make, made the whole process stressful. This had such an impact on her self-efficacy, that it made her question her professional competence and whether she could be a teacher; at one point, she felt as if she was unable to succeed.

In both the primary and secondary classroom, participants developed compensatory strategies to overcome challenges whilst teaching. In secondary schools, Emily took the approach of preparing her lessons intricately to head off any problems associated with her dyslexia. She "tended to type more of my lessons and I didn't like writing on the board because I used to panic and be like 'oh my god, what if I can't spell the word?'" Similarly, Andromache explained how they effectively concealed their dyslexia and enhanced the pupils' learning by getting "the kids to do the things that I'm going to be really bad at like writing notes on the board." They added that they "would never do a massive [...] live spider diagram on the board [...] unless I was recruiting the students to do it for me." Marie explained compensatory strategies she utilised when teaching:

Extract 10 - I do make mistakes and my handwriting is appalling so when I write on the whiteboard I purposely make it so they can't read it because I'll be writing something and then I'll pause and to them it looks just like I'm thinking but it's that I don't know how to spell a word so I'll make it so they can't read it and then they'll go 'oh, miss, what's that word?' and I'll say 'Oh, it's this word.' And they'll go 'oh, ok', then write it down in their books because they know how to spell it. (Marie, 24, secondary).

Marie obscured her own handwriting to avoid spelling publicly. Marie would rather be perceived as someone who cannot write neatly, as opposed to an English teacher who struggles to spell some words correctly. Potentially, she views being unable to spell some words correctly as a threat to her own professional identity, a view perpetuated by her mentor who was unable to reconcile the fact that Marie was both training to be an English teacher and someone who was dyslexic. Indeed, this perception could stem from a wider societal discourse that incorrectly dictates that being an English teacher and having dyslexia are simply incompatible.

Positively, participants recognised that they did bring strengths to the classroom. These included greater resilience in the face of adversity, greater organisational skills, more meticulous detail in lesson planning and more creativity in their teaching. Andromache

explained how they did not "teach like others do." They adopted more creativity into their lesson delivery. In primary schools, not only did Harley find these opportunities to teach rewarding, she also found they gave a lasting impression on the pupils. When asked how dyslexia benefitted her teaching, Harley said:

Extract 11 - I felt like I came up with really inventive imaginative ideas in the EYFS [early years foundation stage]. My mentor said 'you know the children have really stuck with this' [...] I made this little octopus and I created this story about this octopus who was under the water and had been robbed and the suspect was a seven legged octopus or a nine legged octopus it was given the one less one more scenario and the whole time I was there this one little girl absolutely fell in love with this Ollie the octopus that I'd made and she asked every day for ollie the octopus. (Harley, 28, primary).

Harley enjoyed being creative with her teaching. This personal enjoyment allowed her teaching strategies to be more effective and resonate with her pupils. This is a strength she relates directly to having dyslexia. Her success with this creativity was also recognised by her mentor, highlighting the benefits that Harley's dyslexia had brought to the profession.

4. Discussion

This study aimed to bridge the gap in knowledge between the experiences of dyslexic primary and secondary school trainees and explore their experiences as learners within an HEI. We explored participants' experiences in their placement schools and in their HEIs. This provided a novel insight into this area of research which has focussed predominantly on primary school trainees in placement settings only. We have found similarities in experience between the primary and secondary sector, such as inefficient mentoring, the process of managing disclosure and managing the demands of lecture-based learning in HEIs. We have also shown how there were unique experiences for those in secondary ITE. For instance, participants had particularly negative experiences when they were training to teach English and in providing feedback to exam groups. IPA methodology allowed us to explore the nuanced and unique perspectives of trainee teachers whose voices may have otherwise gone unheard. Using this approach allowed participants to speak freely about issues that were pertinent to them which, in turn, led to unexpected and valuable insights. However, due to the small sample size, these findings cannot be generalised to all trainee teachers with dyslexia or to other ITE providers. We also acknowledge that most of our participants were female. Future research may look to address this imbalance by recruiting dyslexic male trainee teachers, specifically.

4.1. Placement experiences in primary and secondary settings

The personal narratives of all trainees enrolled on both the primary and secondary PGCEs implied that having ownership over how and when to disclose their dyslexia was an integral part of their experience on the course and in building their professional identity. However, each participant did this of their own volition, with little discussion from the university support services as to how this could be achieved. Even though the participants in this study were happy to disclose their dyslexia to placement schools, others may prefer to have had their placement school already informed by the ITE university. This finding highlights the need for greater discussion between the ITE university and the trainee with dyslexia about how their disclosure to the placement school can be managed (Griffiths, 2012). A trainee might want to make the disclosure themselves; they might prefer the ITE university to do it

before they arrive at their placement school or they may not want to disclose their dyslexia at all.

In line with Griffiths (2012) and Glazzard and Dale (2013), participants in both primary and secondary settings acknowledged that they brought strengths to the profession. For example, they often turned compensatory strategies in to positive or creative learning experiences for their classes. They also had a greater degree of empathy with pupils with dyslexia. Trainees stressed how they were aware of their status as a role model for pupils with dyslexia and wanted to use it to motivate and support them. Given that trainee teachers with disabilities are sometimes viewed as a threat to high standards (Griffiths, 2012; Riddick, 2001), this finding points towards celebrating the positives trainees with dyslexia bring to the classroom.

Across both sectors, participants highlighted mentors as fundamental to the success of their PGCE experience. Trainees expressed how they found it rewarding when mentors stressed their strengths. Glazzard, 2018 and Griffiths (2012) found that mentors tended to fixate on trainees' weaknesses, and it was detrimental to their confidence. This suggests that if mentors stress a trainee's strengths, it is likely to develop their confidence and give them a platform on which to succeed.

Despite these positives, in some instances, experiences of mentoring in primary and secondary settings were sub-standard. Participants often valued and were receptive to genuinely constructive feedback. However, the way some feedback was phrased was often judgmental and critical, without being supportive. At times, mentors made trainees feel as if they were unsuitable to be teachers. This reflects the findings of Glazzard, 2018 that found mentors in primary settings often emphasised trainees' weaknesses and suggests that this may also be applicable to some secondary mentors. It demonstrates how mentors understood dyslexia from a deficit perspective, underpinned by a medical model of disability. Some mentors appeared to be someone 'ill-suited to the role of supervisor/mentor' (Murray-Harvey et al., 2000, p. 33) and our participants' experiences raise questions about how the quality of mentors can be assured. Our findings suggest that there is lack of professional knowledge and training for mentors in supporting a trainee with dyslexia. Training should look to re-define and re-frame the language used in relation to disability, to language that values functional diversity (Campoy-Cubillo, 2019). Indeed, this is particularly important when we consider that effective mentoring is pivotal to an inexperienced teacher's professional development (Glazzard & Coverdale, 2018).

As a result of The Carter Review of initial teacher education, the UK's Teaching Schools Council developed non-statutory standards against which to judge ITE mentors (UK Government, 2016). These standards focus on mentors' personal qualities, high standards of practice, their professionalism and their own self-development. However, as it stands, these standards are advisory and are not officially assessed. Certainly, as with previous literature (Glazzard, 2018; Glazzard & Coverdale, 2018; Griffiths, 2012), our study highlights a great discrepancy in the quality of mentoring. Potentially, the further development of guidelines of how to support a trainee with dyslexia would mitigate some of the inconsistent mentoring experienced by our participants. Furthermore, in line with the findings of Griffiths (2012) and Glazzard and Dale (2015), there appears to be a discrepancy between the quality of mentoring offered by school-based mentors and university-based mentors. Perhaps UBMs could offer school-based mentors training sessions and opportunities to learn about dyslexia and neurodiversity and equip them with the strategies needed to support a trainee with a special educational need. This would go some way to ensuring a parity of mentoring quality between the university and the school.

4.2. Primary and secondary HEI PGCE experiences

The university-based portion of the PGCE also posed challenges for our participants. Some explained how they found the lecture format challenging. Others cited how they were unable to access reasonable adjustments in the lecture; the conduct of other trainees led to the whole cohort being asked to stop using technology. This became problematic for dyslexic students who used technology to aid their learning. Whilst there is no indication that dyslexic trainees were being targeted deliberately, this finding shows how the needs of dyslexic trainees were overlooked. This finding draws comparisons with Ryder and Norwich (2019), who found that some academic staff lacked enough knowledge to differentiate for dyslexic students. This suggests that there needs to be an increased awareness and understanding of dyslexia amongst the higher education community to ensure that technological accommodations are not removed. Initiatives such as awareness days and seminars for all students and staff could be one potential solution. Furthermore, the PGCE structure also posed practical challenges, preventing some participants from accessing university-based learning support services. As trainees spent one day a week on campus and four days a week in school, they were unable to make appointments with university support services. A potential solution to this problem is to offer telephone or video call appointments. Additionally, HEIs could offer induction packages to postgraduate students to support the transition between undergraduate and postgraduate level. At the end of the initial training year, HEIs could offer similar guidance on managing the transition between postgraduate study and the workplace, where support might be minimal.

4.3. Experiences unique to secondary school trainees

Whilst a portion of our findings have been in line with the work undertaken in primary schools, we did have findings specific to training in secondary schools. Firstly, there was a perceived incongruity between training to teach English and having dyslexia. Our two participants training to be a secondary school English teacher perceived a discourse of negativity towards being both an English teacher and a person with dyslexia. Potentially this discourse is perpetuated by a misconception that because dyslexia results in inefficiencies in spelling, reading and decoding (Lyon, Shawaywitz, & Shawaywitz, 2003), dyslexic people are perceived as somehow less capable of teaching English. Whilst we cannot draw anything conclusive from this finding, it warrants further exploration in the future.

Another key finding was related to the emphasis placed on written feedback, particularly with GCSE groups. The UK's Independent Teacher Workload Review Group stresses how providing written feedback on pupils' work has become disproportionately valued by schools. They argue that teachers often conflate the amount of feedback, with the quality of feedback (Independent Teacher Workload Review Group, 2016). In the schools in which our participants were placed, pressure was placed on the trainees to perform a "quick turnaround" of written feedback. One school even gave the trainee full class-sets of books to mark, without a staggered build up. This led to them feeling overworked and overwhelmed. The concept of a "quick turnaround" lies in contrast to advice supported by the UK's Department for Education. The current advice is not for teachers to deliver extensive, regular written feedback but for teachers to feedback in ways that are effective and time-efficient (Independent Teacher Workload Review Group, 2016). In reaction to the unreasonable marking expectations placed upon them, our participants began building their professional identity around the fact that they found marking

difficult. Providing written feedback resulted in unnecessary stress; this appeared to stem from an incongruence between best practice in marking work and school culture. This could potentially drive teachers away from the profession as some schools promote unsustainable workload in contrast to government advice. With an increased emphasis in schools on supporting children with their 'cognitive load' (Sweller, Ayres, & Kalyuga, 2011), this finding suggests that schools should also consider the cognitive load placed upon trainees and how tasks undertaken by them should be relevant and manageable in order to help them develop.

5. Conclusion

This study builds on a small body of literature that examines the experiences of primary school trainees with dyslexia. We have explored the experiences of primary and secondary trainees as learners in an HEI. This study also makes inroads in to understanding the unique experiences of dyslexic secondary trainees.

In response to RQ1, we found that there were similarities in placement-based experiences across both primary and secondary trainees. Our study also suggests that some of the literature that explores primary trainees may be applicable to a secondary setting. For instance, there were inconsistencies in SBM quality and inconsistencies between the quality of UBMs and SBMs. Future research may want to consider how mentors can be trained to support trainees with dyslexia and value the unique experiences they bring to the profession. Additionally, trainees in both sectors had similar experiences and anxieties about managing the disclosure of their dyslexia to their placement schools.

In answering RQ2, we found that the structure of the PGCE posed challenges for some of our participants enrolled on both primary and secondary courses. They were expected to have completed a substantial amount of work in a short space of time, without adequate accommodations put in place. The course structure also meant that accessing on-campus support was difficult as participants were only able to meet with learning support services on one day a week and had to compete with undergraduates in accessing this service.

Whilst there was similarity of experience in being a dyslexic trainee across both primary and secondary settings, as outlined in response to RQ1, our findings in relation to RQ3 suggest that there are experiences unique to the secondary sector. Participants training to teach in a secondary school felt pressurised by a conflict between best practice and school culture in the provision of written feedback. Additionally, those training to teach English were perceived as unable to be adequate teachers, perhaps because of the literacy demands of English as a core subject. Given the unique experiences of secondary trainees, future research may wish to focus specifically on trainees with dyslexia in a secondary school setting.

In light of difficulties with the quality of mentoring, in disclosure and in the structure of the PGCE course itself, both university and school policies for supporting trainee teachers could be re-examined through a functional diversity perspective, so that they promote diversity in their language and in practice.

Whilst these findings relate to a small group of trainee teachers, we hope they will be useful for ITE providers in considering how they help trainees manage their disclosure and support school-based mentors. These steps are important to ensure that trainees with dyslexia have a positive experience on their PGCE course and allow them to progress successfully on to their career as a fully qualified teacher.

Declaration of competing interest

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PAPER 12

'It feels like its sink or swim': Newly Qualified Teachers' Experiences of their Induction Year

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Abstract. This study examined the experiences of a small group of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) during their NQT year. A focus group was used to explore the NQTs' understandings of their role and the influence of the NQT year on the development of their professional teacher identity. Data were digitally recorded, transcribed and organised into themes. The data indicate that the participants had developed a strong sense of their own accountability for their own professionalism and for improving the academic performance of their pupils. They had been initiated into the discourse of performativity that is entrenched across the education system. Consequently, some, but not all, NQTs had rejected their personal educational philosophies and had embraced a socially assigned identity which embraced the principles of performativity.

Keywords: Teachers; Newly Qualified Teachers; Induction Year; Professional Development; Teacher Identity.

1. Introduction

In England, Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) are required to complete a mandatory induction year to teach in state-maintained schools. This paper uses the terms 'NQT' and 'early career teacher' interchangeably to represent teachers in their first year of teaching. In England NQTs can arrive at their first year of teaching having successfully progressed through an undergraduate or postgraduate programme of initial teacher education. There is also a non-accredited school-based route which confers Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) but none of the participants in this study had qualified as teachers through this route.

Schools in England, like other parts of the world, are required to focus relentlessly on raising students' academic performance. School effectiveness and teacher performance are based mainly on how well students fare in standardised assessments and in primary schools this is limited to Mathematics and English. Senior leaders and school governors monitor closely individual teacher performance and parents, local authorities and the school inspectorate (Office for Standards in Education – OfSTED) monitor whole school performance data which is based on student results.

For an NQT this provides a challenging context in which they are required to work. As early career teachers, they are undeniably at an early stage of forming their professional teacher identity. Their identity will be shaped through a myriad of networks and experiences as they start to discover the kind of teacher they want to be. Yet, at the same time they are expected to raise the academic profile of the school and to do this they must prioritise the academic performance of their learners.

This paper explores the experiences of NQTs during their first year of teaching. At the time when the data were collected the participants were in their second term of teaching.

2. Key literature

Tickle (2000) argues that 'we should not think of induction simply as if novices are to be socialised into some well formulated and accepted practices which exist on the other side' (p. 1). However, in order to 'survive' their induction year NQTs must adopt the policies and practices within their schools or risk potential failure. Educational practice can always be subjected to healthy critique but challenging existing practice in some schools is not a risk worth taking. In other schools, subjecting practice to critique would be welcomed. Therefore, the experiences of early career teachers are always influenced by the educational context in which they are operating within.

Recent research in England (Education Support Partnership, 2018) has demonstrated that early career teachers who have taught between 1-5 years have a greater likelihood of experiencing mental ill health compared to more experienced teachers. More research is needed to help us to understand why this is the case, but one likely explanation is that the transition from the first year of teaching (induction year) to subsequent years is too abrupt, given that the systems of support that are available in the first year are then removed. This would support the case for extending the induction year over two years rather than limiting it to one year.

There has generally been a lack of research into the early professional development of new teachers (Totterdell et al, 2004; 2005). The literature which is available demonstrates that the induction process for teachers has been a cause for concern for several years (Haggarty & Postlethwaite, 2012). One of the reasons for this is the apparent discontinuity of experiences in the transition from initial teacher training to the induction year (Hobson et al., 2007).

Literature has identified that there is little evidence of a staged, progressive induction process where knowledge and skills are developed over time (Harrison, 2001). Additionally, models of support tend to adopt a deficit approach by targeting support on addressing weaknesses in teacher performance (Haggarty & Postlethwaite, 2012; Harrison, 2001) rather than developing teachers' skills further to support them in becoming more effective.

More recently, OfSTED inspection frameworks for initial teacher education have emphasised the need for providers of teacher training to support trainees into the induction year. Models of provision vary across providers and include access to professional development, access to resources, web-based support, telephone helplines and visits to NQTs by university tutors. The impact of this is yet to be measured nationally but many providers operate under financial constraints and therefore intervention and support is likely to be targeted at those NQTs who are demonstrating weaknesses in their practice rather than being universal for all.

Development as a teacher involves a considerable degree of identity work. Robin Smith (2007) argues that there has been a move away from coherent and stable identities towards a view that professional identities are multiple, fragmented and prone to change. Britzman (2003) emphasised identity construction as a continuous 'becoming', suggesting that identity is always in a state of flux. Sfard and Prusak (2005) identified two types of identity; *actual identity*, which refers to a personal identity and *desired identity*, which refers to an identity which is imposed on the individual by others. Whilst we accept that identity is influenced by a range of experiences and interactions and is fluid rather than static, notions of what constitutes an effective teacher are politically influenced and have become increasingly solidified within schools. Within the education system teachers who are 'outstanding' are those who can close achievement gaps between groups of learners and maximise student performance. Whilst this is a laudable aim, it neglects other aspects of teacher effectiveness, such as the ability to meet students' holistic needs, raise self-concept and self-esteem and engender inclusive practice. Within this educational context, Smith (2007) argues that new entrants to the profession become teachers within the new discourses and therefore take for granted curriculum and assessment policies.

Research questions

This study focused the following research questions:

- What were NQTs experiences of their induction year?
- How had their NQT year shaped the development of their teacher identity?

3. Methodology

This study was a small-scale case study of 8 participants who were in their first year of teaching in the primary phase (5-11). The participants were recruited via an e-mail invitation which was distributed to all NQTs who had exited from one teacher training provider in the north of England. Both authors were employed in the institution during the conduct of this research. The invitation was distributed to NQTs who had followed both undergraduate and postgraduate

routes. 8 volunteers agreed to participate, and they have signed informed consent. The participants are shown in the table below:

Table 1: Names of participants

Trainees	Teacher training route
Jack	Undergraduate
Michael	Postgraduate
Josh	Postgraduate
Sue	Undergraduate
Amy	Undergraduate
Ameena	Postgraduate
Claire	Postgraduate
Fran	Postgraduate

Pseudonyms were used instead of their actual names and no reference was made to the names of the schools in which they were employed. One focus group which lasted approximately 1 hour was held at the teacher training provider base. A semi-structured interview schedule was used to loosely frame the discussion. One of us acted as moderator of the focus group. The focus group was digitally recorded by the moderator and subsequently transcribed by the second researcher. Data were analysed using a thematic approach.

The focus group was used to broadly explore the following aspects:

- NQTs' understandings of their role
- NQTs' experiences during their induction year
- NQTs' access to professional development
- NQTs sense of identity

Member checking was offered to the participants, but all participants declined this opportunity.

4. Results

4.1. NQT perceptions of their role

The NQTs in this study demonstrated a clear understanding of their own accountability. They had understood that, unlike during their initial teacher training, they were employed by the school and this brought with it a sense of greater accountability. They had a strong sense that they should be held to account for the progress of their pupils and the need for them to demonstrate a strong sense of professionalism:

When I started in September I requested pupil progress meetings. As an NQT I wasn't going to get them. It is a decision made by the school that they did not

want to put further pressure on me as an NQT to discuss the data of their class. But I didn't want to be seen as an NQT - I wanted to be judged like everyone else. (Jack)

Being responsible for upholding my professionalism has been a key part of my role. I would say that this is more important for an NQT than an experienced teacher. I think you need to show greater professionalism as an NQT as you are just starting out in your career and because you are employed by the school. (Sue)

First and foremost, my main responsibility is a class teacher. (Amy)

Ameena demonstrated that she was aware of her responsibilities in relation to managing other adults and communicating with other members of the teaching team:

Being a manager of adults is a key part of my role. As an NQT I initially thought would be really difficult. However, I have handled this better than I thought I would. Also, part of my role involves being responsible for communicating effectively with my Key Stage Lead. This includes being responsible and accountable to management. Another key part of my role is to develop good working relationships with parents. (Ameena)

Michael commented that the process of enculturation was important and that fitting in with the school culture and forming good relationships with colleagues was crucial at this early stage of his career:

As flippant as it may sound – you get a sense of what your school is like as a culture and as a whole – it has got nothing to do with your skills of a teacher as far as I am concerned. You have to fit in and get on with people. (Michael)

4.2. Networks of support

The NQTs in this study emphasised the importance of having an effective mentor. They characterised this as someone who was supportive and able to provide constructive feedback on their teaching. They valued both formal and informal support from their mentor and they emphasised the importance of establishing a good relationship with their mentor. They also emphasised the importance of having access to a network of support from other people including teaching assistants, parents, other teachers in the school and their peers:

My NQT Mentor is the Deputy Head Teacher. She has supported me in advising me what I need to be doing in my NQT time. She has been there to observe me and give me ideas for improvement. I have also been supported by the Head Teacher who has also observed me and he has given me feedback and different tasks to do –that has been really helpful. (Josh)

We look at the minutes from the last meeting and look at how we have addressed the actions. We consider next steps as well as checking what is coming up in the school diary, such as reports or data collection. (Claire)

In terms of seeking support from my mentor it is a case of going to see her on a very informal basis - discussing any needs that arise.... if that relationship breaks down then you are not going to succeed during your NQT year. The role of the mentor is very much to help support you and give you advice and nurture you through your first year of teaching. (Fran)

I have been supported by other colleagues within school who I work with in both classrooms - they have all observed me as well. We have a very good working relationship with each other. My Teaching Assistant is brilliant- and I talk to her about all the different things and I ask her for feedback and how I can make things better for the children. In both classes, the TAs are very good. We have good working relationships. (Sue)

In the school, we have another NQT who is the teacher in Year 5. She isn't from the same University. We have our non-contact together. We support each other. (Josh)

I still speak to a few NQTs who were on the PGCE course with me and we share ideas and that can be useful. (Michael)

I suppose that it is just knowing that if I needed to drop an email or a make a phone call- I would get positive support. (Jack)

I kind of thought that the Head Teacher wouldn't be around as much - but that suited me. On placement, it always suited me for my mentor to be that bit further away or not as involved in things just so I could take a bit more control. I have not felt under pressure as such. When I have spoken to other NQTs they have been quite nervous about constantly having their Head Teacher on their backs. (Claire)

Other colleagues have played a part in this in terms of supporting me. We are a very open school and everyone talks to everyone e.g. the Year 5 teacher is the Maths Coordinator and I am always in her classroom discussing Maths with her. (Josh)

The Year 3 teacher carries out a lot of Kagan teaching strategies and she is also very much into outdoor learning - so I liaise with her quite a lot. We have attended courses together on outdoor learning. The Nursery teacher is the special needs coordinator. I am in constant dialogue with her about special needs issues that arise in my classroom. I spend time with the Reception teacher and discuss with her what Year 1 provision should look like, for example, am I doing this at the right time of the year? She is also literacy leader so I spend lots of time talking to her about phonics. (Amy)

4.3. Continuous professional development during the NQT year

The NQTs in this study emphasised the importance of having access to continuous professional development during their induction year. Some of them

had attended a conference hosted by their initial teacher education provider and this was perceived as valuable to their development. Sue valued the Masters course that she had enrolled because of its emphasis on how children learn:

I feel that the Masters course has been a key part of my role as an NQT as it has enabled me to look more deeply into how children learn and in what ways children make greater progress. It has also helped me to become more reflective and to look more closely at my own practice. (Sue)

Other NQTs valued more practical training which provided them with exposure to activities that they might use in their classroom. They appeared to value professional development which supported them in developing active approaches to learning:

I took lots of ideas back to the classroom from the NQT Conference and I have tried out loads of ideas with my class in school already e.g. the chocolate bar activity with Reception which was linked to phonics. (Jack)

The activities that I trialled have encouraged my pupils to be more active- and the ideas of what to include in plenaries have been a great help. These activities have given more opportunities to promote quick AfL techniques. I can see more clearly where the children are in terms of their progress. I can then plan the next lesson with more ideas – knowing where the children are up to. In terms of pupil progress, I feel that I have a better knowledge of what to plan which is more suitable to meet their individual needs. (Claire)

4.4. Raising outcomes for pupils

The NQTs in this study demonstrated a strong sense that their role was to raise pupil progress, thus contributing to school improvement. Michael acknowledged the tensions between accelerating pupils' academic progress and maintaining a commitment to the whole child:

... creates a performative culture which makes holistic teaching and learning more challenging. (Michael)

In contrast Fran emphasised the importance of negotiating the imperative to raise academic standards whilst, at the same time, maintaining a commitment to the whole child:

As an NQT I believe enthusiasm and the willingness to learn and absorb ideas from University training and school observations ensure that creativeness is not restricted. It is possible to raise standards and maintain a commitment to the whole child. My children have made good progress this year so far but I have supported them holistically. (Fran)

Others demonstrated that they had begun to displace their personal values in order to focus their energies on raising children's academic performance.

Ameena had begun to displace her personal commitment to inclusive education and this had started to influence her commitment to teaching as a profession:

Having 30 children all needing to make progress is vital. It has been drilled in to us throughout school that progress is key. It feels like its sink or swim and everything rides on the progress that pupils make. This can be challenging as I have several children in my class with special educational needs. Some of these children would be better placed in a special school, despite the fact that I used to be against exclusion. I don't like saying this but I don't think I'll stay in teaching long because it feels like I am not teaching in a way which is true to my beliefs. (Ameena)

Sue had started to 're-think' her commitment to play-based pedagogy in the early years because she felt that it did not prepare children for the formality of the next phase of their education:

The national and school expectations are very high and there is a lot that they need to cover in order to meet the expectations at the end of the year. I was made very aware of these expectations right from the start of my NQT year. As a Year 1 teacher I feel that it needs to be a bit more formal than it is in the Reception class, even though I have always believed passionately in play-based learning in the early years. (Sue)

5. Discussion

The role of the mentor as pivotal during the NQT year was emphasised by the participants in this study. They emphasised the importance of having access to both formal and informal support from their mentor and the necessity for constructive feedback and target setting. However, they also emphasised the importance of having access to a network of support across the school and a wider support network from their peers who they trained with. They highlighted the importance of having access to support, not solely from qualified teachers but also from teaching assistants and the importance of establishing good relationships with colleagues.

The participants seemed to value professional development courses which provided them with active learning strategies that they could use directly in the classroom. Only one participant was studying a Masters programme in education and she valued the contribution that this had made to her understanding of children's learning. Consequently, the course had enabled her to reflect in greater depth on her own teaching.

The participants demonstrated a strong sense of accountability. They had understood that they were accountable for the progress of their learners and that they were also accountable for their own professionalism. Their sense of accountability was heightened because they were now employed by the school in comparison with their initial teacher training phase when they were simply 'guests' in the school. It was evident that some of them had experienced an

initiation into a standards-driven agenda and this had resulted in some internalising this and displacing their previously held personal teacher values. It was evident from the data that the NQTs in this study had been initiated into the discourse of performativity that is entrenched within the education system. Ameena's use of the word '*drilled*' suggests that there was a process of indoctrinating these early career teachers into the values and practices of performativity.

The term *performativity* was coined by Lyotard in his thesis entitled *The Postmodern Condition* (Lyotard, 1984). It refers to the emphasis on the use of outcome related performance indicators. These narrow performance indicators are then used to evaluate school effectiveness. School performance is based on pupil *performance* in standardised assessments and made public through the use of league tables and the publishing of inspection ratings. According to Stephen Ball (2003) 'performativity is a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change...' (p.216). The *machinery* of performativity was established by the Conservative government in the late 1980s and early 1990s through the introduction of high stake assessment processes, school inspections and national performance indicators. Over the last two decades the language of performativity has been internalised, often without question, by school leaders, teachers, learners and parents. As a totalising discourse, performative values and practices have been unquestionably assimilated into notions of what makes a good teacher or an effective educational institution (Thomas & Loxley, 2007) and there was evidence that this was the case with the early career teachers in this study.

Ball has argued that performative discourses result in 'inauthentic practice' (Ball, 2003: 222) which can have detrimental effects. By acknowledging '*... that it needs to be a bit more formal than it is in the Reception class*', Sue had already formed the view that play-based learning in the early years was too informal and did not adequately prepare her learners for the formality of the first year of the National Curriculum. Sue had started to re-think her personal values as a teacher; she was beginning to displace her commitment to play-based learning in the early years in favour of more formal learning. It has been argued that teacher identity is not a stable entity but continually reconstructed as a product of conflicting discourses and practices (Day, Ellison and Last *et al.*, 2003; Day, *et al.*, 2006; Sikes, Measor & Woods, 1985). It is 'always deferred and in the process of becoming- never really, never yet, never absolutely there' (MacLure, 2003: 131). Sue's identity as a teacher appeared to be in a state of flux and she was beginning to internalise a new identity in favour of a new assigned social identity (Snow & Anderson, 1987) which embraces the values of performativity. For Ameena, there was evidence that she had begun to displace her commitment to inclusive practices by demonstrating a degree of resentment towards the children in her class with special educational needs. Michael acknowledged the tensions between maintaining a commitment to the whole child whilst, at the same time, subscribing to the values of performativity. Sadly, Ball (2003) warns us that such values of 'care' have 'no place in the hard world of performativity'

(p.222) and are now redundant. Consequently, Sue, Adam and Ameena had already recognised that in order to survive in their chosen profession it was necessary to displace their personal values in order to focus their energies on maximising children's performance. They had subscribed to being 'deprofessionalised' and 'reprofessionalised' (Seddon, 1997) as they rejected previously held values

Ball's critique powerfully demonstrates ways in which the market, managerialism and performativity in education result in 'potentially profound consequences for the nature of teaching and learning and for the inner-life of the teacher' (Ball, 2003: 226). In developing his critique, Ball argues that the performative discourse has resulted in increased competition, devolved accountability, incentives and the introduction of new forms of surveillance and monitoring processes designed to ensure that outcomes continually improve. Within performative regimes Ball suggests that 'value replaces values' (p.217) as new performance related values replace previous values of care, cooperation and commitment. Teachers learn to focus their energies on maximising performance, often displacing their own professional beliefs about education for social justice (Ball, 2003). In turn 'the heart of the educational project is gouged out and left empty...Authenticity is replaced by plasticity' (Ball, 2003: 225).

However, despite this displacement of values, Fran demonstrated that she was committed both to raising pupil performance and meeting the holistic needs of the children in her class. Web and Vulliamy (2006) have demonstrated how teachers are able to subvert, reject and recast the dominant political versions of what it means to be a teacher, thus enabling them to assert their own professional values on their identity. In support Clarke (2008) argues that it is possible for teachers to 'author' their own identities by resisting identities which are undesirable. Thus, identity formation is a continual process of negotiation and 'a potential site of agency' (Clarke, 2008: 187). He argues that teachers have an ethical obligation to reflect on their identities and to engage in identity work by 'claiming' their identity (Clarke, 2008). It seems that Fran's desire to negotiate her own identity within a performative discourse had provided her with a sense of personal agency. Foucault's concept of *transgression* (Foucault, 1977) is useful in considering how teachers can marginally resist the socially assigned identity to maintain a commitment to their personal values as a teacher. in favour. In *Preface to Transgression* (Foucault, 1977) Foucault describes transgression as a momentary crossing of, but not the violation of a limit. Fran maintained a commitment to supporting the whole child alongside raising their academic performance.

It is important that senior leaders in school provide NQTs with an opportunity to negotiate their personal identities as teachers so that they can teach authentically in ways which are true to their personal values. Ameena had considered at such an early stage of her career that she might not remain in the teaching profession. It is important that teachers feel that they have some ownership over the way they teach. Early career teachers should be empowered to experiment in their teaching, to take risks and to form their own teacher

identity whilst, at the same time, demonstrating a commitment to raising academic standards. A sense of agency in relation to their values as a teacher and their approach to teaching should contribute to a sense of fulfilment at work. Indoctrinating early career teachers by drilling the values of performativity is likely to result in teacher attrition.

Although this is a small-scale study, the results have implications for initial teacher education and the professional development of Newly Qualified Teachers. We recommend that courses of initial teacher education give greater emphasis to the accountability pressures that new teachers will experience during their first year of teaching. We also recommend that the induction year is extended over two years which includes access to quality early professional development courses which are designed to promote the skill of critical reflection and exposure to the latest research findings. Courses of early professional development should go beyond providing 'tips for teaching' and should instead be designed to ensure that new teachers are exposed to the latest research evidence on effective pedagogy.

6. Conclusion

The limitations of this research lie in it being a small-scale study based in England. Thus, it is not possible to generalise from the data. Nevertheless, the study provides a useful insight into the lived experiences of Newly Qualified Teachers.

The NQTs in this study had begun to internalise a socially assigned identity of what makes a good teacher in England in the 21st century. They demonstrated a clear understanding of their own accountability and there appeared to be a shift in their teacher values amongst some and restricted agency in relation to their professional identity. They had been initiated into the discourse of performativity which is entrenched across the education system and this had resulted in some displacement of personal values in favour of neoliberalist values. Although there was evidence that it was possible to negotiate personal values with the socially assigned values of what makes a good teacher, this was not evident across all participants and it had resulted, in some cases, to a sense of disempowerment.

Whilst this is a small-scale study, schools that recruit NQTs may need to consider how these early career teachers are supported to maintain a sense of personal agency in relation to their teacher identity. Whilst the need to raise standards in schools is paramount, teachers also need to feel that they have a degree of agency both in relation to their personal educational philosophy and how they teach. The danger of not allowing teachers a sense of agency is that when teachers teach in a way which does not chime with their personal philosophy it results in educational practice which is inauthentic. Whilst it is critical that NQTs understand their role in raising pupils' academic standards, it is also essential that due consideration is also given to pupils' holistic well-being.

Indeed, we argue that maintaining a commitment to the whole child will raise academic standards, not lower them. It is critical that early career teachers have the freedom and space in the curriculum to experiment with pedagogical approaches. This will contribute to the development of their teacher identity, result in more creative approaches to teaching and ultimately raise academic standards. Finally, we support continuous professional development for NQTs and we value greatly the contribution that Masters level professional development can make to teachers' knowledge and their skills in reflection.

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PAPER 13

Assessing reading development through systematic synthetic phonics

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Abstract

This narrative literature review evaluates the effectiveness of synthetic phonics in comparison with analytic phonics. It presents the key research findings and offers a critical appraisal of this research. Primary schools have developed a variety of assessment processes which assess pupils' knowledge and skills in synthetic phonics. It is through using these assessment tools that gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are identified and these gaps then form the basis of subsequent synthetic phonics interventions. The article concludes by arguing that a more detailed assessment framework may be required for the purpose of assessing children's reading development than the model which schools currently adopt.

Assessing reading development through systematic synthetic phonics

This narrative literature review evaluates the effectiveness of synthetic phonics in comparison with analytic phonics. It presents the key research findings and offers a critical appraisal of this research. For over a decade now, and following the publication of the Rose Review in 2006 (Rose, 2006), educational policy in England has emphasised the need for schools to provide children with a systematic programme of synthetic phonics instruction. In synthetic phonics children learn to read by identifying the smallest units of sound within a word (phonemes) and blending these together to read the target word. It is different from other approaches to phonics which focus on blending larger units of sound.

The emphasis on synthetic phonics has been embedded in the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011) in order to ensure that all teachers have good knowledge of synthetic phonics. The Teachers' Standards were developed by the Department for Education (DfE) in 2011 to provide a framework for identifying the minimum standards expected of all teachers. In addition, inspection frameworks

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for both initial teacher education providers and schools have been revised several times since 2006 and these revisions have resulted in inspectors' [inspectors'] paying increasing attention to the teaching of synthetic phonics in schools.

Schools have developed a variety of assessment processes which assess pupils' knowledge and skills in synthetic phonics. It is through using these assessment tools that gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are identified and these gaps then form the basis of subsequent synthetic phonics interventions. For some children synthetic phonics is highly effective in enabling them to master the skill of *decoding*. This provides them with a strategy for reading unknown words. However, for others the approach is less effective. For example, dyslexics sometimes struggle to master the skill of decoding and instead rely on whole word recognition strategies. This raises a question about whether an alternative approach to learning to read would be more beneficial for pupils who have difficulty processing sound at the level of the phoneme. For these children alternative methods of assessing their reading development and teaching them may be necessary.

Although logic suggests that one size does not fit all, the emphasis on synthetic phonics in the Teachers' Standards suggests quite the opposite. Thus, even if early assessments indicate that the approach is not successful, the political endorsement of synthetic phonics in the Teachers' Standards suggests that teachers should persevere with this approach by providing systematic synthetic phonics intervention programmes for those children who are falling behind. This is deeply worrying, given that subsequent further failure can impact detrimentally on children's self-concept.

This article examines two approaches to phonics to identify which is the more effective. It concludes by arguing that a more detailed assessment framework may be required for assessing children's reading development.

Definitions

The term 'synthetic' is taken from the verb 'to synthesise'. Beginning readers are taught grapheme-phoneme correspondences and taught to *blend* phonemes all through the word right from the outset in order to develop word reading skills (Johnston and Watson, 2007). They are also taught the reverse process of *segmenting* a spoken word into its constituent phonemes. These are then represented as graphemes for spelling. Letter sounds are learnt at a rapid pace and the skills of blending and segmenting are taught from the start (Johnston and Watson, 2007). In contrast, analytic phonics introduces blending much later in the process. Children are taught to analyse the common phoneme in a set of words and individual phonemes are not pronounced in isolation (Strickland, 1998).

Evidence for synthetic phonics

In England, the Rose review (Rose, 2006) concluded that:

Having considered a wide range of evidence, the review has concluded that the case for systematic phonic work is overwhelming and much strengthened by a synthetic approach.

Rose, 2006, para 51: 20.

In this review Rose recommended that synthetic phonics ‘offers the best route to becoming skilled readers’ (p.19) and he argued that teachers should be required to teach synthetic phonics ‘first’ and ‘fast’. This recommendation has informed literacy policy in the England and the content of initial teacher education courses.

Rose substantiated his claim by drawing evidence from the Clackmannanshire research in Scotland (Watson and Johnston, 1998). The second experiment reported in this research examined the performance of three groups of children who received intervention over a 10-week period. Each intervention lasted for 15 minutes twice a week. One group received sight vocabulary training, a second group received intervention in analytic phonics and a third group received intervention in synthetic phonics. The results led the researchers to conclude that synthetic phonics led to better reading, spelling and phonemic awareness gains than the other two approaches (Watson and Johnston, 1998).

A longitudinal study reported by Johnston and Watson (2005) has demonstrated that synthetic phonics is particularly effective for boys. This study reported that both boys and girls demonstrated substantial gains in word reading, spelling and comprehension which were sustained over time when taught through a synthetic phonics approach. However, the gain was larger for boys (Johnston and Watson, 2005). Additionally, the research found that synthetic phonics enabled children from areas of deprivation to overcome social disadvantage by demonstrating gains in reading and spelling which enabled these children to perform above their chronological age (Johnson and Watson, 2005). More recent research also supports these findings. For example, a study by Johnston et al. (2011) compared the performance of 10-year old boys and girls who had been taught to read by either synthetic or analytic phonics. The study found that the group taught by synthetic phonics had better spelling, word reading and comprehension than the group taught by analytic phonics. Additionally, the results demonstrated that the boys taught by synthetic phonics had better word reading, spelling and comprehension than the girls who had been taught by the same method.

However, the Clackmannanshire research (experiment 2 specifically) has received considerable criticism in the academic literature (Wyse and Goswami, 2008). The study lacked sufficient rigour in its design to establish whether the synthetic approach is superior to the analytic approach (Wyse and Goswami,

2008). Children in the analytic phonics group were taught fewer letters than children in the synthetic phonics group (Wyse and Styles, 2007) and the groups were given different amounts of teaching (Wyse and Styles, 2007). Additionally, the research design did not isolate the impact of additional treatment factors which might have contributed to the gains in reading, spelling and phonemic awareness (Ellis and Moss, 2014). For example, factors such as: teacher effectiveness; parents' educational attainment; the quality of the literacy environment in the home; remedial help offered outside the intervention and other reading interventions which operated within the school were not controlled and therefore the evidence is insufficiently robust (Ellis and Moss, 2014). The study failed to report information about the time spent on phonics instruction outside the intervention, time spent on other reading activities and the contexts in which children were exposed to phonics (Ellis and Moss, 2014). Given these serious flaws in the reporting of the research and the design of the study, Ellis and Moss have concluded that:

The weakness of the research design, including the way the statistical data were analysed and reported, suggests it would be unwise to draw any clear conclusions for pedagogy or policy from this single study.

Ellis and Moss, 2014: 249

Despite the methodological weaknesses of the Clackmannanshire research, Johnston and Watson (2005) concluded that 'synthetic phonics was a more effective approach to teaching reading, spelling and phonemic awareness than analytic phonics (p.351). However, as Wyse and Styles (2007) point out, 'it is important that gains are shown for comprehension, not just for decoding and related skills' (p.39). In the first experiment the reporting of the comprehension outcomes was ambiguous and in the second experiment the comprehension findings were not reported (Wyse and Styles, 2007). The subsequent longitudinal study which was published by Johnston and Watson (2005) reported gains in comprehension scores but there was no control group, so it is impossible to attribute gains in comprehension to synthetic phonics (Wyse and Styles, 2007). Additionally, comprehension scores during the longitudinal study were assessed using different tests, thus invalidating any results.

Following the Clackmannanshire studies, the Scottish inspectorate confirmed that Clackmannanshire was "below the average for comparator authorities" (HMIE, 2006, p. 4), thus discrediting the findings of the research. Given the serious limitations of the research, it is questionable why Rose (2006), who acknowledged the criticisms that were levelled against the research, failed to take any of these into account. The recommendations of the Rose Review were subsequently cemented into English national policy through a political emphasis on synthetic phonics in government White Papers (DfE, 2010; DfE, 2016), the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011) and the introduction of the

phonics screening check in Year 1 of the national curriculum. Additionally, the results of the phonics screening check were included in data provided to school inspectors, resulting in penalties in inspection outcomes for those schools where children under-performed in this assessment. Schools were also provided with additional funding for purchasing synthetic phonics resources. These strategies served the purpose of raising the profile of synthetic phonics in schools. To launch a policy change on a lack of robust, empirical evidence was both hasty and naïve and not an adequate solution for addressing England's low position in the international literacy league tables.

Evidence for analytic phonics

Analytic phonics is often described as processing text by going from *whole to part* rather than *part to whole* as is the case in synthetic phonics (Moustafa and Maldonado-Colon (1998). It is a strategy which emphasises the use of larger grain sizes, including the use of rimes.

Goswami (2005) has argued that synthetic phonics is highly effective in orthographically consistent languages. However, in languages such as English, which are not orthographically consistent, it is more difficult for children to use smaller grain sizes (i.e. phonemes) because the inconsistency is greater for smaller grapheme units than for larger grain sizes such as rimes (Goswami, 2005). In English, one grapheme can be represented by multiple phonemes, whilst in many other languages letters are consistently pronounced in the same way. Additionally, in English one phoneme can be represented by multiple graphemes whilst in most other languages a phoneme is always spelt in the same way.

The complexities of the English language inevitably mean that teaching phonics through small grain sizes will result in confusion for beginning readers, especially when there is inconsistency in the sounds represented by these units in different words. Additionally, the inconsistencies also transfer to spelling in that one sound is represented by different graphemes in different words. Goswami (2005) argues that a developmental teaching sequence based on developing rhyming skills helps children to read by analogy and better suits the irregular orthography of English.

Research suggests that children code switch from small to large grain sizes when learning English depending on the word they are reading (Brown and Deavers, 1999; Goswami et al., 2003). Some words have to be learned as wholes because they have 'no orthographic neighbours' (Goswami, 2005: 281). Other words, particularly CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words, have consistent letter-phoneme recoding and the use of small grain sizes is an effective decoding strategy in these cases (Goswami, 2005). Some words contain rimes that are common to other words (*light/ fight*) and therefore the use of rimes

works particularly well in these cases. This suggests that analytic phonics has an important role to play in learning to read, given the orthographic inconsistencies of the English language. Thus, a combination of approaches may be necessary in order to enable children to develop the skill of word recognition.

Synthesis

According to Torgerson et al., ‘There is currently no strong randomised controlled trial evidence that any one form of systematic phonics is more effective than any other’ (2006: 49). Research evidence which is available is insufficient to allow for reliable judgements to be made about the efficiency of different approaches to systematic phonics instruction (Stuart, 2006). In countries where there are one-to-one mappings between letters and sounds (such as in Finland, Greece, Italy and Spain) there is evidence to suggest that synthetic phonics can be extremely effective (Landerl, 2000). However, the phonological complexity of the English language and the inconsistent spelling system mean that there is a need for direct instruction at levels other than the level of the phoneme in order to produce effective readers (Goswami, 2005; Wyse and Goswami, 2008). The inconsistency of English inhibits the automatic correspondences between graphemes and their phonemes (Goswami, 1994; Seymour et al., 2003) and thus it seems logical to suggest that beginning readers should be taught a range of grain sizes rather than focusing solely on the level of the phoneme.

There is now a considerable body of evidence to suggest that no one method of teaching children to read is superior to any other method (Landerl, 2000; Spencer and Hanley, 2003; Torgerson et al., 2006; Walton et al., 2001) and there is no empirical evidence to justify Rose’s recommendation that the teaching of reading in England should rely on synthetic phonics. Much of his evidence was anecdotal (Wyse and Goswami, 2008) rather than empirical and formulating policy on the basis of anecdotal evidence lacks sufficient rigour to justify its implementation.

However, although the evidence on the most effective approach to teaching phonics is inconclusive, there is clear evidence that a systematic approach to phonics produces gains in word reading and spelling (Torgerson et al., 2006) irrespective of whether analytic or synthetic phonics is used. Walton et al. (2001) concluded from their research that, as long as tuition was systematic, then both approaches (synthetic or analytic) lead to similar gains and this finding is supported by a range of studies (Landerl, 2000; Spencer and Hanley, 2003; Torgerson et al., 2006; Walton et al., 2001).

Discussion and conclusion: an alternative assessment battery

Teaching and assessing reading

Approaches to teaching and assessing reading have moved from a psycholinguistic model to a cognitive model. The National Literacy Strategy in England

(DfEE, 1998) advocated the searchlights model of teaching reading. This framework enabled teachers to select different strategies (phonics, grammatical, contextual and graphic) for developing the skill of word recognition. As this framework made phonics an optional strategy, Rose (2006) recommended that this model of teaching reading be reconstructed into the Simple View of Reading (SVOR) which was developed by Gough and Tunmer in the 1980s (Gough and Tunmer, 1986). This model separates out the skills of reading development into word recognition and linguistic comprehension. Both skills are necessary for effective reading and teachers can use the framework to assess children's development in each skill to determine what kind of intervention children need.

The separation of the skills is useful in that the SVOR demonstrates that different approaches to teaching are required to develop word recognition skills and linguistic comprehension. By identifying linguistic comprehension as an essential element of reading development the SVOR highlights the importance of oral language and language comprehension in the process of reading development.

Despite its significant strengths the SVOR does not break down the sub-components of word recognition or linguistic comprehension. It is useful in terms of helping teachers to identify whether or not these skills are secure and more generally informing the approach to intervention. However, it does not break down the development of word recognition into aspects such as the development of visual discrimination, visual memory, auditory discrimination and development within phonological awareness. Additionally, it does not identify the elements which make up linguistic comprehension. The phonics screening check has placed an emphasis on assessing children's word recognition skills through decoding print at the level of the smallest unit of sound (synthetic phonics) and therefore this is the strategy which teachers use to assess word recognition skills in the SVOR.

There is clear evidence that a systematic approach to phonics produces gains in word reading and spelling. However, there is inconclusive evidence to suggest that no one method of teaching children to read is superior to any other method. This has significant implications for educational practice, particularly in relation to assessment of word recognition skills. Given that no single instrument can assess all the aspects which need to be examined by practitioners, schools should develop an assessment battery which assesses children's knowledge and skills in reading development. If the skills of blending and word recognition are not developing through synthetic phonics, schools should consider teaching children analytic phonics through a systematic approach. If the approach to teaching phonics changes, schools will also need to develop an alternative assessment battery which matches the grain sizes that are being taught. To use a colloquial phrase, there is little point in flogging a dead horse. If children fail to learn to read through synthetic phonics it is

counterproductive to continue with this approach. Analytic phonics is based on larger grain sizes of sound and the assessment battery would therefore need to include rimes. Continually assessing struggling readers using an assessment tool which is based on synthetic phonics will potentially damage children's self-concept.

Additionally, given that children with dyslexia and autistic-spectrum conditions often rely on visual strategies, more research is needed on the effectiveness of systematic phonics instruction compared to whole word methods for these learners. Although it must be acknowledged that whole word methods do not give learners strategies for identifying new words, it is likely that one size does not fit all. These learners may require a different approach to teaching them how to read and hence a different form of assessment.

It is essential that children who are not secure in word recognition skills by the age of 7 receive some additional and systematic form of intervention to support their reading development. Whether schools adopt a different type of phonics, or indeed a phonics approach at all, should be a question of professional judgement and depends largely on the specific needs of the individual child. In these cases, it might be more appropriate for schools to develop a different assessment battery which assesses children's skills in auditory attention, auditory discrimination, visual discrimination and visual memory. These pre-reading skills form the basis of reading development.

The skill of word recognition requires both auditory and visual discrimination skills. Children need to discriminate visually between the shapes of graphemes and words in addition to enunciating sounds. They also need to develop the skill of committing a grapheme or a whole word to their memory. Children with poor short term memories may struggle to retrieve information from their memory and this will impede their development in word recognition. Developing visual skills, including the development of visual memory, might be necessary even if auditory skills are secure. An assessment battery which assesses visual discrimination might include, for example, whether children are able to visually discriminate the odd one out from a set of objects. This skill could developmentally be assessed using photographs, line drawing or silhouettes in that sequence. The skill of visual memory could be assessed in relation to whether children are able to recall two objects which are shown then subsequently hidden from the child. The range of objects could gradually be extended and then finally the skill of visual sequential memory could be assessed to identify whether children are able to memorise the objects and their corresponding order within a set. All of these skill are pre-requisite skills for reading.

The skill of blending at phoneme level (phonemic awareness) is developmentally quite an advanced skill. A focus on assessing phonemic awareness

might not target the core areas of deficit. It is possible that poor phonemic awareness is evident because *phonological awareness* is insufficiently developed. Phonological awareness includes an awareness of whole words, syllables and rimes. These are larger grain sizes than phonemes but from a developmental perspective it is easier for children to process larger grain sizes before moving on to the smallest units of sound (i.e. phonemes). Children who are struggling to process sound at the phoneme level need to be assessed on their ability to process larger grain sizes in order to determine whether they need intervention in the area of phonological awareness. Developmentally the skills which contribute to phonological awareness include compound word blending and segmenting, syllable blending and segmenting and onset and rime blending and segmenting. This is a logical order for skills progression. After onset and rime blending and segmenting has been established it is then possible to focus on phoneme blending and segmenting.

Phillips, Kelly and Symes (2013) have identified specific skills which need to be assessed in order to determine whether children have reading difficulties. These skills are grouped under broader categories which are summarised below:

Decoding: grapheme-phoneme correspondence; regular and irregular word reading; non-word reading.

Behavioural: passage reading – fluency and comprehension.

Cognitive: short-term memory; working memory and phonological awareness (blending and segmenting).

Reasoning: verbal and non-verbal reasoning.

Processing: auditory processing; visual processing; speed of processing.

Phillips, Kelly and Symes, 2013

This framework for assessment could provide a more comprehensive assessment of the components of reading development and would more usefully inform the correct approach to intervention than the phonics screening check which assesses only the skill of decoding. However, it could be argued that the skills of developing phonological awareness should be sub-divided into compound word blending and segmenting, syllable blending and segmenting, onset and rime blending and segmenting and phoneme blending and segmenting. Additionally, the skill of visual processing should be sub-divided into the component skills of visual attention, visual discrimination, visual memory and visual sequential memory.

An effective assessment battery in reading should include an assessment of the pre-reading skills identified above. It should include the development of auditory and visual discrimination, phonological awareness and visual memory. It is only through developing a more detailed assessment battery which assesses children's pre-reading skills that teachers will then be able to target the

teaching to match the area of need for those children whose word reading skills are not secure by the age of 7. Within each of these areas there are sub-component skills which need to be assessed. It is possible that intervention through a phonics-only approach will compound a sense of failure and result in teaching which is not developmentally appropriate. Different types of teaching and more comprehensive assessment batteries need to be developed to address different stages of development in reading. Given the inconclusive evidence in relation to synthetic phonics, an assessment tool which only assesses children's skills in this aspect of phonics, such as the phonics screening check, is not fit purpose.

Although this suggested assessment battery may usefully support teachers in identifying deficits in pre-reading skills it does not capture the complex process of learning to read. Research has consistently indicated that the effective teaching of reading uses a balance of phonics and meaning-focused approaches to teach children to read (Pressley et al., 2001; Taylor and Pearson, 2002, Hall, 2013). Linguistic comprehension is critically important to reading development and this is developed through access to a broad and rich language curriculum. The role of oral language in reading development has been highlighted by Clemens et al. (2016) who have emphasised that early language skills form a building block for subsequent reading development, including the development of phonological and phonemic awareness. They have also emphasised the importance of vocabulary knowledge in facilitating reading comprehension (Clemens et al., 2016). A comprehensive assessment battery would therefore need to break down the composite skills of linguistic comprehension as well as identifying the component skills of visual attention, visual discrimination, phonological awareness and phonemic awareness in order to provide teachers with diagnostic information which would inform their teaching.

Given the above discussion, a suggested assessment battery for assessing reading development might be presented as shown in Table 1.

It is anticipated that this suggested framework will provide a starting point for discussion and debate amongst the academic community. Whilst it is acknowledged that elements of reading development may not have been captured in this framework, nevertheless the battery of assessment tasks suggested here offers an approach to assessing reading which acknowledges children's development in reading. This is in stark contrast to the phonics screening check which assesses only the skill of decoding, thus neglecting the sub-component skills that contribute to the development of decoding. It is anticipated that academics will debate this model and recommend that elements be added or removed.

Table 1: Possible assessment battery for assessing reading development

Skills	Sub-component skills	Possible assessment tasks
Visual skills	Visual Processing	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Visual attention -Visual discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Looking at an object -Odd one out activities from a set of objects. Then progress to miniature objects, photographs, line drawings and silhouettes. Sorting and matching activities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Visual memory -Visual sequential memory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kim's Game Kim's Game
Vocabulary development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Understanding everyday vocabulary -Noun vocabulary -Verb vocabulary -Abstract vocabulary e.g. adverbs, adjectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language games
Phonological Awareness	Auditory Processing	Listening games
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -compound word blending and segmenting -syllable blending and segmenting and speed of processing -Phoneme-grapheme correspondence and speed of processing -onset and rime blending and segmenting and speed of processing -consonant-vowel-consonant blending and segmenting where vowels and consonants are digraphs -consonant-vowel-consonant blending and segmenting (real and non-words) including speed of processing 	

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Skills	Sub-component skills	Possible assessment tasks
	-Reading irregular words and speed of processing	
Phonological awareness	Sound identification -awareness of rhyme -detection of rhyme -generation of rhyme -initial phoneme identification -final phoneme identification -medial phoneme identification -All through the word phoneme identification	Rhyming games
Phonological awareness	Rhythm -keep a steady beat -copy simple rhythms -syllable awareness -Identify number of syllables in words	Clapping a beat Clapping/tapping a rhythm Clapping out words Counting syllables in words
Fluency (passage reading)	-Fluency -Comprehension	Passage reading and responding to questions about the text Miscue analysis for identifying errors and strategies that children are using.

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CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The content analysis conducted in section 1.4 demonstrated that the ITT Core Content Framework [CCF] (DfE, 2019) omits important knowledge that pre-service teachers need to be able to advance social justice in schools. This is because content relating to matters of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and disability is not included as mandatory content which pre-service teachers must study. The omission of content which directly addresses matters of social justice in the CCF is concerning given that education should play a fundamental role in transforming pupils' attitudes and advancing social justice (Mayer et al., 2017).

The research questions outlined in section 1.9 focus on identifying the problems with the CCF and the development of an alternative ITE curriculum which more effectively addresses matters of social justice. The research outputs that have been presented will inform the development of an alternative curriculum framework which is presented in this chapter. This curriculum framework is designed to address the omissions in the CCF which were identified in section 1.4.

The transformative paradigm has already been outlined in section 2.4. As a research framework it requires researchers to make 'an explicit connection ... between the process and outcomes of research and furtherance of a social justice agenda' (Mertens, 2007, p. 216). Researchers working within the transformative paradigm must take seriously the implications of their research, beyond publication or dissemination of findings, and determine how their research improves the lives of the individuals and communities that they are researching (Phelps, 2021). The proposed curriculum framework which is outlined in sections 4.9 and 4.10 of this chapter aligns with the transformative paradigm. It directly aims to educate pre-service

teachers about the history of oppression and discrimination, and it introduces curriculum content related to social justice themes. In addition, through embedding social justice into teacher education, with the aim of furthering social justice in schools through positioning pre-service teachers as researchers, the proposed curriculum is designed to generate practical actions that will improve the lives of individuals with minoritised identities. As such, it is designed to generate innovative approaches to advancing social justice through classroom projects which are designed to transform pupils' attitudes about matters of social justice.

This section presents the proposed teacher education curriculum. This curriculum addresses key content which is not included in the CCF including teacher identity, mental health, social justice and inclusion. The curriculum is divided into three elements. The first strand is the curriculum which is taught in the university. The second strand is the curriculum which is delivered by mentors in schools. The third strand is the curriculum which is taught to the mentors to enable them to deliver the second strand.

4.2 Teacher identity

Literature on teacher identity was covered in Chapter 2. Paper 12 demonstrates the lack of alignment between new teachers' personal identities and the socially assigned identity of the good teacher. Some of the participants in this study had, even at this very early stage in their careers, been 'de-professionalised' and 're-professionalised' (Seddon, 1997, p.98). They had recognised that, to survive in the profession, they needed to subscribe to the discourse of performativity by focusing all their energies on raising pupils' academic performance. Those who held firm with their personal values as educators had begun to question whether they would remain in teaching due to the mismatch between their personal educational values and the type of teacher that they were expected to be. Some participants had internalised and accepted the socially assigned identity without question and had displaced their values that

they previously held. However, one of the participants (Fran) was able to subvert, reject and recast the dominant political versions of what it meant to be a teacher, thus enabling her to comply with the dominant discourse of the good teacher while also teaching in a way that remained true to her personal values and beliefs. She was effectively able to author her own teacher identity by intertwining her personal values with the dominant discourses which underpinned notions of effective teaching.

The inclusion of content on teacher identity into the teacher education curriculum will empower more teachers to subvert the dominant political discourses of what it means to be a good teacher. Being accountable for children's academic attainment had caused some participants to re-think their teacher identities and participants who had displaced their personal values and internalised the assigned identity of the effective teacher were not able to intertwine their personal teacher values with the assigned identity of the neoliberal teacher. Including content of teacher identity into teacher education programmes will better support beginning teachers to intertwine the different identities.

4.3 Teacher mental health

Paper 1 and Paper 2 each focus on teacher wellbeing and mental health. However, wellbeing as a construct is often ill defined and is rarely defined in the context of teachers (Cann et al., 2020). In the body of literature, wellbeing has been conceptualised as a multidimensional construct with researchers identifying various associated dimensions. These have included cognitive, physical, mental and social wellbeing (Viac & Fraser, 2020), relationships, sense of purpose and autonomy (Ryff, 1989) and optimism and resilience (Huppert & So, 2013). Both papers have identified strategies that participants adopted to improve their resilience, mental health and wellbeing. It is crucial to include these strategies into the curriculum for pre-service

teachers so that they are better prepared for dealing with the personal and professional challenges that they will encounter both in their personal lives and careers.

The general body of literature fails to distinguish between the factors that affect teacher wellbeing and the dimensions of teacher wellbeing (Cann et al., 2020). In addition, existing research focuses on teacher stress (Education Support, 2020; Greenberg, 2016; McCallum et al., 2017; OECD, 2019), with high workload being viewed as the main contributor of teacher stress (Bonne & MacDonald, 2019; Wylie & MacDonald, 2020). Research also demonstrates the link between lower teacher wellbeing and lower emotional intelligence (Hoglund et al., 2015). In addition, low teacher wellbeing can have a detrimental impact on performance and lead to absenteeism and attrition (Bianchi et al., 2015). There is also research which associates low teacher wellbeing with impaired relationships with students and impaired teaching (Cann et al., 2020). However, despite this body of work, there is a paucity of research which addresses the relationship between teacher mental health and student learning specifically.

Both papers (Paper 1 and Paper 2) highlight the importance of prioritising teacher mental health and wellbeing. The problem of teacher stress is pervasive. It is evident across all sectors of education and across countries (Gray et al., 2017) and results in burnout and lower job satisfaction. Teachers are consistently reported to experience an increased risk of developing mental ill health (Stansfeld et al., 2011; Kidger et al., 2016). Teacher wellbeing is influenced by factors such as life satisfaction and personal happiness (hedonic perspective) and positive psychological functioning. Teachers can demonstrate positive psychological functioning when they are able to form good interpersonal relationships with others, have a sense of autonomy and competence and when they have opportunities for personal growth (Harding et al., 2019). School climate influences teachers' daily experiences in school. It is

shaped by the school ethos which is established by the senior leadership team. Limiting teacher agency can result in diminished teacher wellbeing, which detrimentally impacts on teacher performance (Beck et al., 2011).

Research demonstrates that multiple factors impact on teacher wellbeing, including school climate (Gray et al., 2017). A negative school climate can lead to high rates of teacher absenteeism and staff turnover (Grayson and Alvarez, 2008). Evidence also suggests that there is an association between school climate and teacher and student wellbeing (Gray et al., 2017). Additionally, research also indicates that a positive school climate increases student academic achievement (MacNeil, Prater and Busch, 2009). It is possible that this is because a positive school climate results in better teacher engagement, higher levels of commitment and increased staff and student self-esteem and wellbeing (Gray et al., 2017). Research even suggests that a positive school climate can mitigate the negative effects of socio-economic contexts on students' academic success (Thapa et al., 2013). It would therefore appear that a negative school climate detrimentally impacts on the wellbeing of both teachers and students and has a negative impact on student attainment. This was a key theme that arose in Paper 1. Positive teacher-student relationships support children and young people to be mentally healthy (Kidger et al., 2012; Plenty et al., 2014). These relationships help students to feel more connected to their school (Harding et al., 2019) and improve student wellbeing (Aldridge and McChesney, 2018) through fostering a sense of belonging. Research demonstrates that teachers with poor mental health may find it more difficult to develop and model positive relationships with their students (Kidger et al., 2010; Jennings and Greenberg, 2009). In addition, higher rates of teacher absence can impact on the quality of teacher-student relationships (Jamal et al., 2013). This is because relationships are fostered through human connection.

Research demonstrates that teachers with poor mental health may have less belief that they can support the wellbeing and mental health of their students (Sisask et al., 2014), particularly if they are struggling with their own wellbeing and mental health. Poor teacher wellbeing could therefore be problematic for student wellbeing (Harding et al., 2019). In addition, research demonstrates that teachers who demonstrate 'presenteeism' find it more difficult to manage their classrooms effectively (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009) and are less likely to develop positive classroom and behaviour management strategies (Harding et al., 2019). Presenteeism is evident when teachers with poor wellbeing and mental health continue to work. The quality of their work is reduced, and this affects the quality of their relationships with their students (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009), student wellbeing (Harding et al., 2019) and overall teacher performance (Beck et al., 2011; Jain et al., 2013). Research demonstrates that better teacher wellbeing results in fewer cases of students presenting with psychological difficulties (Harding et al., 2019). There is also an association between lower teacher depression and better student wellbeing (Harding et al., 2019). In addition, there is a link between teacher presenteeism and student wellbeing and psychological difficulties (Harding et al., 2019). Thus, there appears to be a causal relationship between teacher and student mental health (Harding et al., 2019). There is a consensus in the literature that positive wellbeing in teachers is influenced by school climate and that school climate also impacts on student wellbeing and attainment. There is also a consensus that positive teacher wellbeing enhances the quality of teacher-student relationships, student wellbeing and teacher performance. However, there is limited direct evidence of a causal relationship between teacher wellbeing and student attainment and thus, this is an area for further research. There is also a paucity of literature which examines student perspectives on how the mental health of their teachers impacts on their learning and progress. This small-scale study (Paper 1) therefore extends the existing research on teacher wellbeing by examining the perspectives of pupils on how they are affected by the mental health of their teachers.

It is important that pre-service teachers understand ways in which their wellbeing and mental health can adversely affect their teaching. The ITE curriculum should address this, but also address the ways in which new teachers can also sustain good wellbeing and mental health. Fewer studies have specifically addressed the factors which enable teachers to flourish (Cann et al., 2020), although self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) does offer some insight. I have used self-determination theory in Paper 4. This theory emphasises the important role that relatedness, autonomy and competence have on human motivation and flourishing.

In addition to self-determination theory, I have also drawn on Greenfield's (2015) model of teacher resilience in Paper 2 and Paper 4. Essentially, this model offers an ecological perspective on teacher resilience. Rather than viewing resilience as an innate trait, it assumes that resilience is relational, while also acknowledging that some individual factors do influence teacher resilience. These individual characteristics include sense of hope and purpose and teacher self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy is best understood as a teacher's judgement of their capabilities in relation to increasing student engagement and learning (Capone & Petrillo, 2020). Low teacher self-efficacy is also associated with burnout, reduced job satisfaction and poor wellbeing (Capone & Petrillo, 2020). However, Greenfield's model (2015) assumes that teachers operate within a series of nested micro- and macro-systems, each of which impact on the resilience of individual teachers. These include relationships with students, school leaders and access to support networks from friends, family members and colleagues. Teacher resilience is supported when teachers can access these social support networks. In addition, Greenfield's model assumes that the level of challenge that is present within teachers' own professional contexts can also impact on resilience and where professional challenges are significant, this can adversely impact on resilience. Macro policies also impact on the resilience of individual teachers (Greenfield, 2015). This level within the ecological framework includes the introduction of policies in recent years which have resulted in the

marketisation of education, including discourses of performativity (Ball, 2003) which have had a devastating impact on both teacher identity and autonomy (Ball, 2003).

It is important that the teacher education curriculum introduces pre-service teachers to strategies which will support them to maintain good mental health and wellbeing and to the concept of teacher resilience. It is also important that the teacher education curriculum addresses the theories which have been outlined in this section.

4.4 Student mental health

My published work (Papers 3, 5 and 6) addresses the problem of children and young people's mental health. In recent years, there has been an increased expectation that schools should take a greater role in identifying the signs of mental ill-health and assume responsibility for delivering school-based mental health interventions (Shelemy, Harvey & Waite, 2019). Chapter 1 has outlined the context in relation to mental health and therefore addressing the mental health crisis in children and young people must be an urgent policy priority. In Paper 3 I have critically analysed government policy in relation to mental health. I have argued that the policy reflects a clinical discourse which only addresses the symptoms of mental ill-health and not the causes of it. I have argued that a systemic response is required, rather than interventions at the level of the individual, to address the underlying causes of mental ill-health. It is important that pre-service teachers understand government policies which impact on schools. University teacher education programmes play an important role in developing the skill of critical analysis and therefore including policy critiques, such as the critique I have presented in Paper 3, serve an important function within university teacher education programmes.

Paper 5 is an evaluation of an educational mental health intervention. The study found that the use of peer mentoring in physical education increased students' physical activity, improved confidence and was an effective strategy for supporting students' social, emotional and mental health needs. Paper 6 was an evaluation of a community-led mental health intervention in schools. The evaluation demonstrated that the intervention (a mental health curriculum) led to statistically significant improvements in students' mental health literacy and non-statistically significant improvements in overall wellbeing. University teacher education programmes should introduce pre-service teachers to the research that underpins specific pedagogical approaches such as the one's outlined in these two papers. Beginning teachers need to know which mental health interventions exist and which are likely to be successful and the studies outlined in Papers 5 and 6 present the evidence for the interventions that are described. Building research evidence into the teacher education curriculum for all aspects of teaching will ensure that pre-service teachers know and understand the evidence that underpins the approaches they are using in the classroom.

Although pre-service teachers need to understand their role in supporting children and young people's mental health, mental health is currently not a mandatory part of an ITE programme (Shelemy et al., 2019; Shepherd et al., 2013). Previous research has highlighted the importance of professional development for teachers in this area (Graham et al., 2011; Moon et al., 2017) but despite this, mental health is not embedded into the teachers' standards (DfE, 2013) or the CCF (DfE, 2019). Research demonstrates that professional development for teachers should focus on developing teachers' understanding of practical strategies which can directly be applied in classrooms and Papers 5 and 6 outline some evidence-based strategies which teachers can use directly in their classrooms with their students. These mental health interventions should therefore be a component of the initial teacher education curriculum.

4.5 Social justice in teacher education

Paper 7 and Paper 9 both address a strand of social justice by focusing on LGBTQ+ inclusion. Current policy frameworks for ITE (DfE, 2019; Ofsted 2020) do not require student teachers to understand critical issues relating to inclusion. Programmes of teacher education should explore the contested nature of terminology, such as inclusion and social justice and engage students in critical debate about the effects of social categorisations and the socially constructed origins of categories, such as disability and gender. Crucially, content which addresses social class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and disability is absent from both the teacher education curriculum and the National Curriculum for schools. This lack of emphasis at policy level on matters of social justice means that teachers are not adequately prepared to plan and teach social justice projects in schools. The lack of visibility of matters of social justice in the teacher education curriculum also means that pre-service teachers with minoritised identities are not likely to experience a sense of belonging on university campuses and they may conceal their identities when working in schools. If inclusion is not given adequate attention within teacher education programmes, this offers little hope for advancing inclusion and social justice within society due to the transformative effects of education. Pre-service teachers therefore need adequate preparation to give them the confidence to address matters of social justice within schools.

The emphasis on raising levels of attainment in schools has resulted in the prioritisation of limited and restricted pedagogies that produce technical teachers (Peiser et al., 2019) above pedagogies that shape teachers' attitudes in relation to inclusion and social justice. Experimentation through trial and error is critical to teacher development, yet mentors often promote pedagogical approaches which are safe ('technical') and are likely to lead to good academic outcomes for learners (Jaspers et al., 2014). The need for teachers to raise academic standards has resulted in marginalising inclusive and socially-just pedagogies which might potentially transform students' attitudes, values, and beliefs about inclusion (Peiser et

al., 2019). At the same time, school-based mentors are trapped in a discourse of performativity (Ball, 2003) which restricts their ability to develop socially-just pedagogies in their own classrooms (Hobson & Malderez, 2013). Teacher preparation courses should therefore place matters of inclusion and social justice at the heart of the teacher education curriculum.

It has been argued that LGBTQ+ identities and experiences have been marginalised in teacher education programmes and that this is synonymous with the 'othering' of those with non-normative gender identities and sexualities (Dykes and Delpont, 2018). International studies have highlighted the dilemmas that LGBTQ+ student teachers face. For example, in Australia research has drawn attention to the dilemma that student teachers experience when deciding whether to disclose their personal identities (Robinson and Ferfolja, 2008).

Research has found that initial teacher education courses do not prepare student teachers well for teaching and managing sexuality-related issues in the classroom (Lee & Carpenter, 2015). In this study, student teachers were advised by tutors and mentors not to bring their personal identities into the classroom, and they anticipated negative reactions from other teachers in school if they decided to be open about their sexualities and gender identities (Lee and Carpenter, 2015). This illustrates the heteronormative discourses which affect teacher education and schools. It has been argued that sexuality is a problematic terrain in education due to discourses of safeguarding and child protection (Robinson et al., 2013). This results in a climate of suspicion which marginalises LGBTQ+ pre-service teachers. Research demonstrates that minority groups may conceal their sexuality and gender identities due to internalised stigma (Meyer, 2003) and this can result in psychological distress. Some student teachers who identify as LGBTQ+ may choose to adopt the strategies of 'passing' off (Goffman, 1963, p. 73) as heterosexual and 'covering' up (Goffman, 1963, p. 102) their sexual

and gender identities due to fear of rejection or discrimination. If LGBTQ+ content was visible in the teacher education curriculum, then this issue may not occur.

Paper 9 presents a strong rationale for teaching LGBTQ+ content in schools. The paper is written to support pre-service and beginning teachers to articulate a strong rationale for why LGBTQ+ content must be included in the school curriculum. As a policy critique, this paper should be included in the teacher education curriculum to provide the basis of a rationale for undertaking this work in schools. The paper will help them to defend the work they are undertaking in schools, particularly if they encounter resistance. In addition, the paper provides reasoned arguments for including LGBTQ+ content in the school curriculum. By including this content in the curriculum for pre-service teachers, both pre-service and beginning teachers will be more effectively prepared to be able to include LGBTQ+ content into the school curriculum.

While there is evidence which suggests that schools have become more 'LGBTQ+ friendly' (McCormack and Anderson, 2010), largely as a result of equality legislation, evidence also suggests that homophobia is used in schools to police the normative boundaries of sexuality and gender identity (Edwards et al., 2016). Recent evidence of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in schools in England from Stonewall (Bradlow et al., 2017) indicates that the policing of heterosexuality is still evident in schools today, even though it is assumed that attitudes towards sexuality and gender diversity have shifted. The prevalence of prejudice-based bullying in school can make it difficult for both students and teachers to disclose their sexual and gender identities and perpetuate a culture of heteronormativity.

Paper 8 focuses on the experiences of LGBTQ+ teachers. The paper presents the narratives of four gay teachers. Some of the teachers in the study were forced to separate their personal

and professional identities and, for various reasons, it was not possible for them to intertwine their personal and professional identities. In contrast, some participants used their sexuality as a vehicle for advancing social justice and they used their platform as a teacher or school leader to integrate LGBTQ+ content into the school curriculum. The teacher education curriculum therefore needs to address matters of social justice (race, disability, sexuality and gender) on various levels. First, it should enable pre-service teachers to articulate a strong rationale for why it is important to include aspects of social justice within the school curriculum. Second, it should empower pre-service teachers to undertake specific projects within schools and in classrooms with students. Finally, it should include specific content on the historical and current policy contexts in relation to these aspects of social justice, including the legal duties of public organisations to protect individuals with minority identities from discrimination. In addition, all pre-service teachers need to understand the implications of the Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 for schools.

Wells (2018) has argued that it is important to critically interrogate the discourses and discursive practices which create 'otherness'. Research on the experiences of LGBTQ+ teachers is mainly based in the United States (Endo et al., 2010) and the United Kingdom (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009; Gray, 2013; Rudoe, 2010). Research has also been conducted in Ireland (Neary, 2013), the Nordic countries (Røthing, 2008) and Australia (Ferfolja, 2009; Ferfolja and Hopkins, 2013). The research suggests that LGBTQ+ teachers must negotiate tricky private and professional boundaries which can be challenging (Connell, 2015; Endo et al., 2010; Gray, 2013; Hardie, 2012; Rudoe, 2010). Some choose to completely separate their sexual and gender identities from their professional identity as a teacher, others try to weave their gender or sexual identities into their teaching and some leave the profession completely. Connell (2015) uses the terms *splitters*, *knitters* and *quitters* to describe these different types of teacher. Literature demonstrates that LGBTQ+ teachers are often viewed with suspicion (Ferfolja and Hopkins, 2013; Rudoe, 2010). They occupy a difficult terrain as a result of

safeguarding discourses (Gray et al., 2016; Rudoë, 2010). Colleagues and parents may be suspicious of their motives and may question their desire to work with children and young people. They may be accused of promoting their own agenda and subjected to abuse. Piper and Sikes (2010) have highlighted that LGBTQ+ teachers are more vulnerable than other teachers to false accusations. However, these perspectives position LGBTQ+ teachers within a victimised framework. There is need to counter this by viewing them as teachers with agency (Rudoë, 2010) who can resist dominant heteronormative discourses (Ferfolja & Hopkins, 2013; Harris, 2013) and practices which create 'otherness'.

Research suggests that non-normative sexual and gender identities are positioned within schools within a heteronormative discourse which vilifies them whilst at the same time protecting them from harm (Gray et al., 2016). Røthing (2008) uses the term 'homotolerance' to refer to the way in which some schools tolerate LGBTQ+ by preventing them from coming to harm but refuse to positively affirm their non-normative identities. Schools which prevent prejudice-based bullying but do not proactively teach LGBTQ+ content arguably tolerate but do not positively affirm difference. If teachers work within a climate where LGBTQ+ identities are tolerated rather than celebrated, this does not create optimum conditions for students and teachers to be their authentic selves.

4.6 Inclusion in teacher education

In his article on pastoral care, Philpott (2015) makes a critical contribution to the field of teacher education. Philpott's work is summarised in Paper 7. He argues that schools need to give more consideration to the pastoral needs of student teachers during school placements and that these needs require a *proactive* rather than a *reactive* response. Philpott (2015) argues that systems of pastoral support for student teachers need to be proactive rather than reactive in order to prevent 'casualties' (p.15) from occurring. He argues that there is need for school

mentors to predict when student teachers may require pastoral support so that systems of support do not reflect a model of 'first aid' (p.15). Philpott highlights the need for providers of teacher education to give greater emphasis to the non-cognitive aspects of teaching so that student teachers are supported to develop coping strategies to help them manage stress, anxiety and to develop their resilience. In Paper 7, I argued that teacher education needs to be more proactive in meeting the needs of pre-service teachers with minority identities, including those who have disabilities and those who are LGBTQ+. I drew on my own research on dyslexia in this chapter to identify the implications for the mentor curriculum and for mentoring practice in schools to enable teacher education providers to meet the needs of dyslexic pre-service teachers more effectively. In addition, I also highlighted the specific challenges that LGBTQ+ pre-service teachers might experience, and I outlined some implications for the curriculum in initial teacher education.

Philpott's (2015) emphasis on pastoral care has implications for the teacher education curriculum and my research on dyslexia (Papers 10, 11) highlights implications for teacher education and more specifically for mentor development. These papers provide fascinating insights into the experiences of pre-service teachers with dyslexia. The data in both articles highlights experiences of discrimination during school-based placements by mentors and the benefits of being a teacher with dyslexia. The data in both articles illustrates the discourse of ableism which infiltrates teaching and negatively impacts on teachers and children with disabilities. First, the data have implications for the design of the mentor curriculum. Mentors need to understand their legal duties in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and be supported to design placements which include reasonable adjustments for pre-service teachers with dyslexia. Second, there are implications for the planning of placements so that mentors have a better understanding about the needs of the pre-service teacher prior to the start of placements. Finally, the teacher education curriculum in the university should include specific

strategies which dyslexic pre-service teachers can utilise during school placements so that barriers to achievement are removed.

4.7 Developing critically informed teachers

Most courses of teacher education are taught in universities and university education plays an important role in promoting critical intellectual thinking (Brown et al., 2016). Teacher education courses should support pre-service teachers to understand the key research from which to build an evidence base (Beauchamp et al., 2013) so that they can think critically about educational policies. In my published work (Papers 3, 9, 13) I have critically analysed educational policies using academic research and theory to challenge policy. Paper 13 presents the academic research which demonstrates that no one approach to teaching phonics is superior, but the CCF, the teachers' standards and the Ofsted inspection framework for ITE all mandate the teaching of synthetic phonics and do not permit ITE providers to teach alternative approaches. However, I have argued in Paper 13 that a 'one size fits all' approach to early reading development is not appropriate because the evidence which I have presented in the paper does not support the use of a single approach. The exclusion of alternative approaches to reading development is likely to leave pre-service teachers frustrated when they subsequently realise that synthetic phonics does not work for every child and when this occurs, they need a wider range of strategies to turn to in their pedagogical toolkits. It is therefore important that pre-service teachers know the government policy, understand the academic research which supports the policy and the limitations of the research that supports the policy. It is also important that pre-service teachers know the research which underpins alternative approaches so that their practices are evidence-informed, even if they go against government policy.

It is important that the teacher education curriculum introduces pre-service teachers to current educational policies, but it is equally important that they can compare these policies against the research evidence so that they can develop a strong personal teacher identity (Hulme, 2016). This is because a strong teacher identity can support teacher retention and can support teachers to navigate policy changes (Parsons et al., 2017).

4.8 Designing a teacher education curriculum

Designing a teacher education curriculum is complex because the curriculum itself must include distinct but inter-related elements. Although teaching placements provide a crucial component of all teacher education programmes, learning from experience alone is limiting (Philpott, 2014). Pre-service teachers need to learn about educational research and theory and connect this with practice (Golding, 2015; Scott, 2020) and therefore, it follows that teacher education programmes must include research evidence and theory as fundamental components which support teacher development.

The component that is delivered in the university is typically taught by academics, but curriculum implementation often includes the expertise of colleagues from partnership schools. This component is often described as the theoretical component of a teacher education curriculum, but this is not an accurate description because an understanding of both theory and practice can each be developed in the university and in schools (Brown et al., 2016). The second component of teacher education is the curriculum that enables school-based mentors to carry out their responsibilities as mentors. Mentors play a crucial role in teacher development, particularly when there is a collaborative relationship between the mentor and mentee (Bradbury, 2010; Philpott, 2016). The mentor curriculum is typically led by staff from the university, but it can also be delivered by lead mentors in schools. These are mentors who have been identified as experts in teacher education. The third component is the

curriculum which is delivered by mentors in schools. During this aspect of the training, mentors will build on the knowledge that pre-service teachers have gained in the university through a variety of activities including, but not limited to, in-school tutorials led by subject and phase experts. University teacher education has always operated various models of partnerships with schools (Mutton, 2016) and school placements play a critical role in teacher learning (Britzman, 2003; Korthagen, 2010). Pre-service teachers will typically observe teaching and apply their knowledge through planning and teaching lessons.

4.9 Developing an alternative model

This section presents an alternative model for initiating discussions about important content that is missing from the CCF which should be included in a teacher education curriculum.

4.9.1 Linking the model to the research papers

Figure 2 demonstrated the connections between the different papers in relation to the broad aims of the papers. This made it possible to link papers together which addressed a common aim. Figure 3 demonstrates how each group of papers is connected to a common theme. The themes that were identified in Figure 3 were: teacher mental health; pupil mental health; social justice; educational policy and teacher identity. The proposed ITE curriculum model in Figure 4 reflects these themes.

The proposed curriculum is presented in Figures 4, 5 and 6. Figure 3 shows the broad themes which link to the papers. Figure 4 shows the curriculum in the University. Figure 5 shows the curriculum that pre-service teachers will learn in schools. Figure 6 shows the curriculum that mentors need to learn to support pre-service teachers during school placements.

4.9.2 Linking the model to the theoretical framework

The principles of the transformative paradigm have already been outlined in Chapter 2. As a research paradigm, it adopts specific ontological assumptions. Ontologically, it places central importance on the lives and experiences of marginalised individuals and communities (Mertens, 2012). It seeks to highlight experiences of oppression and discrimination (Mertens, 2019) and foster respect different cultures (Mertens, 2009; 2010a). Importantly, it seeks to foster an understanding of how the unequal distribution of power results in both privilege for some individuals and groups, and oppression for others (Mertens, 2012). The need for researchers to understand the pervasive effects of discrimination and oppression and to respect cultural histories are key principles of the transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2012) and therefore cultural competency is essential (Mertens, 2009; 2010b). In addition, researchers working within the transformative paradigm must demonstrate awareness of power issues and be prepared to interrogate how differential access to power can result in privilege (Mertens, 2012). Crucially, researchers need to be supportive and reflective activists (Wright, 2003) and work actively with communities to address issues of social justice (Downey, 2009). In addition, researchers need to build strategies into the research design which lead to an increased understanding of the history of discrimination, and they need to outline the strategies they have adopted to minimise power differentials (Mertens, 2019).

The curriculum model presented in Figure 4 requires teacher education providers to embed social justice content into the university curriculum. It will engage pre-service teachers with content on mental health, sexuality, disability, race and it could be further extended to include content on intersectionality and poverty. This curriculum will require pre-service teachers to reflect on their own viewpoints and consider why it is essential to adopt a social justice lens in teaching.

In relation to epistemology, the transformative paradigm assumes that knowledge is socially, historically and culturally situated. The curriculum models presented below will require pre-service teachers to engage critically with historical, social and cultural perspectives on disability, race, mental health, gender and sexual orientation. Although the models below do not provide additional detail on the content which underpins each strand, an example of content that might be addressed is the shifting position of disability across time from medicalised perspectives on disability, to social and critical perspectives. Understanding these theoretical lenses on disability supports the development of a strong teacher identity and theoretically frames an understanding of how and why attitudes towards disability have changed over time.

The transformative paradigm requires researchers to engage in social change to liberate marginalised and oppressed groups and individuals by improving people's lives. One way of fostering liberation and improving people's lives is through changing attitudes towards individuals with a minority status. Pre-service teachers are well-placed to shape the attitudes and values of the younger generation and therefore a crucial element of the proposed teacher education curriculum is that pre-service teachers would be positioned as agents of social change. The proposed curriculum would require them to work in schools and engage young people in social justice projects. Through their work in schools, they would be required to teach specific aspects of social justice and these projects could form the basis of their own action research using the principles of the transformative paradigm. They could design social justice projects collaboratively with people who have lived experience and they could implement a series of lessons linked to a specific social justice theme. Data could be collected during and at the end of the project and the trainees could subsequently arrange a dissemination event with the local community to support the dissemination of the social justice message to wider audiences. Projects of this nature would require pre-service teachers to actively engage in

social change and they could also include people with minority identities in lesson delivery so that children and young people can also learn from those with lived experience.

These examples illustrate how the principles of the transformative paradigm will be embedded into the proposed curriculum models that are shown in Figures 4, 5 and 6.

4.9.3 A case for including school-based curriculum models

For many years Initial Teacher Education providers in England have developed strong partnerships with schools and during the last two decades mentors in schools have worked collaboratively with universities to design the content of ITE programmes. The ITT Market Review (DfE, 2021) proposed the introduction of the role of lead mentor. The lead mentor will take greater responsibility for the design and delivery of the ITE curriculum in schools and the ITT regulatory criteria (DfE, 2022) were modified to reflect this new model of delivery which will become mandatory from 2024. From 2024, the lead mentors will be responsible for implementing aspects of the ITE curriculum in schools and universities, training school-based mentors and quality assuring placements. The ITE curriculum can therefore no longer be solely delivered in universities and providers will need to be explicit about the content that is delivered in higher education institutions and the content that is delivered by mentors in schools. A fundamental aspect of the new regulations (DfE, 2022) is that providers will be required to design, in partnership with their schools, a mentor curriculum, which provides mentors with the knowledge they need to deliver the components of the ITE curriculum which trainees will learn in schools. As a result of these changes, it is therefore necessary to present curriculum models which demonstrate which components will be learned in universities and which components will be learned in schools.

4.10 Finding themes from the grouped papers

In Chapter 3 the papers were grouped according to common broad aims (see Fig. 2). Each group of papers is also linked to a broad theme. Figure 3 shows the themes for each group of papers. These themes were used to create the proposed ITE curriculum in Figures 4, 5 and 6.

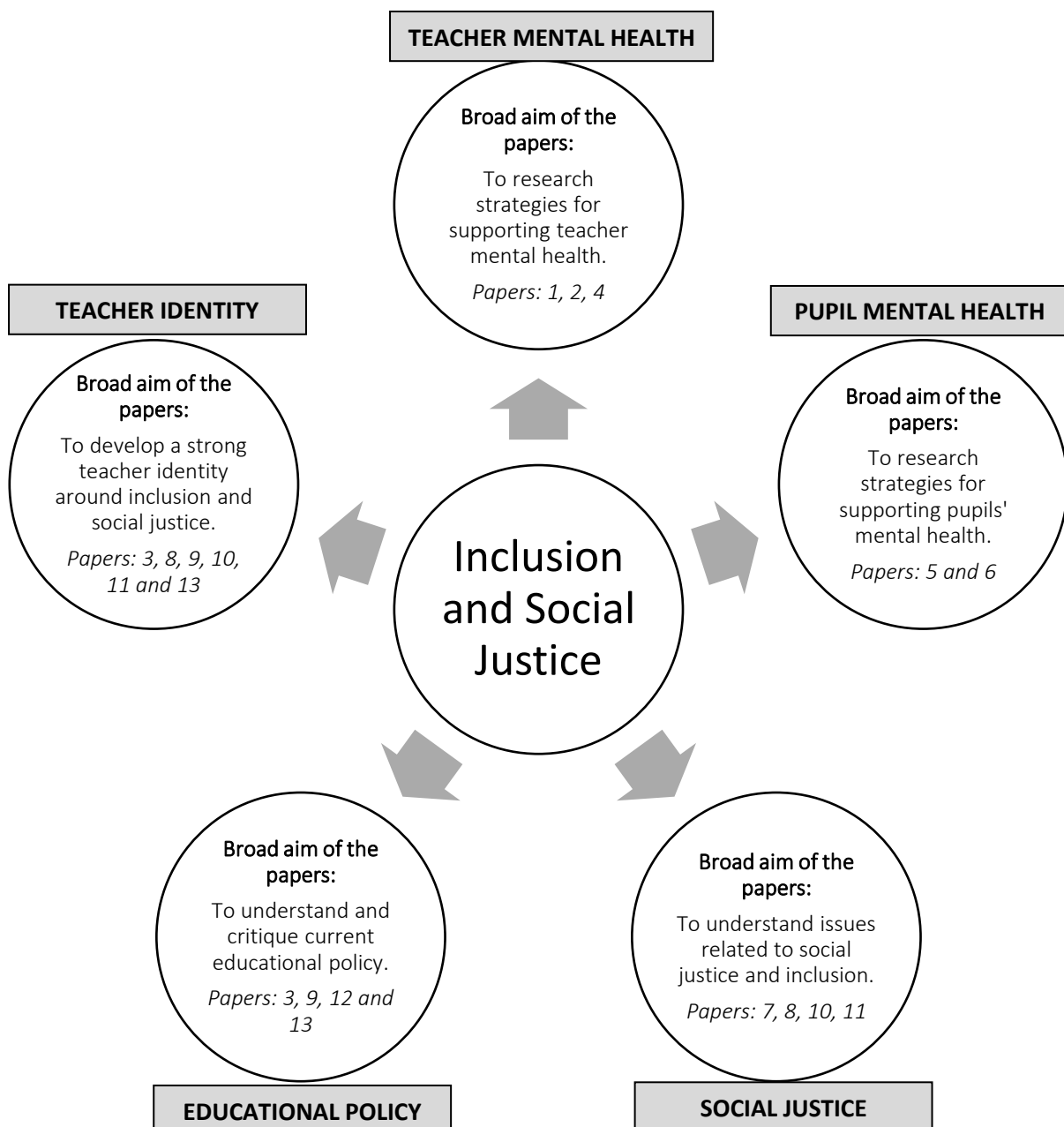


Fig. 3. Map to show how the findings link to the proposed curriculum model.

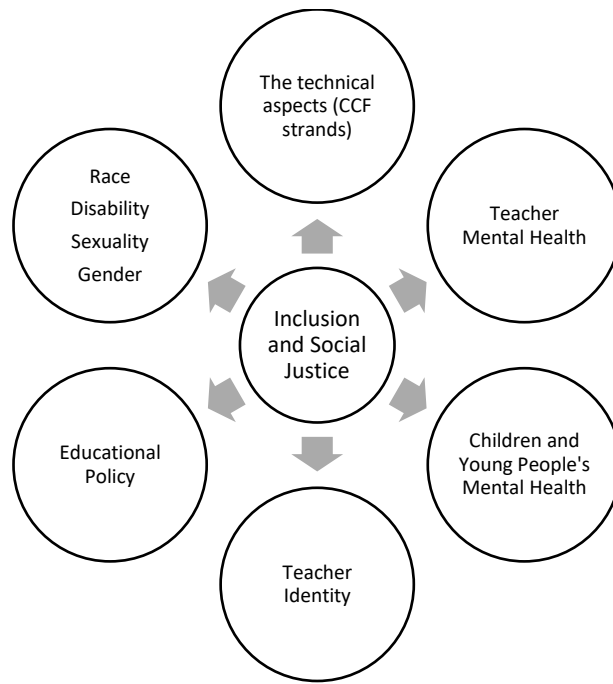


Fig. 4. The curriculum in the university



Fig. 5. The curriculum in schools



Fig. 6. The mentor curriculum

The proposed curriculum is not intended to represent everything that trainee teachers need to learn and one limitation of the model in Figure 4 is that it does not identify the precise content that teacher educators need to teach within each of the themes. The model is intended to initiate debate about the content that is lacking in the CCF, and it therefore requires further development. Other crucial aspects that are not covered in the CCF can be added to the model and examples of additional content may include how to deal with personal and professional crises during the career and how to teach concepts such as digital resilience, digital citizenship and digital literacy in a rapidly changing technological world.

4.11 Further research

The proposed curriculum models presented in Figures 4, 5 and 6 will need to be piloted on a smaller scale and evaluated before being rolled out nationally. Further research needs to be

carried out to determine the exact curriculum content that would need to underpin each of the strands of the models. This content would need to be identified in partnership with schools and sequenced logically to provide pre-service teachers with a coherent curriculum that both deepens their knowledge as they work through the curriculum, but also provides opportunities for revisiting content and consolidating knowledge.

Specific strands of social justice (for example, race, LGBTQ+, disability, or mental health) could become a focus for an intensive placement experience. These placements would need to be designed in partnership with schools and people with lived experience. In keeping with the principles of the transformative paradigm, the placements could be evaluated using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data and the perspectives of children and young people, trainees and mentors could be collected. These pilots could form the basis of research papers to demonstrate the proposed ITE curriculum in action. The evaluation of the social justice curriculum in action in schools could form the basis of future action research projects.

Black (2019) used focus groups to evaluate vignettes of possible future schools and this is one example of an approach that could be adopted in the design of the proposed ITE curriculum. The focus groups could be used as a vehicle for bringing together stakeholders with varying levels of knowledge. Within the focus group, the discussion might focus on the challenges or barriers to implementation of the proposed curriculum and identify solutions for possible futures (Black, 2019). In addition, focus groups, individual semi-structured interviews and questionnaires could be used with mentors, pre-service teachers, head teachers and academics to evaluate the curriculum in action post-implementation. The use of a mixed-methods approach to evaluation would align with the principles of the transformative paradigm.

4.12 Summary

This chapter has presented the proposed teacher education curriculum. I have drawn on my published work to justify the development of the model. Chapter 5 will conclude the thesis and summarise the contribution to knowledge.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section concludes the thesis. It summarises the key findings, identifies the contribution to knowledge and states the limitations of the research. Areas for future research are also identified.

5.2 Key findings

The research questions identified in Chapter 1 are stated below:

- What are the problems with the current government curriculum for initial teacher education?
- How can the research outputs inform the development of a teacher education curriculum?
- What are the elements of an alternative teacher education curriculum that might support pre-service teachers to address key professional challenges, including responding to diversity in the classroom?

In relation to the first research question, I argued in Chapter 1 that the CCF is reductionist because it fails to address matters of social justice and inclusion, and mental health. This results in pre-service teachers being inadequately prepared to address the day-to-day challenges of teaching and results in burnout, low job satisfaction and high rates of attrition. My research papers on mental health (Papers 1-6) demonstrate the importance of including mental health and wellbeing within the teacher education curriculum so that beginning teachers can manage their own mental health and know how to support the mental health of their students. My papers on social justice and inclusion (Papers 7-11) highlight the importance of addressing matters of social justice and inclusion both within initial teacher

education and within schools so that pre-service teachers with minoritised identities feel included and experience a sense of belonging during their training and are better prepared to meet the needs of students with diverse identities in schools.

Reductionism is also evident through the CCFs mandating of government approved approaches to support early reading development, thus ignoring counter research which indicates that no specific approach to reading development is superior and what matters is not the type of phonics being taught but that phonics is taught systematically. I synthesised the research to support this argument in Paper 13. In addition, I emphasised that specific strands of the CCF (for example how children learn, classroom practice, adaptive teaching and behaviour) are reductionist in that they ignore the academic research which suggests that alternative approaches might be more effective than those that are mandated in the CCF. In Chapter 1, I also argued that the CCF produces technical teachers rather than teachers who have a strong teacher identity. It emphasises teaching skills for pre-service teachers to master, but there is no emphasis on teacher identity within the CCF curriculum. My paper on the experiences of early career teachers (Paper 12) highlighted the mismatch between teachers' personal values and beliefs and the socially assigned identity of the 'good teacher' which is imputed on them and which they internalise rapidly after they have qualified as a teacher. It is therefore critical that the teacher education curriculum includes identity work as a key component of teacher development, and this is not addressed in the CCF.

In relation to the second research question, my research on mental health provides examples of interventions that teachers can use to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people (Papers 5, 6). There is a paucity of research which addresses *educational* interventions that can support young people's mental health, but teachers need more effective training in this aspect so they know a range of interventions which they can implement and

the research which underpins them. Including mental health interventions in a teacher education curriculum will therefore ensure that new teachers can more effectively address the mental health needs of the students that they teach. In Chapters 3 and 4, I have justified how the research outputs connect and link with broad themes of the proposed curriculum. These themes have been used to develop the proposed ITE curriculum.

In relation to the final research question, in Chapter 3 I have summarised the implications of each of my papers for teacher education. I have suggested how the papers might usefully inform the development of an alternative teacher education curriculum which addresses the aspects which are currently missing in the CCF. The implications of my research have been used to develop a revised model of a curriculum for ITE which I have presented in Chapter 4. This alternative curriculum is designed to empower pre-service teachers by providing them with opportunities to address inclusion, social justice and mental health within schools. It is also designed to provide pre-service teachers with a strong teacher identity which will support them in navigating and subverting policy changes. Finally, it is designed to support school-based mentors to develop inclusive approaches when working with minoritized pre-service teachers.

It must be acknowledged that subverting dominant notions of what it means to be a good teacher is not unproblematic and, in some schools, social justice work can be a risky endeavour. Current discourses emphasise that good teachers are those who can raise pupils' academic attainment. In my own professional experience, I have witnessed pre-service teachers experiencing discrimination when they introduce discussions with pupils about social justice. For example, some trainees have been disciplined by head teachers, some have had their placements terminated and some have faced criticism from parents when they have discussed LGBTQ+-related content. Although these examples are alarming, nevertheless it is

important that teachers advance social justice. This responsibility is not only a legal duty, but it is also a moral imperative to foster respect for all forms of difference. ITE providers should challenge cases of discrimination across their partnerships and embed social justice firmly into their vision and values statements.

This proposed curriculum presented in Chapter 4 needs to be tested and following piloting it will require revisions. It directly addresses the aspects which are missing from the CCF and in particular it aims to develop teachers who can reflect critically on policies rather than 'producing' technical teachers who are compliant, 'docile' (Foucault, 1977) and have no strong teacher identity.

The CCF produces neoliberal teachers who are trained to fulfil their roles and responsibilities within the machine of performativity. It provides them with the techniques which underpin performativity so that they can close achievement gaps and raise academic standards. The CCF is therefore also a critical element of the performativity machine.

Although some of the individual papers do not directly address teacher education, the themes arising from the papers have been used to develop the proposed curriculum model.

5.3 Contribution to knowledge

The body of research and this overarching narrative makes an original contribution to research, policy and practice. This contribution is summarised below.

Contribution to research:

- From the themes identified across the body of published work, I have proposed an alternative curriculum framework for teacher education. This framework supports the curriculum which is delivered in the university and in schools and it informs the development of the mentor curriculum. There is currently no framework for a mentor curriculum because the CCF does not include this. The proposed curriculum supports teacher education providers to advance inclusion and social justice and through all strands of teacher education provision.
- This research has applied the transformative paradigm (Mertens, 1999) to teacher education. This theoretical perspective has been applied to the proposed teacher education curriculum and, to the best of my knowledge, this is the first time the paradigm has been applied in this context. The transformative paradigm requires researchers to make ‘an explicit connection ... between the process and outcomes of research and furtherance of a social justice agenda (Mertens, 2007, p. 216). It therefore places on researchers a responsibility to actively use the outcomes of their research to advance social justice. The proposed teacher education system is the vehicle through which the quest for social justice can be further developed. This curriculum will empower pre-service teachers to implement a curriculum for social justice in their own classrooms. It will ensure that pre-service teachers are more effectively able to address key professional challenges, including being able to respond to matters of diversity in classrooms. The proposed curriculum empowers pre-service teachers to view themselves as active agents of change in the pursuit of inclusion and social justice. This moral imperative, coupled with increased knowledge of how to respond to classroom diversity, is likely to strengthen resilience, thus leading to reduced attrition from the sector.

- The individual articles make an original contribution to knowledge. The contribution of each article is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Contribution of each paper

Paper	Full reference	Contribution to knowledge
1	Glazzard, J., & Rose, A. (2019), The Impact of Teacher Well-Being and Mental Health on Pupil Progress in Primary Schools. <i>Journal of Public Mental Health</i> , 19, (4), 349-357. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPMH-02-2019-0023	This study elicits the voice of children to explore the relationship between teacher mental health and pupils' learning. No studies could be sourced which draw on pupil voice to explore this relationship.
2	Maitland, J., & Glazzard, J. (2022), Finding a way through the fog: school staff experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic, <i>Cambridge Journal of Education</i> . https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2022.2040954	In this paper we adapted Greenfield's model of teacher resilience to include the relationship between job role and resilience.
3	Glazzard, J., & Stones, S. (2021), Supporting young people's mental health: reconceptualizing the role of schools or a step too far? <i>Frontiers in Education</i> , 5. https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2020.607939/full	This paper is, to the best of our knowledge, the first academic critique of government policy relating to mental health in education.
4	Glazzard, J., & Stones, S. (2021), 'Nothing fazes me, I can do it all': Developing headteacher resilience in a complex and challenging educational climate, <i>International Journal of Leadership in Education</i> . https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2020.1829712	In this paper we drew on our interview data to present a new theoretical model of head teacher resilience. This model emphasises the importance of external professional supervision in supporting head teacher resilience.
5	Glazzard, J., & Rose, A. (2019), The impact of peer mentoring on students' physical activity and mental health. <i>Journal of Public Mental Health</i> , 20, (2), 122-131, https://doi.org/10.1108/JPMH-10-2018-0073 .	This paper presents an evaluation of an original school-based intervention to support children's mental health. This intervention was developed by the Youth Sport Trust and had not previously been evaluated elsewhere.
6	Glazzard, J., & Szreter, B. (2020), Developing students' mental health literacy through the power of sport. <i>Support for Learning</i> , 35, (2), 222-251. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9604.12301 .	This article presents a systematic evaluation of a community sports intervention to support young people's mental health. To the best of our knowledge this was an original intervention, and it has not been evaluated elsewhere.
7	Glazzard, J., & Stones, S. (2020), Supporting Student Teachers with Minority Identities: The Importance of Pastoral Care and Social Justice in Initial Teacher Education. In Beckett, L. (Ed), <i>Research-Informed Teacher Learning</i> , London: Routledge, pp. 127-138.	This chapter draws on Meyer's model of minority stress and applies this to pre-service teachers. To the best of our knowledge this is an original application of the model to this context.

8	Stones, S., & Glazzard, J. (2020), Tales from the Chalkface: Using Narratives to Explore Agency, Resilience, and Identity of Gay Teachers, <i>Frontiers in Sociology</i> . https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsoc.2020.00052/full	Existing research positions gay teachers as victims. This claim is evidenced in this article. In this article we draw on interview data to counter the victimised narratives which were well-documented in the literature. Rather than positioning gay teachers as victims, we explore how our participants demonstrated agency, courage, and resilience.
9	Glazzard, J., & Stones, S. (2021), Running Scared? A Critical Analysis of LGBTQ+ Inclusion policy in Schools. <i>Frontiers in Sociology</i> . https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc .	This paper is, to the best of our knowledge, the first academic critique of the government's relationships and sex education policy.
10	Glazzard, J. (2017), Trainee Teachers with Dyslexia: Results of a Qualitative Study of Teachers and their Mentors. <i>International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research</i> , 16, (12), 87-107. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.16.12.6	Existing literature which is cited in the article positions pre-service teachers with dyslexia as victims of prejudice and discrimination. In this article we acknowledge the challenges but also adopt a strengths-based perspective which moves the argument beyond victimised accounts.
11	Jacobs, L., Collyer, E., Lawrence, C., & Glazzard, J. (2021), "I've got something to tell you. I'm dyslexic": The Lived Experiences of Trainee Teachers with Dyslexia. <i>Teaching and Teacher Education</i> , 104. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103383 .	In this article we further build on the research conducted in article 10 to move research beyond an emphasis on victimised accounts of pre-service teachers with disabilities.
12	Glazzard, J., & Coverdale, L. (2018), It feels like its sink or swim': newly qualified teachers' experiences of their induction year. <i>International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research</i> , 17, (11), 89-101. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.17.11.7	There is a paucity of literature which explores how early career teachers negotiate their teacher identities. This research specifically explores the way in which beginning teachers negotiate the socially assigned identity of the good teacher and their personal teacher identities.
13	Glazzard, J. (2017), Assessing Reading Development through Systematic Synthetic Phonics. <i>English in Education</i> , 51, (1), 44-57. https://doi.org/10.1111/eie.12125	In this article I have presented an original framework for assessing reading development, drawing on knowledge of literacy development.

Contribution to policy:

- After piloting, the proposed curriculum could be adopted by policy makers, leading to revisions to the CCF, particularly if, after piloting, it could be demonstrated that the proposed curriculum has resulted in good teacher retention. This would require a longitudinal study design in which the curriculum is used with a group of pre-service teachers during their training. This sample population could then be tracked for five years post qualification.

Contribution to practice:

- The proposed curriculum framework directly informs teacher education practice by addressing important aspects of content which are not addressed in the CCF. It also informs the curriculum for mentors and the practices which mentors adopt when working with pre-service teachers in school. The proposed model necessitates a substantial shift in practices away from reductionist pedagogies which produce technical teachers who blindly implement government policy, to socially-just pedagogies which shape the development of attitudes, values and beliefs in teacher educators, pre-service teachers and school-based mentors in relation to matters of social justice and inclusion.

5.4 Limitations of the research

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that the body of published work that I have presented represents a patchwork of papers which explore a range of topics and themes. In identifying a coherent thread which runs across the papers, I have argued that the body of work can usefully inform the development of a curriculum framework to support ITE provision. However, I have acknowledged that the body of published work does not specifically inform all aspects of the proposed framework. For example, although my publications do not specifically address this aspect of content, I have identified that race equality and racism should be addressed within teacher education provision.

Although I have developed a framework which further develops the CCF, it is important to acknowledge that the papers were not originally written with the purpose of informing the development of an ITE curriculum framework. Many of the papers were published before the CCF was introduced. The discussions and recommendations that I have made in the individual papers do not directly refer to the development of an ITE curriculum framework. Each paper

makes a unique contribution to knowledge. I have retrospectively reviewed the papers and through this process I have, in this thesis, been able to make a case to support how the papers might inform a teacher education curriculum. It was a challenge to identify a golden thread which stitches the articles together, particularly when the articles focus on different themes. If I was to re-write the articles now, following the publication of the CCF, I would link my recommendations to the development of a proposed teacher education curriculum.

One of the final limitations of this research is my own position as a gay educator. Feminist researchers during the 1960s and 1970s highlighted the significant role that the researcher and researcher reflexivity play within the research process (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). The 'crisis of representation' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018) in the 1980s saw the increasing use of autobiographical accounts within research as a way of explaining researcher positionality, coupled with increasingly diverse forms of representing research. Due to my own experiences of discrimination within the education system, I am passionate about embedding inclusion and social justice into teacher education programmes and into schools. I am aware that my motivation for advancing this work means that my research is neither neutral nor value-free. According to Sikes and Goodson:

Research practice cannot be disembodied. It is impossible to take the researcher out of any type of research or of any stage of the research process. The ...researcher is always there ... we must not pretend that it is possible to forget their personhood, their histories, and all that that entails. Reflexivity should be an inherent and ubiquitous part of the research endeavour.

(Sikes and Goodson, 2003, p. 34)

Greenbank (2003) has argued that claims about researcher objectivity and neutrality in research are flawed and I share this perspective, particularly in relation to qualitative studies.

Since qualitative researchers may be exploring issues that they have experienced personally, this provides them with a unique 'insider positioning' (Sikes and Potts, 2008, p. 3) which needs to be declared. Similarly, qualitative researchers have an obligation to declare any 'insider' connections that they may have with their participants or any connections which they may have had with the research contexts.

What often unites researchers with participants, particularly those researchers working within the transformative paradigm, is 'their common goal of the pursuit of social justice' (Loxley and Seery, 2008: 18). This is often the case in qualitative research where researchers working within the transformative paradigm may be addressing issues related to exploitation and marginalisation. This motivation for researchers to advance social justice may arise from their own personal and professional biographies and their own experiences of discrimination and marginalisation. These experiences provide the researcher with an insider perspective, however much researchers try to position themselves on the 'outside' (Loxley and Seery, 2008). The importance of researchers being reflexive and honest about their positionality is essential to ethical research practice (Sikes, 2013) and demonstrates, in my view, a commitment to democratic research.

Within the body of published work, researcher bias was evident and although this might be a limitation of the research, steps were taken to reduce bias. For example, in Paper 2 both researchers were employed in higher education institutions during the time of data collection. As educators, we had personal experience of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our own mental health. This study sought to explore the impact of the pandemic on staff who were employed in schools. We recruited staff representing a range of role-types to increase the reliability of the findings. To reduce researcher bias we used open questions rather than closed leading questions. We transcribed the interviews and asked the participants to approve the

transcripts before we analysed the data. We adopted a rigorous approach to data analysis which involved seven stages of analysis. The analytic process was iterative, reflexive, and collaborative and included coding and thematic mapping. These processes helped to mitigate the effects of researcher bias.

In Paper 11, although the study was a small-scale investigation, we recruited participants from across two higher education institutions and the sample included trainee teachers studying both primary and secondary initial teacher education courses. We ensured an equal distribution of primary and secondary participants. These steps increased the reliability of the findings, although generalisability was not the aim of the research. As a research team who were also employed as academics or teachers, we were already experienced in working with trainee teachers with dyslexia and we were aware of some of the challenges that pre-service teachers with dyslexia experience. To mitigate against the effects of researcher bias, we provided participants with the right to not answer specific questions if they did not feel comfortable answering them. We used open questions rather than closed leading questions to allow participants to share their own stories. We used a rigorous and staged approach to data analysis Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to ensure that findings were grounded in the data. In both studies (Papers 2,11), we adopted a compassionate, empathic approach to interviewing to reduce power differentials between the researchers and the participants. This approach to data collection supported participants to provide rich data, which increased the validity of the findings.

In Paper 1, this study explored the impact of teacher mental health on pupils. Although there is a paucity of research which specifically explores the relationship between teacher mental health and pupils' learning, as educators with personal experiences of mental ill-health, we were already aware that poor mental health in teachers can have adverse impacts on teaching

quality and therefore have a detrimental effect on pupils' learning. To mitigate against researcher bias, we ensure that the participant sample was diverse by recruiting pupils, teachers with poor or variable mental health and teachers with good mental health at the time of the data collection. We also interviewed school leaders. Although this was a relatively small study based on data collected from 10 schools, the diverse range of perspectives included in the data collection ensured that data from different groups of participants were triangulated, and this increased the validity of the findings. In addition, collecting data from multiple schools representing different socio-economic contexts increased the reliability of the findings.

These examples demonstrate that although it is not always possible to remove researcher bias within research, there are steps that researchers can take to reduce bias. As a gay, disabled researcher with variable mental health, I am naturally drawn towards research projects which address social justice themes. Many of the papers that I have included address the themes that I have a personal connection with. Although I acknowledge that researcher bias cannot be eliminated from my research, in these examples and in the papers, I have outlined the steps I and my colleagues have taken to mitigate against this. My own minoritised identities align well with the transformative paradigm and my published work as a collective seeks to illuminate issues of injustice and advance inclusion to create a more socially-just society.

5.5 Future research

I have developed a proposed curriculum framework for empowering pre-service teachers to advance inclusion and social justice in their classrooms. The framework also supports teacher educators to address social justice and inclusion through the ITE curriculum and it supports mentor development.

Future research could specifically examine the impact of the framework in Figures 4, 5 and 6 on teacher burnout, job satisfaction, teacher attrition and identity through a longitudinal study design. To address this, a study could be designed to test the impact of this proposed curriculum framework on a group of pre-service teachers who have been trained using this model. Data on burnout, job satisfaction, attrition and teacher identity could be collected from this population at the end of their pre-service programme and following completion of their first, second and third years of teaching. In addition, rich qualitative studies could be designed to capture the impact of the proposed curriculum framework on transforming children and young people's attitudes in relation to social justice and inclusion. Specific research studies might be designed to evaluate the impact of LGBTQ+, race, disability, and gender projects which these teachers have designed on students' attitudes and values in relation to social justice.

The proposed mentor curriculum in Fig. 6 could be evaluated by designing a study which captures the views of a group of mentors who have completed the curriculum. Specific studies could be designed to explore the impact of this curriculum on mentors' understanding of matters related to inclusion, social justice or mental health following completion of the curriculum. Additionally, studies might be designed to explore the impact of the curriculum in Fig. 6 on the work that mentors complete in school with trainees and separate studies might explore different strands of this framework with mentors.

5.6 Summary

This chapter has summarised the key research findings, identified the contribution to knowledge and suggested opportunities for future research. The limitations of the research have also been identified.

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