Attrition of mid-career teachers in a neoliberal world – why are experienced teachers leaving the profession?

Mary Bilton

Thesis submitted for the award of Doctor of Education (EdD)

University of Reading

Institute of Education

Submitted December 2022

Declaration: I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Mary Bilton

Abstract

There is an international recruitment and retention crisis in teaching, yet there is an imbalance in research addressing why mid-career teachers are continuing to leave the profession prior to normal retirement age. Research and Government policy in the UK focuses on the retention of new and beginning teachers and overlooks the phenomenon of attrition of those with years of experience and expertise.

This research was located in the interpretive paradigm and used an embedded mixed-methodology to gather data by conducting an online questionnaire (n=119) and subsequent semi-structured interviews with mid-career secondary school teachers (n=14). Thematic analysis was used to scrutinize the data from the interviews.

Through the lens of Labour Process Theory it was possible to shed light on how mid-career teachers perceive their work to be conceptualised by Government and school leadership teams and exposed how their labour is utilized and managed. In doing so, it has been possible to gain a deeper understanding of how mid-career teachers position themselves in their profession and how this impacts their connection with the four key concepts of workload, stress, career and professional identity.

Findings suggest that mid-career teachers feel dissatisfied with their work: a diminished sense of professional identity, lack of autonomy, limited opportunities to develop their career, lack of respect for their experience, and the pressure of being under surveillance which in turn, contributes to increased levels of dissatisfaction with their work. Crucially, participants shed light on the concept of 'workload' in a more nuanced way than simply hours worked or tasks

undertaken. By re-framing the concept of workload, it is possible to acknowledge the role that senior leaders can play in the attrition of mid-career teachers. The concluding proposals to reform and reconceptualise the work teachers undertake (by reducing the gap between hierarchical decision making and the subordinate teacher), suggest that attrition could be reduced by giving teachers more autonomy and control over key aspects of their working lives. Furthermore, through a cessation of conceptualising experienced teachers as workers whose labour and often 'surplus labour' is owned by stakeholders, mid-career teachers could enjoy a longer and more manageable career in the profession.

Key words

Mid-career teacher, teacher workload, teacher career, stress, professional identity, autonomy, senior leadership teams

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my children Abigail and Cameron in the hope that I have inspired them to embrace new challenges, to take every opportunity life throws at them and to keep going even when things seem impossible. Without their unwavering love and support this thesis would not have been possible.

Acknowledgments

Firstly, I want to thank my supervisor Dr Catherine Foley for her invaluable help and support throughout this process. Her advice has been instrumental in the shaping of this research, and her kindness and patience is something I have been so grateful for through some challenging days. I would also like to thank my co-supervisors Dr Alan Floyd and David Kerr for their insightful advice which has been much appreciated.

Secondly, my gratitude also extends to the participants in this research and I thank them for their commitment to taking part in interviews. I am indebted to them for their kindness and willingness to give up their valuable time.

Finally, special thanks and love go to my brother David who has encouraged me, supported me and inspired me with his relentless belief that I *can* do it. And to all my beautiful friends who have constantly asked 'is it finished yet?'….yes, it is!

Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abbreviations

AST	Advance Specialist Teacher
CPD	Continued Professional Development
CPL	Continued Professional Learning
DfE	Department for Education (UK)
FFT	Fisher Family Trust – national data base used for target setting
HR	Human Resources
MFL	Modern Foreign Languages
NASUWT	National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
NEU	National Education Union
NFER	National Foundation for Education Research
NQP	National Professional Qualifications
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TES	Times Education Supplement

Chapter 1 Introduction

‘Education is not the filling of a vessel, but the lighting of a flame’

Socrates

This thesis was borne from personal experience in the secondary education sector in the UK. Having worked as a secondary school teacher and middle leader in the public sector for 30 years, I have increasingly experienced the early departure of many long-serving colleagues who are leaving the profession to pursue a second career or taking early retirement. This trend correlates with evidence that teacher attrition is at its highest level in the United Kingdom (UK) for decades (DfE, 2018a, p. 10; 2018d; Fullard, 2021; NowTeach, 2019) and teacher recruitment initiatives cannot redress the shortfall quickly enough, leaving many schools without the rich experience and gravitas that mid-career teachers take with them when they leave.

This research sought to explore the phenomenon of why these teachers were leaving the profession prior to normal retirement age, focussing on four concepts: workload, stress, professional identity and career. The theoretical lens through which this research was conducted was that of Labour Process Theory, which shed light onto how the work or ‘labour’ that teachers provide is used and managed by employers. Data was collected through an embedded mixed-methodology using an online survey which led to 14 semi-structured interviews with mid-career teachers from a variety of subject areas in England.

A void of highly skilled, experienced practitioners is likely to render the teaching profession less effective and this presented an opportunity to conduct research to gain a clearer

understanding of why mid-career teachers are cutting short their careers in this profession. The education and wider community would benefit from retention of these professionals, and this is at the heart of this research which sought to explore the phenomenon of attrition of mid-career teachers.

1.1 Definition of terms

In this section the key terms of 'attrition' and 'mid-career teacher' will be explained, so that there is clarity from the outset.

1.1.1 Attrition

In relation to the teaching profession, the meaning of the term 'teacher attrition' has been difficult to clarify (Kelchtermans, 2017) but needs to be framed given the focus of this research. Teacher attrition is predominantly located in negative connotations and discourse, focusing on teachers leaving the profession prior to retirement leading to teacher shortages, economic waste of expertise and dissatisfied professionals (Macdonald, 1999). However, there are alternative views; one of revitalizing the teacher workforce through loss of disengaged teachers and bringing on a new wave of enthusiastic practitioners thus fuelling a vibrant economy (Chapman, 1994). Whilst Chapman's view is acknowledged, given the current situation concerning the morale of the teaching profession in the UK and for the purposes of this research, attrition shall be seen from the former lens, vis a vis attrition is undesirable as this quotation suggests:

> The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR, a political 'think tank') has suggested that, in a period of increasing resources for schools, supply cannot meet demand because excessive teacher workloads, poor pupil behaviour, poor management, public criticism, a lack of autonomy and fewer opportunities for creativity

> are reducing teacher status and rendering the profession unattractive (Johnson, 2001a). This leads the authors to conclude that teaching is rapidly becoming an unsustainable profession. (Armour & Yelling, 2004, p. 96).

The term 'teacher attrition' in this research will refer to 'qualified teachers, leaving the profession, for reasons other than having reached the age of retirement' (Ingersoll, 2001).

1.1.2 **Mid-Career teacher**

Characterizing mid-career teachers can be done so through their years of experience, level of expertise, or their professional role, (Booth et al., 2021) and defining a 'mid-career' teacher is seen as ambiguous. In their study, Booth et al. define mid-career as a teacher with between 5-15 years teaching, however, some researchers acknowledge this group as teachers who have been in the profession for between 15-31 years, and are between 35-55 in age (George & Tracy, 1992), or between 11-20 years in the profession (Konstantinides-Vladimirou, 2013).

With the current retirement age for a UK teacher set at 67, it is possible to have a career spanning over 40 years, I therefore chose to include teachers who were in the mid-section of their career. I will use the definition of a 'mid-career' teacher as one with between 10 and 30 years' professional full- or part-time service in secondary schools. However, it is acknowledged that where research has been drawn from academic sources, the definition of 'mid-career teacher' may vary.

1.2 Personal and professional background

I left University in 1989 with a Visual Arts degree and then worked briefly as a product designer before embarking on my Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) in 1991. Throughout the period of researching and writing up this thesis I was Faculty Lead, running the ADT and Engineering Faculty in a local authority (LA) funded secondary school in West Oxfordshire. I have previously worked in middle leadership in two other LA funded secondary schools in the UK but it was through my position as a National Professional Qualification (NPQ) facilitator that I encountered many experienced practitioners from all over the country who told me of their dissatisfaction with the profession and were looking to leave. These discussions and anecdotal accounts are useful for identifying phenomena (Chojnacki et al., 2017), and it was through these discussions that I sought to understand why mid-career teachers are leaving the profession prior to retirement age.

I reflected that during my career there has been a cultural shift in the discourse around perceptions and engagement with workload and stress, with certain themes continuing to surface; marking, reporting, predicting, judging, and measuring which appear to feature in research into teacher attrition. These anecdotal accounts mirror research that cites excessive workload as a source of teacher attrition with monitoring, assessment, recording, reporting and accountability and reports of 'unnecessary components of work' (Butt & Lance, 2005, p. 415) brought to the fore. These performative elements of teachers' practice sit within the global neoliberal paradigm which encompasses the profession, and it is against this backdrop that this research into the phenomenon of teacher attrition is framed.

1.3 Context of this research

It is hard to imagine a time when British Governments took little interest in their education system; a world where the education system and political intervention were independent. In the early part of the 20th Century educators in the United Kingdom (UK) were free to design and develop their own curriculum without any meaningful checks and balances as contemporaneous governments did not consider it their remit to intervene.

However, a seminal speech made by the Prime Minister, James 'Jim' Callaghan in 1976, challenged the concept of what the British education system was designed to achieve. Callaghan laid out a new vision for government intervention to ensure that the needs of employers were met. He proposed that a core curriculum could be implemented to encourage a greater take-up of science subjects based on practical applications, instead of theoretical knowledge. Furthermore, Callaghan wanted to ensure that all children had access to a purposeful experience of education and went on to lay out a vision for an 'inspectorate' to monitor national standards:

> There are the methods and aims of informal instruction, the strong case for the so-called 'core curriculum' of basic knowledge; next, what is the proper way of monitoring the use of resources in order to maintain a proper national standard of performance; then there is the role of the inspectorate in relation to national standards; and there is the need to improve relations between industry and education. (Callaghan, 1976 para 21)

This so called ‘great debate’ opened fresh terrain which the newly elected Conservative government of 1979 brought to the fore under Margaret Thatcher, herself an Education Secretary of the Conservative Party from 1970-1974.

In the following paragraph I will present an explanation of the how the management of education evolved through government intervention and how neoliberalism became a key feature in the framing of education practice since the latter part of the 20th Century.

1.3.1 **Neoliberalism in Education**

A neoliberal culture was brought into the field of education during the Thatcher-ite era of the late 1970s and 1980s when the education systems was seen as problematic due to a liberal stance which was not congruent with the political ideology:

> Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human wellbeing can be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve the institutional framework appropriate to such practices (Harvery, 2005, p. 2).

The introduction of a global performative framework for public services was embraced by world leaders including the Thatcher government (Hill & Kumar, 2012) and thus education, along with many other service sectors, became a commodity with market forces and managers seeping into control policy and practice (Bernstein, 1996). The culture of commercial

accountability has become the primary factor in this neoliberal stance on education reformation, and 'Academic capitalism' is now intrinsic in the fabric of global education.

At the heart of neoliberalism is the capitalist ideal of progress and profit, thus framing both students and teachers as 'human capital' (Hasting, 2019). By commodifying schools, the role of teacher is transformed away from the autonomous educator to a corporate assessor. This changing role has an impact of the location of 'self' and 'professional identity' with a potential conflict between ideology and reality. One Ofsted report acknowledges the impact of neoliberal reforms on teachers in the UK (Ofsted, 2019):

> ...despite the positive feelings towards teaching as a vocation and towards their workplace, many teachers believe that the advantages of their profession do not outweigh the disadvantages and that their profession is undervalued in society. This is exemplified for some by the combination of limited policy influence (they feel 'done to' rather than 'worked with') and insufficient funding to deliver the goals they would like to. This leads to a sense of de-professionalisation (Ofsted, 2019, p. 5).

In a performative arena data gathering must take place for judgement to follow and thus the 'datafication' of the profession and the professional is inevitable, (Lycett, 2013) so much so that the UK Government issued a twenty-six-page report guiding schools and education trusts on how to use the vast amount of data schools now collect (DfE, 2018g). In its conception, the report was designed to ensure that data was used effectively to reduce teacher workload, however, in reality the guidance has not yet permeated into many schools' practice and data

collection continues to be a concern for many teachers. Recent Australian research into data-driven practices concluded that such performative practices have reshaped the definition of teacher identity and thus the profession as a whole (Lewis & Holloway, 2018) and with high-stakes testing a key measure of how good a school is, the pressure on teachers is inevitable.

Teacher professionalism has been called into question by governments who seek to 'improve' teachers by framing their profession within the rubric of neoliberalism. By creating an audit culture in education, governing bodies at both local and national level are best able to judge, monitor and assess progress of not only teachers but pupils and institutions. Such a system inherently requires a hierarchical system of resource management which will be explored in this research.

1.3.1.1 Implementation of neoliberal practice

In order to ensure that neoliberal practice is being implemented, new managerial systems need to be employed, (Shepherd, 2018) and New Public Management (NPM) is increasingly prevalent in education in England; the connection between neoliberalism and managerialism is explained in Figure 1.

Neoliberalism	Managerialism
• The introduction of market-type mechanisms and competition • The commodification of services • A focus on value for money and doing more with less (i.e. efficiency) • Central regulation and/or control • The adoption of an entrepreneurial culture • A shift of priorities from universalism to individualism • An emphasis on service quality and consumer orientation and choice • Greater flexibility of pay and conditions • The growth of contractual relationships (e.g. purchaser-provider) • A blurring of public-private sector boundaries and increased scope for private sector provision	• The adoption of a more business-like approach and private sector practices • The establishment of a management culture • A rational approach to management (e.g. strategic planning and objective setting) • A strengthening of the line management function (e.g. performance management) • Adoption of human resource management techniques to secure employee commitment • A shift from inputs and processes to outputs and outcomes • More measurement and quantification of outputs (e.g. performance indicators)

Figure 1 New Public Management

The NPM method of administering public services demonstrates a shift towards a more business-like approach with ‘outputs’, ‘performance indicators’ and ‘objectives’ becoming common language in English schools.

Managerialism is an inherent aspect of neoliberalism and is the method by which neoliberal concepts are actioned and implemented. This changes the structure of schools with the introduction of business managers, HR teams and Performance Management systems; all in place to monitor and manage the neoliberal agenda. This commodification of education can be seen to render teachers ‘profit maximizing entrepreneurs’, which if not embraced, will lead to loss of their professional status, (Werler, 2015). However, r\research conducted in 2002 (Groundwater-Smith & Sachs, 2002) acknowledges that it is possible to counterbalance neoliberalism in education, by rebuilding trust through rethinking individual notions of professionalism and practice that has an impact on one’s own professional identity.

Neoliberalism in education not only impacts teachers, but also has wide-reaching effects for pupils (Hedegaard-Soerensen & Grumloese, 2020; Llewellyn & Mendick, 2010; Pratt, 2016; Saunders, 2007). In one social-anthropological study (Hedegaard-Soerensen & Grumloese, 2020) it was demonstrated that by implementing neoliberal policies, work seemed to be pushed toward ‘most of the children’ so that targets on academic progress could be achieved. Concepts of diversity and inclusion faded into the background as the primary focus for the teacher was target lead.

This research was thus framed against the backdrop of neoliberalism: to ignore this positionality would be remiss, as it forms the context and locates the research in the current field, both

nationally and internationally. Figure 2 frames the conditions that the English education system currently operate under, with the neoliberal and managerial ideologies leading structures and systems within schools.

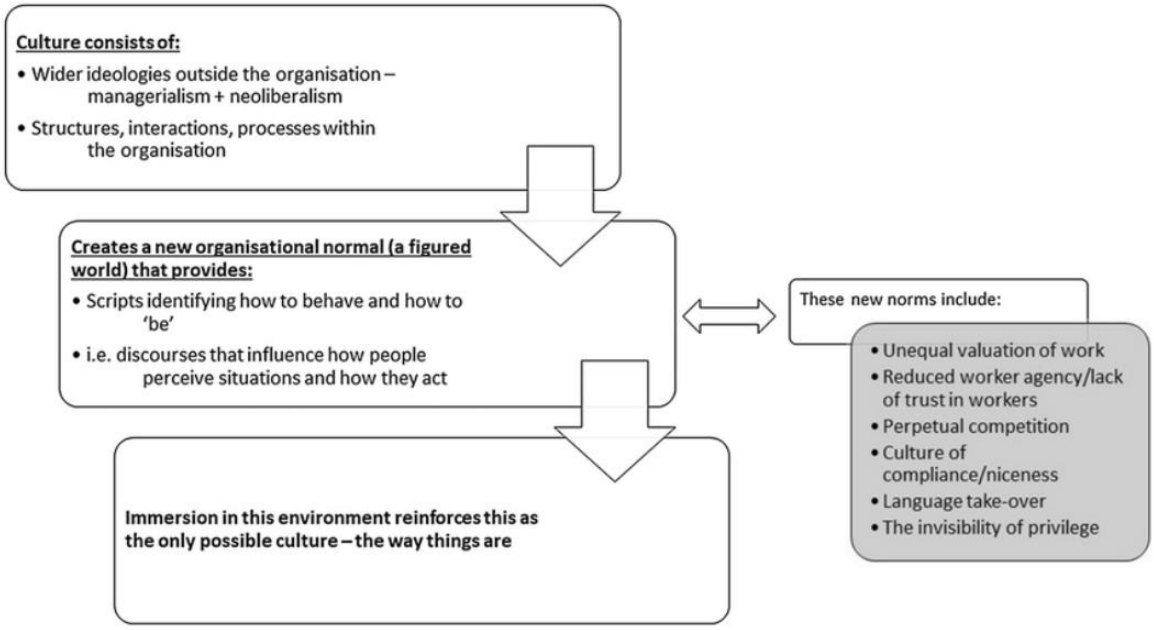


Figure 2 The cycle of neoliberal managerialism (Bone, 2021)

Policy makers, school leaders, and stakeholders create procedures to standardise and guide how those organisations must run, with little room for variation from this cultural 'norm'. Bone's model suggests that one possible consequence of neoliberalism is that workers are left undervalued, in a low trust environment which is subject to competition and monitoring to ensure standards are met.

1.3.1.2 Reporting on standards of education in England

As outlined in the previous section, monitoring is an essential pillar of neoliberalism and as such education requires scrutiny from policy makers and stakeholders. The Office for Standards

in Education (Ofsted) is the English government's inspection service, introduced to ensure that all education establishments in England are providing an appropriate and rigorous education for students. The three key strands of their remit are Inspecting, Regulating and Reporting with all maintained schools and academies (and some independent schools) being subjected to inspection on a regular basis between 1-4 years, depending on the category of the school's previous judgement. Following the neoliberal and performative agenda, schools are rated either Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement or Inadequate and full reports are drafted and published on the government website. Ultimately, the intention is to drive an improvement agenda in all schools and to give stakeholders an insight and choice into which school they choose for their children based on performative data.

However, since its introduction in 1992 Ofsted has consistently been cited as a cause of stress for teachers, leading to 'post Ofsted Blues' (Scanlon, 1999, p. 15) and 'shattering' teachers through the 'brutality of the regime' (Roberts, 2020, p. para 6). The UK Government acknowledges the stress that Ofsted inspections put teachers under and have taken action to issue a 'myth buster'(Ofsted, 2018) to allay the fears of teachers who feel under so much scrutiny with an impending inspection looming. Despite this, since its publication in 2018 (and subsequent withdrawal) there has been little evidence that teachers are less stressed and anxious about these inspections and Ofsted is still very much feared as the pedagogic authority (Gallagher & Smith, 2018) amongst the teacher population.

With the context of education in the UK laid out, the research problem can be explained through closer examination of current lived experiences of mid-career teachers in England and attention will be drawn to the challenges that are currently being faced by this cohort. In the following

section I will introduce the research problem, highlight the issue of teacher attrition in the UK and discuss the implications of this phenomenon on the wider community.

1.4 Introducing the research problem

Teachers have always been under scrutiny, but more recently they find themselves under increased pressures to conform and perform; so how do we continue to 'light the flame' as Socrates so eloquently suggests in the neoliberal world?

1.4.1 Changing age of teacher population

The rate of experienced teachers leaving the profession is increasing year on year, with secondary schools in the UK being worst hit as supported by research in 2017 (Worth et al., 2017). This in turn changes the age of the overall teaching population. Official figures from 2018 (DfE, 2018i) state that in the previous 7 years, the proportion of teachers who retire at normal retirement age (NRA) in the UK has fallen from 40% to just 15% reflecting an age profile difference that is creating a new landscape for British education. Currently 18% of teachers leaving the profession were 55 years of age or older, compared to 33% in 2011 which demonstrates that fewer teachers are staying in the profession until retirement age.

The UK has one of the youngest teaching populations in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) community, with an average age of 39, compared to the OECD average of 43 years of age. Yet there is evidence to suggest that older, more experienced teachers in English secondary schools correlates with high-performing schools at KS4. Those schools with 'good' or 'outstanding' behaviour had slightly older than typical teacher age

profiles, (DfE, 2010) suggesting that older teachers can more effectively manage behaviour as shown in Figure 3.

This data indicates that to lose this valuable skill set from the teaching profession could have an impact on behaviour and academic progress of pupils in secondary schools, and further supports the need for action to retain mid-career teachers through evidence-based research.

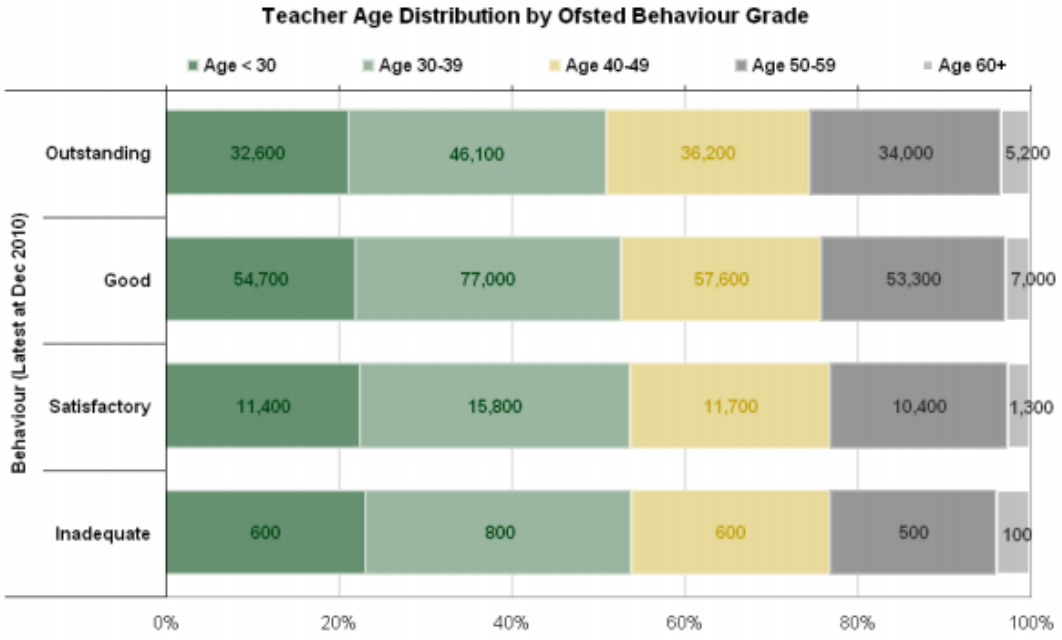


Figure 3 Teacher Age and Ofsted behaviour Grade

In summary, there is sufficient research to demonstrate that mid-career teachers are leaving the teaching profession in the UK before normal retirement age, and that this is an increasing phenomenon. With too few new teachers being attracted into teaching, and the high attrition rates of early-career teachers (Gallant & Riley, 2014), there is an urgent need to retain those with the most experience and proficiency.

1.4.2 **Leavers**

With a global crisis in teacher retention (See & Gorard, 2019) the teaching profession is under extreme surveillance, with many political and economic concerns about what the future will look like given the current shortages of teachers. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) reported in 2018 that year on year since 2010, retention rates of teachers in the UK has declined. Furthermore, the same report showed that the student to teacher ratio has increased year on year in both primary and secondary schools (see Figure 4), with primary classes increasing from 20.5 to 20.9, and secondary schools increasing by a larger margin from 14.9 to 16.3. With increasing numbers of pupils, the need for more qualified teachers is urgent.

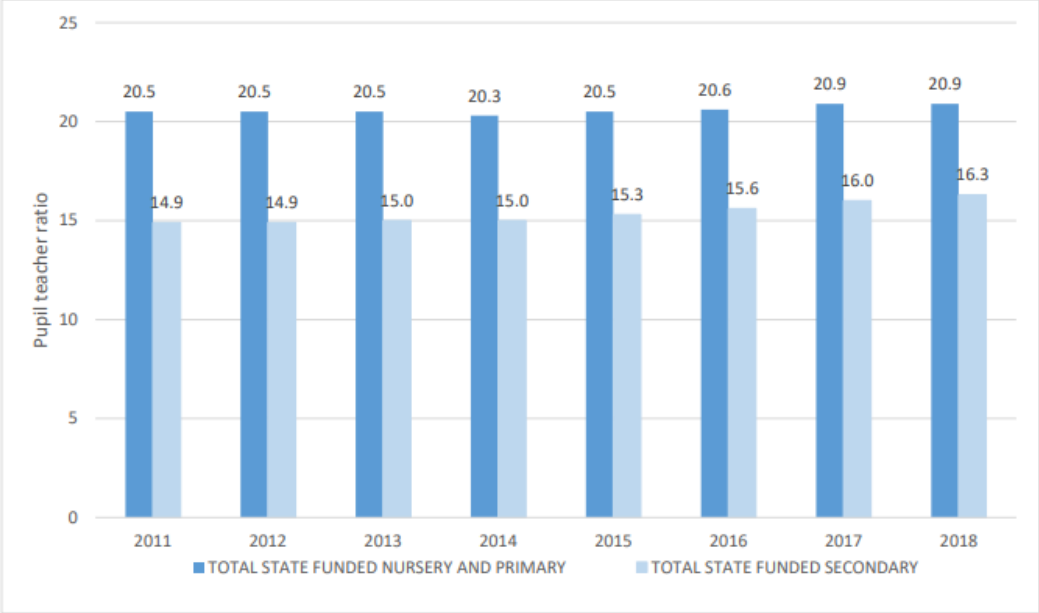


Figure 4 Pupil Teacher Ratios 2011 to 2018 (Department for Education, 2018e)

In response to the diminishing workforce, strategic planning is essential to avoid a crisis of human resources (Jacobson, 2009) and is the cornerstone of producing a viable and sustainable economy. Despite more teachers than ever being in the profession, the number of teachers

required is far greater due to an increased pupil population, and this has left the UK with a deficit of teachers in real terms. Overall pupil numbers are expected to continue rising, driven by a projected 15% increase in the number of secondary school pupils between 2018 and 2024 (Foster, 2019).

The Department for Education (DfE) rely on a statistical model, the 'Teacher Supply Model', (2018f) to estimate the number of teachers required for the following years, however, analysis of this model suggests that it is inadequate and has inherent weaknesses (See & Gorard, 2019). It is noteworthy that See and Gorard's comprehensive analysis of the current teacher crisis omits any reference to retention of experienced staff, and focuses on DfE recruitment, funding, political influence and methodologies for initial teacher training (ITT).

In 2020 there were 461,000 full-time equivalent teachers in England (Gov.uk, 2020). Many of these teachers face a host of challenges that are impacting their professional lives and are contributing to the decision of an increasing number to walk away from a career in publicly funded schools (Perryman & Calvert, 2019). The 'Teacher Retention and Turnover Research: Interim Report' from 2017 (Worth et al., 2017) highlighted the growing concern of high rates of experienced teachers leaving the profession. Their recommendation was clear:

> The Government should investigate why the rate of leaving among older teachers has been increasing and explore whether they could be incentivised to stay in the profession longer, particularly in subjects with specialist teacher shortages (Worth et al., 2017, p. 4).

Furthermore, the report highlights the poor retention rates of both new and experienced teachers in science, mathematics and modern foreign languages (MFL) but this is only part of the picture. The Department for Education suggested that the highest proportion of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subject teachers to leave the profession were those with between 10-25 years in teaching at 44% (DfE, 2018c). However, attrition is not solely related to STEM and MFL subjects areas; an increase in leavers from all subject areas has been reported (Carr, 2019).

1.4.3 **Returners**

For balance it must be acknowledged that not all teachers who report wanting to leave the profession actually do, and roughly 16,000 teachers who had left subsequently returned to the profession in 2016 (DfE, 2016c). Despite an increasing trend for teachers to leave teaching (Foster, 2019) 51% of those teachers who left schools went onto other jobs within the educational sector, perhaps suggesting that they are not yet willing to leave the profession altogether. However, the Department for Education reports that 50% of teachers surveyed would not consider returning to teaching (DfE, 2018a) as it was reported that participants felt that there had been little change to the status quo, making returning to teaching an unattractive option.

1.4.4 **Current strategies to reduce attrition in the teaching profession**

In response to the acknowledgement that there is a growing problem of teacher shortages in the UK, the Department for Education (2019d) reported that teachers had cited workload as a predominant factor in their decision to leave the profession, and put forward suggestions from teachers themselves as to how to solve the problem as detailed below:

- Improving in-school support for teachers

- Increasing focus on progression opportunities
- Reducing workload
- Improving working conditions (flexible working)
- Pay review
- Professional recognition and greater autonomy

The findings from the DfE report concluded that there was no single factor which led to attrition but conceded that workload and accountability were the two most prevalent reasons cited for leaving. The secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP outlined a proposal to recruit and retain teachers in the UK (DfE, 2019d) in response to the current national teacher shortage. In this proposal four key areas were put forward and focused on retention of new teachers, with little to support the mid-career teacher.

- Giving Headteachers more autonomy in reducing teacher workload
- Introduction of an 'Early Career Framework' to support new teachers in their first two years of teaching
- Developments of qualification to give beginning teachers pathways to promotion
- Simplification of the process by which applicants enter the profession

Hind's proposals seek to address the retention of new teachers, which responds to the high rates of attrition of beginning teachers; 20% of new teachers leave the profession within their first two years, and 33% leaving within five years (DfE, 2019d). However, developing recruitment and retention strategies for new teachers in not limited to recent graduates. It is acknowledged that Career-Changers (those coming from careers in other industries into the teaching

profession) can also make a significant contribution to the workforce; however, entry to the profession is still dominated by young graduates. Additional funding was provided for the Teach First programme, Cognition Education and The Brilliant Club all of which provide support for transitioning applicants into the profession. In 2019, Teach First was awarded £39 million and attracted 1,735 applicants (Whittaker, 2019). Of these, 82% were accepted (an increase of 23% percentage points from the previous year) which coincided with the lowering of threshold from a 2:1 to a 2:2 degree. This prompted suggestions that standards were being lowered, however, this was refuted by the government, and despite the reduced entry requirement, applications still fall short of the targets and numbers of new teachers required.

In 2019, cash incentives to entrants to the profession were proposed in the hope of retaining quality teachers. (DfE, 2019a) but there is little evidence of the resultant impact this has had on retention. With 40% of the entire bursary budget being funnelled into the retention of teachers through such schemes, this is still focused on early-career teachers and there is little to entice the mid-career teacher to stay despite the acknowledgement that this is imperative. However, in the 'Recruitment and Retention Strategy' (DfE, 2018a), there was one proposal for long-serving teachers (with ten years or more experience) being offered sabbaticals in the hope that this will retain teachers:

> We also want to support teachers to take advantage of opportunities to experience working in an industry relevant to their field or doing academic research. We have been working with the sector and potential delivery partners to develop a sabbatical pilot for more established teachers. We are committed to working with teachers and Headteachers to deliver an effective pilot. (DfE, 2018a, p. 29)

There is no evidence to support that this has been rolled out beyond a pilot scheme and at the time of writing there is no accessible information as to the outcome of this proposal. Similarly, a revised inspection criteria and more flexible working hours are two further initiatives from the Recruitment and Retention strategy aimed at improving attrition rates, yet there is little evidence from the current literature to support that these recommendations are widely implemented in UK schools.

There have been numerous reports commissioned by the British Government on teacher retention, workload, and stress for many years (Butt & Lance, 2005; DfE, 2016a, 2016c, 2016f, 2018a, 2018c, 2018d, 2018i, 2019c, 2019e; Scott, 2019). It is important to collate this body of literature to demonstrate that the problem is widely acknowledged, but despite these reports and initiatives, teacher attrition persists.

Table 1 brings together a sample of some of the studies that have been undertaken to research the recruitment and retention issues in the UK since 2016.

Year	Government endorsed research 2016-2021
2021	RAND Europe, Understanding Teacher Retention, February 2021
2020	National Foundation for Educational Research, School workforce 2020
2020	National Foundation for Educational Research, Teacher Labour Market in England–- Annual Report 2020, June 2020.

2019	National Foundation for Educational Research, Retaining Science, Mathematics and Computing teachers, November 2019.
2019	National Foundation for Educational Research, Part-time Teaching and Flexible Working in Secondary Schools, June 2019.
2019	Education Policy Institute, Teacher recruitment, progression and retention in multi-academy trusts, June 2019
2018	TALIS 2018: Teacher Working Conditions, Turnover and Attrition. Statistical Working Paper. UK Department for Education. UK.
2018	National Foundation for Educational Research, Teacher Workforce Dynamics in England: Nurturing, supporting and valuing teachers, October 2018.
2018	Education Policy Institute, The teacher labour market in England: Shortages, subject expertise and incentives, August 2018.
2018	Institute for Fiscal Studies, The characteristics of and earnings and outcomes for physics teachers, March 2018.
2018	School workload reduction toolkit 2018
2017	National Audit Office, Retaining and developing the teaching workforce, September 2017.
2017	Education Committee, Recruitment and Retention of Teachers, February 2017. The following webpages also provide links to further analysis of the teacher labour market:
2016	Education datalab: Teacher careers 2016

Table 1 Government endorsed research into Teacher retention and recruitment

These reports were selected for inclusion in this table as they demonstrate that the government is concerned with addressing the problem in the education sector, however, in this body of work

no reference is made to retention of mid-career teachers, strengthening the assertion that there is a paucity of research into retaining this valuable resource.

1.5 Research Aims

As the previous section highlights, there is evidence to acknowledge the problem of teacher attrition in experienced teachers in the UK. The wealth of experience and knowledge that experienced teachers take with them when leaving the profession has been overlooked in favour of enticing new teachers to the profession. The intrinsic traits of the mid-career teacher are seen as positive and conducive to positivity in the profession as Hargreaves explains:

> Mid-career teachers were typically more relaxed, experienced and comfortable about their job and themselves than they had once been, but still enthusiastic and flexible enough to respond to change in a broadly positive way. (Hargreaves, 2005, p. 979)

Experienced, long-serving teaching staff often have the gravitas, subject knowledge and pedagogic experience that is perhaps under-developed in younger counterparts. Whilst research acknowledges that the problem of experienced teachers leaving the profession prior to retirement age is on-going, there is insufficient research to demonstrate that this trend is being addressed. It should be in everyone's interest to conduct meaningful research into why these teachers are leaving the profession.

Therefore, this research seeks:

- To explore the reasons for mid-career teachers leaving state-funded secondary schools in England prior to retirement age of 67 years.
- To gain further insight into what part (if any) neoliberalism plays in teachers' decisions to leave the profession.

- To examine how mid-career teachers position the impact of workload, stress and career on their own professional identity, and how this reflects on decisions to remain or leave the profession.
- To contribute to the body of knowledge pertaining to the attrition of mid-career teachers in UK secondary schools
- To use the findings to formulate recommendations for courses of actions that could reduce attrition in mid-career teachers.

1.6 Thesis overview

Having identified the context and problem of mid-career teacher attrition in secondary schools in England, I will present an explanation of the theoretical framework, and a review of the literature connected to the phenomenon of mid-career teacher attrition, both in the UK and internationally. The methodology used for this research (embedded mixed methodology) will be presented, and details of how data was collected through an online survey, and semi-structured interviews will be laid out.

The findings will be presented, leading to a discussion drawing together the findings with links to the underpinning theoretical framework, Labour Process Theory. Finally, summative conclusions will be drawn and presented in the final chapter, along with recommendations for further research and action.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

In this chapter the conceptual and theoretical frameworks will be laid out prior to the presentation of a literature review exploring the key concepts in turn.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

The purpose of a conceptual framework is to put forward a structure which will shape the research by offering tentative predictions for the phenomenon (Cooksey & McDonald, 2011). The decision to do a scoping review of literature prior to conceptual development was to clarify which concepts are prevalent within a given phenomenon (Munn et al., 2018). From this broad review, it was then possible to perform a more systemic review with a clear focus on the identified criteria. Having scoped current literature in preparation for this research, it was established that there were many variable constructs which may influence teacher attrition such as geographic re-location, personal circumstances, and embarking on new challenges (Foster, 2019). The aforementioned reasons given for attrition could be considered 'external' to the work that teachers do. Having to relocate due to a partner's new job, relocating or giving up work to care for children or relatives are all worthy of study, but may not offer insights into the work that these teachers do which leads them to leave the profession. The results of the scoping review indicated that there were four themes that were repeatedly cited by mid-career teachers as key factors in their decision to remain or leave the profession (Burton, 2014; Farber, 2010; Tye & O'Brien, 2002); workload, stress, lack of career opportunities and professional identity. These four concepts were congruent with the discussions I had experienced with mid-career teachers who had inspired this research. Furthermore, other possible factors could have been addressed under the concepts proposed; for example, lack of flexible working opportunities to

allow for effective childcare could be acknowledged under the concept of 'stress' and I was satisfied that the four concepts used were broad enough to subsume other factors that were not explicitly used.

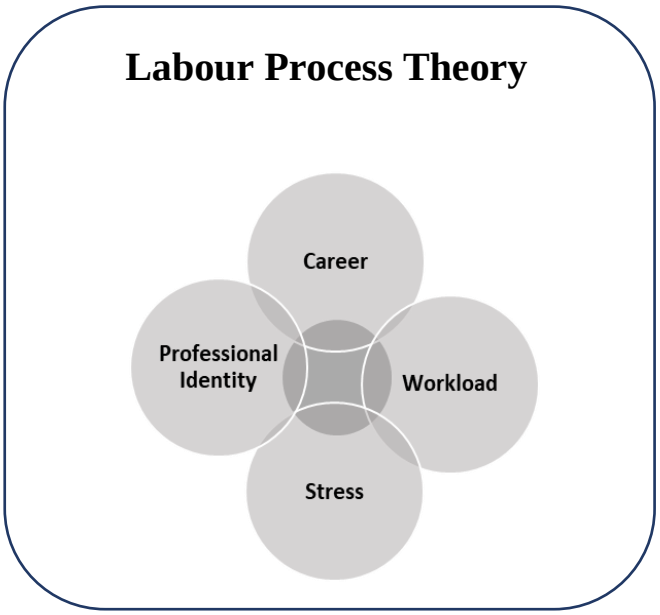


Figure 5 How the key concepts sit within the neoliberal backdrop of education in the UK.

These themes were positioned as underpinning concepts for this research as shown in Figure 5, and served to inform and drive the research questions (Berman & Smyth, 2015).

This conceptual framework is laid out prior to the literature review in order to focus on literature concerned with these key areas. Inherently, these four concepts sit within a neoliberal paradigm that forms a backdrop to the education system in England and will be explored through the lens of Labour Process Theory which will be laid out in the following section.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The importance of a theoretical framework cannot be underestimated in social science research and can be compared to the blueprint of a house (Osanloo & Grant, 2016) as it will support the

research and help provide a lens through which to observe the phenomenon under scrutiny. This research was underpinned by Labour Process theory. By looking at the labour teachers provide and the process by which this labour is handled, a foundation is laid from which the phenomenon of attrition of mid-career teachers and their professional lives can be explored. In the following section, Labour Process Theory will be outlined in order to explain the theoretical lens through which this research was conducted.

2.2.1 **Labour Process Theory**

For decades the work of teachers has been under the neoliberal spotlight, with the skills that teachers provide seen increasingly as 'labour' to be utilised to satisfy a commercial contract:

> Numerous accounts from many countries have detailed meddling with teachers' roles in attempts to commodify education and make schools instrumental agents of types of market-driven and market-managed social arrangements...[teachers] are losing power and control over the basic conditions of their work. (Harris, 1994)

This notion that a worker's labour is a commodity was developed by the German philosopher, Karl Marx in the 19th Century who coined the phrase 'labour power' to describe the work that is done to fulfil a task for an employer. When a worker is employed, the heart of that transaction is the labour of the employee, for which he or she will be paid. Marx coined this 'labour power' as the worker's capacity to produce goods or services, and ultimately construed that the creation of profit for the employer is an 'inherent abuse of the worker' (Harvey, 1983, p. 1). A key component of Labour Process Theory is that workers do not receive the full value of their

labour, instead, that reward is passed to the managers, or business owners who are exploiting the worker in the form of profit.

Harry Braverman revived Marx's labour concepts in the 1970s with a broader set of intentions to frame exploitative management practices in a capitalist world in his seminal book, Labour and Monopoly Capital (Braverman, 1974). Braverman suggested that how work, or 'labour', is planned has become the preserve of the managers with the fundamental principal that conception and execution of work has been separated to subordinate the worker. Furthermore, Braverman asserted that managers organise workers to ensure that optimum performance is elicited, and with this there is a requirement to impose a set of organised procedural and disciplinary outcomes for those who are unable to provide optimum standards in their work. Braverman further argued that use of technology would enhance the method of control exerted over the workers and ensure optimization of their labour. In doing so, the skill of the worker is further diminished; work becomes repetitive, boring and disenfranchising. Braverman states that unlike craftsmen, who undergo a long, skills-based training, the proletariat worker is de-skilled, diminished, and left with a lack of autonomy over their work and attributes Taylorism (Taylor, 1911) to the disassembly of autonomous skills in the mid-century which was defined by four principal points: scientific investigation of individual tasks, careful selection and training offered to workers, provision of detailed instructions which must be supervised and finally evaluation of outcome by management to ensure optimization has occurred.

Whilst some observers may not recognise Taylor's principals in direct relation to the education profession, with increasing control being taken away from classroom teachers there are perhaps parallels to be made. The devolution of autonomy in industrial situations may have some merit

for increased productivity, however, when applied to the craft of education, the pupils are inextricably denoted as products and the teacher, merely a deliverer of a commodity, i.e. knowledge.

The positioning of teachers in the workforce as merely deliverers of 'work' is the subject of much debate with arguments coming to the fore about whether the modern teacher is in fact a professional or merely an industrialised worker (Reid, 2003b). Furthermore, scholars are divided on whether the proletarianization of teachers is inevitable, or in fact well advanced (Buyruk, 2014; Densmore, 2018). In one study from the British Journal of Sociology of Education, the link between neoliberal proletarianisation of teachers and their resilience is highlighted (Price et al., 2012) as this paragraph illustrates:

> teachers' work has become increasingly adverse as a result of neoliberal policies that have both demanded 'more for less' from teachers and created conditions where teachers are increasingly casualised, deskilled and alienated from the labour process.' (Price et al., 2012, p. 91)

Strong rebuttals have been put forward to Braverman's theory (Armstrong, 1988; Gospel & Howard, 1992) with suggestions that Braverman offered an objective view, with a disregard for subjectivism (Spencer, 2000). However, Armstrong concedes that Braverman's argument is not merely concerned with the de-skilling of work, but the lack of control over that work that is of concern (Armstrong, 1988). Reid suggests taking this notion further and states that Labour Process Theory can be used to offer powerful insights into the 'fabric' of educational environments (Reid, 2003b):

> Instead of asking whether teachers are being proletarianised, a labour process perspective should ask: How are teachers being controlled currently, and what effect are the controls having on their work? (Reid, 2003b, p. 571)

Reid continues to assert that Labour Process Theory is eminently suited to 'nuanced educational analysis' (Reid, 2003a, p. 571), which is no less profound in the 21st Century when teachers are operating on a neoliberal stage. Throughout this research Labour Process Theory acted as the lens through which the nature of teachers' work was viewed and analysed.

With the conceptual and theoretical frameworks established, the following sections in this chapter will review literature concerned with the four concepts underpinning this research and literature from national and international studies will be presented.

2.3 Search strategy

In this review literature was sought from research written in English, focussing on studies that are concerned with why mid-career teachers are leaving the profession. Research was reviewed from up to 40 years ago as well as the most current research so that I could understand how long the phenomena in question has been under scrutiny. I believe this to be important in locating the concepts in a timeframe which could be pertinent to discussions on how and why a problem still exists many years after the acceptance of the dilemma.

The review primarily focused on academic literature, but grey literature was also acknowledged throughout this study. Grey literature is defined as 'that which is produced on all levels of

government, academics, business and industry in electronic and print formats not controlled by commercial publishers' (Rothstein & Hopewell, 2009, p. p108). The UK Government has produced many reports in response to a wide range of education-related issues which provide a valuable source of data. Furthermore, the Government regularly consults with teaching unions in their development of education policy, and they provide a robust representation of their members' voice. One example of this was the collaboration between teaching unions and the Department for Education (DfE) in developing the Education staff Wellbeing Charter, (DfE, 2021a) which resulted in a declaration of support for the wellbeing and mental health of teachers in the UK. As the UK Government engages with unions in policy formation, information from teaching unions has also been referenced in this research. Another source of grey literature is the Times Education Supplement (TES). This is the leading education newspaper in the UK with a weekly readership of almost 500,000 and whilst it is acknowledged as a non-academic source, it is effective in representing current trends and experiences of educators in the UK from all phases. Using grey literature was useful as it highlights any disconnect between policy and practice which is important when attempting to establish why teachers are leaving the profession despite proposed political interventions and can offer suggested starting points for more robust academic investigation.

2.4 Workload

Teacher workload is defined as time spent in teaching, administrative or additional and extracurricular activities, and performing co-curricular responsibilities (Hosain, 2016), and evidence asserts that teachers both domestically and internationally are subjected to excessive and intensive amounts of work. This has had a detrimental effect on teachers and students alike for decades (Dibbon, 2004) with those in the UK currently having one of the highest workloads

compared to other countries, (OECD, 2019). Data from a significant body of literature on the subject supports the findings that teacher workload is both excessive and cited as primary reasons for leaving the profession (Lemaire, 2009; Manuel et al., 2018; Naylor, 2001; Pace et al., 2021; Selwood & Pilkington, 2005). Literature supports that the issue of excessive teacher workload is not new; for decades research has cited workload as a problem for many teachers in the UK and other counties (Bubb & Earley, 2004; Ingvarson et al., 2005; Johnstone, 1993; Lemaire, 2009; Naylor, 2001; Peter Sellen, 2016; Sugden, 2010) and yet despite the number of acknowledgments that there is a clear pattern of excessive work in the daily lives of teachers, this continues to be a problem.

In response to the Teacher Workload Survey in 2016 (DfE, 2016f), the Department for Education committed to undertake a review of teacher workload. This survey was designed to offer insights into factors which are associated with longer working hours in order to address these prevalent issues in UK schools. Subsequent reports and case studies were published with the objective of reducing workload, supporting early career teachers, reviewing marking policy, encouraging resource sharing, using data management systems to reduce reporting time. However, there is little evidence that these proposals have been effective in reducing reports of excessive workload and furthermore there were no solutions aimed at mid-career teachers; strategies were aimed at helping early career and beginning teachers reflecting much of the academic research as previously highlighted.

2.4.1 **The workload paradox**

The British government, in partnership with the main teaching unions, produced a research paper to investigate the prevalence of stress and workload on teachers in the UK (DfE, 2019e). A range of teachers and managers across both primary and secondary UK state schools (Academies and LA funded) were surveyed over a three-week period to give details of workload in terms of patterns of engagement, with some revealing results. A reduction of 4.4 hours was reported between 2016 and 2019 (as shown in Figure 6) predominantly by reducing non-teaching tasks, and a reduction in the requirements for marking.

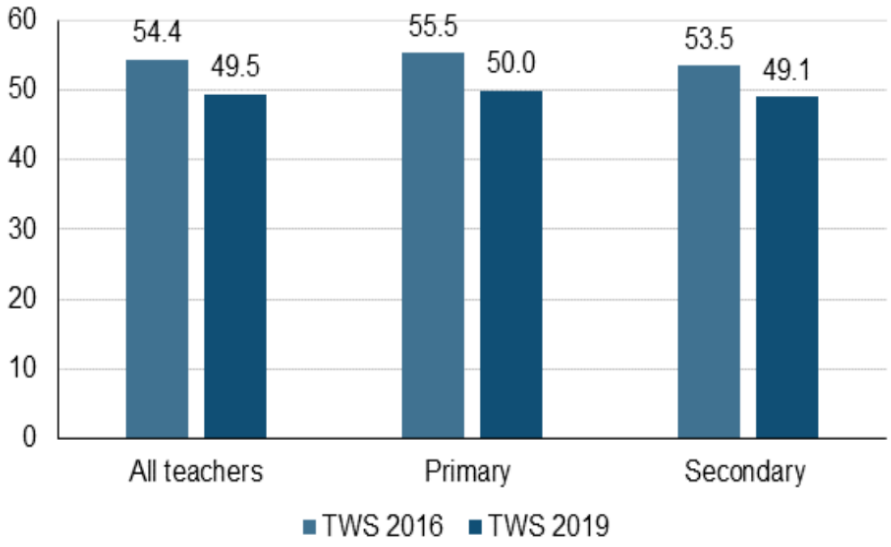


Figure 6 Average total working hours of teachers and middle leaders by phase

The same research showed there was a 16-percentage point decrease in secondary school teachers reporting that workload is a very serious problem in the 2019 report. Whilst this could suggest a positive outcome to the workload reforms introduced, further investigation is required to understand why, if workload is being reduced, teachers were still leaving the profession? This paradox was highlighted almost twenty years ago, in the 'Transforming the School

Workforce: Pathfinder Project' (Harris, 2002) and as Butt and Lance acknowledged in their response to this report 'job satisfaction is dependent on a more complex set of factors than hours worked' (Butt & Lance, 2005, p. 420).

The UK government commissions workload surveys periodically which provide an insight into how much time is spent on teachers' tasks (Walker et al., 2019) in an attempt to redress the problem of excessive workloads. A recent study analysed four datasets, (Allen et al., 2020) and concluded that there has not been a significant increase in working hours of secondary school teachers, which exposes the dichotomy: teachers consistently cite workload as one of the leading factors leading to attrition, yet their working hours are not increasing. Following the 2019 Workload survey, teaching unions suggested that this paradox may indeed need further attention by responding:

> Although the government recognises that teacher workload is through the roof, its efforts to combat it has made precious little difference. This is because Ofsted and the accountability culture continues to run rampant in England's schools. This is another contributing factor to the recruitment and retention crisis. (Moss, 2020)

The connection between workload and attrition is further explored in a statistical working paper commissioned by the DfE (Sims & Jerrim, 2020) that sought to explore teacher working conditions, turnover and attrition. In this report the aforementioned factors are explored with five working conditions under analysis: impact of leadership/management, collaboration with colleagues, preparation for their role, workload and poor pupil behaviour. The link between

workload and attrition was not well established: ‘workload does not show a robust relationship with turnover or job satisfaction’ (Sims & Jerrim, 2020, p. 24). Whilst the participants for this study were primary school teachers and Key Stage 3 secondary school teachers, this is of interest in this research. This finding further demonstrates the paradoxical nature of workload and attrition in the UK.

Much of the research into teacher workload seeks to get ‘time and motion’ data, with the intention of making teachers more efficient, (Ashman & Stobart, 2018; Featherstone & Seleznyov, 2018; Richardson et al., 2018; Selwood & Pilkington, 2005), however when aspects of work are reduced (and thus time working), attrition and dissatisfaction persists.

There have been several studies into how workload can be reduced (DfE, 2018j; Ellis et al., 2018; White et al., 2018) in addition to setting-up a number of workload review groups (DfE, 2018b). In response to consultation with key stakeholders, the Department for Education created a ‘workload reduction toolkit’ (DfE, 2018j) which was designed to give school leaders suggestions that would alleviate excess workload. A small-scale review was conducted with 36 schools in England (Churches, 2020) and concluded that if the toolkit is actively promoted and sufficient training given to all staff, there was a reduction in teachers’ workload and improved sense of self-efficacy. However, Nick Gibb (the Minister of State Education) reported that whilst the workload reduction toolkit can have some benefits in local contexts, teachers are still leaving the profession citing that workload is just one reason for leaving with job satisfaction and autonomy key factors in decisions to leave the profession (Gibb & Elliot, 2021). As Allen et al conclude, the emphasis on ‘workload’ may be misplaced by policy-makers, and reflects See and Gorard’s findings that declining teacher retention may be more to do with increased

accountability, surveillance, and government policy than number of hours worked (See & Gorard, 2020).

As with the other concepts under analysis in this literature review, the research into teacher workload is often disproportionately focused on the beginning teacher (Buchanan et al., 2013; Ellis et al., 2018; Gallant & Riley, 2017; Helms-Lorenz et al., 2016; Howes & Goodman-Delahunty, 2015). There is a deficiency of research into the workload of mid-career teachers and there are still significant opportunities to understand how the concept, perception and nature of workload links with teacher attrition.

2.5 Stress

For decades, stress has been a common factor cited by teachers in the UK that leads them to consider leaving the profession (Farber, 1991; Friedman, 2013; Harmsen et al., 2018; Kyriacou, 1987). However, it must be acknowledged that not all stress is damaging (Grippo, 2016) and in fact at times, is essential to working efficiently and effectively (Benson & Allen, 1980). Eustress is 'positive' stress that keeps us engaged and excited about life's challenges (Tocino-Smith, 2019). Consider a roller coaster; the stress and fear are, for many, a recreation and gives a real thrill, yet this condition is neither 'distressful' nor chronic. However, for this research, teacher stress is defined as 'unpleasant negative emotions, such as anger, frustration, anxiety, depression and nervousness that teacher experienced due to some facets of their job' (Kyriacou, 2001, p. 28), and literature reviewed will represent this aspect of stress.

The phenomenon of teacher stress and workload is not confined to the UK; literature can be found from international sources (Ost & Schiman, 2017; Rothman et al., 2018; Scott, 2019;

Shafie et al., 2017; Torres, 2016; Whelan, 2018) that demonstrates the scale of this global problem. Stress is cited as a major factor is teacher attrition rates, particularly with beginning teachers (Borg et al., 1991; Chaplain, 2008; Harmsen et al., 2018; Harmsen et al., 2019; Kyriacou, 1987) that brings with it negative impacts on economic circumstance and quality of education (Hanushek et al., 2016). Most recently, research revealed that 5% of all UK teachers are reporting mental health problems which last for at least 12 months (Weale, 2019) which in turn results in staff absence.

Teacher stress has been subject to intense research and review for decades (Abel et al., 1999; Borg et al., 1991; Burke et al., 1996; Kyriacou, 1987; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978). Whilst contemporary research continues to be conducted (Cancio et al., 2018; Ismail & Abdullah, 2019; Pace et al., 2019) the majority of research focuses on beginning teachers (Crosswell et al., 2018; Harmsen et al., 2018; Harmsen et al., 2019; Kutsyuruba et al., 2019) with relatively little investigation into stress in mid-career teachers. One such study points to feelings of isolation, leading to stress, and subsequent attrition of beginning teachers (Prilleltensky et al., 2016) which in turn exacerbates negative self-efficacy, and enjoyment of the job. A recent YouGov poll (Neale, 2018) revealed that 37% of 911 teacher-participants were unhappy with their job, and cited three main reasons:

- Workload
- Marking
- Inspections

Teacher attrition has been linked to stress and job dissatisfaction, which is reflected in the number of teachers exiting or wanting to leave the profession (Shannon et al., 2017). The technologies of neoliberalism continue to shape the work of teachers, which in turn affects

teachers' opportunities to establish a sense of wellbeing in their working environments (Abel et al., 2015, p. 107). The feelings of inauthenticity of teachers' work is further highlighted in recent research (Perryman & Calvert, 2020) and suggests that aspiring teachers go into the profession with beliefs and expectations about the nature of the role, the hours, the hard work, and yet they report that:

> the reality of teaching being worse than expected, and the nature (rather than the quantity) of the workload, linked to notions of performativity and accountability, being a crucial factor. (Perryman & Calvert, 2020, p. 4)

Despite the numerous reports of stress being prevalent in the teaching profession, sickness absence has fallen since 2013 as shown in Figure 7.

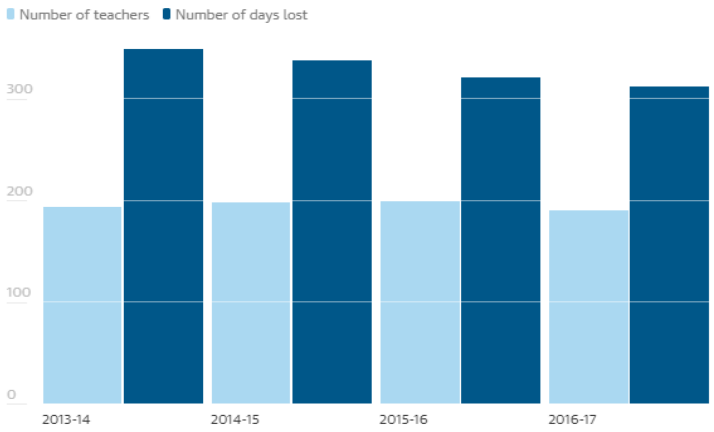


Figure 7 Number of teaching days lost per thousand in the UK between 2013 and 2017

This paradoxical evidence might suggest that whilst stress is high amongst teachers, they are able or willing to cope with this in preference to taking time off. There may be many reasons for this but there is little research to explain this phenomenon.

Causes of teacher stress have been explored and documented both through academic research and anecdotal accounts (Ahmed & Shabbir, 2019; Blase, 1986; Boyle et al., 1995; Clipa, 2017; Jacobson, 2016; Kyriacou, 1987; Pedditzi et al., 2020; Ryan et al., 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017) with clear descriptions of the effect that stress and burnout have on the teachers. There are several antecedents to stress such as poor behaviour from pupils, poor relationships in the workplace, low wages, lack of autonomy and power (Harmsen et al., 2018).

The plethora of information surrounding stress in the teaching profession goes back decades, (Blase, 1986; Boyle et al., 1995; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978) yet the profession continues to see a rising trend in teachers reporting high levels of stress. This could suggest that the research is not being used effectively to reform the situation as evidenced by Farber's research into stress and burnout (Farber, 1984), which acknowledged that stress has most impact on experienced teachers between the ages of 34 and 44. Over 35 years later, the profession is still being subjected to unacceptable levels of stress, not only in the UK, but internationally (Abbasi et al., 2019; Hartney, 2020; Hu et al., 2019).

Much of the current research suggests that teachers are experiencing the state of 'burnout', which is defined as work induced depression (Diaz, 2018) and has been described as being symptomatic of 'emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment' (Maslach et al., 1997, p. 192). Whilst these emotions may be considered

subjective, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) aims to provide an empirical analysis of such emotions to enable statistical analysis to be applied, most frequently in human services professions such as teaching, nursing, law enforcement. The MBI was developed as a tool to empirically measure the three key elements of 'burnout', and with significant research into the prevalence in teachers (Aluja et al., 2005; Gold, 1985; Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981; Kantas & Vassilaki, 1997; Schwarzer et al., 2000) it has been suggested that it is possible to triangulate and validate the impact of those emotions empirically (Byrne, 1993).

2.5.1 **Occupational wellbeing**

To counterpoint the levels of stress reported in education, in recent years teacher wellbeing has been seen as increasingly important (Brady & Wilson, 2020; Burić et al., 2019; Holmes, 2005; Huang et al., 2019; Price et al., 2012; Yin et al., 2018) which sits at a juxtaposition with the neoliberal demands underpinning the profession. A comprehensive review of literature suggests that it seems that 'neoliberal policy regimes are deeply problematic for establishing a sense of professional wellbeing in teachers' (Acton & Glasgow, 2015, p. 110). By defining terms for competency, the 'Professional Teaching Standards' (DfE, 2011b) imposed a mechanism for auditing teachers' work, and rather than develop the professionalism of the teacher, causes stress with the notion of 'competency' brought into measurable question. Guidelines issued by the National Education Union (NEU) demonstrate the importance now being placed on wellbeing of staff in schools. In response to concerns from union members, the NEU published a wellbeing 'Ready Reckoner'(National Education Union, 2019a) designed to give teachers a method of assessing their own wellbeing.

Furthermore, the former Education Secretary, Damian Hines, announced measures to ensure that schools are better able to support the wellbeing of staff by committing to working with headteachers to promote wellbeing in schools (DfE, 2019c). What is not clear is whether these guidelines are being implemented effectively in UK schools and to what extent staff have engaged with the NEU wellbeing Ready Reckoner. Furthermore, Ofsted reports that occupational wellbeing is lower in more experienced teachers than that of their less experienced counterparts (Ofsted, 2019), with 35% of respondents reporting low occupational wellbeing as shown in Figure 8.

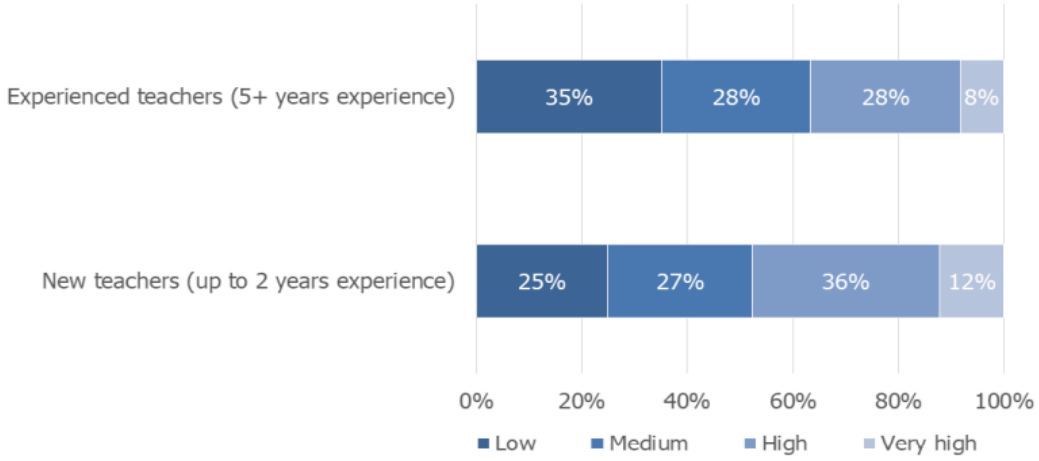


Figure 8 Occupational wellbeing of experienced teachers compared to less experience teachers (Ofsted, 2019)

The connection between wellbeing and attrition is prevalent in the UK as highlighted in a 2018 report, (Skinner et al., 2019) which sought to better understand the impact of managerialism on teacher wellbeing. Day and Gu (2013) acknowledge the impact on emotional wellbeing when faced with challenging work environments and suggested that the tension between the neoliberal paradigm and teacher authenticity is at odds with teacher wellbeing:

> When those real connections break down so does teachers' capacity to cope with educational change, workload and management issues, leading to negative impact on emotional and mental wellbeing (Day & Gu, 2013, p. 39).

Public health policy acknowledges the importance of having a sense of purpose, belonging, satisfaction and personal identity in order to maintain positive mental health (Black, 2008). The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) reported that one in five people in the UK (an estimated 5 million people) suffered from stress, anxiety and depression leading to more than 11.5 million lost working days each year. Teachers have been ranked in the top three of the most stressed workers in Britain consistently since 2010 (National Education Union, 2019b). Furthermore, the Office of National Statistics report that female primary and nursery school teachers had a heightened risk of suicide, making up 102 of the 139 educator suicides between 2001 and 2015. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is no evidence to suggest that teaching had a direct impact on these tragic deaths, anecdotal reports suggests that stress-related factors like the impact of Ofsted has a part to play (Bulman, 2017; Downs, 2015; McDevitt, 2011; Paton, 2007). With a significant financial cost to teacher turnover in addition to the human and moral cost, this is something that should require further attention.

2.6 Career

This section reviews the literature concerning the third strand of the conceptual framework and seeks to explore career opportunities and trajectories of mid-career secondary school teachers in the UK, and to expose possible links with teacher attrition. It is essential to explore and fully

understand teachers' engagement with the notion of their own career if we are to understand what leads to them leave this career behind.

There is a significant body of research into many aspects of teacher careers (Bayer et al., 2009; Coombs et al., 2018; C Kyriacou et al., 2003; Rolls & Plauborg, 2009; Wilson & Deaney, 2010) yet, as with other areas of education research, much of this focuses on new teachers or those in their early years (Bayer & Brinkkjær, 2014; Chris Kyriacou et al., 2003) 'neglecting in-service teachers in late-career development and exit stage' (Kwee, 2020, p. 3997). In 2019, the UK government launched an 'Early Career Framework' (DfE, 2019b) which sets out a framework by which new teachers will receive additional support and guidance in their beginning years as teachers. Yet the Mid-Career teacher remains a largely unexplored sector (Bayer M. et al., 2009, p. 16). There are several well-used models to frame the career trajectory of teachers that attempt to break teachers' careers into phases (Fessler, 1995; Huberman, 1993; Sikes et al., 1985), all created to explore patterns in teacher career development and to try to understand both internal and external factors that influence teachers' careers as demonstrated in Figure 9.

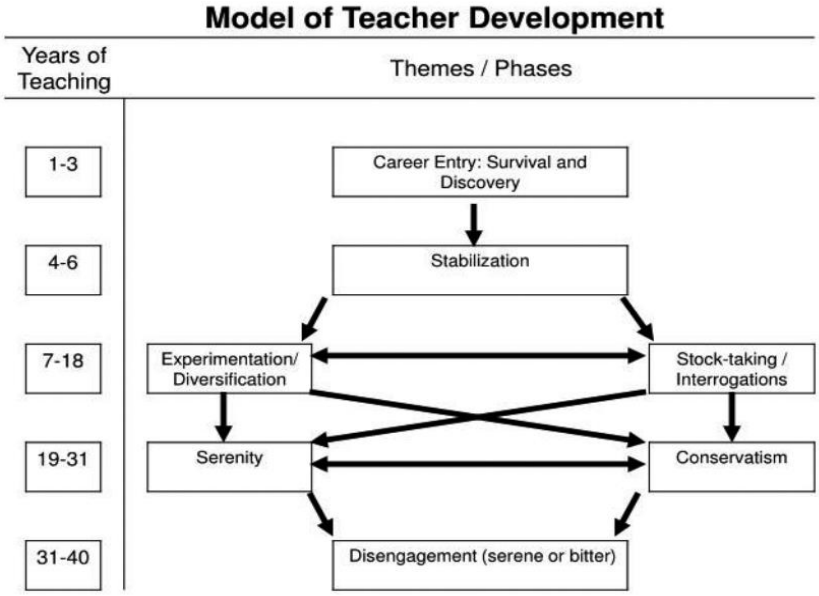


Figure 9 Huberman's model of teacher development

In this model Huberman suggests that mid-career teachers enter a phase of stabilisation between 4 and 7 years teaching, whereby confidence in their skills as practitioners is high. However, more recent models (Day et al., 2006) challenge this arguing that this phase comes later in a teacher's career. They found that teachers are concerned with promotions and taking on more responsibilities during these early years which is in line with the structure of the school system in the UK.

Through 'Variations in Teachers' Work, Lives and Effectiveness ' (VITRA) (Day et al., 2006), it was reiterated that teachers' professional lives run in phases, and inter-link with personal phases and these factors together are what influence a teacher to remain or leave the profession. In this longitudinal study, Day et al found teachers' ability to sustain a long career is influenced by a number of factors: professional identity, positive relationships with school leaders and colleagues, quality of CPD, management of work/life balance.

It is through these stages that teachers feel that they are competent in their teaching practice and are considering expanding their role in some way, moving on to further leadership and management programmes such as National Professional Qualifications (NPQ), or conversely many become disenfranchised and start to consider leaving the profession. Previous studies found that mid-career teachers often have external factors pulling on their careers; many start families at this stage needing an increased income from higher paid positions (Sikes et al., 1985) which leads them to promotion or change in role as the models shown in Figure 10 and 11 illustrate.

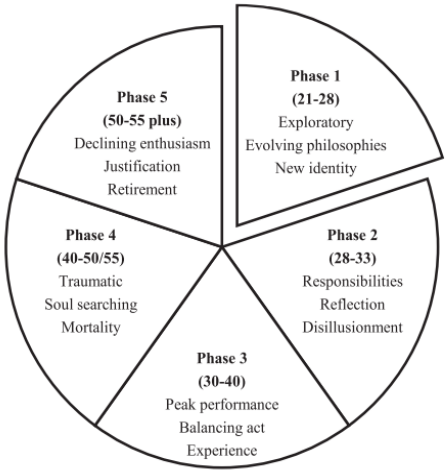


Figure 10 The key elements of the five phases

(adapted from Sikes, 1992).

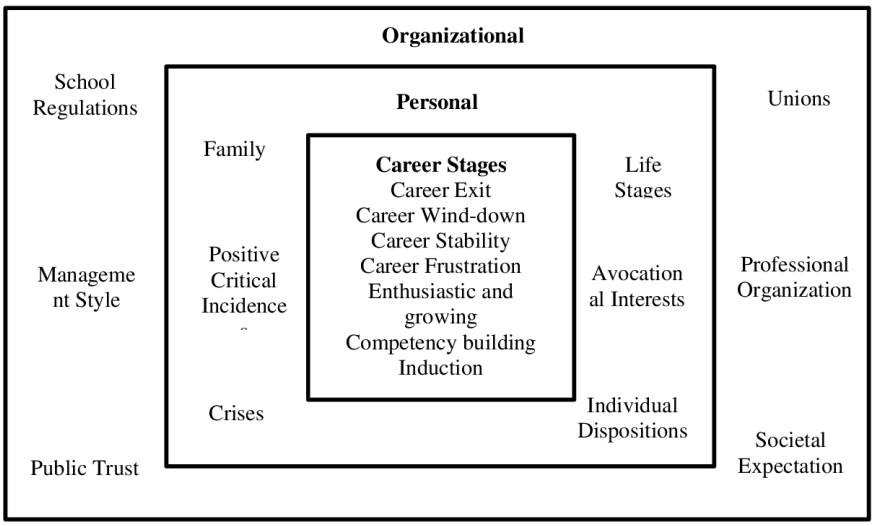


Figure 11 Fessler Model of career stage

When teachers reach a certain point in their careers, balancing increased responsibilities at home and in school requires a shift in approach with individuals relying on commitment and resilience to ensure that they remain effective. Whichever model taken, there is a consensus that the phases are broadly similar with mid-career teachers experiencing significant changes

in their career trajectories. In comparison to Sikes's model, Fessler omits age as a factor, preferring to focus on career stage (Fessler & Christensen, 1992).

To support career phase models, there are a variety of career ladder models used in different countries, with most having two streams: one leading teachers to senior management positions, and one which leads to an 'advanced teacher' position allowing the teacher to stay in the classroom. However, there is also a paucity of evidence to support how effective these models are in predicting how teachers will behave given changing education policies (Crehan, 2016).

Historically teachers' career opportunities in the UK have been dominated by a system of taking on more responsibilities; increasing line management responsibilities and/or increasing the number of tasks one is expected to do rather than being rewarded or promoted for their teaching skill. The British government produced a report which demonstrates a proposal of the career pathways that UK teachers could expect to follow (Commons Select Committee, 2012). The model that was proposed (Figure 12) gives three strands a teaching career trajectory could follow: classroom teaching, school leadership and specialization.

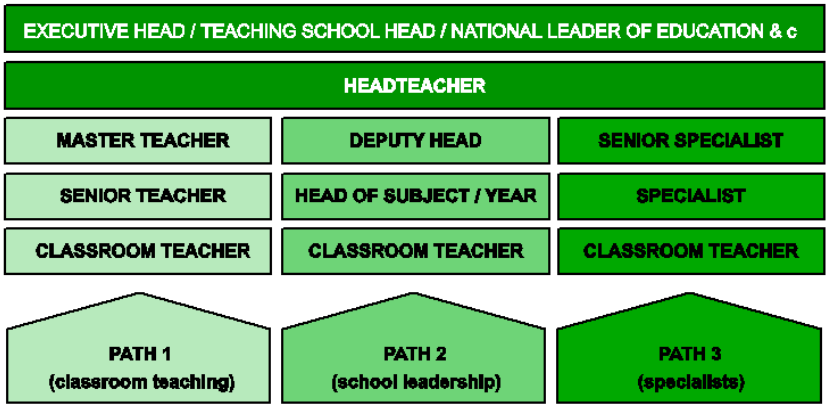


Figure 12 Suggested Career Pathways for UK teachers

In order to bring teaching in line with neoliberal models where promotion and subject expertise are rewarded, the Department for Education introduced the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) system in the UK, in response to the desire to 'improving performance and remedying underachievement' (Education & Employment, 1997). The initiative aimed to reward those most skilled in teaching, demonstrated by passing a series of threshold standards, and to cascade this skill and knowledge on to other less skilled teachers in their own school or via outreach work in other local education authority (LEA) schools in their area. The funding for this was via a grant system at local authority level, with schools bidding to get funding for an ASTs in their school. However, this had a low uptake of less than 5%, compared to 80% of teachers in or after their fourth year of teaching taking on more responsibility for administrative or leadership promotions (Weston, 2013).

It was reported that only 25% of ASTs were confident that they would still be funded for their role, with 70% reporting that they were unsure if they would stay in the profession as a lack of funding has led to the end of their role (Fuller, 2016), despite their self-efficacy being high, and their engagement in the role strong. One AST reported:

> This proposal has left me feeling highly demoralised in a profession and post that I used to love. This government seems to be doing everything it can to demotivate and demoralise young and ambitious members of the teaching profession. I do not see why I should take such a backwards step in my career, having achieved, and I believe contributed, a lot in my first ten years of teaching. I do not wish to leave the classroom to go into management, but these proposals may leave me no alternative. (Fuller, 2016, p. 24)

In 2014, the AST scheme was abolished, and a replacement scheme promoted as an alternative to management roles, was launched. The 'Specialist Leaders of Education' (SLE) was introduced, which requires all applicants to have two years of school leadership as a pre-requisite for application (DfE, 2014). There were 6000 SLEs in UK schools in 2015, which represents 1.5% of the teaching workforce.

In a study of mid-career teachers (Booth et al., 2021) it is acknowledged that there are limited progression routes for those outside of leadership roles, leaving the 2012 proposals (Figure 12) redundant in favour of new leadership and management opportunities. With the focus on in-post career progression being drawn back to leadership and management roles, a range of nationally recognized qualifications were launched by the Government's National College for Teaching and Leadership in 2014. The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), National Professional Qualification for Senior Leaders (NPQSL), and National Professional Qualification for Middle Leaders (NPQML) were introduced in an attempt to 'professionalise' teachers to a national standard. These qualifications were relaunched in 2021, bringing in specialist teaching practice to the remit at middle leader level. In addition, three new NPQ courses were be introduced to allow teachers to focus on developing their teaching, not just their leadership and management (DfE, 2020c). These programmes come at a significant financial cost which could create a barrier to the majority of teachers in publicly funded schools where budgets are continuing to be cut.

2.7 Professional Identity of Teachers

This final section of the literature review seeks to focus on the professional identity of teachers and aims to explore how experienced teachers view their own professional self, how is this identity formed and how does this impact their decision to stay in or leave the profession.

Recent research suggests that the link between professional development and career plays a key role decision to remain or leave the profession for mid-career teachers, (Booth et al., 2021). Development of one's own professional identity as a teacher is imperative in framing ones 'attitudes, affect and behaviour in work settings and beyond' (Caza & Creary, 2016, p. 5) and as such to understand the mid-career teacher we need to examine research concerned with professional identity of teachers to ascertain what their journey might look like on their way to making decision to leave or remain in the profession.

It is widely cited that professional identity is not something which can be defined or fixed (Beijaard et al., 2004; Rus, Tomsa, Regega, et al., 2013) and could be considered a relatively new area of research (Beijaard et al., 2004). However, much has been done in the last two decades to address the paucity of research in this field (Beijaard et al., 2004; Farrell, 2014; Hong, 2010; Lester & Coulter, 2011; Richter et al., 2011; Rus, Tomşa, et al., 2013; Sachs, 2001).

The bridge between professional self-image and professional role, has been demonstrated to be particularly strong in highly institutionalized occupations (Bévort & Suddaby, 2015) which encompasses most public service professions such as teachers, doctors and police officers. These professions are subjected to immediate and reactive role change in response to

government policy change, often making the gap between perceived role and lived experience much wider and creating professional identity conflict. In the absence of 'significant identity work' (Reay et al., 2016) perception of the professional self can cause conflict if not carefully and consciously managed.

Professional Identity has been conceived as an on-going negotiation of one's self-concept (Mead, 1934) and in the contemporary context of education, is located within the context of global attrition (Westervelt, 2016). The definition of 'teacher identity' has been problematic (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Kompf & Boak, 1996; Rus, Tomsa, Rebega, et al., 2013) and there is relatively little generalized research to show how mid-career teachers in the 21st Century feel about their own professional identity. Research suggests that experienced teachers believe that their perceptions of professional self differ significantly from when they first started in the profession, with just 30% of teachers believing their perceptions of self and identity have not changed over the course of their careers (Beijaar, 2000). Beijaar concluded that the participants saw themselves as subject and didactical experts but less so on pedagogical aspects of their work. Furthermore, evidence suggests that teachers bring together three aspects to form their own professional identities: personal dimension (life beyond the workplace), professional dimension (expectations of educational ideals), and situational dimension (physical work environment), (Canrinus et al., 2011).

There are many areas within the phenomenon of professional identity that are worthy of study, yet much of this focuses on beginning teachers (Chong & Low, 2009; Chong et al., 2011; Hong, 2010; Pearce & Morrison, 2011; Pillen, Beijaard, et al., 2013; Pillen, Den Brok, et al., 2013; Proweller & Mitchener, 2004; Walkington, 2005; White & Moss, 2003). Conversely, there is a

general paucity of contemporary research into mid-career secondary school teachers and their professional identity. Whilst the government reports a heterogeneous demographic when citing attrition (DfE, 2018a, 2018c, 2018i, 2019d) much of the contemporary academic research falls into specialized research fields, for example: University lecturers (van Lankveld et al., 2017), English language teachers (Martin, 2017), second language teachers (Wada, 2016), and music teachers (Baker, 2005) to highlight just a few. However, there is less research into generalised teacher retention in experienced teachers, and a disproportionate engagement with professional identity development of new and beginning teachers as previously stated.

There are two areas of professional identity of teachers that have been highlighted in academic studies (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2009; Barmby, 2007; Easthope & Easthope, 2010; Harmsen et al., 2018; P. Sellen, 2016; Smith & Ulvik, 2017) as threads that run throughout teachers' lived experiences relating to how their professional identity is formed over time; Performativity (and Managerialism) and Professional Development. Therefore, for the purposes of this section of the literature review I intend to analyse literature that focuses on two key frames of reference relating to Professional Identity.

1. Performativity
2. Professional Development through the lens of experienced teachers.

2.7.1 **Performativity**

In this section I will examine the first of the two key areas which come under scrutiny when teachers reflect on their professional identity as outlined in the previous section.

The term ‘performativity’ was constructed by the Jean-Francoise Lyotard in his 1984 work ‘The Postmodern Condition’ (Lyotard, 2000) and is considered as a mode of regulation and control through judging, comparing and encourages change through reward and sanction. In response to educational praxis in a performative world, much research has been undertaken to explore the impact that the commodification of teaching has on teacher identity (Ball, 2003; Day & Sachs, 2005; Kilderry, 2015; Lamote & Engels, 2010; Perryman & Calvert, 2019; Singh, 2018). In Ball’s seminal paper, ‘The teacher’s soul and the terrors of performativity’ (Ball, 2003) teachers are described as ‘having to balance belief and commitment, service and even love, and of mental health and emotional wellbeing’ (Ball, 2003, p. 216) causing internal conflict with one’s own sense of their professional self. In his paper Ball suggests that the entire vocabulary of the profession is re-worked under the panopticon of neoliberalism, leaving many confused and dissatisfied with the confused relationship between ‘teacher’ and ‘manager’. The ironic juxtaposition between empowering the ‘manager’ is set against an inherent ‘low-trust’ surveillance which cause further disconnect between the professional identity of teachers and underpins the assertion that ‘Performance has no room for caring’ (Ball, 2003, p. 224).

Ball suggests that teachers could ‘resist’ the managerialisation of our profession, but to do so would be to reject the new discourse of our profession and thus ourselves (Ball & Olmedo, 2013). Subsequent work by Ball takes the concept of ‘resistance’ further and explores what it is to ‘refuse’ neoliberalisation (Ball, 2016) by drawing on the work of Foucault and expanding this to the performativity of our current educational praxis in regard to truth and our professional self. In contrast, analysing ‘Performance Government’ (O’Brien, 2015) O’Brien reveals the counterpoints to neoliberalistic interventions in local schools; highlighting the benefits of such a system that is designed to ‘optimize’ performance, yet ultimately concluded

that this is at price; that of 'professional freedom of educators and school leaders' (O'Brien, 2015, p. 833).

There is a paucity of research to counteract Ball's criticism of what he describes as 'terrors of performativity'(Ball, 2003) however, Meng responds by recommending an 'exorcism' of performativity and suggests that:

> Educators be encouraged to playfully consider non-performative goals, and that institutions can even welcome insincere or experimental consideration of non-performative educational goals. Such solutions may also correct excessively performative cultures outside educational contexts (Meng, 2009).

Whilst Meng proposes a counterpoint to managing the ever-present performativity, there is a consensus that performative culture in the field of education is predominantly seen as negative and undesirable.

A thematic nexus found in much of the research into performativity is that of 'pretence' and 'illusion' on behalf of, not just the teacher, but the institution; ' Performativity, by its boundless nature, includes a degree of fabrication' (Meadmore & Meadmore, 2004, p. 386). Meadmore reported how one school sought to avoid a particular government directive by not actively promoting use or engagement in that activity, but instead promoted discourse in elements of their practice that the school did well. By circumnavigating directives, avoiding 'control' from the government, this Headteacher found a way to 'pretend' to be doing one thing whilst actively doing something that they felt more beneficial.

Paying ‘lip-service’ or ‘playing the game’, is a common narrative in teachers lived experiences, and could be considered ‘value schizophrenia’ as the following example demonstrates:

> My first reaction was ‘I’m not going to play the game’, but I am, and they know I am. I don’t respect myself for it; my own self-respect goes down. Why aren’t I making a stand? Why aren’t I saying, ‘I know I can teach; say what you want to say’, and so I lose my own self-respect. I know who I am; know why I teach, and I don’t like it: I don’t like them doing this, and that’s sad, isn’t it? (Ball, 2003, p. 221).

This is not limited to individuals and permeates institutions and research suggests that ‘strategic deliberation and management’ (Singh et al., 2014, p. 830) exists and demonstrates that some schools are able to use value schizophrenia as a heuristic device to present a worthy school identity under increasingly hyper-accountable constraints.

By contrast, not all teachers reject performativity. For some new teachers the perceptions of the ‘role of a teacher’ embraces the neoliberal paradigm from the outset and could present a very different view of what teaching is, compared to their more experienced counterparts, thus having a more authentic view of their professional self from the outset. Those who have been trained post 2007 will have been initiated into their role with the Professional Standards for Teachers (DfE, 2011a) which embodies the level of accountability and datafication of their working practice from the start (Wilkins, 2011). These ‘post performative’ teachers are neither ‘compliant’ or ‘resistant’ to the datafication of the teaching profession and accept that they are

able to find a balance between performativity and autonomy (Wilkins, 2011). However, there is no evidence to suggest that these teachers stay longer in the profession which implies further research is needed to clarify this.

2.7.2 **Continued Professional Learning (CPL)**

In this second section on Professional Identity, I will be exploring the current literature on CPL and how teachers engage with professional learning. A fundamental principal of the neoliberal reforms has been the professionalisation of teachers, which is believed to be a precursor to quality teaching and improved learning outcomes (Dodillet et al., 2019). The importance of CPL is therefore essential in demonstrating a level of professionalism and must be considered a 'career long obligation' (Kloosterman, 2019).

The terms 'continuous professional development' and 'continuous professional learning' are often used interchangeably; however, it is important to acknowledge the perceived differences between the two terms. The term 'development' is more passive than the more recent term 'learning' that has been bought into the education vernacular and implies an active engagement with self-improvement; a fundamental key of neoliberal education agenda (Mockler, 2013). Professional development has been seen as stand-alone experiences that can lead to professional learning, but despite the semantics, in reality there is little change in the content, delivery or design of educational advancement.

One thread throughout many studies focuses on the link between professional identity and continued professional learning, (Cordingley et al., 2003; Day & Sachs, 2004) and suggests that professional identity is, in varying degrees, developed through effective and authentic CPL as it correlates teachers self-worth and improved outcomes for students (Caena, 2011). Having

the opportunity to engage with structured training and professional learning is beneficial in enhancing self-confidence and motivation, as well as allowing the self to demonstrate professionalism (ATL, 2018). It could be considered that the role of professional learning in education is intrinsically linked to career stories of teachers and is well-researched through a variety of different lenses (Day et al., 2012; Kelchtermans, 1993; Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 2006).

A further element of the current neoliberal backdrop is that of self-improvement through training and professional development by reflection of practice and has attracted much attention (Bevins et al., 2011; Canning, 2011; Farr, 2006; Finlay, 2008; Haigh, 2000; Wilkins, 2011). However, engagement in 'traditional' styles of CPL (training courses) are criticized for being ineffective (Hunzicker, 2011); something that is supported by anecdotal reports (EPALE, 2019; Simons, 2019). Often CPL is delivered through a 'one size fits all' philosophy, with teachers sitting in rooms with an 'expert' disseminating knowledge. The requirements to engage in training to improve practice is mis-matched with the opportunities for educators to do this effectively. The best professional development requires differentiation according to teachers' experience, phase and subject. Training that aims to directly enhance pupil achievement is perceived as being highly relevant (Hunzicker, 2011), but this training is most effective when a holistic approach is undertaken, and educators have opportunities to engage in multiple interactions with CPL in varying forms.

One research paper suggests that the readiness to accept and engage with CPL is, to some degree, down to the age of the teacher (Hustler et al., 2003) with younger teachers being more willing to engage with CPL activities that rely on self-reflection, whereas more experienced

teachers are less likely to do so. This notion of commitment in experienced teachers is further researched (Day et al., 2005) and suggests that core identities of teachers are not considered, acknowledged or valued by policy makers at governmental level, and with recent cuts to budgets (Staufenberg, 2019), CPL in schools is suffering from lack of investment (House of Commons Education Committee, 2017) that could have a negative impact on experienced teachers' professional identity:

> The challenge for innovators or in-service trainers is to take the responsibility for linking the personal strengths of people in schools with academic knowledge. (Korthagen, 2017, p. 399)

Korthagen identified that CPL needs to be personal, and connected to the persona of the teacher, which requires a bespoke and highly personal approach, linking individuals with knowledge, and nurturing the 'expert within' (Dadds, 1997). Differing models of delivering and devising CPL are well researched (Friedman & Phillips, 2004; Postholm, 2012; Ravhuhali et al., 2015; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002), yet the connection between access to effective CPL and attrition of experienced teachers is not fully explored.

Without adequate funding, it is highly unlikely that effective CPL can be delivered in any meaningful way to enhance teachers' practice or professional development. As Day and Sachs conclude in their 'International handbook on the Continuing Professional Development Of Teachers' (Day & Sachs, 2005) , CPL is often used as a political tool to push policy change or reform agendas.

To report an alternative view of the provision of CPL in a neoliberal environment, research from Australia has taken a more positive approach, and suggests that neoliberalism offers opportunities for reform and reconceptualises teachers' ownership of their praxis by introducing reward structures, development of professional partnerships, and effective learning communities (Bloomfield, 2009). However, there are significant barriers to accessing effective professional learning programmes in the UK with few teachers being able to access funding to benefit from such programmes.

2.8 Literature review summary

The purpose of reviewing the current literature on the four concepts underpinning this research was to understand what is already established about the factors that influence the attrition of teachers, what is less well understood, and how each concept interplays with the attrition of mid-career teachers in UK secondary schools. What has been identified is that for each concept there is limited research focusing on mid-career teachers, with most of the research giving attention to the recruitment and retention of early career teachers. Despite a historic net migration out of the profession being reported almost 30 years ago (Mercer & Evans, 1991) retention of experienced teachers is still an under-researched field.

There is a significant body of literature exploring the workload of teachers, however there is little research to understand why teachers are still reporting excessive workload as a key indicator of teachers wanting to leave the profession, when there is evidence that working hours are reducing. Similarly with the concept of stress, there is a large range of research to identify stress as a key precursor to leaving teaching, however, there is a paucity of research into how stress can effectively be reduced to facilitate career longevity.

There is strong research to explain how teachers' careers are established, yet there is a disconnect between current policies to develop teaching careers in a practical way. Whilst there are several proposals to lead teachers through a long career in the profession, teachers are still leaving the profession and again, many of these policies are aimed at new and beginning teachers. Those strategies which do seek to provide opportunities for experienced teachers rely on local funding and are subjected to change or abolishment that renders them untenable. Similarly, the opportunities for CPL are reliant on time and funding commitments from school budgets, which again, creates barriers for those wishing to access learning and development opportunities.

Literature attests that the performative culture that permeates the education system in the UK is often in conflict with the professional (and personal) values of some teachers. This is particularly prevalent in experienced teachers, many of whom trained in a different age of education, when neo-liberalism was in its infancy. Research suggests that newer teachers who trained under the more recent performative agenda, are less impacted by the level of surveillance they experience in school, and yet these teachers are still leaving the profession.

What is clear from the literature review is that there are interconnections between the four concepts of workload, stress, career and professional identity. These concepts interlink and overlap throughout the literature, and it was anticipated that these connections could reappear and be explored in the data from this research.

.

2.8.1 **Research questions**

Having reviewed the current literature on the four key concepts underpinning this research, the following questions will be addressed.

Research question 1	How does workload impact teachers' decisions to leave the profession?
Research question 2	Do mid-career teachers perceive stress as a contributory factor in their decisions to leave the profession?
Research question 3	How do teachers' career expectations factor into decisions to leave the profession?
Research question 4	How does Professional Identity impact teachers' decision to leave the profession?

These questions will contribute to the main research question of this study: What are the perceptions and experiences of mid-career teachers that lead them to consider leaving the profession prior to retirement age?

The intention of this research is to facilitate an improved discourse within government thinks-tanks, trade unions, and educational leaders at all levels who set and enact education policy in England. It is hoped that this research will add to current literature in the field of attrition of mid-career teachers and go some way to informing future recommendations to redress the problem of experienced teachers leaving the profession prior to retirement age. If light can be

shed on what key factors influence mid-career teachers to leave or stay in the profession, this research will be of value.

Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter will outline the underlying ontological and epistemological stance which leads to the final research design and my position as a research-practitioner will also be acknowledged. I will outline how specific methods were chosen from an epistemological and ontological perspective, and this will be followed by an outline of methods used for this research which will subsequently examined in detail along with ethical considerations. Finally, details of how thematic analysis of the data was performed will be laid out.

3.1 Ontological stance

Acknowledging an ontological and epistemological stance from the outset is critical in framing this research in a philosophical context. To understand ontological positionality is to demonstrate our beliefs about the nature of reality in a social world; do we see the world as objective or subjective? The underpinning stance for this research is a relativist ontological view, believing that reality is created 'inter-subjectively, based on meaning and understandings of social and experiential levels,' (Dudovskiy, 2019 para 5). To hold a relativist belief is to accept that reality is an entirely subjective experience where there is nothing outside our own thoughts and is inter-dependent on subjective experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

This research inherently relies on rich descriptions of subjective experiences of teachers which is congruent with this ontological paradigm. I sought to understand the nature of mid-career teachers' 'truth' with the understanding that each participant will have their own reasons as to why they are planning on leaving the profession prior to retirement. These truths sit within personal experiences, and I believe it is critically important that these narratives are exposed if

a greater understanding of the phenomenon of mid-career teacher attrition is to be fully understood.

3.2 Epistemological Stance

To comprehend how knowledge is understood in the social world is critical in developing the correct tools to gather that knowledge which is the role of epistemology. The epistemological alignment underpinning this research is an interpretivist paradigm, supporting the belief that phenomena are explained through multi-faceted, complex constructs that cannot be simply explained through a single interpretation which brings human interest into focus (Dudovskiy, 2019). As a social actor in the process the researcher is able focus on meaning and employ multiple methods in order to draw out different aspects of lived experiences. Using naturalistic approaches, such as interviews and observations, meanings can be drawn from the data.

The nature of this research is located in personal, complex and highly individual perceptions and experiences and thus the data was be examined through an interpretivist lens. To employ the converse, positivist approach would be to assume that an empirical, scientific methodology could be used to explain the phenomenon of teacher attrition. Whilst empirical methods could be used to obtain and draw conclusions from numerical data, such as the percentage of teachers thinking of leaving the profession, this would be one part of the puzzle only. The fundamental aspect of this research relied on 'sense-making' of data, rather than testing an empirical hypothesis, which a positivist researcher may undertake. However, the inherent nature of interpretative research requires an interpretation of data that can present limitations due to bias on the behalf of the interpreter or researcher; something that must be considered by careful planning (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

3.3 Research Design - Embedded Mixed Method

This research sought to explore lived experiences of mid-career teachers who are considering leaving the profession prior to normal retirement age through the lens of Labour Process Theory and to establish how four concepts interplayed with decisions to remain or leave the profession and it was therefore essential to recruit participants who were willing to share their experiences, and to provide qualitative data for analysis.

There are several options for gathering qualitative data; ethnographic study, case study, narrative inquiry and grounded theory, however, an embedded mix-method (Creswell, 2012) approach was selected as the most appropriate for this research as this methods allows researchers to gather information prior to the main data collection which can help shape, support and develop this element of the process (Terrell, 2012).

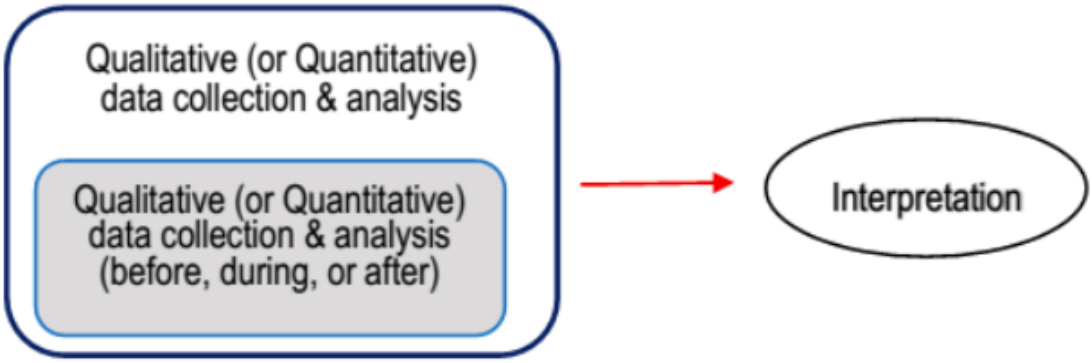


Figure 13 Embedded Mixed Method Design (Creswell 2012)

Within an embedded mixed-method design (see Figure 13) questionnaires and interviews are often used together (Almalki, 2016) with the former providing broad patterns of evidence, and the latter drawing out more in-depth insights. This research followed this method and two types of data collection were selected: an online questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews. There

is sufficient evidence to suggest that mixed method research can be a very effective way of gaining insight into phenomena (Doyle et al., 2009).

3.3.1 **Participant recruitment**

Initial participant engagement was established through a short sampling questionnaire which was used as a 'touch point' to ensure that the concepts identified as the most prevalent from the literature review were aligned with current experiences of mid-career teachers and also gave opportunities to signpost other factors which could be included in the formation of the interview questions. Furthermore the questionnaire provided access to potential interview participants.

The limitations of the questionnaire must be acknowledged. For the data to be of value, it is necessary to know the sampled population, and secondly, to ensure the respondents are not biased (Andrade, 2020). The first point was addressed by ensuring that respondents were all verified teachers, which was a prerequisite of being part of the teacher Facebook forums. With regard to the second point, despite the sampled group being teachers, it cannot be assumed that their responses can be generalized. It could be possible that results were from respondents who were biased and had a vested interest in responding to questions about their dissatisfaction with their job. It is also acknowledged that there could be inconsistency between the questionnaire results and the semi-structured interview data, with a questionnaire taking just a few minutes to record responses compared with more in-depth enquiries.

3.3.2 **Wording of questions**

As a novice researcher the wording of the questions took careful consideration. On reflection, some of the questions could be considered weak, and the response method could have been clearer. Whilst I was careful to devise impartial questions, one question requires some

explanation; I asked participants ‘To what extent does onerous paperwork influence your decision to remain or leave the profession?’. This might appear biased by implying that all paperwork is onerous. However, I wanted to make a distinction between justifiable paperwork and that which is onerous which I should have made clearer. Furthermore, I used the term ‘big’ in some questions which is inappropriate and ambiguous. For example, I asked ‘Stress plays a big part in my decisions to remain or leave the profession’. This not only lacks clarity in the question formation itself, but the use of an inappropriate terminology exacerbates the inherent weakness of the question.

Had this questionnaire been the primary source of data it would not have stood up to rigorous academic scrutiny. Despite these limitations, the principal purpose of the questionnaire was to support the proposed concepts for this study, to shape and inform interview questions and to recruit interview participants. I was careful to reflect on this when presenting the findings by using data from the free text box at the end of the questionnaire, and not relying on the data from the questions themselves.

This questionnaire was posted on several Facebook teaching group forums, and from this it was not only possible to recruit interview participants, but also gave some useful data which subsequently informed the questions for interviews. The rationale for the choice of methods used is outlined in the following section, however, Table 2 demonstrates the order in which the data was collected and provides a brief overview of the format, rationale and outcome for each method.

Method	Format	Number of participants	Date	Rationale	Outcome
Pilot questionnaire in host school	Hard copy given to three secondary school colleagues in a face-to-face meeting for one hour.	N=3	November 2020	To ensure that the final questionnaire was robust and manageable	Some errors picked up and amended prior to launch of questionnaire.
Online questionnaire	Bristol Online Survey issued online via a link on Facebook groups. Likert Scale used for answers	N=119	January 2021	To gather preliminary data to steer questions for interview	Useful data gathered which was used to form the questions for the interviews.
Semi-structured interviews	1:1 Teams meetings scheduled via	N=14	February 2021-	To gather data for analysis	Data gathered which represented

	email correspondence		March 2021	through the lens of labour process theory	the research questions.

Table 2 Timeline of key actions

3.4 Data Collection Methods

As stated in the previous section, there were two primary methods of collecting data in this research: an online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. In this section I will outline how participants were recruited, how the questionnaire was designed, how data was collected and subsequently handled.

3.4.1 Use of social media for participant engagement

The use of social media as a means of disseminating surveys and questionnaires ensures a cost effective and efficient way of getting useful responses (Wright, 2017). In this research, Facebook was used as a platform for initiating engagement with participants. Facebook has a wide variety of groups that have been set up to share teaching experiences and resources for specific subjects and as a member of one of the Design and Technology groups, I felt that this could be an effective method of accessing a wide range of potential participants from a range of teaching subject areas. Furthermore, using members of these groups ensured that irrelevant agents do not enter the sample as group members are required to authenticate themselves as teachers prior joining the group via their school email address.

Participant engagement was gathered by an initial questionnaire which was posted on five specific groups (DT, English, Maths, STEM and a general teaching group) and as part of this questionnaire respondents were asked if they would like to participate in an interview. It could have been possible to access other subject areas, but I was unable to get access from the group administrators in time. The questionnaire itself was designed using Bristol Online Surveys which was the recommended tool by the University of Reading. The use of online survey tools is considered to have considerable advantages as they are not time consuming to create, have little or no cost implications and data analysis and transfer is easily attainable (Nayak & Narayan, 2019) and as a novice researcher seemed appropriate.

There were almost two hundred thousand teachers who could have engaged in this questionnaire via the online groups, with group memberships ranging from six thousand to over one hundred and forty thousand members in one group, however, when using Bristol Online Surveys it is possible to limit the number of responses allowed and a limit of 300 was put on so ensure manageability of data analysis. The questionnaire went live on 30th January 2021 and was live for eight weeks. There were one hundred and twelve responses within six days, and a further seven responses in the following two weeks. Having noticed no new responses after three weeks, the link was removed. I could have left the link live for longer and sent out a follow-up reminder, however, with the time constraints I was working to I felt that there was sufficient data to support the correlation of the information from the literature review, which was the main objective of the questionnaire. The data was subsequently reviewed using the Bristol Online Survey tools to identify themes which could be used to shape the questions for the semi-structured interviews. Of the one hundred and nineteen completed questionnaires,

there were thirty-one teachers who volunteered to take part in an interview. From this, emails were sent to those who were willing to take part requesting that they contact me with a suitable time to schedule an interview, and fourteen participants responded to these emails.

An additional benefit of social media platforms for gathering data is that it is possible to target a wide range of suitable participants and using subject-specific teaching groups on Facebook proved to be an invaluable source of potential participants and the final group of participants is shown in Table 3. All of the teachers selected for interview reported (via the initial survey) that they were considering leaving the profession. The participants were mid-career teachers with between ten and thirty years in teaching. Pseudonyms were used throughout the research and were chosen by assigning a pseudonym using the same initial letter of their real name which made it easier for me to connect data with the participant.

	Pseudonym	Age bracket	Subject	Current Position	Number of years teaching
1	Carol	50-54	Music	Head of Faculty	26-30
2	Karl	50-54	Geography	Main-scale teacher –previous Assistant Headteacher	26-30
3	Julie	55-60	Design and Technology	Part time main-scale teacher	16-20
4	Helen	35-39	English	I.C Pupil Premium – previous Head of Faculty	10-15
5	Kathy	35-39	MFL	Head of Faculty	10-15

6	Sally	50-54	Maths	Previous Main-scale teacher – recently left to set up an online maths tuition business	16-20
7	Dan	55-59	Drama	Previous Assistant headteacher, recently left to start his own business	21-15
8	Annie	50-54	Engineering	Main-scale teacher	10-15
9	Eve	55-60	Design and Technology	Main-scale teacher	26-30
10	Pete	55-60	Design and Technology	Head of Pastoral	26-30
11	Matt	50-54	Design and Technology	Head of Careers	21-25
12	Cathy	35-39	Design and Technology	Part time main-scale teacher	10-15
13	Joe	35-39	SEND	Head of SEND	10-15
14	Lesley	35-39	Art	Main-scale teacher	10-15

Table 3 Semi structured interview group participants

Participants for interview were from geographically diverse areas in the UK, from both rural and city schools and were selected so that different subjects and teaching positions were represented, although it must be noted that there is a disproportion number of Design and Technology (n=5/14) teachers as this was the largest demographics to respond. This may be as

I am a member of this online group, and there was perhaps more 'buy in' from my subject peers although none were known to me personally. However, the broad term 'design and technology' encompasses several different subjects under this generic umbrella such as food technology, textiles and engineering. Furthermore, the five DT teachers that took part in the interviews held different managerial roles which provided a range of different perspectives which was desirable.

It was important to gather participants from not only different subject areas, but also from teachers who held different positions in schools; main-scale teachers, Head of Subject, Pastoral roles, and those with experience of senior leadership. Of the fourteen participants, two had previous SLT responsibilities, two were part-time, three were pastoral or special education, and three were Head of Faculty/Department. Two participants had recently left the profession; Dan had left an Assistant Head role four years ago to retain as a Blue Badge tour guide, and Sally had very recently left a main-scale teaching role to run an online maths tuition business. The gender balance was five males and nine females which was broadly representative of secondary school teachers in England with 38% of secondary school teachers being male, and 62% female (2021). With relevant permissions in place, participants were emailed and invited to book an appropriate time for interview.

3.4.2 **Questionnaire Design**

When conducted effectively questionnaires can elicit a wide range data about beliefs and opinions (Kasunic, 2005) and the benefits of adopting this method are that it has many important characteristics which lead to a rich source of information. By using a questionnaire

it was possible gather information from potential participants prior to the interviews however, questionnaires can have limitations (Harris & Brown, 2010).

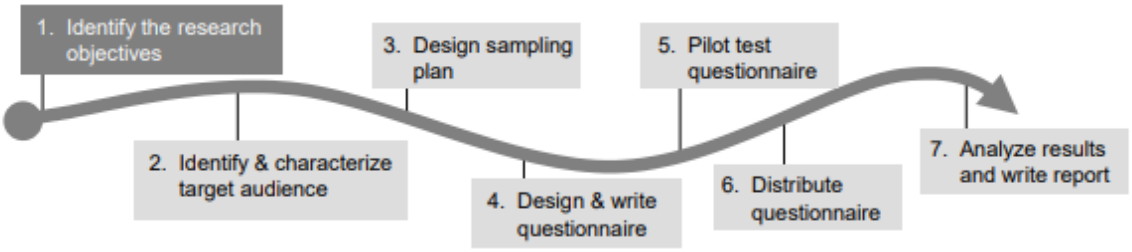


Figure 14 Survey Research Process (Kasunic, 2005).

As a novice researcher, using an established method for designing and implementing a questionnaire was prudent to ensure credibility. In order that the questionnaire would elicit robust data, and not draw out 'superficial' data, I used a trusted seven-step process to ensure a rigorous data set is collected which is outlined below in Figure 14 (Kasunic, 2005).

This process shows a linear progression from inception to analysis and provided a roadmap for the survey construction and implementation which was broadly followed. A pilot questionnaire was discussed with three mid-career teachers from my own school to provide quality assurance (Appendix A). Their feedback on the design of the survey was useful in the adaptation and improvement of the final questionnaire, such as correction of grammar errors and clarity of wording of questions. From the feedback of the pilot questionnaire, I was able to develop the format, eliminate human errors and clarify the wording so that the participants found it quick and easy to complete.

The questions were based on the review of literature and the conceptual framework and questions needed to be simple and straight-forward in their construction, allowing participants to respond quickly. Some of the questions were designed to gather demographic information such as age, gender, and subject taught. Further questions were designed to draw out data about how participants felt about their work, stress, CPL and career in such a way to ensure that large numbers of responses can be effectively managed and analysed in a time efficient manner. Questions that were non-dichotomous were given a Likert scale response option.

The questionnaire asked for information about how participants felt about particular aspects of their work, the autonomy they had in their work, how they were valued in their workplace. A free-text box was included to give participants an opportunity to offer further information as to why they were remaining or leaving the profession which may not have been possible through the questions alone (Garcia et al., 2004). It is acknowledged that free text can help researchers in drawing out further information from closed questions, however the limitations should be considered and not substituted for more in-depth data collection.

3.4.3 **Use of Likert scale**

The Likert scale was used for some questions as it is an established method of recording participants' responses and it is likely to produce a highly reliable data (Bertram, 2007). It allowed participants to give quantifiable responses which could be easily analysed and also provided a gauge of how strongly participants felt about a particular topic which was useful in the context of this research. The wording of the questions was carefully considered to ensure that respondents had a balanced range of response options which did not limit their ability to express their true responses. I used an odd number of response options with the Likert scale so

that participants could express a neutral response; to use an even number could be considered antithetical as it could force participants to give a false answer in the absence of a suitable option.

3.5 Semi-structured Interviews

The second method selected for gathering data was semi-structured interviews, which was the main source of data for this research. Interviews were an appropriate choice in this research as they have been used in a wide and varying qualitative research in many areas, (Dapeng & Weiwei, 2009; Fenech et al., 2019; Low, 2013; Nordgaard et al., 2012) and are frequently used in education research to understand why phenomena occur (Brown & Danaher, 2019; Kishita et al., 2018; Oplatka, 2018; Tyson, 1991). This qualitative method is considered an effective way of understanding personal experiences and provides the researcher with a lens through which participants can relay their stories and can allow 'participants to offer new meanings to the topic of study' (Galletta & Cross, 2013, p. 2). Furthermore, the use of interviews is considered to contribute to a body of knowledge that is both conceptual and theoretical and is based on the meanings that life experiences hold for the interviewees (Crabtree & DiCicco-Bloom, 2006, p. 314). At its very heart interviews are about listening, detail, nuance, and tone. As Connelly & Clandinin explain, 'by developing a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful', (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 45) the semi-structured interview approach can give a unique insight into phenomena.

Whilst semi-structured interviews have many ideal qualities for this type of research, there are some disadvantages of undertaking semi-structured interviews, (Adams, 2015) as the following passage reveals:

> SSIs are time-consuming, labour intensive, and require interviewer sophistication. Interviewers need to be smart, sensitive, poised, and nimble, as well as knowledgeable about the relevant substantive issues. The process of preparing for the interviews, setting up the interviews, conducting the interviews, and analysing the interviews is not nearly as quick and easy as you might think. The time and effort required to do all of it right is considerable. (Adams, 2015, p. 493).

Despite these drawbacks, semi-structured interviews were still the preferred option in this research due to the rich data they can provide, and some of the disadvantages were mitigated in this research; reducing time commitments by using Teams to conduct the interviews and circumventing manual transcription by using specialist software for example.

3.5.1 **Question development**

Questions for the semi-structured interviews were drawn from three sources: the literature review, the conceptual framework and the initial questionnaire results (Appendix B). For example, having identified that stress is a concern for mid-career teacher from the literature review, (and thus one element of the conceptual framework) as well as feedback from questionnaire participants, questions about stress were included in the interview agenda.

Wording the questions for the interviews required close consideration. To conduct effective interviews, participants must be put at ease and informal language was chosen to reflect a relaxed and open interview style in order that there was no 'inherent power imbalance' (Råheim et al., 2016, p. 1) between interviewer and interviewee. Consideration was also given to the use of open and closed questions. When interviewing, it is desirable to use open-ended questions to gather information and motivate respondents to be free to express their opinions in their using their own words (Züll, 2016), consequently the questions were designed to not only use relatable language but also to allow participants to give full responses in their own words.

3.5.2 **Questions prior to interview**

In preparation for interviews, careful consideration was given to whether to provide participants with the questions in advance of the interview. It could be argued that this diminishes the authenticity of the response as interviewees may give 'polished' answers (Shanlick, 2011), however, there is little guidance for researchers on this area of interview technique. After careful consideration it was decided that providing the questions to participants in advance may mitigate any anxiety for the cohort. The participants were therefore given the broad question themes prior to interview to allow them to consider their positionality with regard to the concepts under the spotlight in this research, (Appendix C). I used colloquial language and kept the questions deliberately broad to allow participants to consider their own responses rather than be prompted in any specific way. This served to put participants at ease and to reassure them that they were not going to be put 'on the spot' which could create anxiety. By making participants feel at ease I felt I would be in a strong position to draw out their authentic responses in the limited time available. Furthermore, had participants felt the thematic areas

were too personal or intrusive, they could withdraw from the interviews which would be the ethical course of action.

3.5.3 **Interview logistics**

Prior to the interviews, participants were contacted via the email address that they submitted in the questionnaire. With some negotiation between myself and the participants, a time was set for each interview which were conducted between February and March of 2021 via Microsoft Teams. These brief email exchanges were the start of the important rapport building (Prior, 2017) with the interviewees and meant that at interview, initial affiliation had already been made.

Participants were given the option of a face-to-face interview or a remote Teams meeting, however, with the social distancing rules in place during the interview time-frame Teams meetings were ultimately the only viable option. Teams is a cloud-based video conferencing tool which has a variety of useful features which makes it suitable for one-to-one interviews. As the 'owner' of the meeting, it was possible to control the meeting by starting and stopping the recording, storing the recording securely, and actioning a transcription from the recorded interview through Microsoft Stream. To use Teams, participants had to download the App, and respond to a link to access the online meeting. Prior to the Covid pandemic, the use of online tools for meetings was not prevalent in education settings. However, the global lockdown facilitated the necessity for educators to upskill and engage with video-conferencing which was beneficial as it reduced travel time to conduct face to face meetings, facilitated recording and transcription more readily, and it was possible to effectively schedule online meetings more efficiently.

By way of preparation, each participant's response from the initial questionnaire was reviewed so that I could get some background into their current situation. I also read any free-text information that may have been included in their original questionnaire, what their subject specialism was and what role they had in school all of which gave valuable information prior to interview. A paper copy was printed out to facilitate notetaking during interviews, which was effective. All interviews were conducted in English, with first language English speaking participants.

Once the Teams Meet had started, each interview began by introducing myself, thanking them for their time and reassuring them of the procedure and security of their information. Participants were told when recording would start and when it would end. An audio-visual recording was made for each interview, but the quality of some visual material was poor due to intermittent internet connections, but this did not interfere with the audio quality. During the interviews, I employed a reflective technique to judge whether additional prompts were needed during questioning to encourage participants to give further insights. However, in many cases this was not needed, as the participants were very open and responsive.

3.6 Thematic Analysis of Data

In this section, how the data was handled will be outlined. For this data set, as for all qualitative research, interpretation of the data is key and much consideration and careful planning was essential. The researcher needs to demonstrate to the reader that the narratives collected represent not simply the accuracy of events, but the meaning and impact of those events on the participants' experience (Polkinghorne, 2007). These accounts are termed 'narrative truths' as

opposed to ‘historical truths’ (Spence, 1982) and it is the researcher who ascribes meaning to those narratives. In this study, the nature of the data lent itself to a thematic analysis approach as this method allows for identification, analysis and interpreting ‘patterns of meaning’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86) of non-empirical data. There is some concern that thematic analysis is too ill defined to be a method (Ryan and Bernard 2000), however, Braun and Clarke attest that this method of data analysis should be seen as essential in understanding qualitative data and have developed a six-step process as a guide to ensure that the process is used effectively (Figure 15).

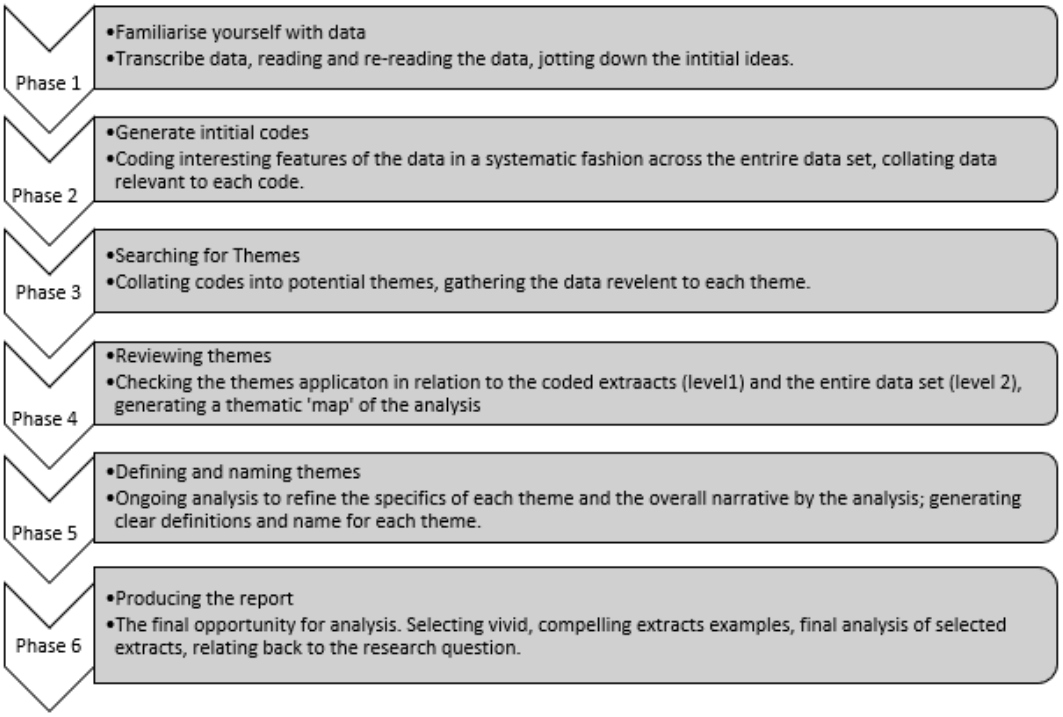


Figure 15 Braun and Clarke’s thematic analysis approach

Employing this method was an important foundation to underpin the critical analysis phase and I have presented a model to show how the 6 Phase analysis was used in the analysis of the data

as shown in Figure 16 which illustrates how the interview transcripts, notes from interviews, and themes were handled.

Figure 16 Process for data analysis of interviews based on Braun and Clarke model

3.6.1 **Transcription of interview data**

It is desirable to undertake transcription in a timely manner (McGrath et al., 2019), consequently each interview was transcribed within 24 hours of recording so that I could draw on my own reflections and by using notes taken during the interviews, any aspects of the interview transcript that were ambiguous or unclear could be easily clarified. By using the transcription feature in Teams, it was possible to get a quick first draft of the interviews. Ironically, the failure of the Teams transcription tool to provide perfect transcriptions proved beneficial as it was essential to listen to the interviews for a second and sometime third time, going through and making corrections to the auto-transcription. This process was time consuming but instilled a real understanding and connection with the data, which is beneficial, (McGrath et al., 2019).

The management of data transcription presents challenges to researchers, (Loubere, 2017; McLellan et al., 2003; Oliver et al., 2005) with the dichotomy of verbatim verses edited records being the primary concern (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006). The act of transcription refers to a written report of spoken dialogue that has taken place through interview. Some argue that the spoken word should not be the only aspect of an interview that is recorded, but also the non-verbal signals that are present during interview (Wellard & McKenna, 2001). As interviews were conducted via Teams meeting, referencing non-verbal signals was not reliable as the quality of the visual connection was not conducive to being able to see such signals.

To create a verbatim transcript requires the researcher to log every aspect of the interview; each pause, length of pause, 'filler' language, such as 'err', 'um,' and any grammatically incorrect words. In this research, rather than accept the verbatim approach to data handling, responses were cleaned to ensure accessibility and readability whilst still presenting a reliable account of teachers' words and meanings (Allen, 2017). In creating a clean transcript, only irrelevant information would be omitted, for example 'hang on a minute while I let the dog out', or 'my phone's not working properly'. The process of cleaning the raw data was time-consuming, however, as a novice researcher, it was an invaluable experience which gave opportunities to become immersed in the data.

As previously stated, when cleaning the data, it was necessary to remove some irrelevant text, however, it was a mindful process of word elimination, and was only done to clarify meaning and not to change validity and reliability of the responses. One example would be where one participant has a strong regional accent and used the word 'us' when referring to himself. This

could cause some confusion when reading outside of the context of the whole interview, so I adjusted this from ‘us’ to ‘I’ to ensure clarification that he was referring to himself and not to the plural. This was done with no disrespect to the regional accent. Another participant tended to stop mid-sentence and talk about something quite different, then return to the original theme. It was necessary to eliminate the middle section as it clouded the point she was making. This is an example of the editing process:

Original script

> ‘We do a lot of it in school, CPL, which generally don't feel helps, particularly with the career, and...that, that would bring us back to the ladder climbers. I've had two-hour Twilight session run by, you know, after teaching… that… I'd been teaching then for 14 years.. I've been teaching then, and the teacher running this was an English teacher in the second year of teaching and then what she was telling me how like teaching and learning strategies and then sorry, sorry it's ‘learning and teaching’ strategies.’ (Mark)

This is not easy to read, but during the context of the spoken conversation it was easy and very natural to follow the points he was making. However, I edited the transcript for the purposes of the final report so that the reader could easily access his narrative.

> ‘We do a lot of it in school, (CPL) which I generally don't feel helps, particularly with the career…that would bring me back to the ladder climbers. I've had a two-hour Twilight session, (I'd been teaching then for 14 years) ...and the teacher running this was an English teacher in the second year of teaching and she was telling me

'Teaching and Learning' strategies and then…. Sorry, sorry it's 'Learning and Teaching' strategies' (Mark)

The 'cleaned' version of this transcript retains all the key information from the interview yet makes it much easier to read but critically retains the validity of the data.

3.6.2 **Use of interview notes**

Having generated transcripts of the interview, it was possible to read them though side by side with the notes taken during interview (Figure 17). This process elicited broad themes which were taken as a starting point for generation of final themes for analysis.

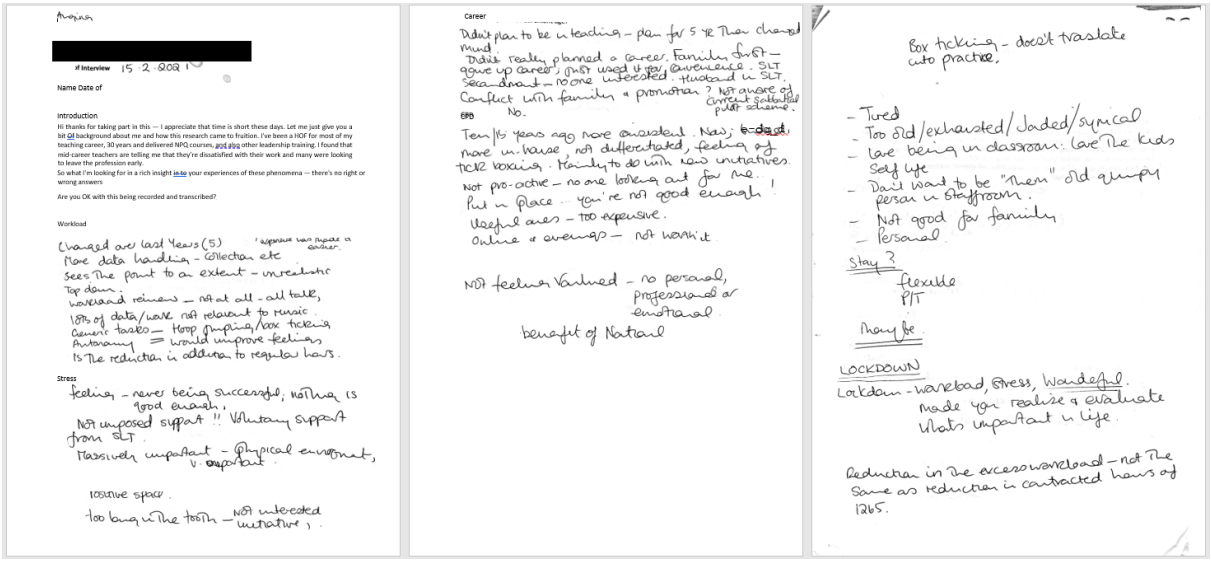


Figure 17 Notes taken during interview (sample)

Use of software in managing qualitative data has many advantages over manual analysis (Denardo & Levers, 2002) as it primarily gives the researcher a tool to organize and group data into themes which can then be reviewed, and connections made between those themes. Nvivo 12 is a common program used by researchers to organize data which can then be analysed

quickly and effectively, and by using this software it was possible to import data sets and create nodes (themes) as the data was reviewed.

It was essential to review some of the contextual data surrounding the text to ensure that the meaning was not lost or taken in isolation (Bryman, 2001) and reference back to original notes, and on some occasions, the original recorded interview was necessary. On the interview notes sheet physical symptoms of stress, themes and phrases were recorded on each participant's sheet so that these 'nuggets' could be referred to in order to provide a contextual snapshot of that narrative. One example of understanding the context was the phrase 'I drink too much' which was written on one note sheet. Was the participant being flippant or even comical about a situation or did they actually report that their job made them drink too much? Reading the transcript offered little in the way of clarifying this so it was necessary to revisit the recorded interview. This revealed a tone of voice and pauses which confirmed that the participant was not being flippant, and that this was an admission that drinking was a coping mechanism. This was then coded under 'physical symptoms of stress'.

By drawing out common themes from the data it was possible to group these together to build up patterns which could explain or shed light on the phenomena under scrutiny. Themes identified from my hand-written notes during interview were checked against the in-data coding in Nvivo to ensure that all the data was represented.

3.6.3 **Generating themes**

Key phrases from the interview transcripts were considered and assigned a node (theme) based on the narrative and context. By reflecting and being fully immersed in the data, it was possible

to develop these nodes in an iterative manner. It was during the analysis of first few interviews that most nodes were developed, and at the end of the data analysis, saturation point was reached when 'new information is no longer emerging from data collection, new coding is not feasible, and/or no new themes are emerging' (Johnson et al., 2020, p. 141).

Grouping data into themes was an essential phase of the data analysis. This was a critical phase that required grouping nodes together to form broad themes around the fundamental conceptual and theoretical foundations of the research and sixteen different nodes were initially assigned to the data with four child nodes.

The data shown in Figure 18 shows the nodes and child-nodes assigned after reading through the transcripts. The 'files' refer to individual transcripts from which data was taken, and the 'references' denotes how many times the theme was mentioned.

Nodes

Name	Files	References
SLT and management	12	55
Imposed tasks and autonomy	13	52
Stress and professional identity	13	50
Physical symptoms of stress	12	32
Workload	10	31
Professional development	12	45
Government initiatives	9	24
Career	7	24
Flexible working	3	7
Ofsted	7	11
Family and career	7	10
Enjoy teaching the pupils	7	10
Reasons for leaving	5	9
Good intentions v actions	5	7
Flexible working	6	17
Taking ownership of work	4	6
Working environment	4	5
External perceptions	4	4
Unrealistic deadlines	1	3
Reactive	1	1

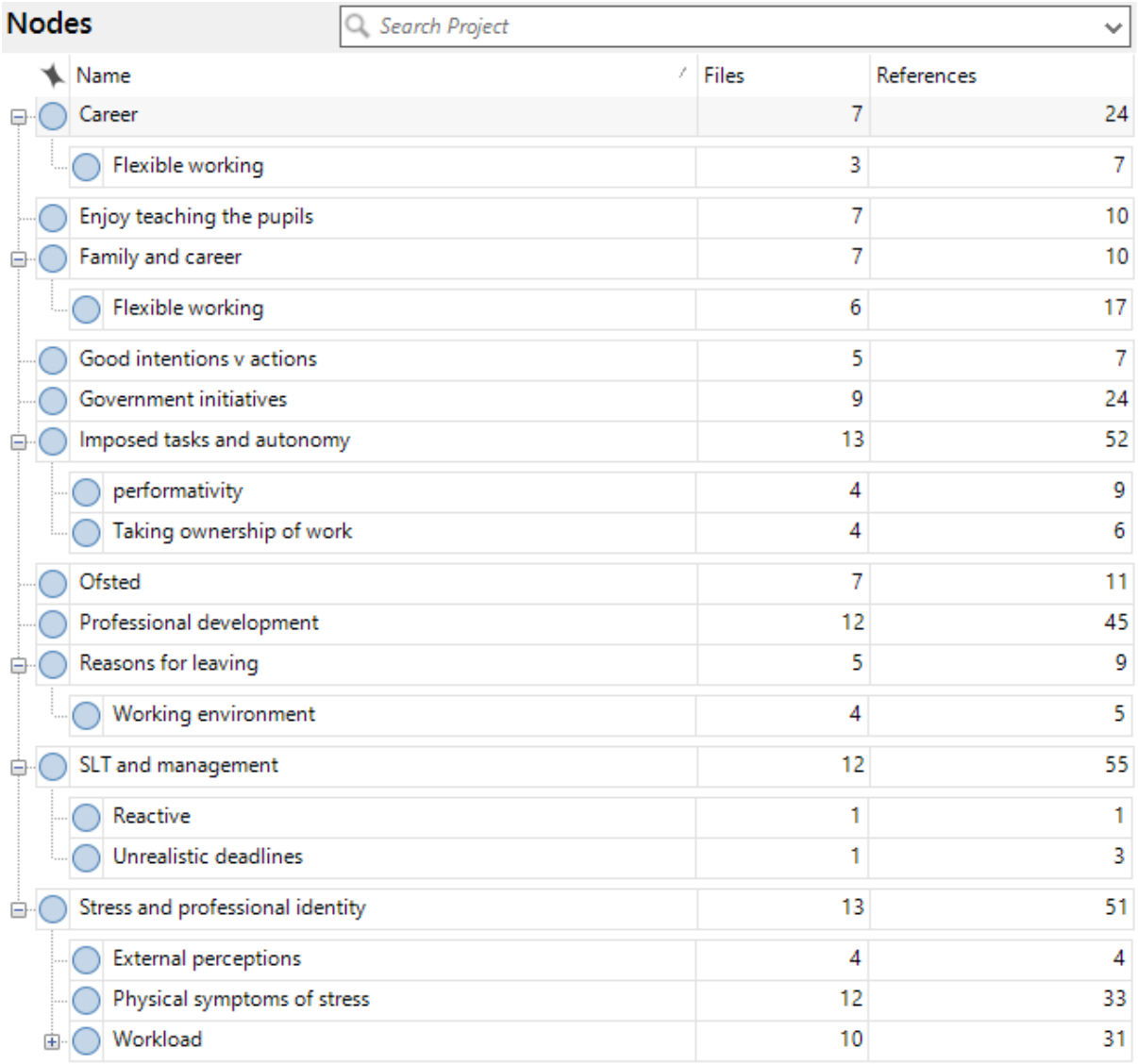
Figure 18 Coding of semi-structured interview data

3.6.4 **Reviewing Themes**

Having collated the data under thematic nodes, a thorough review of the data was undertaken by reading the narratives under each node to see if these original nodes could be reduced further. For example, Carole reported dissatisfaction with an imposed 'reactionary approach' to her work, highlighting that she is often asked for things at the last minute. As this participant's data was one of the first to be coded, I had created a node 'Reactive' as it was anticipated that this theme could come up again. However, as the coding process continued, this concept was better placed under the 'SLT and Management' node as this 'last minute' approach was a result

of poor organisation by her leadership team. Therefore the 'Reactive' node was merged with 'SLT and Management'.

Nodes and themes were revisited multiple times, actioning a multi-layered analysis throughout this process. I also revisited the notes I had taken during interview as it was important that no data was omitted; reading through the notes, after the transcripts were coded provided an additional layer of credibility to this process as shown in Figure 19.



Name	Files	References
Career	7	24
Flexible working	3	7
Enjoy teaching the pupils	7	10
Family and career	7	10
Flexible working	6	17
Good intentions v actions	5	7
Government initiatives	9	24
Imposed tasks and autonomy	13	52
performativity	4	9
Taking ownership of work	4	6
Ofsted	7	11
Professional development	12	45
Reasons for leaving	5	9
Working environment	4	5
SLT and management	12	55
Reactive	1	1
Unrealistic deadlines	1	3
Stress and professional identity	13	51
External perceptions	4	4
Physical symptoms of stress	12	33
Workload	10	31

Figure 19 Final themes (nodes) and sub themes (child nodes)

Having assigned thematic nodes to the data, it was then possible to begin a holistic analysis of the data, and to get clarity on emerging themes and patterns. This process involved reviewing data from the nodes and revisiting the transcripts and notes to ensure that context and meaning were accurate. This thematic analysis exemplified how themes crossed over and connected with other themes. For example, the concept of 'unnecessary work' connected to many other themes. If we take the example given by one participant; they spoke about frustration of a CPL session run by an inexperienced co-worker. This one task connected to workload, (time required to do the task), SLT (frustration that school leaders were asking for perceived futile tasks to be completed), Performativity (School leaders were focused on getting evidence that CPL was being delivered to hit a specific target) and Professional identity (the mid-career teacher was frustrated that their time was being directed inappropriately, leaving him feeling like a 'worker' not a professional). There were many connections made between these themes in this data corpus which made it very challenging to analyse themes in isolation, yet that in itself was an important insight into the phenomenon.

3.7 Quality Criteria

If this research is to be of use in the academic and education community it was imperative to produce a robust and competent study. Qualitative research does not conform to empirical strategies for analysis, and relies on descriptive, experiential accounts to explain phenomena and often attracts criticism for lacking rigor and being 'merely an assembly of anecdotes and personal impressions' (Mays & Pope, 1995). However, there is a large body of literature to counteract this premise (Cho & Trent, 2006; Kvale, 1989; Noble & Smith, 2015) which suggests that qualitative data requires an alternative criterion for judging data; credibility,

transferability, dependability and conformability (Majid & Vanstone, 2018). These will now be discussed in turn.

3.7.1.1 Credibility

To ensure credibility in qualitative research, the participants' voice should be authentic and legitimate. The credibility of this research was established through reviewing existing literature which was then used to inform the research design. In doing so, it was possible to establish that the research questions were credible and would allow for robust responses to be gathered. Furthermore, by using an embedded mixed methodology it was possible to get a clear insight into the phenomenon from two different sources: a questionnaire and subsequent interviews. Recording and transcribing this data was conducted with the intention of recording the participants data accurately. Using thematic analysis with references to original interview transcripts, notes taken during interviews, and results of the questionnaire, the participants' voice was accurately represented throughout the process. Interview participants all gave permission for their dialogue to be recorded to ensure that an accurate record existed of their interview.

3.7.1.2 Transferability

By faithfully reporting the details of how this research was carried out, further research could be conducted in the same manner using different contexts. This study focused on four themes (workload, stress, career and professional identity); however, other themes could be used in future research (such as impact of pupil behaviour on mid-career teachers' decisions to leave the profession) which could add to the understanding of teacher attrition. Furthermore, this study could be used by other researchers to transfer in different contexts. For example, this data

collection process could be transferred to focus on beginning teachers, late career teachers or teachers in private schools. However, it would be for that researcher to make a judgement on how effective this transfer would be.

3.7.1.3 Dependability

Dependability in research refers to the reliability and consistency of the research findings and is reliant on clear documentation that will allow outsiders to audit and critique the research process. The qualitative researcher can ensure dependability by describing the changes that occur in a given setting, and how these changes affect the way these settings impact the outcomes. The global pandemic is one such example of this. It could be argued that the results were affected by the uniquely challenging environment that teachers found themselves in during the pandemic, and if the research was conducted again, would those same teachers give the same responses? A clear account of the research process has been documented which will stand up to external scrutiny.

3.7.1.4 Conformability

Each qualitative researcher brings their own interpretation of results to a study, and there are strategies used to ensure these results could be corroborated by others. By documenting methods used, thoroughly checking and re-checking data, putting forward counter arguments to interpretation of results, all ensure a high degree of conformability. In this study data was actively cross-referenced with interview transcripts to mitigate bias and distortion.

Taking a more holistic approach to qualitative validity, when the data collection and analysis was imminent I looked to Denscombe for guidance (Denscombe, 1998) and by following a tried and tested method it was possible to ensure that this study was as authentic as possible.

Additionally, Kasunic's Survey research process was used to guide the questionnaire development and Braun and Clarke's six step thematic analysis (see methodology chapter) as starting points for data analysis of the semi-structured interviews to ensure that my methods were rigorous.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical codes of practice exist to ensure that research can be carried out without harm to the participants and is a fundamental moral obligation of all researchers to demonstrate our respect for participants and to follow these codes robustly. Full ethical approval was sought prior to any contact with participants and data collection (Appendix D). Several considerations are attributed to conducting ethical research; privacy and confidentiality, protection from harm, avoidance of conflict of interest, avoidance of deception, providing information debriefing, informed consent and privacy and anonymity (Smythe & Murray, 2000) which will each be addressed in turn.

3.8.1.1 Protection from harm

This research asked teachers to reflect on their own positionality within the profession and share their feelings and stories about whether they have considered leaving the profession prior to retirement age. The fundamental question in this research is addressing a phenomenon that surrounds a negative positionality; that of attrition. When asking participants to reveal their personal experiences, it could be expected that negative emotions and feelings are brought to the fore which may be problematic for the participants. Addressing feelings of dissatisfaction may further exacerbate any negativity or distress they potentially already hold which must be considered. It had to be anticipated that this research could stir negative emotions and draw

teachers to consider leaving the profession where they may not have previously done so. It is prudent to acknowledge that the nature of personal interview requires participants to recall both positive and negative stories from their lived experiences and these could cause potential psychological harm. In this study a key concept was that of stress, which would require participants to reveal how (and if) they are suffering from negative stress which may bring an emotional response. In order to mitigate this harm, participants were well informed about the process prior to interview, and were sent the thematic questions prior to interview. In doing so, participants were given opportunities to withdraw from the interviews if they felt uneasy with the process.

To ask participants if they could give up an hour of their time was a dichotomy; the focus for the research was attrition on teachers and participation would require an hour of their valuable time which could compound any potential stress and feelings of being overwhelmed. In order to allay this stress, email contact was made with participants prior to interview to try to build rapport and to provide reassurance that they had the option to withdraw at any time and providing the questions prior to interview gave interviewees the opportunity to have transparency around the process. The use of Teams has the benefit of a very clear time allocation, and participants were made aware that the interview was booked for one hour maximum with no running over.

3.8.1.2 Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity.

The initial questionnaire required a time commitment from participants, and a clear outline of what would be expected needed to be presented in a declaration of intent and consent. This was linked to the declaration as a hyperlink, and all participants accepted this declaration prior to

completing the questionnaire, (Appendix E). Reassurance that all data would be confidential, and stored in accordance with University of Reading's confidentiality policy was essential in order to gain the trust of participants.

Maintaining confidentiality is essential in research (Polit & Beck, 2016) therefore, when quoting from the interview data I used pseudonyms to reference the participants. Where direct quotes have been taken from the initial questionnaire a similar anonymised identifier has been used with a prefix SP followed by a unique number. This differentiates the quotations from interview with those from the initial questionnaire who were referred to by a pseudonym.

3.8.1.3 Avoidance of deception

The following quotation exemplifies the importance of avoiding deception in research:

> Deception most obviously violates the principle of respect, by depriving prospective participants the opportunity to make an informed choice regarding the true nature of their participation.(Alasuutari et al., 2008, p. 101).

From the outset, participants were informed of the nature of the study and what their commitment would involve, via the standard protocols from the University of Reading (Appendix F). Participants were given information prior to both the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews which explained what the aim of the research was, what thematic questions would be asked, and were informed that they could withdraw at any time through the written information and consent process.

3.9 Positionality as a research-practitioner

The role of the interviewer is critical in the process of data collection and the researcher must have a sound understanding of 'what is already known' about the topic for research so that they are best placed to shape discourse and practice within that field (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 33); in this instance as a research-practitioner.

Practitioner-research has been defined as a 'blanket term that encompasses many different traditions, movements and methodologies' (Ellis, 2016, p. 123) and although this type of research is less traditional than non-practiced based enquiry it is acknowledged that research-practitioners can provide effective interrogation of praxis through their own reflections in the field under scrutiny. There are benefits of being immersed in the phenomenon, such as having a unique position to explore highly sensitive problems which could not be done by a non-specialist in the field (Coupal, 2005).

As a practicing mid-career teacher, my position is thus one of a 'research-practitioner' and it is acknowledged from the outset that I would not be detached from this research and would have an empathetic understanding of the mid-career teacher's position. However, to conduct this research appropriately, it required constant self-reflection to ensure that I was responding appropriately to the data and ensured that I did not unduly influence the interpretation of the data (Van Heugten, 2004). My own experiences have formed personal beliefs about why mid-career teachers are leaving the profession and my own thoughts of leaving prior to normal retirement age inevitably influence my own perceptions on why other mid-career teachers may be considering leaving. This is congruent with the interpretive position that underpins this research. However, it is acknowledged that my own reasons for considering ending my career

before retirement age, may not be generalised and when framing this research, it was critical to not impose personal beliefs on others which would not only be unethical, but also affect the authenticity of the research outcomes. This was counteracted by ensuring that the questions were based on existing literature and the responses from the initial survey.

As a practicing teacher sharing the same lived experiences as my participants, it was anticipated that a high level of engagement with my peers could be made. Judgements can be made from an 'insiders' perspective, which could be seen as beneficial. It is this immersion in the reality of the environment that gives me an advantage in drawing out useful data, and the ability to seek answers to the most prevalent questions which non-specialists may not be able to do so effectively.

3.10 Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the methodology for this research, giving details of questionnaire design, semi-structured interview design and how existing strategies were employed to ensure a robust data corpus was collected. Ethical issues have also been addressed in this section. An outline of how the thematic analysis was conducted has been presented with an explanation of how the final themes were drawn out from the data. In the following chapters, the data will be presented followed by a discussion of each theme.

Chapter 4 Data Analysis – Initial Questionnaire

This research attempted to explore reasons for attrition in mid-career teachers against a neoliberal background, and through the literature review four concepts were used to frame this study: workload, stress, career and professional identity. An embedded mixed-methodology was used to gather data from two sources: an online survey and then fourteen semi-structured interviews. The purpose of conducting an initial questionnaire was to draw out broad themes from the participant group which would then form the basis for the questions for the face-to-face interviews. The questionnaire was designed to seek reassurance that the four proposed concepts were still relevant to the phenomenon of teacher attrition.

The foci for gathering primary data through the questionnaire were:

1. To establish to what extent mid-career teachers are considering leaving the profession
2. To check that the research was in line with the suggested concepts put forward for the research and to provide reassurance that those concepts (as highlighted in the literature review) were still relevant with current mid-career teachers by gathering data on:
    - How participants feel about the work they currently undertake
    - How stress impacts their working lives
    - What experiences mid-career teachers have with CPL
    - How teachers see the development of their careers

The practical requirements for this questionnaire were:

1. To access as many mid-career teachers as possible in a three-week window
2. The questionnaire should not be time consuming to complete
3. To recruit participants (n=12-15) for the second stage of data collection

The first nine questions of the questionnaire were related to gathering demographic data such as age, gender, and what subject was primarily taught. There was range of participants (n=119) in terms of age and number of years teaching with the majority working at MATs, 27% from Local Authority maintained schools, and the remainder from other school types such as free schools. A total of 12 subjects were represented in this questionnaire however, there was a significant majority who taught design and technology. This may have been due to my membership of this social media group, however, when selecting participants for interview I was able to gather data from a range of other subject teachers. At the end of the questionnaire I inserted a free text box and gave teachers opportunities to add additional reasons for why they may be considering leaving (or remaining) in the profession. I have included one free-text data capture which exemplifies the responses I received.

> I feel that the way teachers are being seen as it is now our job to be everything from a teacher to a social worker. I love being in the classroom teaching my subject but with government moving the goal post all the time and headteachers pandering rather than supporting their staff who are qualified professionals and trusting them to do their job. Instead we get constant scrutiny and made feel like no matter what we do it is never good enough. It just feels like we are dammed if we do and dammed if we don't. (SP046)

The data from the questionnaire affirmed that 76% (n=88) of participants were considering leaving teaching prior to retirement age with accountability, changing government initiatives and onerous tasks strong elements in their decisions to remain or leave in the profession. Results

also confirmed that 71% (n=81) of participants reported that stress played a large part in their decision to stay or leave the profession, with 35% (n=41) citing stress as a major issue for them. The majority of participants (n=77) reported sporadic access to effective CPL, yet just 25% stated that improved opportunities for CPL would positively influence their decision to remain in the profession.

The questionnaire provided a useful source of information that was obtained quickly and easily over the course of a few days in January 2021. To summarize the finding, the participants reported that the following themes were present in their working lives and were contributing to their desire to leave the profession prior to retirement age; workload, stress, accountability, poor career opportunities and sporadic professional development. Poor pupil behaviour was raised as a factor with 51% of survey participants citing this as a reason that contributed to their decision to remain or leave the profession. Rather than add this as a fifth concept to the research, it was decided that this could come under the concept of 'stress' and was thus not added to the conceptual framework. Similarly, the lack of autonomy survey participants experienced was prevalent in the free-text response section and this was a factor that I would be looking for in interview responses.

This data supported the conceptual basis for the research and informed the subsequent development of the interview questions. Further reference on the data from the questionnaire will be brought into the discussions on each of the concepts in the following chapters.

Chapter 5 Data Analysis and discussion- Workload

This chapter will be the first of three which will present the data taken from the semi-structured interviews which will then be followed by a discussion of the findings. In this first section, data will be explored that sought to address the first research question, the data will be analysed and then a discussion will be presented drawing on the underpinning theory and conceptual framework of this study.

Research Question 1 How does workload impact teachers' decisions to leave the profession?

During thematic analysis of the interview transcripts, the concept of 'work' did not generate a separate node as participants did not speak explicitly about work as a separate entity. Instead, their experiences in relation to the work they do were drawn through a range of different concepts and six sub-themes were identified with relation to their workload:

1. Number of hours worked
2. Feelings of guilt,
3. Unnecessary work,
4. Imposed work and interruption,
5. Work at local level
6. Government interventions.

5.1.1 **Hours worked**

From the initial questionnaire 64% (n=76) of respondents stated that workload was impacting and/or seriously impacting their wellbeing, with just 30% satisfied with the tasks they

undertake. Each of the semi-structured interviewees reported that workload was a concern yet just two participants cited the number of working hours per se as concerning as the following excerpt demonstrates:

> But you know, essentially I could work 65-70 hours a week as I'm sure you could, and, and there would probably still be things that they actually I don't….I don't cover. So, I guess those are the biggest things. Communication I think is this massive, absolutely huge. (Kathy)

Having expressed that she could work 60-70 hours a week, Kathy did not cite any specific tasks undertaken, but went on to explain that 'Communication' was 'absolutely huge' which suggests that for her, the workload was intrinsically linked to communication within the school, and this could suggest that the 'communication' is as much of an issue for Kathy as the hours worked. Kathy also stated that some work doesn't get covered, which is her strategy to balance her wellbeing. Similarly, a second participant cited working 80 hours plus, but was able to address this by 'kicking back' and not doing some of the required tasks:

> I used to, you know, in the first of five years as Head of Department, I was probably working 80 plus hours a week, but I think as I was getting older I just thought all this is this is not right…I don't have time to do it and this is the reason why.. so I started to sort of kick back a little bit. And just say, ur, well, I'm not doing this. If you, you know you can't just have the cake and eat it. (Matt)

The ambiguity around hours worked was paralleled in the data from the initial questionnaire; of the 119 respondents, there were only three who discussed actual hours worked via the Free Text comment box. The generic reference to 'workload' was reported in a similar way by the questionnaire participants who talked about work in relation to how this had a physical effect on them, rather than the hours worked: 'Work/life balance is causing depression-like feelings' (SP206)

5.1.2 **Feelings of guilt**

Four participants reported that rather than simply work more hours, they have taken the professional decision to manage their work by omitting some of the tasks they are required to do in order to maintain a reasonable work/life balance. However, this was reported to come at a cost as participants acknowledge that they feel unsuccessful because they cannot manage the work:

> I think it's this feeling of never being, successful. Feeling that nothing that I ever do is good enough. (Carole)

This feeling of never being 'good enough' was echoed by Dan who highlighted the pressures of dealing with multiple tasks at one time. Having been an assistant headteacher, he was very aware that much of his time was spent managing other members of staff who were stressed, and this had an impact not only on his own stress-levels but the quality of work he could do. The data suggested a connection between work and feelings of frustration, stress, not being 'good enough' and not solely the number of hours worked. Despite trying to manage their work, many of the participants felt that they were unable to be successful in their roles.

5.1.3 **Unnecessary work**

All participants reported dissatisfaction with having to do work that they felt was unnecessary, and this brought about feelings of frustration. The following quotation describes how, despite a lighter workload than some other subjects, perceived low-value tasks were required which made the task of marking mock examination papers much more time-consuming:

> ..and then providing the feedback to the students in a way that was more 'ticking a box' to prove that we were doing it rather than just doing it, so it was a very, very time-consuming administrative task. (Sally)

The frustration in this instance was the 'tick box' approach in their professional practice, not the requirement of the activity itself. This perceived unnecessary work was cited as the biggest factor from the questionnaire respondents with 81% of participants reporting that moderately or significantly impacted their decision to remain or leave the profession.

5.1.4 **Imposed additional work and interruption**

A common thread which was referenced by thirteen of the fourteen interview participants was that of additional work being expected at short notice or without consideration to time available to do that work. This was not work that was too challenging, but it was the manner in which this additional work was presented to them for action with the expectation that teachers will 'just take it'.

> So we're still teaching 34 out of 50 lessons and we've got all this additional work and we don't get time to do it. And you've got all of the other things as well, and somehow that workload seems to just

> be piled on and on and on, and the expectation is that we just take it. (Karl)

Further examples were evident which demonstrated the frustration felt by doing work which was expected in a very short time frame. The following participant explained that they are not able to fully utilise their time because they are being directed to do other work:

> there was never enough time to do planning because there was so much time that was directed. (Annie)

Participants reported the 'futility' of tasks that they are asked to do, and 're-hashing' initiatives which took unnecessary time out of their busy day. Three teachers reported that many of the 'new' strategies, were re-worked from previous years, and there was dissatisfaction that it even though they hadn't worked before, they were expected to try to re-engage with them for a second time.

> I mean, it's an old story isn't it that if you feel if you've been teaching long enough, you'll see things come in, go out and come back again and I do get the sense of that now. (Eve)

Despite a predominantly negative narrative about their work, seven of the respondents saw value in some of the work they do, despite the additional hours required, and had positive feelings about this aspect of their job:

> I think we do a much better job now educationally than we ever did in the 90s in in terms of tracking work.. for their predicted grades, etc. I think.. I think that's positive. I think that it does it make more

> work, yes it does, but I think it does make us more accountable. And I think that's generally a positive thing for education. (Pete)

Pete acknowledged that the new reporting system is more time consuming, but he believed that it is worthwhile, which he described as a positive. He went further by qualifying how he was happy to work excessive hours to complete work that was 'valuable':

> ..so I put a lot of work into stuff that I think is worth doing. Um, even if it's extra-curricular.. so you know, I don't mind investing huge amount of time in my 145 year nine students that will take the Battlefields 'cause I.. I see the educational value in that. (Pete)

The concept of 'workload' for Pete was intrinsically linked to 'value' of the work undertaken (in this case a trip to the first world war battlefields).

5.1.5 **Handling workload at local level**

Three interview participants referred to workload reduction strategies in their schools, and whilst some school leaders made attempts to reduce workload, they were not always successful as the following excerpt demonstrates:

> There's a lot of talk about workloads I really believe that my school is considering workload, but the reality of the situation is they will say that 'we're really conscious about your workload..we really don't want you spending hours on this, but you gotta do it in now! (Carole)

None of the participants felt that their workload had reduced in recent years which is in contrast to the Government's data which suggests a national reduction in workload of teachers and middle leaders (DfE, 2019e). Furthermore, no participants were aware of any initiatives to reduce workload such as the workload reduction toolkit (DfE, 2018j).

5.1.6 **Government interventions and impact on workload**

All participants were vocal about how the Government initiatives were responsible for an increased workload. Changes to the Department of Education's advice on marking, and the 2014 national curriculum restructure have been filtered down through schools and this work has given participants increased pressures. This was echoed in the initial questionnaire with 74% of the cohort citing a moderate or significant impact of government initiatives as a reason for wanting to leave the profession:

> But you know, the government things just get landed and then we seem to have this explosion in school, you know there's a new initiative and now we all need to jump through all these hoops and create this and do that and do the other. But actually, what's the purpose of it? (Kathy)

There was a perception among the participants that there were 'mixed messages' between Ofsted requirements and the daily expectations within schools in terms of recording evidence:

> I know that Ofsted inspectors don't want this level of data collection, nor does the government. [The workload] is driven by fearful middle management and Heads with not enough control over them. (Eve)

Three participants spoke of Ofsted using words like ‘fearful’, ‘scared’ and ‘terrified’ whilst two other interviewees describe how they are able to separate Ofsted from their working practice, with one suggesting ‘rightly or wrongly we tend to put in an Ofsted suitcase you get it out once every, four or five years. You jump through the hoops that are set.’(Pete). Four teachers noted that despite Ofsted’s directives they are not required to adhere to specific marking strategies, but they were still expected to have detailed paperwork to hand for review which caused frustration in some of the cohort.

5.2 Discussion – Workload

Research question 1 How does workload impact teachers’ decisions to leave the profession?

In this section of the chapter, I will present a discussion through the lens of Labour Process Theory and draw out key finding to establish how participants view the work they do and how this impacts decisions to leave the profession.

The data suggests that the concept of ‘workload’ is complex and multi-faceted and raises a number of issues. When talking about the concept of ‘work’ participants spoke with frustration about feelings of dissatisfaction that linked very closely with other factors hiding behind the generalised term ‘workload’ such as value of work, how work is directed and what level of control participants have over their work.

5.2.1 Time and motion or time and emotion?

The literature review highlights the universal problem of excessive teacher workload (Bubb & Earley, 2004; Ingvarson et al., 2005; Johnstone, 1993; Lemaire, 2009; Naylor, 2001; Peter

Sellen, 2016; Sugden, 2010) yet the participants in this research did not report 'workload' per se in their narratives, instead, they broke this concept down into different 'chunks' and talked about how they felt when doing (or being asked to do) tasks. Only two interview participants cited the number of working hours as being detrimental in their working lives, whilst others talked about their work in terms of the way their work is allocated, the lack of time allowed to do tasks, and the perceived futility of some tasks that were given which led to feeling de-professionalised. One participant said:

> The school I am working in now has far less workload but to be honest, I still feel very undervalued and feel like I could be replaced very easily, (PS184)

This acknowledgement that even with a reduced workload, negative feelings were still prevalent. Data from this research suggests that teachers work hard and invest a significant amount of time and emotional energy into their work, and often describe their work through feelings; 'exhaustion', 'love', 'worthlessness', 'fear', and not units of time. In order to manage her workload, one participant stated that she 'stops caring about things' such was the emotional input that was required to do her work. These emotions extended to feelings of guilt for some participants, who experienced a tension between wanting to be successful in their professional work but felt unable to achieve this.

This could suggest that workload is not solely linked to hours worked but is a much more complex phenomenon. This is supported by a recent TALIS report (Jerrim & Sims, 2019, p. 90) which suggested that teachers feel that they spend too much time marking and doing administration tasks, however they also report that they would be willing to spend more time

on extra-curricular activities and professional training, echoing the suggestion that the concept of 'workload' is not about hours, but something more. This was congruent with Pete's narrative when he described how he was happy to put in hours of time organising an enrichment trip to the Battlefields. Similarly one questionnaire participants reported positive feelings about work:

> I've found a school where although my workload has increased I'm allowed to do it without too much oversight. (PS524)

The evidence suggests that teachers are willing to invest more time in their work if they see value in that work and can work autonomously, and yet the data in this research shows that they are not able to do this due to the directives from their line managers.

5.2.2 **Differing perceptions of work**

In order to frame further discussion about the data gathered on the concept of 'work' from the cohort, it is useful to understand how this sits with policy-makers who are attempting to redress the problem of excessive workload in the profession through the workload reduction toolkit (DfE, 2018j). In doing so it is possible to explore the tensions between government policy development and the day-to-day experiences of mid-career teachers and to uncover possible reasons for the workload paradox, as outlined in the literature review.

There is evidence that the workload reduction toolkit has proved to be effective in reducing some aspects of teacher workload in pilot schools where trials were conducted (DfE, 2018e), yet none of the participants in this research had knowledge of the toolkit, and therefore it is not possible to ascertain whether this would have been beneficial to their own workload. However,

in exploring the concept of how the DfE is attempting to address the excessive workload is of interest.

.

Drawing from the workload reduction toolkit and the Teacher Workload Survey (DfE, 2019e) it is suggested that current policy-makers see the work teachers do as a series of tasks as Table 5 demonstrates (DfE, 2018j) whereas the data from this research suggests that participants see their work in a different, more holistic and emotional way as outlined in the previous section.

The table below was created using information taken from the Department of Education's workload reduction toolkit. The dissection of teachers work into component parts, could be paralleled to the Taylorist concept that tasks are informed by scientific investigation i.e. the breaking down work into specific, specialist tasks.

Workload Reduction Toolkit
Individual planning or preparation of lessons either at school or out of school
Teamwork and dialogue with colleagues within this school
Marking/correcting pupils' work
Pupil counselling (including career guidance and virtual counselling)
Pupil supervision and tuition outside of timetabled lessons (including lunch supervision)
Pupil discipline including detentions
Participation in school management
General administrative work (including communication, paperwork, work emails and other clerical duties you undertake in your job)
Communication and co-operation with parents or guardians

Engaging in extracurricular activities (e.g. sports and cultural activities after school)
Cover for absent colleagues within school's timetabled day
Appraising, monitoring, coaching, mentoring and training other staff
Contact with people or organisations outside of school other than parents
Organising resources and premises, setting up displays, setting up/tidying classrooms
Timetabled tutor time and related activities (secondary only)
Staff meetings
School policy development and financial planning
Recording, inputting, monitoring and analysing data in relation to pupil performance and for other purposes
Planning, administering and reporting on pupil assessments
Other activities (you may wish to specify)

Table 4Individual tasks of teachers from the Teacher workload reduction toolkit

Having broken down teachers' work into discrete tasks, the toolkit guidance suggests that managers ask teachers which task/s could be removed without impacting outcomes for pupils. The inference is that by reducing 'tasks' workload will decrease with a desirable outcome for teachers in terms of freeing up time. However, by expecting that pupil outcomes must not change, it could be suggested that this is a reflection Braverman's assertion that managers seek to gain optimization from the subordinate workers' performance regardless; in this instance the DfE suggests that one aspect of workload could be removed to reduce time pressure of teachers yet seeks assurances on how they intend to retain their optimum performance in the absence of

a particular task. This need for optimization was reflected in the data from this research, with participants reporting that getting optimum outcomes (in the form of exam results, services provided to parents and favourable inspection grades) was paramount. To reach their optimum capacity, participants reported that they were expected to engage with range of strategies such as the introduction of generic formats for monitoring work, provision of pre-prepared lesson plans and rigid systems for interactions with parents. It was reported that each of these systems were devised at a leadership level with little engagement or input from the teachers themselves at inception. This in turn led to teachers feeling that this removed autonomy from their professional practice which the participants found frustrating.

Drawing on the literature review, the workload reduction toolkit and data from this research it has been possible to present an illustration of the way policy-makers currently perceive 'work' in schools with manager-lead directives coming from the top, and a series of tasks subsequently directed to subordinate teachers. These tasks each take time and can lead to negative stress due to time needed to undertake these tasks as I have presented in Figure 20, (I have included five examples of tasks that teachers do for illustration purposes only and does not represent the full range of work undertaken). This model suggests that policy-makers perceive that in order to reduce stress, time must be freed up, and this can be done by reducing tasks which are directed to teachers from a managerial position.

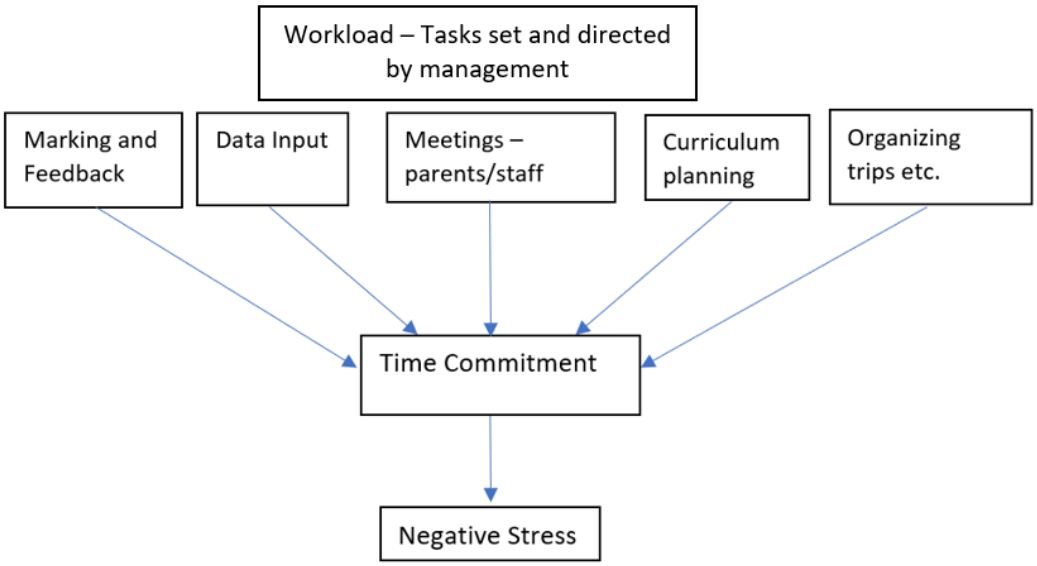


Figure 20 Current model to demonstrate how policymakers view workload and stress of teachers.

Using this model policy-makers have taken a linear approach to resolving the workload and stress issues by focussing solely on the tasks themselves that teachers undertake and excludes any acknowledgement of how, by whom and when these tasks are presented to subordinates. This model reflects the experiences of the cohort, with many teachers feeling 'done to' rather than included in decision making surrounding those tasks. This model is seen as unsatisfactory for participants who reported that being directed to undertake work over which they have little input or control comes with an emotional cost, stress, disengagement and frustration. We can draw on Labour Process Theory in this instance and recognise the managerial input and the labour supplied by subordinates who are required to undertake those tasks (as their labour is owned by superiors) and they are expected to perform accordingly without involvement in the decision making process, regardless of their feelings, experience or expertise.

I have presented a model (Figure 21) to represent the data drawn from the semi-structured interviews and illustrates how the participants in this study locate the concept of work in their current practice. The tasks from the first model have been replaced with emotional and systemic factors (not exhaustive in the model), which lead not to units of time, but a lack of professional autonomy and identity which in turn leads to negative feelings about their work.

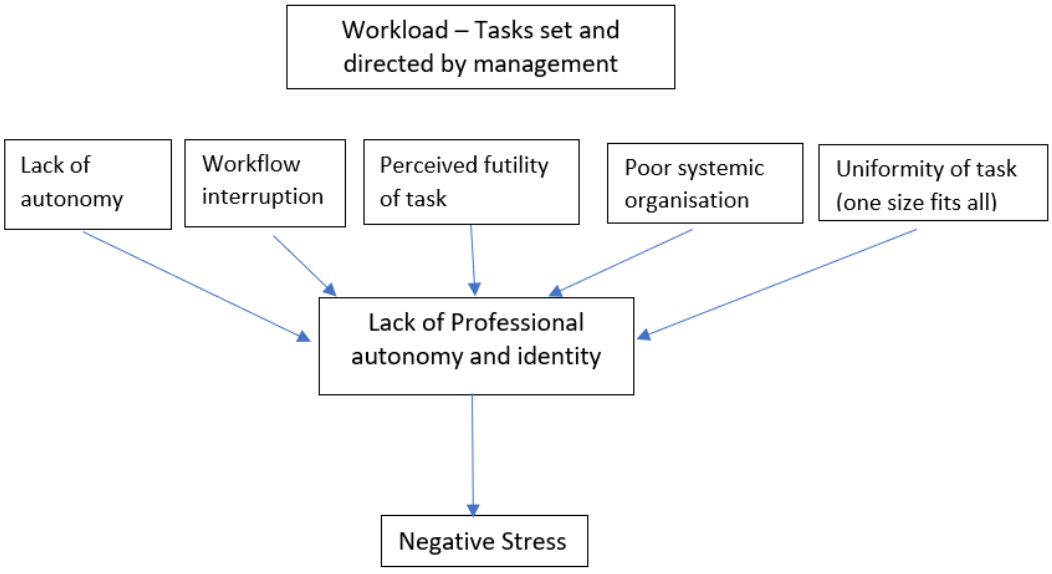


Figure 21 Alternative proposal for representing current teacher workload and stress

One participant who remarked that he had to spend hours 'shoe-horning' his curriculum plan into a proforma document provided by his leadership team, reported this task as stressful because there was no engagement in the design of the system he was expected to use which was not suitable for his needs; he had no autonomy in this task and thus he was disengaged, which in turn lead to diminished professional self-worth. It could be argued that if this model had been adopted by his leadership team, they could have engaged the teacher with the process

at its inception and given him the autonomy to design the form to his faculty's needs. This in turn could have been less stressful and more fulfilling for the participant.

Reflecting back to the participants' experiences I have presented a model (Figure 22) for improving the handling of work based on the data from this research. The process of imposed task from hierarchical leaders is no longer in play. Instead, a more collaborative and collegiate approach is suggested. Subordinates are no longer separate from management decision making, and this could lead to feelings of positivity and improved professional identity, and thus reduced stress.

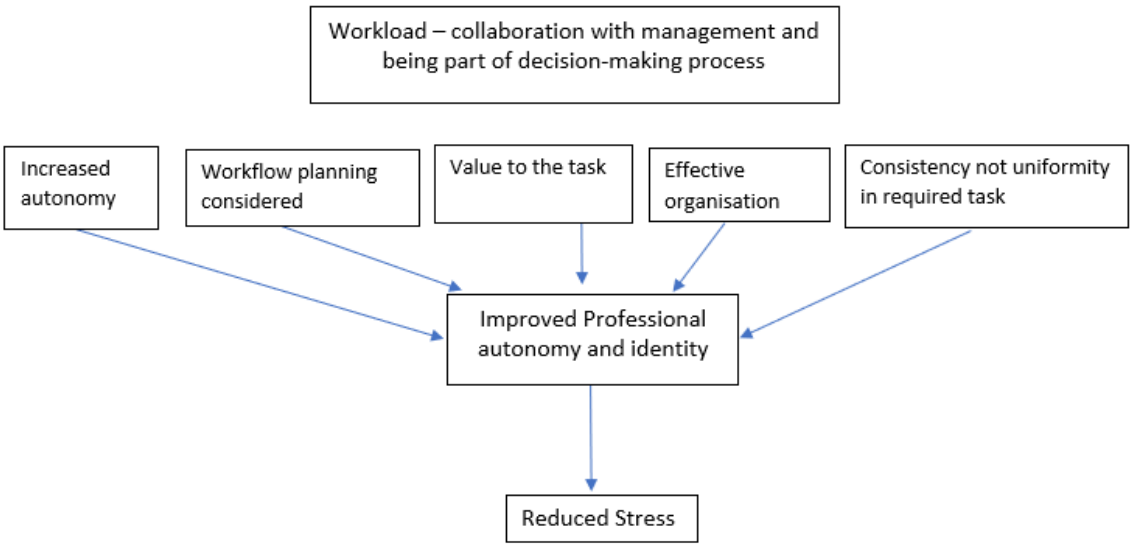


Figure 22 Proposed model for handling the work teachers undertake.

By working in this way value-schizophrenia could be eliminated which in turn leads to positive outcomes (optimisation) for pupils and staff. As the literature review attests, teachers with an increased sense of autonomy and positive sense of professional identity feel valued and are more likely to remain in the profession (Worth et al., 2017).

To adopt and implement this model could require an adjustment in the systemic management in schools. Managers who hold the power and who have worked hard to separate the workers from decision making, would have to review their practice. This leads us onto the theme of Leadership.

5.2.3 **Separation of leaders and subordinate workers**

Interactions with school leadership teams reoccurred in the narratives of participants with regard to the impact school leaders have on their workload; something acknowledged in research as a key factor influencing teacher motivation, commitment and retention (Day et al., 2006, p. 7). The importance of effective leadership and management in successful schools cannot be underestimated and the empowerment of teaching staff is a cornerstone of school improvement (Bush, 2021; Player et al., 2017; Preston & Barnes, 2017). It has been acknowledged that the central role of a school leader is to improve the performance of its employees, and in turn provide 'individualised support and consideration, fostering intellectual stimulation, and modelling appropriate values and behaviours.' (Leithwood et al., 2008, p. 30). This ideal is not one which 86% of participants of this small-scale project were experiencing. One participant reported that a new headteacher arrived with assertations that by the time she left, the school would be 'outstanding'. This was not perceived as inspirational or visionary by the experienced teacher; instead, it was seen as highlighting the transient intention of the new Headteacher:

> So she was already thinking about leaving and what she would leave behind, which is a really bad way to start in the school. (Annie)

Some interviewees described heroic leadership styles (Drysdale et al., 2014) leading their staff in an autocratic, and non-participatory way, which was not well-received by experienced practitioners. The heroic leader dictates (often with charisma and enthusiasm) to their staff rather than empowering, negotiating and encouraging; themes that were reflected in this study. Participants reported that they were told to 'just do it', 'do it now', and were given little choice or control over the instruction. This leads us back to Labour Process Theory, whereby employers control production in pursuit of maximising profits, and thus the relationship between employer and employee is often in conflict (Harley, 2018). In the case of schools, the employer (Government or School leaders) is looking to 'maximise production'; an Outstanding judgement from Ofsted or being top of an academic league table. The data from this research group established that many of the participants' leadership teams adopt a hierarchical, managerial model to direct their workers (in this case mid-career teachers) to carry out that work, with little regard for their experience or perhaps more importantly, their expertise. The data suggests that in these participants' schools the managerial desire for rewards calls for optimization of work with the fragmentation and deskilling of tasks, with the mental labour and decision-making power given to those in higher managerial roles (SLT). This phenomenon was evident in the data from the semi-structured interviews. If we review the results, we have evidence that many skilled teachers are being excluded from the planning or development stage and only becoming useful when they need to just 'do it now!'

All participants were frustrated with the lack of autonomy in their working day with regard to when work should be done, what work should be done and how that work should be done. Consider one participant who is given her lessons on PowerPoint each week. She was not part of the planning of these tasks, despite almost 15 years' experience, instead she reported feeling

like a ‘deskilled worker’ not a ‘professional’, echoing the premise that ‘workers cannot be relied upon to work in the best interests of capital’ (Reid, 1997, p. 2). Comparisons could be made here with New Taylorism which seeks to control labour through ‘high-steaks’ testing and ‘pre-packaged, corporate curricula’ (Au, 2011, p. 25) to standardize classroom practice. Ironically, as Au argues, Taylorism in its inception sought to expand education for all, however it could be suggested that this new mode of operation where testing and uniformity are pushing pupils to the edges of the domain as they are unable to access the uniform, singular curriculum. This was evident in Helen’s account of how she has to use pre-written PowerPoints to deliver her lessons; a devise to ensure uniformity in the delivery of a scheme of work. This could be considered the ultimate in ‘pre-packaged corporate curricular’ that not only subjugates her experience and expertise but provides an ideal opportunity for surveillance from superiors.

Ironically, the surveillance of the work Helen was doing served to remove any meaningful accountability as this excerpt demonstrates:

> an absolute joke because you can't appraise me because I'm teaching somebody else’s lessons. So if you if you were my line manager, and you said, ‘I'm going to come and watch you’, you couldn't criticize it. 'cause I'd be teaching the lesson you gave me. (Helen)

Helen was frustrated as he was an experienced teacher and felt that she should be able to plan and prepare her own lessons, but she was directed to deliver lessons that someone else had prepared.

The concept of separation of intellectual work and labour is further evident in the narrative of one participant who reported being micro-managed. As an experienced practitioner, she had the skills and experience to undertake a complex project, but there was a level of control over this by her leadership team who expected to be consulted before any decisions were made, (a clear separation of work and intellectual decision-making power). Kathy was enthusiastic about the task and was prepared to commit many hours to this project, yet this was diminished by having autonomy being taken away. This left her feeling under-valued and not trusted to do the work despite her ability and experience: 'I was micro-managed within an inch of my life and that almost led me to sort of say 'no, actually I can't do this'. This exemplifies the impact of de-skilling experienced teachers; Kathy embraced the task with the associated hours that this would take, but the removal of autonomy by her leadership team made that work unpleasant and caused feelings of frustration and 'stress' which is not uncommon in the current neoliberal world of education, (Worth & Van den Brande, 2020). Kathy exemplified the 'time and emotion' concept as discussed previously; she was willing to commit to a large, time consuming project, but was left feeling defeated due to the lack of autonomy and surveillance over her work.

Participants acknowledged and understood that leadership teams are also under pressure from stakeholders, (Downes, 2020; Glazzard & Stones, 2021) however the evidence from this research suggested that working within a hierarchical system that holds intellectual capital (and thus decision making) at the top, is not an effective strategy in making best use of the labour it attempts to control. Collaboration rather than control would be more beneficial is empowering the participant, (Davis & Wilson, 2000; Farris-Berg, 2014).

The data was not exclusively negative with regard to the manner in which participants were managed; one interview participant relayed how they have had positive experiences in their role which was, in large part, down to effective leadership and management who were mindful of how work was directed. Best practice was reported when SLT considered the impact that their directives would have on current workload, and what impact this would have on outcomes for students and workload of teachers. In doing so, they considered, (and appreciated) that their staff had been well planned and organised and were reluctant to disrupt this plan by imposing 'do it now' tasks on them which would cause unavoidable stress. One participant from the initial questionnaire, reported that he 'never thought of leaving' (SP013) and ascribed this having a 'great Head [teacher].' This was also reported by another questionnaire participant:

> I now work in an incredibly supportive school and can see my career going from strength to strength and I've only been at the school for 6 months. It's very rare to find a well-managed school. (SP049)

As the previous quotation demonstrated, an effective leadership team is invaluable in ensuring that their workforce thrives. However, the undercurrent in this research was one of dissatisfaction with the modus operandi of school leadership teams. As Dan explained, even as a member of the leadership team himself, he was unable to lead and manage staff the way he felt was best, but instead had to adopt an unspoken 'party line' of constant target setting and evaluating from staff who were already under pressure and doing a highly effective job. This expectation to implement performative methods of managing conflicted with his own beliefs and lead to his exit from the profession after 25 years.

Some participants felt that the process of training teachers who were moving into management positions was incomplete, leaving new leaders ill-equipped to lead or manage effectively. This is a position that is reflected on a national level by the General Secretary of the National Education Union who acknowledged that 'I hear teachers' tales of poor, ineffective and, on occasion, downright appalling school leadership just too often.' (Boutsted, 2015). Boutsted goes on to report that poor leadership results in 'workload issues which blight teachers' lives'. She accepted that this was an 'unpalatable truth', but one which must be acknowledged in the pursuit of improving conditions in UK schools. Boutsted acknowledged the need for effective training for school leaders, with access to up-to-date research which can guide and inform their leadership, reflecting the data in this research.

A 'top down' leadership style is largely seen as undesirable in education with 'leading from the middle' seen as a more sustainable method of leadership (Hargreaves & Ainscow, 2015). Successful implementation of a top-down strategy for managing work relies on engagement from subordinates yet this is unlikely due to the impact this approach has on teacher self-efficacy and de-professionalisation (Dufour, 2007; Prichard & Moore, 2016) .

The connection between effective management of teachers and job satisfaction has been acknowledged for many years. In 2013 TALIS put forward suggestions to relieve the professional tension between leadership teams and their workforce, yet there is little evidence to suggest that leaders have changed their practice in response to the proposals (Sims & Jerrim, 2020, p. 54) and this was reflected with the participants in this research. All but one of the interviewees reported a sense of dissatisfaction between themselves and leadership teams to some extent. The singular participant who was appreciative of his line

manager's working practice described how they met regularly and useful discussions took place to ensure that work was carefully considered in terms of his time management and workload commitments at that time. This engagement and inclusion in the process reportedly worked in that school as the professional respect afforded to him gave him a sense of empowerment over the work he was being asked to do. This is reflective of the model presented in Figure 22.

5.2.4 **Surveillance of work**

The phenomenon of heightened teacher surveillance is commonplace, with little sign of abating which was reflected in the data from this research. This is aligned with the national picture in England as Worth and Van den Brande highlight:

> The increase in school autonomy since 2010 through the growth of academy schools does not seem to have resulted in any changes to the overall levels of teacher autonomy. (Worth & Van den Brande, 2020, p. 10)

The ironic juxtaposition between the increase in more autonomous schools and the continued subjugation of teachers is what many participants described in interview and is evidence of the post-panoptic era in education (Skerritt, 2020) where teachers are subjected to surveillance from three sources: from management, from students and from peers. As one participant described, 'I mean, the thing is, is what they've reduced the teachers to a people that just 'deliver' (Anne). The level of control exerted over her work was a source of frustration as she acknowledged that the lack of professional trust was demoralising. One survey participant explained how the level of surveillance from parents was stressful:

> Parents and their increased power to complain, constant access requests, freedom of information means you are always tiptoeing and walking on eggshells. (SP350)

A culture of high surveillance and control raised issues of trust between those in leadership roles and subordinates that creates a sense of separation within an organisation and could be considered parallel to the separation of manager and production line worker in a factory.

When reflecting on the principals of Taylorism direct comparisons can be made as Taylor 'sought to separate design from implementation and thereby to accumulate all information and authority at the hands of management' (Gür, 2014, p. 889). This separation of decision making and implementation of work, brings with it inherent surveillance and judgmental practice, which subsequently impacts teachers' sense of independence and autonomy which was recognised by the participants in this research.

5.2.5 **Imposed tasks and work-flow interruption**

Participants expressed dissatisfaction with tasks which were 'imposed' on them. It was reported that this aspect of their working life left participants feeling hopeless, exhausted and stressed. When reviewing the data from the interviews, this phenomenon was reported by all but one teacher as a cause for frustration and negative feelings about their daily work.

Concerns about 'work' were intrinsically interwoven with feelings of frustration towards those who were imposing that work and there was a perceived lack of understanding and respect for the experience of the mid-career teachers. The 'reactive approach' reported by participants

when being delegated work caused frustration and stress, as the cohort believed there was little regard paid to the timing and context of the tasks they were being asked to undertake. Some reported a 'knee-jerk' response from superiors when imposing tasks in response to external directives with little consideration given to the people who then must do that work and how this impacts their own personal work schedule. Participants observed that the lack of organisation 'higher up' had a detrimental impact on those who had organised their time more effectively.

Participants reported that they are often interrupted throughout the day to move to another heterogeneous task which something that the Government highlights in their case study of leaders and teachers (DfE, 2019f). The authors recommend that teachers should identify 'pinch points' to ensure that time is most efficiently used. These 'pinch points' are not so easily managed without a collegiate approach between managers and subordinates and it could be argued based on the data from this research that it is the last-minute tasks that are allocated to teachers during the working day that prevents teachers from working in an optimum manner, a stark contrast to the ideals of neoliberalism and optimisation. One interviewee said that if a parent contacted the school during the day, there was pressure to respond within 24 hours regardless of the interruption to her work. This was a target set by her school leader and is a further reflection of the performative agenda in the workplace of the participants. Failure to meet this target would result in a discussion with the line manager in question as to why action had not been taken in the timeframe. Even at this simplistic level, this exemplifies the neoliberal tenet of measurable performance and providing sanction for failure to adhere to those targets.

Similarly, Karl shared that it was frustrating that his non-contact time was used ‘in any way the school chooses’. Not only did this prevent him from planning his work effectively but is a reflection of the ownership of his labour as Braverman suggests. Supporting this further Helen reported that ‘workload doesn’t cause me stress, it’s the last-minute things’. Whilst this reactive practice is frustrating, there are further considerations these interruptions have on a teachers’ working day.

There is evidence to suggest that ‘interruption’ in itself is a cause of stress (Chisholm et al., 2000; Sugawara & Fujita, 2012) with older teachers being subjected to more stress than their younger counterparts, (Tams et al., 2018). Short-term requests for tasks which need doing ‘by the end of the day’ caused stress for Kathy who reported that she felt that she would ‘panic’ if things weren’t done. John echoed this and reported that he was ‘given three different requests all on the same day’ prompting ‘mini melt-downs’ for many staff.

By the very nature of the profession, teachers are going to experience interruptions in their daily work, and this is an inevitable and inherent part of their praxis. When teachers are required to shift gears from teaching subject specific content, to dealing with an upset pupil, to managing colleagues, the requirement to make emotional shifts on a minute by minute, hour by hour timeframe, leads to loss of focus and creates tension. The concept of workflow interruption has been reported for decades, as this extract from the 1940s demonstrates:

> When a task is interrupted, the tension persists, producing forces which direct the subject’s thought toward the incomplete task. (Prentice, 1944, p. 327)

This phenomenon of interruption is further explored in recent research which makes clear links between being interrupted during tasks and stress (Baethge & Rigotti, 2013). Working with these interruptions can lead to decreased performance and errors, and leads to tasks being incomplete which in turn leads to decreased performance quality (Baethge & Rigotti, 2013) which is incongruent with the neoliberal performative ideology.

This pattern of interrupted practice could be considered reflective of the experiences of the participants who describe feeling like they need 'brain space'(Joe) and who are suffering from exhaustion. Participants report that 'last minute things', 'what are they going to ask me next?', 'we get short-term requests' are what contribute to their feelings of stress. The amount of cognitive energy required to cope with the different, disparate tasks that are imposed on teachers could go some way to explain their mental exhaustion as research has found that the workload associated with revisiting tasks delays mental recovery and has a relationship to wellbeing issues such as depression (Rout et al., 1996).

In a business context the phenomenon of workflow interruption has a clear monetary impact. Schulte reports that after each interruption it takes about twenty-three minutes to refocus to the previous level of efficiency which causes workers to lose time and causes frustration (Schulte, 2015). The research tells of 'time bandits' – those who steal time from others who are trying to work, and how this has a severely detrimental effect on the efficiency of the organisation who were left feeling guilty for not being able to complete tasks which in turn lead to low morale. Consider then, the teacher who has effectively planned their working day; significant infringement on this will have a detrimental impact on the teacher's ability to complete the task as well as impact their morale. These feelings of guilt were reported by several interviewees

with regard to their work, as they felt that they were unable to complete everything that needed doing, leaving them with low self-esteem and dissatisfaction with their situation.

5.2.6 **The subordinate worker**

The cornerstone of the Labour Process theory underpinning this research is the provision of labour to undertake management-led tasks to gain profit for an organisation. This comes at the expense of the subordinate worker who is expected to take on more work with no extra time or renumeration given, i.e. provide surplus labour. Therefore it could be considered that teachers' time is owned by the employer and as such, the 'worker' (in this case a skilled professional educator) must do as they are instructed in order to maximize gains for the organisation. The removal of professional inclusion in favour of 'use-value'(Carter, 2021) left teachers with feelings of being de-valued and stressed. The notion that as an employee one's labour is controlled or owned by management alone is demoralising and many of the participants talked of 'pointless' tasks, as Pete describes:

> I don't mind work that is valuable. I think what depresses me is doing work for the sake of it that has no meaningful positive effect on my career, the school's career or dare I say.. the students. (Pete)

The use of the word 'depresses' demonstrates the impact these perceived valueless tasks have on experienced teachers. The participants acknowledged that there are some tasks which do have value and yet these tasks are often managed ineffectively by those with the intellectual ownership, who perhaps believe that consistency is interchangeable with uniformity. One participant cited having to spend time inputting text into a department development plan pro-forma, which took hours of his time and he described this as 'stressful'. He was not objecting

to providing a plan for his department, but he was not given the autonomy to provide his own template, thus demonstrating lack of trust and deskilling his professional practice, and an example of the de-skilling of teachers. When non-economic capital, skills and specialist knowledge are removed from workers, a process of proletarianisation is considered to be underway, which could echo the experiences of this cohort.

There were many participants who talked of ‘paper trails’ and providing work for outside agencies and stakeholders which they felt was completely unnecessary. As one teacher said, ‘if we didn't do that and actually just got on with what it was we actually were writing the paper trail about, we actually get a lot further’ (Kathy). This feeling of creating a paper-trail was brought up many times and caused frustration, and at times, anger with participants using terms such as ‘pointless’, ‘waste of time’, ‘box-ticking’, ‘it depresses me’. This lack of professional trust was evidently a feeling of frustration as Carly explained; ‘It is so important to feel confident and trusted and valued in your work whatever work it is. If you're not trusted in it then what are you doing?’

Whilst it may be a conceptual leap to compare the work of a teacher with that of a manual labourer in the Braverman mould, the same laws of value are present; intensive control and surveillance of labour, be that manual labour or professional labour (Fabiane Santana & Cilson Cesar, 2015). Under the current neoliberal conditions, teachers are seeing an imbalance between their labour and their surplus labour which benefits the Capitalist, (in this case school leaders) to the detriment of their own wellbeing. School leadership teams could be considered the Capitalists in a local setting as they are directly responsible for the management of the labour they employ, and they have the autonomy to utilise this labour as they see fit. Equally,

leadership teams could reposition themselves as merely the supply of labour for their own Capitalist authority; the CEO of a MAT, the local education authority or Federation manager. Further extrapolation would render the CEOs, LEAs and Federation managers themselves subject to the Capitalist managers i.e. the Government.

When workers are ascribed work over which they have control the output is more efficient, however when no control or autonomy is available, that work merely becomes a 'task' over which workers have no ownership:

> Teachers need to feel valued and that their opinions are solicited and incorporated into decisions or policies. They are called to foster the collaboratives process, and to empower teachers.' (Ghamrawi & Al-Jammal, 2013, p. 77).

This disconnect between professional beliefs and imposed tasks has caused a tension in participants' self-efficacy and the lack of autonomy and the connection with performativity is evident in this data.

Similarly, there was a frustration that participants felt that their professional experience was not acknowledged and they were given no credit for the knowledge and experience they had. The following excerpt was just one of fifty-two examples in the data that exemplified the frustration of not having their experienced recognised:

> I am personally asked to do very patronising and belittling tasks to make me feel like I'm part of a team. When I know, I know, I'm not an arrogant person, but I'm secure in my subject knowledge on the

whole, and I'm secure in my teaching ability. And so I'm like, why have I been asked to do that? (Helen)

Many participants cited a 'one size fits all' approach to directives such as standardized policies, use of proformas and pre-designed PowerPoints for lessons were problematic and participants would value inclusion in the decision-making process. The results from the semi-structured interviews are reflective of research which echoes teachers' experiences of how a lack of autonomy effects their practice and self-esteem which will be discussed further in the following chapter.

5.2.7 **Section Summary in relation to the research question:**

RQ1 How does workload impact teachers' decisions to leave the profession?

Both questionnaire and interview participants held strong views on how workload impacted their decision to remain or leave teaching. The vast majority felt that workload was a primary factor in their dissatisfaction with their current roles, however, the concept of workload was not seen in hours worked, instead a more nuanced reflection and understanding of what the concept of 'workload' means in their experience was established. Work was discussed in terms of feelings and emotions and not simply hours worked which supports the theoretical stance taken in this research. The data revealed that the participants held strong views on the work that they undertake and felt that their time could be better used doing tasks which they felt had value congruent with their own beliefs and experiences. The process by which tasks were created and disseminated to teachers had an impact on the feelings they had to those tasks, with the 'top down' approach unsatisfactory. The reactive approach to assigning tasks gave participants a

sense of feeling ‘done to’ which caused frustration and linked strongly with their sense of professional identity and agency.

Teachers expressed that they are able to find time and energy for projects and work which they perceive to have value whereas those tasks that mid-career teachers perceive to hold little value or congruence to their own beliefs serve to bring their enthusiasm down, leading to stress and dissatisfaction with their work which in turn plays a part in their decisions to want to leave the profession.

Chapter 6 Data Analysis and discussion - Stress and Professional Identity

When reviewing the data from the interviews, the concept of stress was predominantly inter-connected with professional identity and as such the findings laid out in this section will demonstrate the interconnection between stress and how this had an impact on teachers' professional identity. This will be outlined further in the discussion section of this chapter. For this reason, this chapter will relate the data to two of the four original research questions:

RQ2 Do mid-career teachers perceive stress a contributory factor in their decisions to leave the profession?

RQ4 How does Professional Identity impact teachers' decision to leave the profession?

In the initial questionnaire 71% of respondents cited stress as a significant factor in their decision to remain or leave the profession. When interviewees were presented with a question about how stress affected their working lives, they responded with a range of reasons for feeling stressed: lack of autonomy and poor leadership, performativity, and ineffective performance management. Each of these will be laid out in the following sections.

6.1.1 Physical symptoms of stress

When asked about how stress manifests itself, there were very frank responses from the participants. They revealed stories of the impact that stress has had on both their professional and personal lives. By documenting some of their physical symptoms the participants shared during interview, I intend to give context to the issues raised and provide an understanding of

the current working lives of the participants. The following quotations from two of the fourteen participants demonstrates the extent of stress in this cohort:

> …and that's not unusual because it really has affected my mental health. And I phoned my doctor and I have wept, you know, and I've had to go…. it sounds awful, but I've actually gone and had my self-hypnotized to be able to have some kind of happy memories, which sounds really stupid. Stupid. (Julie)

> So I…. I'm currently on antidepressants and I… I'm hopefully getting to a point where I won't be on them for that much longer, but that's been over a year and... I have had to have counselling organized through school…. I've had to have counselling and so my, my stress has got to the point where it's led to depression as well. (Joe)

Eleven of the fourteen participants reported significant health issues that they believe are in some part related to their job; heart problems, insomnia, depression, relationship issues and high blood pressure were reported in this group, which is congruent with the national picture (Travers & Cooper, 2018). After talking with one participant after the interview had taken place, she told of how she had been rushed to hospital with a heart attack. As she was being wheeled into surgery, she said to her husband 'can you make sure someone tells Year 7 they can't cook tomorrow?' This was relayed as an 'after-thought' as though this wasn't relevant or important. This level of commitment to the pupils above even their own health and wellbeing needs acknowledgement in this research and gives a vivid background to the experiences of the participants.

6.1.2 **Autonomy and Leadership**

Interview participants reported that stress and feelings of diminished self-esteem often stemmed from having tasks imposed on them as highlighted in the previous chapter. This led to negative feelings and a sense of being 'taken for granted' or reduced to 'workers' rather than professionals. In this section, light will be drawn on the link between feelings of lack autonomy and the role that leadership has on participants in terms of stress and professional identity. As Carly explains, the professional work she is doing is being reduced to 'ticking a box' for which she believes will bring little impact to her students.

> Why am I busting a gut to tick a box for something that I'm never going to talk about in my class? (Carly)

She went on to explain the feelings of being 'flotsam and jetsam' of being almost a disposable commodity. Other participants also reported these feelings of doing work which has little impact on students as being stressful. The conflict between the professional self and the 'worker' was evident:

> Again, isn't it about professionalism and self-esteem? It is so important to feel confident and trusted and valued in your work whatever work it is. If you're not trusted in it, then what are you doing? (Carly)

For the majority of participants stress was caused by doing work which neither moved learning forward or added to the organisational infrastructure of the school or department. The practice of imposing work on teachers (from school leaders and indirectly from Government) was cited many times, with participants reporting that they feel like they are 'people that just deliver',

‘performing pandas’ and ‘the most expensive cover teacher’. This was something that all the participants found frustrating and often stressful.

Eleven participants reported leadership teams being ill-equipped to lead and manage them and their work effectively, and provoked a strong response from the cohort, with only one participant who experienced positive interactions with their leadership team. The language used when relaying experiences about SLT was predominantly one of frustration and disappointment. There was dissatisfaction with the methods that school leaders use in schools to get work done, and there were four instances when participants referred to inexperienced leaders ‘climbing the ladder’ and were perceived as not having the skill set to best manage staff effectively.

In the following excerpt, Matt referenced how he felt positive about his role when he was given autonomy, but a subsequent change of SLT brought with it as new way of working:

> I had a lot of autonomy then and then I think we got a lot of changes to SLT. We got a lot of.. lot of ‘climbers’ and who wanted to make their own careers. They're all ambitions by bringing in systems and want everyone to do everything the same and I think that… that was probably.. probably.. the work and other people’s systems that I just thought pointless. (Matt)

In this case, he refers to ‘climbers’ – those who are climbing the promotion ladder and keen to impress by bringing in new initiatives which take away autonomy of teachers which lead to stress and frustration. There was also one participant (Joe) who highlighted his desire to see a set of standards for new leaders’ ‘I think it'' probably it's.. it's more around the idea of there being kind of an almost.. a national set of standards for leaders’. Whilst there are standards for school leaders

to adhere to (DfE, 2020b) it was clear that Joe was unaware they existed. One other teacher had very strong views on the impact of school leaders and stress: 'My biggest problem is ineffective leadership.' Karl, and others made reference to SLT 'ticking boxes'.

Participants talked about a perceived identity change in teachers who became members of a leadership team, highlighting a move from one role to another and the associated change in professional identity. Participants reported that it was as though teachers were unable to move to a leadership role without sacrificing part of the professional self, which was explained by one participant who had been a member of a leadership team that he described as 'corrosive'. He reported that he felt that he had to replace his compassion with a narrative of 'you can do more' which he was uncomfortable with. Dan, who had been an assistant headteacher, had a sense of conflict between what was 'expected' of him as part of the Leadership team and what his own personal beliefs and management style were:

> I fundamentally disagreed with many of the things I was doing, so the net result of that was that, um.. I ended up in a place where there was.. there was nowhere to go, I think. (Dan)

The data suggested that the mid-career teachers wanted strong and effective leadership which was reported to be lacking in the participants' current schools, and there was a real sense of disappointment. As one participant demonstrated, the impact of poor leadership had a very real impact on her mental health and lead to her leaving a particular school, as she described it as 'toxic' with a regime of 'all stick and no carrot'.

There were references to 'egos' at play and this was problematic for some of the participants, and often referring to headteachers with negative connotations. Whilst participants had some

empathy with the wider body of leadership teams, there was little sympathy for headteachers who they believe to be ultimately responsible for the quality of their working lives. The following participant reflected on the stresses that his headteacher put him under:

> When you're dealing with teenagers and you have an authority from above saying 'This must happen this way there are no excuses and you haven't got control over the people that you've gotta produce something from, then that is a recipe for massive, massive stress. (Dan)

The impact leadership directives had on our participants was often detrimental to their working lives, however, one participant shared positive experiences of an effective leadership practice and demonstrated how positive support from SLT can be referring to the 'buffer' between directives and teachers, but this was the exception in this cohort.

6.1.3 **Performativity**

Performative practice was experienced by all the participants and was in all but one instance perceived as a negative element of their working lives. The feeling that they were being judged in many aspects of their work clearly had an impact on their sense of identity with varying degrees. As Dan (an ex Assistant Headteacher) explained:

> We spent our time hammering the heads of department, putting them under immense pressure to deliver results with the constant threat of if your GCSE results dropped as a head of department, there was a consequence to this, and it created an atmosphere generally of fear. (Dan)

This element of fear of judgement was reported by three other participants. However, there was evidence that some participants circumvented performative practice by either ignoring or paying lip-service to the requirements; Pete for example said that he didn't fear Ofsted because he put it in an emotional 'suitcase' and brought it out once 'every four or five years' when he would 'jump through hoops'. He went on to say that Ofsted would be a far more valuable exercise if they came to schools unannounced; reflecting that he valued the principal of inspection, but the manner in which Ofsted operated was perceived to be flawed.

The dislike of performative praxis was reported by several participants who cited detailed directives which they perceived to be stressful; using generic templates to record information, to undergo observations and to mark students work in a 'target setting' parameter. One participant told of how she was expected to continually monitor and record her pupils progress to ensure that they 'know where they are [academically]' which she described as pointless. She felt that the time spent monitoring and recording each students weekly progress detracted from the actual process of teaching. Another interviewee described how she was told what pen colour to use when marking students work, how she had to mark the work, how she had to then give it back and create 'ping pong' marking dialogue which she felt detracted from their progress rather than enhance it. She went on to explain that the pupils also felt that this type of approach to feedback was ineffective. This participant was obliged to do the school's system of marking, but then used her own more effective method of marking and put post-it notes on the pupils work with a comment which she felt was more purposeful. She described this system of 'double marking' as stressful and time consuming yet necessary for the benefit of the pupils who appreciated the post-it note method.

As a practical subject teacher, she felt it was better for the pupils to be allowed to be creative with practical materials rather than sitting reading and responding to written feedback. This type of activity was pushing this participant to reflect that if this type of performative practice continued, she would leave the profession.

Six other participants expressed similar views about how they were required to monitor, mark and revisit work to satisfy their line managers, using a variety of 'rainbow-coloured pens' and 'yellow paper'. Questionnaire participants (72%) reported that performative accountability is a significant factor in their decision to leave the profession. The quote below demonstrates how another participant felt about the performative practice he was experiencing:

> it stresses me out, here, you know we don't use purple pens, but yeah we have, we have green and red pens for different things…. I mean, I will have 'closing the loop stamps' when you stamp the books when you ask them to do something that reminds them that they have to review the work and close the loop and respond to feedback (Mark)

The concepts of being judged (and that of judging others) was not limited to participants in their own schools. Three participants reported that they were under surveillance from the media and wider societal scrutiny which added pressure to their sense of professional identity.

> 'Every time you open a newspaper there is something else about teachers getting long holidays and how easy the job is' (Dan)

This scrutiny from the media left Dan feeling disenfranchised with his role. He went on to describe how he felt that there are huge misconceptions in the media and society in general which left him feeling stressed and worthless. Having reflected on discussions with friends from

industry compared to his old teaching job he is not surprised that there is conflict between the perception and the reality. In his friend's workspace there are assistants to make calls, type up minutes, process administrative tasks and he is able to take regular breaks away from his work environment. Dan suggests that perhaps the critics are unaware that these roles are all undertaken by the teachers in addition to their primary role of teaching.

6.1.4 **Performance management and Continued professional Learning (CPL)**

When compiling the questions for interview, I framed questions around profession identity to include performative practice and CPL to reflect the literature review. Five participants talked about the impact that performance management had on them in terms of stress and their professional identity, and whilst there was some acknowledgement that the process was necessary there was a perception that this process was not impactful for their level of experience and expertise, and many saw this process as a 'tick-box' exercise. One participant described the process of undergoing performance management as being 'soulless' after having to amass a range of written evidence to prove that she was doing her job to the required standard and another said it was 'completely pointless'.

Pete explained that each year he was set one mandatory target which is, from the outset, unrealistic and has little chance of achieving. Two further targets are chosen each year, but he reported that he doesn't have enough time to complete these and he resents having to spend a lot of his time on performance management which has little benefit to the pupils or himself professionally. Despite not achieving his target, he felt that this was not a reflection on his teaching ability.

Intertwined with performance management was the concept of professional learning which elicited a strong response from participants. The over-riding data was that there was a lack of funding at both local and governmental level and the whole field of CPL was disappointing to them. Too often participants felt that they were not able to access any meaningful professional development as the following extracts from a participant so eloquently explains:

> I thought.. you know, if you go on a hike you prepare yourself, you get the right shoes, you wear the right clothes, you might need to take a snack along. You take a map, you think about your route and those are all things that you need in order to succeed and to do this journey that you're going to embark on. And I hadn't done that. Neither had the school. (Annie)

The analogy of being prepared for a hike is very pertinent and there was a clear sense of wanting to be 'equipped' for new challenges or roles in her professional life. Annie expressed her disappointment that she was not well prepared for the new demands of her role and there was a clear disconnect between the expectations from her line managers and the lack of investment in her professional practice. This is reflected in the initial questionnaire with 65% of participants reporting that they have had sporadic CPL throughout their career, with just 30% receiving consistent effective training. There is a clear trend from the interview data that participants would value good quality professional development, however, it was apparent that this was not available. All but one of the participants had no experience or connections with the National College's NPQ courses and only one (Karl) had been offered a precursor to the NPQ leadership qualification which he had found useful to some degree: 'that was good because.. not that I was taught anything, but it allowed me to work on a project'.

One participant reported that CPD was ‘rehashed’ and consequently she views it with distain wondering ‘how long is this going to last this time?’ Further narratives echoed this sense of doing training which is neither relevant nor useful to them:

> Early in my career, back 10-15 years, and I think it was much more of a consistent approach to CPD or professional development. And I think there's a lot of in-house professional development so everybody is doing the same thing. It's not particularly for my benefit. It's again a feeling of tick-boxing saying, ‘we've provided that course’. (Carole)

> I've been on three or four [courses] in the space of 15 years. You know, that's.. that's.. that's atrocious for somebody of my, you know, ability, drive.. all those things, just never…no opportunities. (Kathy)

There was also a sense of ‘training for what?’ as career routes are reported to be so limited. Many avenues are not available due to the change in the national education structure and local authority control being vastly reduced. Opportunities to be a county advisor, or local subject specialist no longer exist, which would have created pathways for experienced teachers. Similarly, the removal of the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) role left many without a clear career path. Many participants had to fund their own CPL, including nationally recognised courses in leadership and management, and master’s degrees. There was some limited evidence of schools funding or part-funding courses, but the majority of participants had not received any additional training:

> I resigned and I went and I did creative leadership, a management level five [qualification]. I was offered a level seven but I haven't got the two and a half grand to do it.. I paid for my own CPD. (Julie)

Some participants reported how their leadership teams were circumventing the issue of providing professional development by claiming that anything new that a teacher engages in is almost, by definition, 'professional learning' as Helen explained, 'If you upload a document or a YouTube clip or a PowerPoint or something that's me having CPD'.

Participants reported that they are often denied development opportunities due to financial costs, not only of the course or programme, but the cover to release them from their teaching duties.

> At the school I was in, had a very, very good CPD person who was along the same lines as me, had a real sense of valuing staff as people, the defining factor was always money. (Dan)

One participant was grateful to have a master's degree funded by the school but was given no time from his duties to do it, which put a huge strain on his work-life balance and 'nearly killed' him. Others have had opportunities to be seconded to a leadership team, yet there was little evidence to suggest that this was useful in terms of moving their career and practice forward and they were not retained on SLT after the initial fixed term.

There were many accounts of teachers being subjected to generic training which was too broad to be of use to them given their experience. Participants explained how much of the training had no impact for them or their professional practice but were made to complete the training regardless. This exacerbated the feeling that their time was being wasted.

There was mention of the ‘ladder climbers’ delivering training to more experienced staff which caused frustration not only because the training was not relevant to them, but also because the facilitator was inexperienced:

> We do a lot of it in school, (CPD) which I generally don't feel helps, particularly with the....(that would bring us back to the ladder climbers!).. I've had a two-hour twilight session, (I'd been teaching then for 14 years) and the teacher running this was an English teacher in the second year of teaching and she was telling me [about] ‘Teaching and Learning’ strategies and then….’sorry, sorry it's ‘Learning and Teaching’ strategies! (Matt)

Matt’s frustration is evident at not only being instructed by an inexperienced teacher, but the time he has to commit to this activity. Carole echoes the frustration of having to spend time on ineffective professional development activities and suggests that it’s an exercise in surveillance and accountability to external agencies.

> There’s a lot of in-house professional development so everybody is doing the same thing. It's not particularly for my benefit. It's again, a feeling of tick boxing saying we've provided that course! (Carole)

There was a sense of dissatisfaction with the current state of CPL offered in the participants’ schools, which is reflective of the national picture as highlighted in the literature review.

The responses to the research questions as laid out in this section capture a very honest collection of personal experiences which helped explain the experiences of mid-career teachers. Participants report being very stressed with a diminished sense of professional identity. In the

following chapter I will discuss these findings through the lens of labour process to shed light on this phenomenon.

6.2 Discussion – Stress and Professional Identity

RQ2 Is stress a contributory factor in teachers' decisions to leave the profession?

RQ4 How does Professional Identity impact teachers' decision to leave the profession?

The themes of stress and professional identity were grouped together for discussion as they were synonymously linked in the findings and it would have been inappropriate to separate them for analysis and discussion. Teachers often reported stress as a causal reaction to a diminished sense of professional identity, and whilst there were connections to workload, this was not a strong correlation. The stress in many participants stories was brough about by managerial practice, and not necessarily by hours required to complete tasks. One example of this is the stress brought about by having to 'tick boxes' for professional learning training; the training is conducted during directed time, and paradoxically requires little effort or engagement, yet causes a dis-proportionate amount of stress as experienced teachers feel as though their time is being used to conduct valueless tasks, which gives a sense of diminished professional identity.

In the following sections I will focus on discussion around the impact that stress had on teachers in this participatory cohort and their professional identity through the lens of Labour Process theory beginning with the symptoms of stress and leading on to how this makes them feel as professional educator.

6.2.1 **Symptoms of stress**

The most profound feedback from the semi-structured interviews were the physical symptoms suffered by 11 of the 14 participants. Heart attacks, paranoia, depression, breakdowns, and marriage difficulties were just some of the issues reported by participants. Teachers were reporting 'toxic fear' in the workplace which represented a huge amount of stress that consequently impacted their sense of professional identity and personal lives. The self-perception of hopelessness, exhaustion and frustration were often accompanied by narratives that they were 'finished' with one participant recalling a phrase; 'Teaching: the profession that eats its young'. There was an acceptance that physical symptoms were almost inevitable, as many of these were reported in casual manner, almost as an after-thought. What was being described in many of the participants is the phenomenon of teacher burnout; 'a state of chronic stress that leads to physical and emotional exhaustion, cynicism, detachment, and feelings of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment' (Bourg Carter, 2013). This is familiar pattern with the national and international picture reporting that more teachers are suffering from this condition. The data showed that 93% of interview participants experienced serious symptoms of stress; this is much higher than national statistic of 77% (Scanlan, 2021). One explanation of this heightened stress could be that mid-career teachers are less agile in the labour market and, unlike their younger counterparts who may be recent entrants to the profession, they have family and financial commitments which prevent them from leaving to protect themselves from adverse stress. As one participant stated, 'there's just nowhere to go' and felt that they are unable to leave to avoid the impact of stress.

6.2.2 **Stress and sense of professional self**

This section will start with a discussion on how the participants felt about their work in terms of stress and I will then discuss the impact of external perceptions of teachers and how this impacts their sense of self.

Of the fifty-one citations that were coded under 'stress', all but six referred to how stress made them feel as a professional, and how this impacted their sense of identity which is in line with academic research (Skinner et al., 2021). The concept of professional identity was only formally acknowledged by one participant during interview which is reflective of the difficulty that teachers have defining professional identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Kompf & Boak, 1996; Rus, Tomsa, Rebega, et al., 2013). The concept of professional identity is somewhat inherent yet un-acknowledged in the lexicon of the participants' working lives. However, despite the terminology being not used overtly, all fourteen participants referred to their professional self in more subtle ways.

The stress that teachers reported as a result of their current situations, left many teachers confused about their role and it brought questions about their professional identity. Many reported that they felt that they were not teachers at all; one referred to herself as an 'expensive cover teacher', another reporting that they 'never felt good enough', and 'a performing panda'. Furthermore, there were reports of participants feeling diminished professionally by being treated like someone whose labour is being used to 'deliver', perhaps aligning with the intention of facilitating cheaper labour through the deskilling of work, (Reid, 2003b). This is congruent with research which suggests that when teachers' work lacks input-ownership, there is a decrease in job satisfaction (Worth & Van den Brande, 2020). Again, we see links with labour process

theory which exemplifies the experiences the participants were exposed to. The degradation of work to which Braverman referred can be seen to encompass a number of processes, namely:

> • the loss by the ordinary worker of the right to design and plan work.
>
> • the fragmentation of work into meaningless segments.
>
> • the re-distribution of tasks among unskilled and semi-skilled labour, associated with labour cheapening
>
> • the transformation of work organisation from the craft system to modern, Taylorised forms of control. (Reid, 2003a, p. 561) (Reid, 2010, p. 561)

These sentiments align with the narrative of the participants in the research and teachers are left feeling devalued which impacts their professional identity.

If we draw back to a battlefield visit that one participant enjoyed organising, it could be suggested that despite the workload eating into his personal time at evenings and weekends, this work was not stressful, because 'it was worth doing'. Perhaps this is because this sense of contributing to the wider education of students is aligned with his core values and beliefs about what being a teacher means to him. Pete's conflict between what he believed to be valuable to his pupils' education and other elements of his work that he perceives to be futile are in line with what Ball describes as 'value schizophrenia' (Ball, 2003, p. 221) where teachers are in a dichotomous situation with tensions pulling on their fundamental values as educators. This is supported by another participant who said that she was 'bogged down in the minutiae of systems' which left her feeling tired and stressed. In the following excerpt she spoke of having to undertake directives which she didn't see any value in:

> But actually, what's the purpose of it? What is the purpose of it? Is it going to benefit our staff and our children going forward? Or is it because the government have landed us with something needs to be actioned, and I think that.. that is often very, very frustrating because what's the point? What's the impact and why do we… why do we have to do that? (Kathy)

Teachers go into the profession with an expectation of being able to use their skills to inspire, develop and nurture their students, so the de-skilling of many aspects of their work causes conflict of professional identity. The cohort described how they 'loved' teaching and working with their pupils and that this was above all their primary motivation; 'I do genuinely love teaching', 'I went into teaching to make a difference', 'I loved my classes and I love my subject' were just three of many assertions of a clear desire to teach. What is striking was the use of the term 'love' when describing these feelings about their face-to-face teaching. Compare this to language used when talking about how they feel about their professional identity; 'flotsam and jetsam', 'overpaid cover teacher' and 'just a worker'. Despite loving teaching, there is sufficient discord in their professional lives to leave the participants feeling disenfranchised. The sense of being undervalued and 'worthless' could suggest that workload is not the sole cause of frustration, perhaps it is the feelings of being a replaceable commodity? The commodification of teachers serves to realign the role of teacher from educator to entrepreneur with market forces in play. The teacher must deliver to the customer (the pupil) in order to maximise profits and provide value for money (for managers) which leads to an uncomfortable tension between personal ideology and professional reality.

Some participants told of how their professional identity was impacted by references to teachers' professionality from outsiders; the British commentary on the 'workshy' teachers, the jokes in the pub about being 'on holiday again' and 'finishing work at 3pm'. As one participant (Dan) stated, 'you can't open the paper anymore, can you, without somebody saying we're lazy'. He felt that the profession was lacking any respect, and he was 'sick of it'. This was put succinctly by Julie who said that there was a 'systematic disrespect' for the profession.

In addition to the localised stress brought about by a sense of de-professionalisation in individual schools, the disrespect for the teaching profession that permeates the British vernacular plays its part in diminishing the feelings of self-worth of our most experienced teachers. Participants reported that they were almost a 'laughing stock' and that there is a sense of disappointment towards Government policymakers by some participants who they felt should be helping the profession and supporting the wider teaching workforce. For example, Dan said, 'the government should be investing in education' and rejecting adverse narratives.

The phenomenon of 'teacher bashing' (Moore, 2021; Mullin, 2020; Toynbee, 2013) was evident in the data and congruent with the national picture where 80% of surveyed teachers 'felt negativity or cynicism related to the teaching profession, some or all of the time' (Education Support, 2021). Although there is research to suggest that the British press has made significant changes in their representation of its teachers (Hansen, 2009), many in the cohort still felt a lack of respect for their work from the non-teaching community contributed to their stress levels and diminished their professional self-worth. The narrative that plays out in the media was cited as a key factor in one participant wanting to 'get out', something acknowledged in research (Bayer M. et al., 2009). One female participant echoed these findings as she said that this constant negativity in our current cultural vernacular left her feeling that it was 'eating away at her soul'.

Similar feelings were expressed by participants with a discourse that suggests that they feel like 'a failure' because the work that they do is 'never enough'. It could be suggested that the responsibility lies with school leaders to ensure that wellbeing of staff is their priority (Al-Jammal & Ghamrawi, 2013), however participants did not report that there was help available from their school leaders.

6.2.3 **Performativity and monitoring**

The impact of a performative culture in participants' schools was evident in the findings. This element of the neoliberal agenda is a cause of dissatisfaction with the majority of participants (72% of questionnaire participants and 93% of the interviewees). The participants found persistent target setting and pushing for greater progress in pupils and staff alike, was perceived as a fearful experience, presenting the Sisyphean dichotomy where no task is ever complete. Participants felt that nothing they achieved was ever good enough (as previously discussed) which is the fundamental underpinning of the target setting, rewarding and sanctioning environment that neoliberalism brings to education:

> I have to follow school policy and they often get very twitchy if there's not lots and lots writing in there because of Ofsted coming in and people from the local authority and, you know it's that has become the measure of how well children were doing. (Eve)

This quotation from Eve exemplified current practice experienced by many participants. She refers to 'they', her leadership team who fear Ofsted or Local authority representatives coming in and judging the individual teacher, the pupils, and thus their leadership and management. Records of how her students are progressing were required to demonstrate that she, and her students were working towards (or ideally) exceeding pre-set targets. Similarly, Pete with thirty

years' experience has three targets set for him from line managers each year. He said that from the outset, they are unrealistic, but is resigned to the fact that he will not achieve those targets so he developed strategies to deal with these unattainable expectations.

There was significant evidence from the cohort that they were being subjected to intense scrutiny of their professional practice, and a high level of control over the task they are assigned. It has been demonstrated that teachers are told what to teach, how to deliver it, what colour pens to use, what colour paper to use, how to report pupils' progress, how to report what they have said to pupils, and even where to stand in a classroom. Whilst there is a need for consistency, and high-level practice, participants suggested that this should not be interpreted as uniformity. As this survey participant explains, the level of monitoring is problematic, leaving her with a feeling of never being able to achieve what she wants professionally:

> I love being in the classroom teaching my subject but with government moving the goal post all the time and Head teachers pandering rather than supporting their staff who are qualified professionals and trusting them to do their job. Instead we get constant scrutiny and made feel like no matter what we do it is never good enough. It just feels like we are dammed if we do and dammed if we don't. (SP249)

The work of teachers in an arena of performativity causes tension between identity and praxis, (Hendrikx, 2020) which in turn causes stress. The notion of 'playfully' rejecting performativity as Meng proposes, is not something the participants were able to achieve (Meng, 2009, p. 1). Hand in hand with the performative practice was a great deal of managerial surveillance which further exacerbated the participants' sense of worth. There were many reports of work being

'pointless', or 'box ticking' which, for busy teachers, was a huge cause of frustration. The lack of autonomy participants reported is echoed in research from the NFER (Worth & Van den Brande, 2020) which demonstrates that teachers with more autonomy are happier, yet those teachers with influence over their work are decreasing. The NFER reported that compared to other professions, teachers fall far behind others in the control over how they manage their time, their pace and the tasks they do with only state-sector health professions having a lower autonomy level. Furthermore, it was stated that unlike other professions, teaching has no link between autonomy and experience, and as such those who have developed their craft over many years, are faced with an equal amount of hierarchical control over their work.

In order to manage the conflict between what 'should be done' and 'what is done' there is evidence that teachers create strategies to manage their conflicting identities in the following way:

> ..this study found three strategies teachers use to cope with the tensions between self-image and role, ranging from working extra hours to playing the administrative system. (Hendrikx, 2020, p. 608)

In support of this suggestion, participants reported that they sometimes navigated through this conflict by reluctantly 'ticking boxes' or paying lip-service to given tasks. Some also said that they made decisions to simply stop, and not continue to do the work. Whilst the latter strategy may be effective in that moment, the subsequent feelings of guilt or failure merely appear to push those conflicting feelings to one side, only for them to resurface in the future causing further emotional conflict as previously discussed.

There is evidence from this research to suggest that a teacher's role has changed into one where datafication is embedded in the global praxis of education and where 'managerialism increasingly reduces the role of teaching to that of a technical deliverer of pre-set pedagogies' (Brain et al., 2006, p. 412) and is causing mid-career teachers to acknowledge that the profession they entered is no longer a reality. This is incongruent with their identity as teachers as one participant explained 'I'm just… I'm just a worker. I'm just a worker' and another described herself as merely 'cheap labour'. These experienced teachers spoke of themselves as though they were unskilled workers and not professionals which is further testimony to the perception of being 'de-skilled' in a low-trust workplace (Wong, 2006).

The commodification of education (a global zeitgeist) causes conflict between teachers and their praxis. No longer are they able to be creative and free to develop their own curricula, or even individual lessons, and this comes at a time in their career when they should have more autonomy to match their experience and expertise. If we refer back to theory, this withdrawal of creativity is described by Marx as rendering the worker 'impoverished' and with pedagogical autonomy withdrawn through high level surveillance from managers, the work that experienced teachers do, could indeed be considered impoverished.

A common thread amongst the participants was the feeling of being a failure, and unable to feel successful in their professional role. One participant commented that he was expected to do what 'was beyond possible' which caused him a huge amount of stress. High-stake testing and a drive for improvement is prevalent in education practice world-wide and this was reflected in the data from interviews and the initial questionnaire. All the interview participants reported feeling negative about performative elements of their work which had a direct effect on their sense of identity. Some reported 'fear' of not being good enough, with a the 'sword of Damocles' hanging

over them. The resultant impact on teachers' wellbeing was a sense of diminished professionalization and self-worth. There has been much research to attest to the evidence that high-stakes testing is not effective in ensuring progress and actually damaging to the wellbeing of the students (Gonzalez et al., 2017; Hout et al., 2012; Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012). Diminished self-efficacy could be compounded by the belief that marking, measuring and assessing is incongruent with teachers' fundamental values as a method for improving student outcomes. The dislike for 'education fads' was something reported by many of the participants; re-hashed initiatives, ping-pong marking, coloured-pen feedback, and buzzwords for example 'learning and teaching' instead of 'teaching and learning' were all elements of their working lives which brought a sense of frustration to the mid-career cohort.

The performative culture that exists in the profession was also a source of anxiety from the cohort. The datafication of teachers' work is well documented, and a fundamental principal of neoliberalism and whilst there was an understanding that progress has to be recorded, it was the manner in which that data was recorded which caused concern. Not only was there a clear desire for school leaders to have written records of pupil and teacher progress, but also written details of how that progress was achieved, to what extent progress was achieved, what methods were used to achieve progress, how this compared to other groups of students and how the pupils responded (in writing) to feedback, which was in many cases seen as unnecessary. Despite verbal feedback being acknowledged as the most effective type of feedback (Collin & Quigley, 2021), many teachers had to write that they had given verbal feedback. The counter-intuitive surveillant practice puts further emphasis on the lack of trust between the 'worker' and 'manager', creating a division which is undesirable.

The datafication of mid-career teachers' praxis was acknowledged by many participants as an integral part of their job, and there was acknowledgment that data is and can be, a valuable element of their work. The collective narrative was not one of discontent with using data to move learning forward or having to create data, it was the rigidity of the protocols for performing and administering those tasks that was strongly evident and was reported as demoralising and 'futile' in many cases. As Annie explained; 'you need to prove this, you need to have evidence for that'; her experience was that it's 'the stuff that would get in the way of doing things that I really enjoy'. Similarly another participant recalls how her leadership team put more value on written evidence of marking rather than the actual work of the pupils. Her autonomy was removed due to school policies that seek to provide a rigid protocol for demonstrating feedback in a particular way i.e. 'rainbow-coloured pens'. This level of control over how tasks were carried out was brought up in many interviews with participants reporting how they had to use different colour pens, specific paper, and stamps which prove that a 'dialogue' between teacher and pupil has taken place. As one participant explained, he had to write assessments on yellow paper and whilst he was not suggesting that assessments shouldn't be done, it was the directive as to what colour paper to use which caused him concern. In his experience, assessment could have taken many, perhaps more effective, forms such as verbal feedback, yet he was not given the autonomy to do this. This level of control is seen as 'soul-crushing' (Didau, 2019).

There was evidence to suggest that participants were subjected to the 'terror of performativity' as described by Ball, (Ball, 2003). The nexus between control over their own work and negative feelings and emotions is evident from the interview data and congruent with Ball's theory. By being exposed to work that is, in its inception, designed to control and judge, the self-worth of the teacher is eroded as was evident in the narratives of the cohort. A key aspect of performativity in education is the concept of having control over the field of judgement, and this lack of control

over one's professional work caused significant frustration and stress. When talking about their work, it was the specific tasks that prompted feelings of de-skilling, (box-ticking and a lack of respect) rather than the amount of time the work took, and there was a sense that work that was being imposed on them was done for alternative motives such as authoritarian control and self-promotion of the professional careers of others.

The UK government had acknowledged that a 'paper-trail' practice from school leaders is very real and is a cause of stress for teachers as echoed in this research. In response to this national problem, the DfE produced a 'myth buster' to help guide leaders through the actual requirements of an Ofsted inspection (DfE, 2016b) in an attempt to clarify what was required when inspections took place. Whilst the document has since been withdrawn, the remit for inspections is clear about what documentation is required from teachers, however, staff are still 'drowning in a tsunami of paperwork' (Roberts, 2019). In a DfE report published in 2018, it is reported that senior leaders are still requesting written evidence of data entry, in-depth marking, and minutia of planning which is in conflict with the requirements of Ofsted (DfE, 2018b), and reflective of the data from this research. Teachers responding to the DfE survey reported similar feelings of frustration and stress when asked to complete tasks that did not improve outcomes for pupils or learning. Requiring a workforce to undertake irrelevant work suggests a disconnect between leaders and subordinates in the pursuit of accountability and control and the increased surveillance on experienced teachers and is detrimental to their wellbeing. The lack of control and autonomy demonstrates the panoptical methods employed by leaders who seek to control the academic labour leaving teachers disengaged and separated from inclusion regardless of the task itself. This practice is a reflection of the proletarianisation of academic work, and has been acknowledged for over twenty years, (Wilson, 1991) yet still continues under the performative backdrop of neoliberalism.

Despite this somewhat bleak picture, the current Covid pandemic has given school leaders a small window of collaboration and improved autonomy as Ofsted inspections were suspended during the pandemic, according to one Multi-Academy Trust leader, (Morrow, 2021). At this education forum, MAT leaders and headteachers reflected on the positive effects of being released from Ofsted until schools are beyond the reach of the pandemic. They report that greater collaboration and empowerment to work autonomously has had a positive effect on progress in their schools: 'The fear factor has gone', reported one speaker:

> Instead of being insular and thinking about the impending Ofsted [inspection], we have been able to be open and honest with each other about how we are doing and look for help and answers. (Morrow, 2021)

Without the fear of judgement in schools, these MAT leaders and headteachers echo the sentiments of the participants who do not respond well to fear and judgment. Morrow uses a similar example as one of the interview participants who likened his experience of being an SLT member with having a sword of Damocles over him:

> High-stakes accountability is a Sword of Damocles and if you are in that space and thinking about collaboration or outside engagement, there is a real fear sometimes that you could take your eye off the ball for your own children…so there is a tension between not wanting to make a mistake and doing the right thing, (Morrow, 2021).

This experienced MAT leader acknowledges the fear that performative practice has on his own working life. The welcome respite that the temporary cessation of Ofsted inspections has not

only been a welcome relief but has brought about unexpected benefits of inter-school collaboration and unity.

It is accepted that this is a singular, non-academic source, however could these professional discussions, ironically borne from a global education disaster, be the green shoots of rethinking performativity in education and bring an end to the 'disturbing' phase in education (Burnard & White, 2008), with leaders at local level taking the agenda to the hierarchy?

6.2.4 **Deskilling or upskilling?**

Professional development was a thread that was woven into the feelings of being undervalued and exacerbated feelings of abandonment in their profession and brought about a rich source of data. It is well established that there are links between effective professional development opportunities and job satisfaction (Fahed-Sreih, 2020) as supported by one participant who said he had received opportunities for effective CPL it had inspired him, and he was much happier and felt more valued in his role. By having effective investment in his praxis, the teacher felt empowered and appreciated. However, the over-riding narrative was not so positive with the rest of the participatory cohort. Professional development was reported as having several debilitating factors such as lack of appropriate opportunities for experienced teachers, lack of funding, lack of time to engage with opportunities. It could be argued that this is consistent with Braverman's theory that workers are being de-skilled and subordinated by those who are holding the power at the top to ensure that the separation between worker and manager are upheld. One interviewee explained that when she was working in the City prior to becoming a teacher, whenever she was promoted or given further responsibilities, she was also given appropriate training. This investment was critical in her performance in the new role and gave her a personal sense of professional value which she reports to be lacking in her subsequent teaching role. A lack of

investment in people leads to dissatisfaction and a sense of feeling under-valued; a phenomenon widely reported in both the business and education world (Allas et al., 2020; Fletcher-Wood & Zuccollo, 2020). If schools are to be run like businesses, it could be useful to look at the other, non-public service sectors and learn from their experiences of investment in people.

Not only was there a consensus that schools wouldn't (or couldn't) make a financial investment into CPL but there were many reports of CPL being offered 'in-house' and delivered by less experienced facilitators. If we reflect on Pete's experience of being 'lectured' by a junior colleague with just two years teaching experience, his frustration was palpable. This was true for many of the participants who felt that a 'one size fits all' to professional development activities was not just stressful, (because they felt there were better uses of their time), but also demeaning and disregarded any acknowledgement of their experience and professional status.

These experiences are in line with recent research which reports that just 11% of CPL offered in schools in the UK is of 'high quality' measured against the government's standards, (Van den Brande & Zuccollo, 2021). This was consistent with the results from the initial questionnaire in this research with respondents demonstrating their dissatisfaction with the availability and quality of CPL in their schools and was echoed by interview participants as the following quotation illustrates:

> ..so it's not really professional development. It's not developing you as a professional. It's just ticking a box that somebody says we need to have ticked. (Helen)

This box-ticking approach to CPL reflects an efficient way of demonstrating 'investment' in teachers without any significant financial outlay; all bang for no buck. Much of the CPL offered

to the participants was related to changes in exam curricula or training on software which develop skills in data tracking and administration tasks which is provided free to schools. Whilst this generic training is essential in ensuring that teachers can continue to function effectively in their workplace, this is not reflective of the definition of 'professional development' which suggests that CPL should be valued, cherished and actively pursued to enable career development and progression (ISBL, 2021). If we review interviewee's experiences, they were unable to benefit from effective CPL, instead they were subjected to tick-boxing exercises which was disappointing for them. From the interviews, there was no evidence of a cohesive, managed approach to genuinely effective, personalised development from any of the experienced teachers in this research.

The disconnect between individual desire for professional development and inadequate provision in schools is a national problem, and not unique to this research. The UK Government produced a set of Standards for Teachers' Professional Development, and the focus is unilateral i.e. 'professional development should have a focus on improving and evaluating pupil outcomes' (DfE, 2016e). This is reflective of the neoliberal paradigm of target setting and desire for constant improvement of outcomes yet the data suggests that this is not in place in participants' schools.

In the absence of CPL opportunities in school, four participants reported how they had enjoyed a range of self-funded professional development programmes; doing a master's Degrees, Creative Leadership and Management at the Chamber of Commerce, and Leadership programmes which were undertaken at their own expense and in their own time and in two cases, leaving the profession to get further training before returning to the school's workforce. It could be argued that these self-funded development opportunities could improve pupil outcomes via more engaged, happy teachers however, the main focus was on the 'professional challenge' by

giving participants the joy of professional improvement. Participants reported that it was first and foremost, something for themselves which gave them a sense of value in their professional lives.

Funding for CPL has been dramatically cut in the last ten years. Not only have schools' budgets been cut in real terms (NEU, 2018; Roberts, 2022), but opportunities to progress professionally through schemes such as the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) or Recovery Reading programme have been removed. This has had an impact on CPL opportunities for the future, as well as for those teachers who had previously invested in these programmes who are now left with no role. Previously, these professional challenges gave participants a sense of career development and improved self-efficacy which, in the absence of these opportunities, has now left them with a feeling of having nowhere to go. Let us consider the teachers who were previously able to develop their professional practice as Advanced Skilled Teachers. This professional development pathway allowed experienced and expert teachers to remain in the classroom and disseminate their knowledge to others, in recognition of their skill as a professional (Fuller et al., 2013). With a clear progression pay scale and the opportunity to share their good practice, this was a viable option for many mid-career teachers which his no longer available.

In response to the paucity of effective professional development for teachers in the UK, the National College which previously offered nationally recognised qualifications in Leadership, is soon to be re-branded as the Institute of Teaching (DfE, 2021b) offering development and training for trainee teachers, early career teacher and those wishing to undertake a National Professional qualification. Whilst this sounds encouraging, the total number of participants will be just 6000 at full capacity, however there is no timeframe given to suggest when this may be. With 480,000 teachers in the UK, it will be difficult to envisage how this will impact the

profession as a whole. The teaching profession could be considered held 'hostage' to a hybrid version of neoliberalism; one where performativity and the pursuit of optimum outcomes is critical, but the upskilling and improvement of resources (teachers) is inadequate.

6.2.5 **Section Summary in relation to the research questions**

RQ2 Is stress a contributory factor in teachers' decisions to leave the profession?

RQ4 How does Professional Identity impact teachers' decision to leave the profession?

The data revealed that these research questions were intrinsically linked together, and it was difficult to separate them for analysis. Participants reported high levels of stress with some severe symptoms such as heart attacks, depression, and relationship breakups to name just a few. Stress was linked to the performative agenda of neoliberalism with negative feelings surrounding being monitored and measured in the work that they do. The feelings of stress interlinked closely with the concept of professional identity and led to the participants' feelings of being a failure, that what they do is never enough and being under-utilized or recognized, both in a professional context but also in a wider societal one. The data from this research suggested that mid-career teachers are not able to access appropriately differentiated and challenging professional training, which leads to a further sense of diminished professional fulfilment. The lack of suitable professional training has added to the feeling of being undervalued and deskilled. The neoliberal agenda of target setting, standardization, and the commodification of education has brought stress and distress to many mid-career teachers.

Chapter 7 Data Analysis and discussion - Career

This final data analysis chapter will focus on the remaining research question. In this section an account will be given of how the participants viewed their careers, and this will be followed by a discussion of these findings.

RQ 3 How do teachers' career expectations factor into decisions to leave the profession?

Results from the initial questionnaire showed that 25% (n=30) of participants agreed or strongly agreed that improved career development would make a difference in their decision to remain or leave the profession, whilst 43% (n=51) reported that improved career opportunities would have little or no bearing on their decision. There was no clear evidence that improved career opportunities would prevent attrition from the questionnaire data. Furthermore, data from the interview cohort yielded the most limited responses and none of the participants had started teaching with an explicit plan or had a definite career path which has been adhered to. Of the fourteen interview participants four had previous careers outside of teaching and they too had come into teaching with no clear career trajectory; rather they were reactive to their circumstances within the profession as they arose.

7.1.1 Limited options

From the interviews, there was a sense of inevitability to their career path. No participants had been able to verbalise a plan for their career, rather, it just 'happened'. A few had ambitions to move into other senior positions, but there was a sense that the only real career progression was to SLT roles as one participant explained; 'Yeah, I became an assistant head because there was nowhere else to go'. One participant reported that he was in a 'limbo land' with few real options:

> Teaching…I think it's really radically changing.. I think it's something that you do until you just.. you do it for 10 years and you can't do anymore, and it's.. it's people like us that are sort of floating around in this of limbo-land of mid-career where we can't really get out, and because we've got mortgages and families and we've got commitments by this stage. So where do we go and what do we do? We just stay in this profession while it kills us, you know? (Joe)

As Joe explained, he felt there was a sense of being trapped in the profession, in 'limbo-land' where his personal commitments are preventing him from moving either forward or out of the profession. There were some participants who tried to move to senior leadership roles but were unsuccessful:

> I don't ever want to be a Head 'cause I think I wouldn't cope with the stress and the management that involves, but I would quite like to be on the lower rung of SLT and I did apply and didn't get it. (Pete)

Pete said that he often speaks his mind and light-heartedly suggested that this is why he's not on the SLT. This could indicate that there is a career game to be played with a certain amount of conflict between saying what you think and then being part of a different 'team' where those thoughts and expressions must be modified. This issue of professional integrity when moving into STL was explained by Kathy:

> You know, we've had colleagues that have gone up to that role [SLT] who have changed completely, and I'm afraid that that's just not something I'd be prepared to do. (Kathy)

This was reflected by some other participants in interview who felt that there was an expectation to lose their identity to become 'other' and this was not something they were prepared to do. There was some sympathy for those on leadership teams with an acknowledgement that they too lack training as Sally explains:

> But having worked previously… in, not industry but in corporate, I don't think that the people that get put into these positions of management are trained in any way. They just get become a leader and then they don't know how to do it. And there's no management for them. Whereas when I worked in the city, every time I got promotion, I got sent on courses. And that's where I feel…. 'oh my word you haven't got an inkling', but then is it not your fault because no one's training you. (Sally)

Sally's experience was mirrored with what Dan had reported as a member of the SLT. He had been told to push an already good Head of Department for even better results, with a performative narrative that was not congruent with his personal beliefs. He believed she was doing an excellent job, but the leadership narrative that he had to follow was one of performativity, results and outcomes, which was a dichotomy for Dan.

7.1.2 **Second careers**

Some teachers brought experience to their teaching role, by having previous careers before coming into the profession, and were able to draw reflections from these careers to make comparisons with their teaching role. There was some comparison between the efficiencies experienced in previous work and a sense of frustration that, despite the neoliberal paradigm that teachers now work in, the opportunity for efficiencies have not been brought to the education

sector. One participant made this analogy from her experience as a textiles manager when expressing frustration with her leadership team:

> If you're going to put the cotton rails at the very bottom end of the factory, six and a half miles away from the shirtsleeves, then you are the production manager are screwed and will be fired. And actually, that's what the senior leadership do. The senior leadership will not bother to make any kind of cohesive planning of the resources. They don't create a hierarchy where everybody has to actually put the things in the right place. (Julie)

There was clear and balanced reflection on both the good and bad sides of their previous careers, but there was only one report of any aspect of teaching being better than their pervious jobs. One participant reported that he'd rather be teaching than on a freezing oil rig!

7.1.3 **Flexibility in career**

Flexible working is cited by policy makers as a key factor in potentially retaining teachers, (DfE, 2019d), however in practice this can only offer limited opportunities. Helen was not given flexibility to go part-time in her head of faculty role having returned from maternity leave, so she had little option but to step down to a main-scale teacher and this has now put her career plans back to the point where she feels she is 'going nowhere'. Similarly, Annie spoke of how balancing family and career was made difficult as she was also refused flexible working:

> I work 0.8 of a full time and that went on for quite a number of years, and I was actually quite happy with it. It made meant that it was easier for me with my children who were relatively small then and later on as well. But then at some point my department Head left and left a

> vacancy and I was asked to apply for it. And now, (I am quite ambitious and I'm capable as well) so I applied for the job, but they said, 'you have to be full time, you cannot have this job and be part time'. (Annie)

The conflict between family responsibilities and career was highlighted by others in the group. Carol had sought to move her career forward by joining the SLT and had been seconded onto a SLT for two years prior to becoming pregnant with her third child. When she returned from maternity leave she was not given the opportunity for retention on the SLT; 'That was the end of it, nobody wanted to know.' Similarly, two other female participants (Helen and Eve) told of how they were refused part-time work as middle leaders. Helen felt that she could certainly have managed the role of Head of Faculty on an 80% timetable but was not given the opportunity after her decision to have a family.

Karl, a veteran teacher of 20 years reported that he would have valued career flexibility, as he wanted to go part time in his SLT role to complete a master's degree. When denied flexible working, he resigned his post and took a year out to complete his studies (at his own expense) before going back into teaching as a main scale teacher, having had to give up his management post. He reported that if he'd been offered a more flexible approach to his role, he could have remained in the profession for that year which would have been beneficial to him and his pupils.

One participant raised the issue of ageism; believing that she has been discriminated against when applying for promotions because of her age. This was raised by two others who felt 'trapped', not necessarily directly because of their age, but because their salaries were relatively

high compared to less experienced teachers, and they felt that employers would choose a 'cheaper' and possibly younger alternative.

Three participants explained that going part-time has been a positive thing for their mental health and personal lives, as Carly who works 0.8 part-time states' 'I think it's so important for my mental health just to have that day'. However, not all request to go part-time were granted. One participant was refused part-time working because there were already two other members of her department who worked flexibly which generated anger from the participant: 'so I can't do it, but they can? What the hell's going on here? Something's not right' (Helen).

None of the participants were offered sabbaticals, although half of the cohort said they would have valued this opportunity. None had any knowledge of the recent pilot scheme which ran in 2018 which saw some teachers offered a year in industry to support their career. There were some interviewees who expressed a real desire to take either an academic or work-related career break, and eloquently described the potential benefits, with one participant believing they should be mandatory:

> That would be a massive asset to the school, and equally if that teacher could go out, I think that would be brilliant thing to offer as an incentive and will keep people fresh and just remind you what there is a big bad world that there is. (Pete)

Half of the participants had expressed a desire to work more flexibly, however, this would come at the cost of giving up current management responsibilities which they felt was incongruent with career progression.

7.2 Discussion – Career

RQ3 How do teachers' career expectations factor into decisions to leave the profession?

For the participants in interview, the notion that teaching was a life-time profession was under scrutiny. None of the fourteen participants reported that they would be in this profession for their whole working life and the narrative was that teaching was no longer something, under the current climate, which was tenable long term, i.e. to reach full pensionable age. It could be argued that this result would be inevitable given the nature of the research, however, a comparison was made with a doctor's career when one participant explained that 'no doctor goes into their profession knowing they'll only do it for ten years'. This is a reflection of the national picture with fewer teachers reaching pensionable age in the UK compared to previous years (Knights & Willmott, 1990). Despite the British government acknowledging this phenomenon in 2019 (Sharp et al., 2019), the number of teachers leaving the profession prior to retirement age has not abated. In the following section, I will discuss how participants felt about career planning, possible career pathways and flexible working.

7.2.1 Career planning

None of the interviewed cohort reported that they had planned a career trajectory on entering the profession. This is not to say that during their careers they have not developed ambitions to develop their careers and seek to move into different roles as they became more experienced. Moreover, they felt the only opportunities to progress their careers were to move to SLT roles, which left them feeling that they had limited options. The sense of 'having nowhere to go' and being in 'limbo land' was reported by the interview cohort. Rather than being a streamline career pathway available to the participants, there were accounts of being given limited options.

Kathy wanted to be an assistant Headteacher, but opportunities were not available in her current school. Rather than move schools, she moved to a faculty role instead, 'for financial reasons', which is a reflection of Sikes's finding that more experienced teachers are bound to careers due to external factors like family commitment (Sikes, 1985). Kathy explained that she was prepared to be adaptable in order to progress her career despite it not being her preference. She acknowledged that there were opportunities available further afield, but in her current role as a mid-career teacher she had family and 'strong community ties' which kept her in the school she had worked at for almost twenty years. This was a common theme amongst more experienced teachers; they felt that they were unable to be as flexible as their younger counterparts who have fewer family commitments and can be more easily relocated. Kathy had invested many years in her local community and this was what made her such a passionate teacher, but ironically also held her back from developing her career the way she had wanted.

Contemporary research reflects that many school leaders would not consider agreeing to middle or senior leadership roles being part-time because they feet it 'would make it impossible to undertake strategic duties, manage staff and lead teams effectively' (Sharp et al., 2019, p. 2). Part-time leadership and management roles do exist, but as one questionnaire participant reported that she was 'devastated' to have to give up her part-time head of department role. She was unable to manage 50-60 hours per week on a 0.6 full-time equivalent post with elderly parents and a young family. In this instance, her counterpart was given the full-time roll which benefitted from extensive support from more senior colleagues, which she believed could have helped her retain her part-time role, but no support was offered.

Whilst some participants felt that they had been discriminated against because they wanted to have flexibility in their roles to allow them to balance work and family commitments, a report

by the Equality and Human Rights commission found that gender discrimination in the Education sector was less that other sectors with 7% of mothers feeling the need to leave the profession, compared to 11% in other sectors. However, there are less part-time opportunities for leaders in education than other sectors with the expectation that leadership roles cannot be shared, (Patience, 2021). The participants who voiced their concerns during interview, felt they would have been able to manage a flexible leadership role with their family commitments, yet these opportunities were not available, which in turn could be seen as their schools not optimising resources effectively and is in opposition to the neoliberal form of optimisation for profits at all times.

The issue of flexible working in education has been acknowledged as an area for focus by the British government and has recently run pilot schemes to tackle the issue. As one Headteacher reported, adopting a new mindset on the notion of flexible working can have huge benefits to the teaching workforce:

> I'll confess, when our trust approached me to become a pilot flexible working school, I was sceptical. I had always seen flexible working as part-time working only, something associated with problems to overcome, rather than a solution. But I soon learned there was more to it – and there were huge benefits it could bring to High Hazels. (Magsood-Shah, 2022)

This change in mindset echoes the proposal in Figure 22 that puts a collaborative management agenda at the head of a new model of managing work. As Magsoon-Shah explains, by changing the narrative from 'part-time' to 'flexible working' and offering flexible working in all vacancy advertisements, she saw an increase in applicants for roles which had significant benefits to the

school. By increasing staff satisfaction, retention has improved which in turn has shown to be a real cost benefit and demonstrates how the optimisation of resources can be achieved.

Following successful pilot schemes, in 2020 the UK government subsequently funded eight 'Flexible Working Ambassador Schools', whose remit is to facilitate better understanding of how more schools can be flexible with teacher employment, (DfE, 2020a) and it could be suggested that the limited access to flexible working will be addressed in the near future. However, for the participants in this research flexibility in career opportunities was still problematic.

7.2.2 **Possible career pathways**

Career pathways in teaching are not always linear, and in order to create a clearer career journey for teachers, the British government has created in-school posts to champion leadership in education. Appointed 'Specialist Leaders of Education' offer teachers opportunities to develop leadership capacity in schools through coaching, assisting with action planning, facilitation training and data analysis. There are no current figures for how many SLEs there are, but figures from 2016 suggest that there are 6000 teachers currently in these positions (DfE, 2016d), from a teaching population of 480,00. None of the interviewed participants had applied for SLE status, and only one participant had been offered any form of professional development qualification. The main career opportunities open to the fourteen participants were moves into leadership roles within their own schools.

One participant had made a career move into the Recover Reading programme, but this was subject to funding cuts, and that ended this career path for this mid-career teacher. Similarly, one participant was a trained AST but again the lack of central government funding cut this career

path off to her and she had not been offered a superseding SLE role. If we refer back to the proposed career pathways in Figure 16, three potential pathways are put forward by the UK Government: Classroom teaching, School Leadership, and Specialists yet the evidence from this cohort was that in reality, only one pathway (school leadership) was open to them due to lack of funding for the specialist pathways, or classroom experts being reduced or abolished.

7.2.3 **Value schizophrenia**

If we look to Labour Process theory, the divide between managers and workers is pronounced and it could be argued that the participants in this study acknowledged this divide in their current practice and were unwilling to give up of aspects of their professional identity to gain promotion to 'management'. If we reflect on Dan's account of how he was expected to behave in a way as an assistant headteacher that was not congruent with his beliefs, he is describing what Ball cites at 'value schizophrenia' leading him to 'end up in a place where there was nowhere to go' with a fundamental chasm between his beliefs and the expectations from his own line manager. The dichotomous conflict between professional identity and promotion to SLT was raised by many interview participants; there was a sense that if promoted to a senior leadership role they would have to sacrifice some of their principles and sense of professional self. Kathy reflected that to move to SLT would require her to 'change her beliefs', which she was not prepared to do. Other participants explained that they did not want the additional stress and workload that is perceived to be inherent in senior leadership roles. Furthermore, one participant recalled that he felt he had not been successful in his application for a leadership team post because he 'speaks his mind', suggesting that he would not be able to continue to do so had he gained that promotion.

This could be considered to align with the notion of separation of work and intellectual ownership which is an integral part of Labour Process theory. Could participants feel that school leaders are expected to be 'separate' from workers and promote values which may not be

congruent with inherent beliefs of subordinates? It could be argued that promotions to SLT require a different set of professional and personal skills to the subordinate counterparts which thus requires the shift in profession (and perhaps personal) values which many are unwilling or unable to embrace.

7.2.4 **Section summary in relation to the research question**

RQ3 How do teachers' career expectations factor into decisions to leave the profession?

The participants in the semi-structured interviews had very limited expectations of a clear career path from the beginning of their careers. Instead, these experienced teachers just 'fell into' their current positions, largely due to the lack of alternative options. Some had wanted to take on a specialist teacher role but with the scheme abolished, the only viable alternative for many was to move up the ladder to senior leadership posts, which often caused a dichotomous position for many. This conflict or 'value schizophrenia' was an acknowledged difficulty within the cohort; many of whom were unwilling to give up their core values and beliefs in favour of what is seen by some participants as essential in moving 'up the ladder'. Career progressions were made more complex for many of the participants who were unable to access flexible working, particularly in leadership roles. It was acknowledged that there were limited career opportunities, and some participants felt that they were stuck in their current roles due to external factors such as commitments to local communities, family ties and children.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I will review the problem that this research sought to address and will be followed by an outline of the purpose of the study and then a conclusion to the data will be presented. Following on from this, I will outline the contribution to new knowledge and then recommendations will be presented, along with the limitations of the study and final reflections will be offered.

8.1 Review of problem

Attrition of teachers in England reflects a current global phenomenon (See & Gorard, 2019). There is an extensive body of research into beginning and new teacher attrition, (Buchanan et al., 2013; Ellis et al., 2018; Gallant & Riley, 2017; Helms-Lorenz et al., 2016; Howes & Goodman-Delahunty, 2015) designed to shed light on why teachers are leaving the profession, however there is a paucity of research into the phenomenon of experienced teachers leaving prior to retirement age. This study sought to add to the literature in addressing this gap in research.

8.2 Purpose of the study

The gap in research into the attrition of mid-career teachers needs to be filled if policy makers, government think-tanks and education stakeholders are to move forward in finding solutions to the current problem of teacher retention. There is much at stake by allowing this experienced and often expert group of professionals to walk away, taking with them the knowledge, gravitas, and skills that are so valuable. The financial and academic cost of losing this valuable resource should not be underestimated.

Four concepts were drawn on to underpin the research; workload, stress, career, and professional identity (to include Performativity and CPL). These concepts were taken from research that cites

these four areas as the most prevalent causes for teacher attrition, and by delving into these themes, new insights could be established.

8.3 Theoretical Summary

Throughout this research there have been strong links to the underpinning theoretical framework, and key concepts have been drawn upon to develop conclusions to the data presented. The underlying principles of Labour Process theory have provided a critical lens through which to view the work that mid-career teachers undertake and the data demonstrates a significant dis-connect between intellectual power held by a managerial hierarchy and the implementation of work to the emotional detriment of the workforce; a key tenant of Labour Process theory. There is evidence that the participants felt that their work was often de-professionalized and commodified in nuanced ways, the impact of which will be drawn out further in the data summary section for each concept.

Furthermore, the evidence suggests that there are strong connections between the sense of de-professionalization and the neoliberal agenda that enshrouds the profession. The neoliberal agenda was designed to commodify and control market sectors through free market forces, and in the context of education the impact of this could be considered to reduce teachers (and thus the labour they supply) to instruments of capitalism by means of conceptualizing their time as a commodity to be utilized as the owners of that labour choose. This research demonstrates how the utilization of mid-career teachers' labour has been managed through New Public Management systems which aims to control the workforce through target setting and the quantification of outputs with punitive responses when targets are not met. There were some illuminating findings with regard to this aspect of teachers' work which will be discussed in more detail in the following sections. If the language of neoliberalism is used to describe the findings,

there is clear evidence that teachers are expected to reach or ideally exceed targets (optimum output) without being allocated additional time (supply of surplus labour) in order to satisfy the demands of the overseeing agents. The commodification of teacher's labour under the neoliberal agenda could be considered to sit in an uncomfortable position as Marx defined the value of a commodity to be measured as the average number of labour hours required to produce that commodity (Marx, 1970). Whilst this may be a viable conceptual calculation when making car parts, or even when a lawyer performs a labour-intensive task by billing that client for each minute spent in producing that commodity, it is a more complex situation when a teacher's labour is commodified. There is no product or commodity in education which could be considered to render the fundamental neoliberal concept of efficiency invalid. Not only is the commodity itself nebulous, but it is also impossible to quantify how much time it takes to 'make' that commodity; how long does it take to council a student through a difficult time, to plan a school trip, or to give extra revision sessions to pupils who need help? The ironic juxtaposition of Marx's theory and neoliberalism should not be overlooked. Teachers thus find themselves supplying 'surplus labour' indefinitely to meet the demands of their remit causing stress and dissatisfaction with their roles.

Alongside the attempted commodification of teachers' labour there was evidence that teachers were subject to efficiency measures as part of the neoliberalistic philosophy. The standardization, scrutiny and judgement of their work led to a further sense of de-professionalization and lack of autonomy. This intellectual dis-empowerment was a critical cause of stress and job dissatisfaction in the cohort. This was evident in reflections of the target-setting frameworks mid-career teachers were working under, often leading to value-schizophrenia which manifests feelings of stress. The disconnect between personal beliefs and ambitions of the mid-career

teachers and the way their labour was being used led many to feel alienated from their core values in relation to the profession they clearly love.

As discussed in the data analysis of the subordinate worker, it is possible to surmise that senior leadership teams act as the owners of their teachers' labour and in doing so render themselves to be hierarchical capitalists by separating intellectual capital and task management. However, it is acknowledged that leadership teams themselves are subjected to their own capitalist authority in the form of the leaders of their multi academy trusts, local education authorities or Ofsted. It was noteworthy that when Ofsted was suspended during the pandemic, a group of Headteachers were able to work more collaboratively and effectively without the panopticon scrutiny of Ofsted. They had effectively been (albeit temporarily) removed from the hierarchical system and could briefly enjoy collaborative and autonomous connections and they reported this as having 'freedom' to share knowledge and ideas which was mutually beneficial (Morrow, 2021). Whilst this was an isolated occurrence, it could signal the need for further investigation to clarify that removal of the current neoliberal and managerial structures that SLTs work under could affect positive change, and ironically, provide more efficient outcomes that the neoliberal agenda seeks to achieve.

Having sign-posted the embedded theory in this section, a full data summary is now presented.

8.4 Data Summary

At the end of the interview process it was clear that all the participants were dissatisfied with many elements of their professional work which was not unexpected given the nature of the research. These experienced teachers loved teaching yet all of them expressed a desire to leave

before retirement age, however, whilst they had all considered leaving the profession in the last two years, there was acknowledgement that moving out of teaching may not possible due to financial, family or other external commitments. All participants spoke with candour and passion about their careers and expressed sadness that they felt this way.

The concept of 'workload' has been reported as one with multiple facets and connections to other constructs such as emotion, perceived task-value, the manner in which the work is disseminated and how experienced teachers are allowed to conduct their work. If work is perceived to be congruent with their own sense of educational values the data suggests that mid-career teachers are prepared to put in additional hours to achieve these goals, however this research has also shown that there is little opportunity for experienced teachers to undertake autonomous tasks that align with their educational values despite their experience and expertise, and recommendations from the Government, (DfE, 2019d).

There is evidence that there are parallels with the fundamental principles of Labour Process Theory with the division of intellectual power and provision of labour, often to the detriment of the individual and the profession as a whole. The experiences of the participants suggest that the profession has been divided into those with power and those who carry out the work; this leaves teachers with little or no autonomy over what they teach, how they teach it or how this is judged which has resulted in disengagement in the participatory cohort. It could be suggested that the mid-career teachers in this study are caught in a dichotomy; on one hand being de-skilled by authoritarian managers, and on the other hand being given the additional responsibility of a managerial position without the recognition or power; a duality which leads to stress, job dissatisfaction and attrition.

The impact that school leaders have on the working lives of mid-career teachers is significant. Good leadership teams that promote autonomy, value and recognize expertise and experience are reported as 'hard to find'. The interviewed participants felt that their leadership teams sought to control and remove autonomy which left them feeling disengaged and frustrated.

Managerial and performative practice has led to lack of autonomy and a surveillance culture in the workplace and reflects the conditions under which the participatory cohort operate, to the detriment of their wellbeing and self-efficacy. Teachers reported that they feel that they are used as 'cheap labour' as one interviewee cited, and often little regard is paid to their professional or emotional needs. This was exemplified by manner in which work was disseminated to them; it was problematic for some participants who felt that their own planning and organisation was being de-railed by last minute or untimely requests. This type of reactive practice from school leaders causes stress and conflict which could be avoided.

Alongside the managerial spiritus mundi sits the performative practice which also led to emotional conflict in the participants. The continuous pressure to test, improve, and push forward towards optimization is stifling creative practice in many ways which serves to disenfranchise experienced teachers. The culture of testing and target setting causes stress due to the time this takes and the disconnect between perceived validity of that task and the time this takes away from more valuable learning opportunities.

As highlighted previously, it is be recognized that leaders are also in a subordinate position to their own hierarchical managerial structures, which some participants acknowledged. School leaders are subjected to their own directives from their line managers, which ultimately is the government and their monitoring arm, Ofsted. However, it was suggested that at a local level,

school leaders could respond to their workforce in a more collegiate manner in order to better manage mid-careers' stress and working lives.

Being unable to complete work left many participants with a sense of guilt and feelings of 'never being good enough'. This was exacerbated by negative perceptions from the public (Asbury & Kim, 2020) and the British press who often bemoan 'lazy' teachers. The perceived lack of professionalism from outside agencies is further compounded by the limited options for developing their careers which are perhaps more available in other professions.

None of the participants were on a planned career journey; opportunities to develop their careers are currently limited to movement 'up' to senior leadership roles which some believe would require a fundamental shift in their professional identity which they are not prepared to sacrifice. The data indicates that there is a disconnect between government policy and viable opportunities for mid-career teachers. Whilst the government has introduced a new raft of nationally recognized qualifications (the NPQ Programmes), these are poorly promoted and out of reach for those who are aware of them due to the relatively high cost.

A lack of flexible working opportunities for managerial or leadership roles has stunted career opportunities for some who have family or additional responsibilities, with those wanting to take on flexible roles being denied. Furthermore, there is a reported lack of effective, relevant, and engaging professional learning opportunities with all participants disappointed with the current trend for cost-neutral, generic in-house CPL which is of little or no value. This training is most often perceived as 'box-ticking' exercises that have an exponential negative impact of experienced teachers as they take so much time away from tasks that they perceive as more valuable and further widens the gap between managerial directives and worker-autonomy.

One concept that was brought to the fore and ran through the data was that of autonomy. Many of the responses from participants shed light on their feelings and of lack of autonomy in the work they do, the tasks they undertake, the training that is offered and the way they were managed. Participants reported a low-trust working environment which further erodes their sense of professionalism and experience, which in turn induced feelings of stress.

Neoliberalism could be seen to be in conflict with working practices in education despite the drive to commodify the profession. At its heart the neoliberal zeitgeist seeks to deregulate, and open up markets to competitive forces, and yet paradoxically in this neoliberal world, the data from this research indicates that the participants believe that education is becoming more regulated where the freedoms of creativity and individualism are constrained to the detriment of the mid-career teacher. The data suggests that the mid-career teachers in this research sit in a hybrid version of neo-liberalism where the fundamental tenets of optimisation, measuring and target setting are not accessible due to lack of time, resources or training. If we consider the participant who made the analogy of being prepared for a hike; she would expect the right equipment, preparatory training and a map. When talking about her current role, she felt that she is expected to do work without adequate resourcing which is in contrast to Sally who had worked in the City prior to being a teacher. Any promotion in a private sector role that Sally undertook went hand in hand with appropriate training and support, which came with a financial commitment. Without this financial investment, it is difficult to understand how schools can provide the necessary resources and infrastructure to empower the workforce to reach optimisation. It could be argued that in non-public service industries, workers are empowered and upskilled to deliver optimum outputs by receiving effective training, provision of adequate resources, facilitation of autonomous working and rewards for meeting targets, something that the participants in this research reported as lacking.

There are several examples where Government policies and lived experiences of teachers come into conflict throughout this research. The findings of academic research highlight the need for improved teacher wellbeing, autonomy, flexible working and career opportunities, all of which are well documented by the British government, see Table 1. Despite numerous schemes and strategies, there is evidence of practice in the participants' schools which is contrary to many of these recommendations. Research reviewed for this thesis suggests that working hours have decreased yet attrition rates have not abated; Ofsted requires no onerous paper-trails, yet participants report still having to produce excessive paperwork for scrutiny; flexible working is actively being promoted by the Government, but flexible opportunities have not been open to the participants in this study and training opportunities are created yet the access to these is extremely limited. The data suggests that there is a clear disconnect between government policy and how this filters down to the individual teacher.

Having reviewed the findings from this research, it is possible to get a clearer picture of how the theoretical and operational factors influence teacher attrition, as shown in Figure 23. Neoliberalism and Managerialism bring tension to the mid-career teacher by creating a framework which many teachers reported as being incongruent with their beliefs about how the profession should be framed. Teachers reported that they did not see their pupils as 'customers' and rejected the constant scrutiny to measure performance. Additionally it is possible to see how operational factors influence the work that teachers undertake. With the government and leadership teams imposing their policies on mid-career teachers, it is possible to understand how this causes a sense of lack of autonomy, dis-engagement with their profession and ultimately feelings of stress.

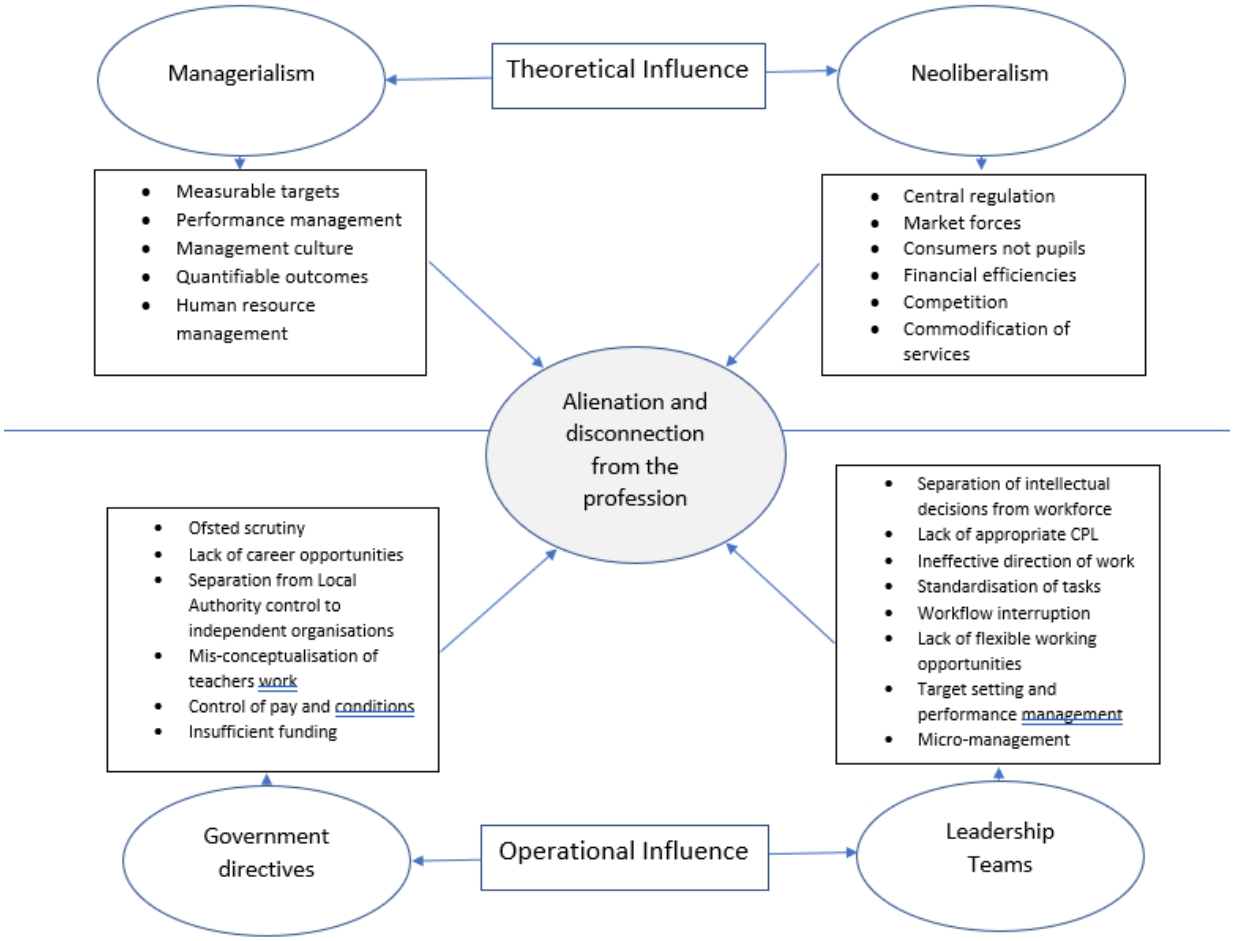


Figure 23 Theoretical and operational influences leading to attrition of mid-career teachers

With the repositioning of how mid-career teachers conceptualise their work (figure 23) the emotional responses from the interviewees have been tabulated (Table 5) to demonstrate how aspects of the mid-career teachers' work interlink with each other. The common features of the participants' dissatisfaction with their roles have been laid out with the connection to the four key concepts so that it is possible to see the how each element can have an impact in other areas.

Factors impacting mid-career teachers' decisions to leave the profession prior to normal retirement age taken from the data corpus	Concepts			
	Workload	Stress	Professional identity	Career
Feelings of guilt	■	■	■	
Completing unnecessary work	■	■	■	
Imposed additional work	■	■	■	
Interruption to workflow	■	■	■	
Government interventions	■	■	■	■
Physical symptoms of stress	■	■	■	■
Lack of autonomy	■	■	■	■
Ineffective leadership	■	■	■	■
Negative professional identity		■	■	■
Performance management	■	■	■	■
Ineffective professional development	■	■	■	■
Limited career options		■	■	■
Lack of flexible working opportunities		■	■	■

Table 5 Summary of findings and connections

By viewing the data in this format it is possible to see how factors such as lack of flexible working opportunities connect with stress and professional identity and career choices. Viewing the findings in this context could help policymakers understand why removing one single element of a teachers' workload (as the workload reduction toolkit suggests) will have little overall impact on retaining mid-career teachers. Some aspects of teachers work have an impact on all

four conceptual elements, and it could be beneficial to address these issues holistically in order to reduce teacher attrition.

- Government interventions
- Feelings of stress
- Lack of autonomy
- Ineffective leadership
- Ineffective professional development

This study has put forward some strong indicators of the antecedents to mid-career teachers choosing to leave the profession, as outlined in the discussions. The neoliberal paradigm has been reported as a professional challenge to the interview participants with the managerial and performative practice that permeates English secondary schools having an impact on mid-career teachers and could be considered a significant factor in those experienced teachers who are seeking to leave their profession behind. Furthermore, the four concepts underpinning this research cannot be seen as separate entities. Instead, they interlink and create complex networks of feeling and emotions which mesh together to leave mid-career teachers with challenging decisions about whether to leave or remain in the profession. With recent research suggesting that there will be an increase in teachers leaving the profession due to the Covid pandemic, this problem is more urgent than ever (Fullard, 2021).

8.4.1 **Contribution to knowledge**

In this section I will outline the contribution to new knowledge taking each concept in turn. This research has provided some contributions to help further understand the phenomenon of teacher

attrition of mid-career teachers by giving further insight into the four concepts underpinning this research and how these links with their current praxis.

It is worth acknowledging that this research in itself is a contribution to the gap in the academic literature with regard to attrition of mid-career teachers. There is a significant paucity of research into this group of teachers, and one which should continue to be addressed. By conducting this study I hope that other researchers will be drawn to the phenomenon of mid-career teacher attrition and explore other avenues of enquiry to help redress the balance in the academic field.

A further contribution to knowledge is the re-framing the concept of workload and stress. These concepts are often used synonymously when teachers express their dissatisfaction with their roles. By extricating these terms, it has been possible to dig deeper into what the concept of workload means to mid-career teachers, and to see stress as a causal outcome of diminished autonomy and professional identity.

8.4.2 **Concept 1 - Workload**

This research has provided a 'snapshot' of the current experiences of mid-career teachers within a neoliberal agenda in secondary schools in England. Interview participants (n=14) reported a highly nuanced view of their workload which revealed that this concept is not merely one of hours worked, but instead a highly complex network of responses to the tasks they undertake, which in turn impacts their stress levels, professional identity and career choices. This has highlighted the need for a review of how stakeholders and policy makers view the concept of workload as supported by existing research,(Butt & Lance, 2005; Scott, 2019) (Butt & Lance, 2005; See & Gorard, 2019) and it has been possible to present an alternative model to view the concept of teacher workload in relation to hierarchical structures with emotion and feeling of

teachers at its heart. This new model could encourage further discussion and research into the role that 'workload' plays in the reduction of attrition. Through this proposed model we could seek to further understand how mid-career teachers respond not only to the amount of work required, but the manner in which work is directed, the lack of autonomy with which this work is done, and the perceived value of the work required. The emotional impact of how work is directed to mid-career teachers, and the importance of engagement with tasks is demonstrated in this research and should not be underestimated. By acknowledging the impact of treating experienced teachers as 'workers' where their professionalism is subjugated, it could be possible to review preconceptions of workload from a linear 'time and motion' concept where work is considered in terms of task and time alone, to something more complex. This could go some way towards finding solutions to retaining experienced teachers in the profession.

8.4.3 **Concept 2 & 3 - Stress and Professional Identity**

This research has drawn the spotlight on the levels of stress that experienced teachers are under with a very real picture painted of the impact this has on the cohort in physical and emotional terms, leading to diminished professional identity. The impact of the physical symptoms of stress should not be underestimated. The links between the different elements of a teacher's working lives are complex, with stress being caused by a wide and diverse range of factors, ranging from a neoliberal narrative and lack of professional (and often personal) respect, to the impact of ineffective leadership. Furthermore, this research has identified that there is no clear link between hours worked and feelings of stress; highlighting the need for further research into the effectiveness of current models employed by policy makers that attempt to reduce stress in the workforce.

The paucity of meaningful professional development for mid-career teachers is evident from this research, and this could contribute to the wider debate about the impact of CPL, or lack thereof, on mid-career teachers. As the findings suggest, 'box-ticking' CPL has a significant impact on other factors such as stress, feeling of lack of autonomy or control over their professional development, and ultimately their careers. It could be suggested that the ripple-effect of offering experienced teachers boxes to tick, and 'one size fits all' training sessions have been underestimated in its negative impact for this cohort. The connection between feeling undervalued interconnects with poor professional identity opportunities and on a more immediate level leaves experienced teachers feeling frustrated and disengaged with their work. Furthermore, the framework of performativity in teachers' professional lives has been exposed as a factor in reducing enjoyment in their work. The regular judgements, target setting and monitoring of their work, is incongruent with a feeling of autonomy and value. The participants in this research expressed disappointment that their experience in the profession was under-valued which led to the feeling of stress. Teachers in this cohort loved teaching yet saw little opportunity to remain in the profession until retirement age due to feelings of stress.

8.4.4 **Concept 4 -Career**

This research highlighted the paucity of opportunities that are currently available for mid-career teachers. Whilst there are some opportunities to become senior leaders, or Specialist Leaders of Education, it was evident that these options are either not available or desirable for our mid-career teachers. The teachers in this cohort are willing and keen to progress their careers and want to keep working, but current opportunities are incongruent with their current roles which would require more flexible working opportunities. The gap between career opportunities presented by the government and what teachers are actively exposed to is at odds and must be acknowledged. Evidence suggests that there is a lack of understanding at all levels on how

teachers can access and benefit from career development opportunities which predominantly comes down to funding. This research also highlights some enticing pilot schemes that are often abandoned without effective communication or rationale; the proposed teacher sabbatical scheme for example. If teachers are to be offered genuine and sustainable career development these issues will need review and re-evaluation without delay.

8.5 Recommendations

From this research it has been possible to draw insights into how the concepts of workload, stress, and professional identity inter-connect (see figures 21, 22 and 23) and the data suggests that these factors do not and cannot sit alone.

There are strong educational and financial benefits to retaining this experienced group of teachers yet as the literature review attests, there is an acknowledged gap in research into attrition of mid-career teachers. This research presents evidence that may help to reduce that gap in knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon. The way that policy makers and school leaders view the work that mid-career teachers undertake offers up a holistic picture of how antecedents to leaving the profession interact and connect to each other.

8.5.1 Recommendations for Leadership Teams

The impact school leaders and their teams have on attrition should not be under-estimated. If we are to look at the work teachers do and want to fully understand the lived experiences of what 'workload' means to teachers, it must be viewed at school level. Some of the findings related to national strategies which the working teacher has limited influence over, however, many of the antecedents of stress and frustration could be alleviated by changing the managerial modus

operandi, and actively adopting strategies to create a more autonomous working environment for their teachers at school level.

- School leaders have a key part to play in the retention of experienced teachers. This research has suggested that despite pressures from external agencies such as Ofsted, school leaders have the power and resources to empower and encourage mid-career teachers which would enable them to have a fulfilling role in their schools. A fundamental review of how experienced teachers are handled would need to be adopted by those schools who fail to acknowledge and value the latent potential of their experienced workforce.

- Giving teachers time to do work, avoiding last minute interruptions to workflow, giving teachers autonomy to complete tasks, engaging teachers in decision making to reduce the gap between the proletariat teacher and hierarchical managers would provide day to day support to mid-career teachers. With the gap of 'worker and decision-maker' reduced, improved discourse could be established, and greater productivity could follow (a key tenant of the neoliberal agenda). Teachers should have opportunities to engage in genuine decision-making activities which would reflect effective communication between parties.

- School leaders should focus on bespoke training and avoid 'one size fits all' CPL exercises. Avoidance of ineffective training sessions in favour of streamlined bespoke training would be beneficial in acknowledging the mid-career teacher's experience and needs which in turn improves self-esteem, reduces stress and signals recognition of their individual needs.

- Increase meaningful flexible working options for mid-career teachers to encourage this cohort to remain longer in the profession. By reviewing the findings of this research, school leaders could consider offering more support to those who want to continue with leadership roles on a flexible basis. To facilitate this, teachers may require more support when moving into managerial roles to ensure optimum efficiency.

- Recognise experience and expertise in mid-career teachers to give a sense of empowerment to those experienced practitioners. By empowering and engaging experienced teachers, the maximum value of their labour could be achieved, which is at the heart of neoliberal intentions. This could be done by improving communication between school leaders and experienced teachers; to ignore such a valuable asset would be a missed opportunity to benefit from the gravitas and experience that this cohort retains.

8.5.2 **Recommendations for Policy makers.**

If current research is to be acknowledged, (Fullard, 2021) is essential that policy makers, government think-tanks and researchers seek to reduce the paucity of research into the reasons that mid-career teachers leave the profession prior to retirement age. Further research is needed urgently to redress this phenomenon and the following recommendations could go some way to resolving the attrition crisis:

- Policymakers should revisit the concept of 'workload' and avoid simplistic 'time and motion' style philosophies which seek to reduce 'tasks'. The latter method has not proved to be a successful method for reducing attrition, so a new lens is perhaps required and workload should be re-framed in a more holistic way, and not merely viewing the tasks

undertaken. Furthermore, leadership training should be rigorously encouraged to ensure that line managers are sensitive to the experience and gravitas that mid-career teachers bring to their roles. Strong collaborations are required between leaders and teachers to ensure that work is distributed in good time, without a 'just do it' agenda (see Figure 22).

- Current education policies are set within a neoliberal paradigm, which inherently brings testing, target setting and judging. This is incongruent with many mid-career teachers' beliefs and leads to tensions between the work that they are asked to do and their philosophical values. The data from this research indicates that if the subordination of teachers could be reduced, and managerialism and performative systems could be reviewed (or removed) it could allow teachers to regain their creativity, independence, and autonomous practice.

- Teaching must be reframed as a sustainable career to avoid the exodus away from teaching with flexible working an integral component of this. School leaders could encourage meaningful flexible working in management roles to encourage and facilitate those aspiring to develop their career. A more effective dialogue between teachers and policy makers needs to be established with better promotion and access to training, opportunities and new initiatives which should be adequately funded which would be beneficial to the current workforce.

- Funding should be made available to develop career opportunities for experienced teachers, such as paid sabbaticals or external professional qualifications; NPQ courses or a master's degree for example. Opportunities need to be reworked to ensure that they are

filtered down effectively into all schools, and allow genuine access for all and not just a few in pilot schemes.

- Training for all members of leadership teams should be strongly encouraged to ensure that they are equipped for the role they are in. This would not only benefit their own practice and career opportunities, but it would have an impact on their teams and subordinates who could benefit from their improved management at local level.

What should be avoided is taking a piecemeal approach to resolving the problem of teacher attrition of mid-career teachers. Removing one, singular antecedent to attrition (such as reducing marking) is unlikely to be effective as recent research demonstrated (Fuchsman et al., 2020; Shirrell, 2014). The conditions that intertwine to cause mid-career teachers to consider leaving the profession are complex and do not stand alone, nor should they be treated as such. By taking a holistic approach to the factors that lead to attrition, and reinstating autonomy and professional trust in teachers, mid-career teachers may choose to stay in the profession for longer.

8.5.3 **Recommendations for mid-career teachers**

Mid-career teachers are not passive players in this research and should continue to request effective dialogue with school leaders to ensure they are not separated from decision making, that they are offered career progression opportunities and they should seek to become more empowered to regain control over their practice. Furthermore, they could continue to engage in research such as this project, which will contribute to the wider body of evidence in moving towards solutions to attrition.

8.6 Limitations of the study

This research does not seek to present a definitive reality of all mid-career teachers in England; however, it attempts to give insight into the current experiences of a small sample of that demographic group (n=14). It must be acknowledged that all the participants had expressed an interest in leaving the profession prior to interview and that these findings are not necessarily reflective of the majority of mid-career teachers, many of whom may be satisfied with their work.

Aside from the four concepts under the lens in this research, there are several other factors that could contribute to teachers' decisions to remain or leave the profession which were not included in this study: poor pupil behaviour, renumeration and other external factors like commitments to family members. The decision to focus on four concepts (workload, stress, career and professional identity) was taken in response to current literature, however, future studies could include or focus on other factors. This research could be developed in a second study with consideration paid to ethnicity, gender, to focus more closely on number of years teaching or age for example.

Similarly, it could be suggested that this research could be enriched with an increased participation cohort for semi-structured interviews. Fourteen mid-career teachers were interviewed for between 45 minutes and one hour and it could be beneficial if I had been able to interview more participants which could have added to generalizing results. In this study I included two participants who had recently left the profession; again, it could be beneficial to conduct a similar study with a cohort of mid-career teachers who have left the profession to compare their responses.

8.6.1 **Methodology**

My initial questionnaire was originally conceived to inform the line of questioning for the interviews. Whilst this is a common method to use, as a novice in the field I found that a 'simple' questionnaire is far from simple. This naivety on my part was very grounding and it made me critically reflect on how to proceed. As acknowledged in section 3.3.2, there were weaknesses with the formation of the questionnaire, both in the wording and the structure of the questions, and were I to conduct research in the future, this would be a critical area for development. I should have undertaken more rigorous research into how to construct and conduct online questionnaires prior to embarking on this research, and I am disappointed that I did not do so. Despite this, I feel that this does not detract from the validity of the findings overall as the questionnaire was used to signpost the concepts under scrutiny.

I subsequently went into the semi-structured interviews with wider eyes and did not make over-simplistic assumptions on how straightforward organizing and conducting an interview would be. As a new researcher, I chose to use tried and testing models for designing the initial questionnaire and subsequent semi-structured interviews. This was beneficial in ensuring a robust data collection; however, it was time consuming and proved to be 'clunky' when trying to follow these methods. If this research were to be repeated, I would be more adept at structuring the process, as I would be more confident in my ability. Furthermore, having gained experience throughout this project, I would be more proficient at framing questions for questionnaires and interviews if a further research project was to be conducted.

Having waded through the obstacles of developing the initial questionnaire, I was more prepared to think about every aspect, nuance and possible event prior to embarking on the interviews, and whilst I felt that I was well prepared, there were still things to reflect on and improve should I

undertake further study. Prior to interviews more direction could have been given to the instructions for the interviewees in regard to the hardware required for a successful Teams meet. Two participants conducted the interview on mobile devices which was problematic in terms of sound quality for transcription and 'flow' of the interview. In hindsight, I also needed to develop the 'script' for conducting the interviews as I was not prepared for the level of emotion that many participants showed when talking about their profession. All were open and frank with their responses, and there were some emotional moments when talking about the stress and physical symptoms experienced by the majority of interviewees. This was challenging for me personally, as I would naturally take time to empathize and explore the feelings of others, however, I was very aware that there was a one-hour time limit in which I had to elicit as much data as I could which left me trying to move on to the next question which required an emotional shift that I had not anticipated. This tension between being an interviewer and my natural empathetic qualities was something I reflected on after the interviews and is something which will need exploration and resolution should I conduct further research.

As with all research, time management is critical. Plans were constantly being re-written due to, but not limited to, the Covid pandemic which threw practicing teachers into a world of new and immediate learning. However, some elements of this crisis-learning proved useful as I was able to save time by doing Teams interviews instead of trying to conduct interviews over the phone or travelling to locations across the country which is something that could be taken forward in subsequent studies as it proved very time-efficient.

Whilst the areas for development as a neophyte are clear, I found that being a research-practitioner was beneficial as I was able to bring an inherent understanding of the participants' habitat, and this helped significantly during the interpretation of data. This was particularly

useful when comparing the narratives from policy makers with the experiences of participants. For example, Ofsted reassures the teaching profession that paper-trails of evidence are not necessary prior to inspection. Whilst this may seem unequivocal to a non-teaching researcher, my own experience was drawn upon to suggest that this may not reflect the reality of teachers in English schools.

The data handling was a particular challenge for me, as the concepts are so intertwined with each other it was a real challenge to separate out individual themes. All of the themes are so inherently connected with one another it was a constant challenge to organize and make sense of the individual concepts.

8.6.2 **Covid 19**

This timing of the research must also be acknowledged in this section. With the global pandemic affecting teachers worldwide, it could be beneficial to replicate this study now that we have lived with Covid for almost two years. Data suggests that there is a stronger surge for mid-career teachers to leave having worked through an extremely challenging time, although there is counter evidence to suggest that this was an anomaly and pre-Covid deficits have returned (Fullard, 2021). In this research the interviews were conducted prior to the second national lockdown in 2021 and the true impact of Covid on education in the UK had not yet taken full effect. Should the research be repeated post Covid it is acknowledged that results could be different.

8.6.3 **Personal reflections**

This has been a very personal journey for me as I have recently left the profession, having given 30 years to the state education system in England. However, during this five-year process, I was able to engage with my peers in a more informed way. As the leader of a large faculty, I tried to reflect on the concepts that I was exploring and put into practice some of the key findings as they

emerged; giving autonomy to individuals in my team, working with them to plan when work could be scheduled, developing in-faculty systems which were collaboratively produced and trying to reduce factors which brought about stress. Naturally, there were some elements beyond my control such as CPL opportunities and career pathways, however, I encouraged in-faculty training which could be useful for my teams' future roles. This research has also guided me toward becoming a union representative with the NEU which has given me a small voice in the larger audience of union members. It is through this platform that I am able to represent my peers in making changes to the education system. Now, as a semi-retired teacher, I hope to be able to continue to work in the education system in some capacity, however this is yet to be realized.

As a novice in this arena, I have found the process of education research illuminating. My research questions changed and evolved as I started the initial research; moving from a broad 'why are experienced teachers leaving?' to a more developed and critically mature line of research. The deeper understanding of theory underpinning research was critical in my advancement in this research and the opportunity to immerse myself in the work of Braverman was extremely satisfying. Similarly, when conducting the literature review, it was revealing to learn more about theory, research and literature connected with the research questions I was hoping to explore.

Managing a busy full-time post as well as personal and family commitments was challenging at times and I found self-belief to be a fluid emotion during this doctoral thesis. On several occasions the imposter in me overshadowed my ability to move forward however, I just kept reading and writing, editing, re-writing and taking one step at a time which brought me to the end of this process.

I particularly enjoyed developing my understanding of how I felt about the art of teaching, and how my own perceptions of neoliberalistic practices have shaped the work I do and there was a sense of relief to understand that these experiences and feelings were expressed by other mid-career teachers.

I have recently taken semi-retirement from my Head of Faculty post and have a personal connection with this research. The data resonated with me, and I am now seeking a new journey in the field of Education where I can use this research to help schools retain mid-career teachers by reviewing how their experiences in their current schools are impacting their decisions to stay or leave. Having had this opportunity to clarify how the profession is losing so many valuable people I am more determined to try to redress the balance and work with schools, providing support for leadership teams who need to retain their most experienced teachers.

8.7 Final thoughts

Mid-career teachers are a highly valuable resource, with experience, knowledge and gravitas that has thus far been overlooked with the focus on retention of newer entrants to the profession. The participants in this study have passion and enthusiasm for teaching by changing lives, guiding futures and developing enquiring minds. With a reconceptualization of the work teachers undertake and its position in the neoliberal world from both government, policy makers and school leaders, there is hope that mid-career teaches will see a way to remain in the profession they love. Failure to do so would be a loss to the profession and to the countless young students who benefit every day from the enrichment these teachers bring to their lives.

References

Abbasi, N. N., Javed, M., Mahmood, A., & Ali, A. (2019). A Study of Occupational Stress among Female Teachers at Elementary School Level. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences (PJSS), 39*(1).

Abel, M., Acton, R., & Glasgow, P. (2015). Teacher Wellbeing in Neoliberal Contexts: A Review of the Literature. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *40*(40), 107. https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2015v40n8.6

Abel, M., Acton, R., Glasgow, P., & Sewell, J. (1999). Stress and Burnout in Rural and Urban Secondary School Teachers. *The Journal of Educational Research, 92*(5), 287-293. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220679909597608

Acton, R., & Glasgow, P. (2015). Teacher wellbeing in neoliberal contexts: A review of the literature. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *40*(8), 6.

Adams, W. (2015). Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews. In *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119171386.ch19

Ahmed, I., & Shabbir, S. (2019). Causes of Teacher Stress: Its Effects on Teacher Performance and Health Problems. *International Journal of Management and Business Sciences*, *1*(1), 1-13.

Alasuutari, P., Bickman, L., & Brannen, J. (2008). *The SAGE handbook of social research methods*. Sage.

Al-Jammal, K., & Ghamrawi, N. (2013). Teacher turnover:Impact of school leadership and other factors. *International Journal of Educational Research and Technology (IJERT), 4*(1), 68-78.

Allas, T., Fairbairn, W., & Foote, E. (2020). *The economic case for reskilling in the UK: How employers can thrive by boosting workers' skills*. https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/the-economic-case-for-reskilling-in-the-uk-how-employers-can-thrive-by-boosting-workers-skills

Allen, M. (2017). The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods. In. Thousand Oaks, California.

Allen, R., Benhenda, A., Jerrim, J., & Sims, S. (2020). New evidence on teachers' working hours in England. An empirical analysis of four datasets. *Research Papers in Education*, 1-25. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2020.1736616

Almalki, S. (2016). Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Data in Mixed Methods Research--Challenges and Benefits. *Journal of education and learning*, *5*(3), 288-296.

Aluja, A., Blanch, A., & García, L. F. (2005). Dimensionality of the Maslach Burnout Inventory in school teachers. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, *21*(1), 67-76.

Andrade, C. (2020). The Limitations of Online Surveys. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine*, *42*(6), 575-576. https://doi.org/10.1177/0253717620957496

Armour, K. M., & Yelling, M. R. (2004). Continuing professional development for experienced physical education teachers: towards effective provision. *Sport, Education and Society*, *9*(1), 95-114. https://doi.org/10.1080/1357332042000175836

Armstrong, P. (1988). Labour and monopoly capital. *New technology and industrial relations*, 143-159.

Asbury, K., & Kim, L. (2020). *"Lazy, lazy teachers": Teachers' perceptions of how their profession is valued by society, policymakers, and the media during COVID-19*. https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/65k8q

Ashman, J., & Stobart, G. (2018). *Reducing teacher workload*. Department for Education

ATL. (2018). *CPD How to access it and why it's essential*. ATL Union. http://atl.org.uk/Images/worklife_campaign_cpd_factsheet.pdf

Au, W. (2011). Teaching under the new Taylorism: high-stakes testing and the standardization of the 21st century curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *43*(1), 25-45. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2010.521261

Baethge, A., & Rigotti, T. (2013). Interruptions to workflow: Their relationship with irritation and satisfaction with performance, and the mediating roles of time pressure and mental demands. *Work & Stress*, *27*(1), 43-63.

Baker, D. (2005). Peripatetic music teachers approaching mid-career: a cause for concern? *British Journal of Music Education*, *22*(2), 141-153.

Ball, S. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of education policy*, *18*(2), 215-228. https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093022000043065

Ball, S. (2016). Subjectivity as a site of struggle: refusing neoliberalism? *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *37*(8), 1129-1146. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2015.1044072

Ball, S., & Olmedo, A. (2013). Care of the self, resistance and subjectivity under neoliberal governmentalities. *Critical Studies in Education*, *54*(1), 85-96. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2013.740678

Ballet, K., & Kelchtermans, G. (2009). Struggling with workload: Primary teachers' experience of intensification. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *25*(8), 1150-1157. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.02.012

Barmby, P. (2007). Improving teacher recruitment and retention: the importance of workload and pupil behaviour. *Educational Research*, *48*(3), 247-265. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131880600732314

Bayer, M., & Brinkkjær, U. (2014). *Professional learning in practice: Newly qualified teachers' and educators' encounter with practice*. People's Education Press.

Bayer, M., Brinkkjær, U., Plauborg, H., & Rolls, S. (2009). *Teachers' career trajectories and work lives* (Vol. 3). Springer Science & Business Media.

Bayer M., Brinkkjaer U., Rolls S., & H., P. (2009). *Teachers' Career Trajectories: An Examination of Research* (Vol. 3).

Beauchamp, C., & Thomas, L. (2009). Understanding teacher identity: an overview of issues in the literature and implications for teacher education. *Cambridge journal of Education*, *39*(2), 175-189. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057640902902252

Beijaar, D., Verloop, N., Vermunt, J. (2000). Teachers' perceptions of professional identity: an exploratory study from a personal knowledge perspective. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *16*(7), 749-764.

Beijaard, D., Meijer, P., & Verloop, N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *20*(2), 107-128. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2003.07.001

Benson, H., & Allen, R. L. (1980). How much stress is too much? *Harvard Business Review*, *58*(5), 86-92.

Berman, J., & Smyth, R. (2015). Conceptual frameworks in the doctoral research process: a pedagogical model. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, *52*(2), 125-136. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2013.809011

Bernstein, B. (1996). *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity*. Routledge.

Bertram, D. (2007). Likert scales. *Retrieved November*, *2*(10).

Bevins, S., Jordan, J., & Perry, E. (2011). Reflecting on professional development. *Educational Action Research*, *19*(3), 399-411.

Bévort, F., & Suddaby, R. (2015). Scripting professional identities: how individuals make sense of contradictory institutional logics. *Journal of Professions and Organization*, *3*(1), 17-38. https://doi.org/10.1093/jpo/jov007

Black, C. M. (2008). *Working for a healthier tomorrow: Dame Carol Black's review of the health of Britain's working age population*. The Stationery Office.

Blase, J. J. (1986). A qualitative analysis of sources of teacher stress: Consequences for performance. *American educational research journal*, *23*(1), 13-40.

Bloomfield, D. (2009). Working within and against neoliberal accreditation agendas: opportunities for Professional Experience. *Asia-Pacific Journal of teacher education*, *37*(1), 27-44. https://doi.org/10.1080/13598660802530503

Booth, J., Coldwell, M., Müller, L.-M., Perry, E., & Zuccollo, J. (2021). Mid-Career Teachers: A Mixed Methods Scoping Study of Professional Development, Career Progression and Retention. *Education Sciences*, *11*(6), 299.

Borg, M., Riding, R., & Falzon, J. (1991). Stress in Teaching: a study of occupational stress and its determinants, job satisfaction and career commitment among primary schoolteachers. *Educational Psychology*, *11*(1), 59-75. https://doi.org/10.1080/0144341910110104

Bourg Carter, S. (2013). *The Tell Tale Signs of Burnout ... Do You Have Them?* https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/high-octane-women/201311/the-tell-tale-signs-burnout-do-you-have-them

Boutsted, M. (2015). Inadequate school leadership results in the management and workload issues that blight teachers' lives. *TES online*. https://www.tes.com/news/inadequate-school-leadership-results-management-and-workload-issues-blight-teachers-lives

Boyle, G. J., Borg, M. G., Falzon, J. M., & Baglioni Jr, A. J. (1995). A structural model of the dimensions of teacher stress. *British journal of educational psychology*, *65*(1), 49-67.

Brady, J., & Wilson, E. (2020). Teacher wellbeing in England: teacher responses to school-level initiatives. *Cambridge journal of Education*, 1-19.

Brain, K., Reid, I., & Comerford Boyes, L. (2006). Teachers as mediators between educational policy and practice. *Educational Studies*, *32*(4), 411-423. https://doi.org/10.1080/03055690600850396

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101.

Braverman, H. (1974). *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*. Monthly Review Press.

Brown, A., & Danaher, P. A. (2019). CHE principles: Facilitating authentic and dialogical semi-structured interviews in educational research. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, *42*(1), 76-90.

Bubb, S., & Earley, P. (2004). *Managing teacher workload: Work-life balance and wellbeing*. Sage.

Buchanan, J., Prescott, A., Schuck, S., Aubusson, P., & Burke, P. (2013). Teacher retention and attrition: Views of early career teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education (Online)*, *38*(3), 124-141.

Bulman, M. (2017). Primary school teachers' suicide rate nearly double national average. *The Independent*. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/primary-school-teachers-suicide-rate-double-national-average-uk-figures-a7635846.html

Burić, I., Slišković, A., & Penezić, Z. (2019). Understanding teacher well-being: a cross-lagged analysis of burnout, negative student-related emotions, psychopathological symptoms, and resilience. *Educational Psychology*, *39*(9), 1136-1155.

Burke, R. J., Greenglass, E. R., & Schwarzer, R. (1996). Predicting teacher burnout over time: Effects of work stress, social support, and self-doubts on burnout and its consequences. *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping*, *9*(3), 261-275. https://doi.org/10.1080/10615809608249406

Burnard, P., & White, J. (2008). Creativity and performativity: counterpoints in British and Australian education. *British Educational Research Journal*, *34*(5), 667-682. https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920802224238

Burton, S. (2014, Saturday 30 August). A teacher speaks out: 'I'm effectively being forced out of a career that I wanted to love'. *The Independent*.

Bush, T. (2021). Assessing successful school leadership: What do we know? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *49*(5), 687-689. https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432211034675

Butt, G., & Lance, A. (2005). Secondary teacher workload and job satisfaction: do successful strategies for change exist? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *33*(4), 401-422.

Buyruk, H. (2014). “Professionalization” or “Proletarianization”: Which Concept Defines the Changes in Teachers’ Work? *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *116*, 1709-1714. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.460

Byrne, B. (1993). The Maslach Burnout Inventory. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *66*, 197-212.

Caena, F. (2011). *Quality in Teachers' continuing professional development*. European Commission.

Callaghan, J. (1976). A rational debate based on the facts. Ruskin College.

Cancio, E. J., Larsen, R., Mathur, S. R., Estes, M. B., Johns, B., & Chang, M. (2018). Special education teacher stress: Coping strategies. *Education and Treatment of Children*, *41*(4), 457-481.

Canning, R. (2011). Reflecting on the reflective practitioner: Vocational initial teacher education in Scotland. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*, *63*(4), 609-617.

Canrinus, E. T., Helms-Lorenz, M., Beijaard, D., Buitink, J., & Hofman, A. (2011). Profiling teachers' sense of professional identity. *Educational Studies*, *37*(5), 593-608. https://doi.org/10.1080/03055698.2010.539857

Carr, J. (2019). *David Cameron's £67m STEM scheme fails to deliver* (Schools Week, Issue.

Carter, B. (2021). Defending Marx and Braverman: taking back the labour process in theory and practice. *International Socialism*. http://isj.org.uk/marx-and-braverman/

Caza, B. B., & Creary, S. (2016). The construction of professional identity. In *Perspectives on contemporary professional work*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Chaplain, R. P. (2008). Stress and psychological distress among trainee secondary teachers in England. *Educational Psychology*, *28*(2), 195-209. https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410701491858

Chapman, D. (1994). Reducing teacher absenteeism and attrition: Cause, consequences and responses. Paris: UNISCO. *Institute for Education Planning*.

Chisholm, C. D., Collison, E. K., Nelson, D. R., & Cordell, W. H. (2000). Emergency department workplace interruptions are emergency physicians "interrupt-driven" and "multitasking"? *Academic Emergency Medicine*, *7*(11), 1239-1243.

Cho, J., & Trent, A. (2006). Validity in qualitative research revisited. *Qualitative research*, *6*(3), 319-340.

Chojnacki, G., Resch, A., Vigil, A., Martinez, I., & Bates, S. (2017). *Understanding Types of Evidence: A Guide for Educators*.

Chong, S., Low, E. L., & Goh, K. C. (2011). Emerging Professional Teacher Identity of Pre-Service Teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *36*(8), 50-64.

Churches, R. (2020). *Supporting teachers through the school workload reduction toolkit*. London: Education Development Trust

Clandinin, J., Pushor, D., & Orr, A. M. (2007). Navigating Sites for Narrative Inquiry. *Journal of Teacher Education, 58*(1), 21-35. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487106296218

Clipa, O. (2017). Teacher stress and Coping strategies. In *Studies and Current trends in Science of Education* (pp. 120-128). Editura Lumen, Asociatia Lumen.

Collin, J., & Quigley, A. (2021). *Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning*

E. E. Foundation. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/feedback

Commons Select Committee. (2012). *Retaining, valuing and developing teachers*. London: Crown

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry. *Handbook of complementary methods in education research, 3*, 477-487.

Cooksey, R. W., & McDonald, G. (2011). *Writing up your research: Surviving and thriving in postgraduate research*. Tilde University Press.

Coombs, A., DeLuca, C., LaPointe-McEwan, D., & Chalas, A. (2018). Changing approaches to classroom assessment: An empirical study across teacher career stages. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 71*, 134-144.

Cordingley, P., Bell, M., Rundell, B., & Evans, D. (2003). *The impact of collaborative CPD on classroom teaching and learning.* EPPI-Centre.

Coupal, L. (2005). Practitioner-Research and the Regulation of Research Ethics: The Challenge of Individual, Organizational, and Social Interests. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 6*(1). http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/528/1144

Crabtree, B. F., & DiCicco-Bloom, B. (2006). The qualitative research interview. *Medical education, 40*(4), 314-318.

Crehan, L. (2016). *Exploring the impact of career models on teacher motivation*. UNESCO.

Creswell, J. (2012). *Educational research: Planning conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research (4th ad.)* (4th ed.). Pearson.

Crosswell, L., Willis, J., Morrison, C., Gibson, A., & Ryan, M. (2018). Early career teachers in rural schools: Plotlines of resilience. In *Resilience in Education* (pp. 131-146). Springer.

Dadds, M. (1997). Continuing professional development: nurturing the expert within. *Journal of In-Service Education, 23*(1), 31-38. https://doi.org/10.1080/13674589700200007

Dapeng, L., & Weiwei, W. (2009). Barriers and incentives of CCS deployment in China: Results from semi-structured interviews. *Energy Policy*, *37*(6), 2421-2432.

Davis, J., & Wilson, S. (2000). Principals' efforts to empower teachers: Effects on teacher motivation and job satisfaction and stress. *The clearing house*, *73*(6), 349-353.

Day, C., Calderhead, J., & Denicolo, P. (2012). *Research on teacher thinking*. Routledge.

Day, C., Elliot, B., & Kington, A. (2005). Reform, standards and teacher identity: Challenges of sustaining commitment. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21*, 563-577.

Day, C., & Gu, Q. (2013). *Resilient teachers, resilient schools: Building and sustaining quality in testing times*. Routledge.

Day, C., & Sachs, J. (2004). *International Handbook on the Continuing Professional Development of Teachers*. Open University Press.

Day, C., & Sachs, J. (2005). *International handbook on the continuing professional development of teachers*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

Day, C., Stobart, G., Sammons, P., Kington, A., Gu, Q., Smees, R., & Mujtaba, T. (2006). Variations in teachers' work, lives and effectiveness. *Final report for the VITAE Project, DfES*.

Denardo, A., & Levers, L. (2002). *Using NVivo to Analyze Qualitative Data*.

Denscombe, M. (1998). *The Good Research Guide*. Open University Press.

Densmore, K. (2018). Professionalism, proletarianization and teacher work. In *Critical studies in teacher education* (pp. 130-160). Routledge.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2005). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3 ed.). Sage Publications.

DfE. (2010). *A profile of teachers in England from the 2010 School Workforce Census* London: Department for Education

DfE. (2011). *Teachers' Standards: Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies*. London: Department for Education

DfE. (2014). *Specialist leaders of education: a guide for potential applicants*. London: Department for Education

DfE. (2016). *Initial teacher training census for the academic year 2015 to 2016*. London: Department for Education

DfE. (2016). *Ofsted inspections:myths*. London: Department for Education

DfE. (2016). *School Workforce in England: November 2016*. London: Department for Education

DfE. (2016). *Specialist Leaders of Education (SLE)*. London: National College of Teaching & Leadership

DfE. (2016). *Standard for teachers' professional development*. London: Department for Education London

DfE. (2016). *Teacher workload survey 2016*. London: Department for Education Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-workload-survey-2016

DfE. (2018). *DFE Teacher Retention Strategy Report*. London: Department for Education Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786856/DFE_Teacher_Retention_Strategy_Report.pdf

DfE. (2018). *Exploring teacher workload: qualitative research*. London: Department for Education Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/686734/Exploring_teacher_workload.pdf

DfE. (2018). *Factors affecting teacher retention: qualitative investigation*. London: Department for Education

DfE. (2018). *getintoteaching.education.gov.uk*. Department for Education. https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/life-as-a-teacher/real-life-experiences/career-progression-stories

DfE. (2018). *Guidance - School workload reduction toolkit*. London: Department for education

DfE. (2018). *Initial Teacher Training allocations and the Teacher Supply Model, England 2019-2020*. London: Department for Education

DfE. (2018). *Making data work: Teacher workload advisory group report*. London: Department for Education

DfE. (2018). *Reducing teacher workload*. London: Department for Education

DfE. (2018). *School Workforce in England: November 2018*. London: Department for Education

DfE. (2018). *School workload reduction toolkit*. London: Department for Education

DfE. (2019). *Early Career Framework*. London: Department for Education

DfE. (2019). *Early-career payments for teachers*. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-career-payments-guidance-for-teachers-and-schools

DfE. (2019). *Support on Wellbeing for teachers in schools and colleges*. London: Department for Education Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/news/support-on-wellbeing-for-teachers-in-schools-and-colleges

DfE. (2019). *Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy*. London: Department for Education

DfE. (2019). *Teacher workload survey*. Department for Education. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/592499/TWS_2016_FINAL_Research_report_Feb_2017.pdf

DfE. (2019). *Ways to reduce workload in schools. Tips and case studies from school leaders, teachers and sector experts.* London: Department for Education

DfE. (2020). *Flexible working ambassador schools*. London: Department for Education

DfE. (2020). *Headteachers' standards 2020*. London: Department for Education

DfE. (2020). *National Professional Qualification (NPQ): Executive Leadership Framework*. London: Department for Education

DfE. (2021). *Education Staff Wellbeing Charter*. London: Department for Education

DfE. (2021). *New Institute of Teaching set to be established*. London: Department for Education Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-institute-of-teaching-set-to-be-established#:~:text=A%20new%20Institute%20of%20Teaching,and%20development%20throughout%20their%20career.

Diaz, C. (2018, 20 August). *The Truth About Teacher Burnout: It's Work Induced Depression*. http://psychlearningcurve.org/the-truth-about-teacher-burnout/

Dibbon, D. (2004). It's about time. *A Report on the Impact of Workload on Teachers and Students. Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland*.

Didau, D. (2019). *Weak leadership, not workload, is forcing teachers to quit*. https://www.teachwire.net/news/weak-leadership-not-workload-is-forcing-teachers-to-quit

Dodillet, S., Lundin, S., & Krüger, J. O. (2019). Constructing professionalism in teacher education. Analytical tools from a comparative study. *Education Inquiry*, *10*(3), 208-225. https://doi.org/10.1080/20004508.2018.1529527

Downes, P. (2020). Changing pressures in the secondary school. In *State Schools* (pp. 33-45). Routledge.

Downs, J. (2015). *Head's Suicide raises questions about Ofsted inspection*. https://www.localschoolsnetwork.org.uk/2015/11/heads-suicide-raises-questions-about-ofsted-inspection

Doyle, L., Brady, A.-M., & Byrne, G. (2009). An overview of mixed methods research. *Journal of research in nursing*, *14*(2), 175-185.

Drysdale, L., Bennett, J., Murakami, E., Johansson, O., & Gurr, D. (2014). Heroic leadership in Australia, Sweden, and the United States. *The International Journal of Educational Management*, *28*. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-08-2013-0128

Dudovskiy, J. (2019). *Interpretivism (interpretivist) Research Philosophy*. www.research-methodology.net

Dufour, R. (2007). In Praise of Top-Down Leadership. *School Administrator*, *64*(10), 38-42.

Easthope, C., & Easthope, G. (2010). Intensification, Extension and Complexity of Teachers' Workload. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *21*(1), 43-58. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425690095153

Education, D. f., & Employment. (1997). Excellence in Schools. White Paper. In: DfEE London.

Education Support. (2021). *Significant signs of burnout amongst teachers*. https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/news-and-events/news/significant-signs-of-burnout-amongst-teachers/

Ellis, G., Bell, P., Buckle, L., Sherlaw, A., & Shenton, A. K. (2018). *Reducing teacher workload: research report into shared planning*. Department for Education.

Ellis, N. (2016). The Challenges of Practitioner Research: A

Comparative Study of Singapore and NSW. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *41*(2).

EPALE. (2019). Give the power back to boost adult education and CPD training engagement. https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/content/give-power-back-boost-adult-education-and-cpd-training-engagement

Fabiane Santana, P., & Cilson Cesar, F. (2015). Deskilling and degradation of labour in contemporary capitalism: the continuing relevance of Braverman. *Work Organisation, Labour & Globalisation*, *9*(1), 76-91. https://doi.org/10.13169/workorgalaboglob.9.1.0076

Fahed-Sreih, J. (2020). Introductory Chapter: Job Satisfaction and Career Development. In *Career Development and Job Satisfaction*. Intechopen https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.93088

Farber, B. (1984). Stress and Burnout in Suburban Teachers. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *77*(6), 325-331. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.1984.10885550

Farber, B. A. (1991). *Crisis in education: Stress and burnout in the American teacher*. Jossey-Bass.

Farber, K. (2010). *Why Great Teachers Quit: And How We Might Stop the Exodus* (1 ed.). Corwin.

Farr, F. (2006). Reflecting on reflections: the spoken word as a professional development tool in language teacher education. In *Spoken English, TESOL and Applied Linguistics* (pp. 182-215). Springer.

Farrell, T. S. C. (2014). 'I feel like I've plateaued professionally … gone a little stale': mid-career reflections in a teacher discussion group. *Reflective Practice*, *15*(4), 504-517. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2014.900029

Farris-Berg, K. (2014). A different model for school success: Empower teachers. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *95*(7), 31-36.

Featherstone, G., & Seleznyov, S. (2018). *Reducing teacher workload*. U. I. o. Education.

Fenech, R., Baguant, P., & Ivanov, D. (2019). The changing role of human resource management in an era of digital transformation. *Journal of Management Information and Decision Sciences*, *22*(2), 1-10.

Fessler, R. (1995). Dynamics of teacher career stages. *Professional development in education: New paradigms and practices*, 171-192.

Fessler, R., & Christensen, J. (1992). *The teacher career cycle: Understanding and guiding the professional development of teachers*. Allyn & Bacon.

Finlay, L. (2008). *Reflecting on 'Reflective practice'* (Practice-based Professional Learning Issue.

Fletcher-Wood, H., & Zuccollo, J. (2020). *The effects of high-quality professional development on teachers and students: A rapid review and meta-analysis*. E. P. Institute.

Foster, D. (2019). *Briefing paper Teacher Recruitment and Retention in England*. (7222). London

Friedman, A., & Phillips, M. (2004). Continuing professional development: Developing a vision. *Journal of Education and Work*, *17*(3), 361-376. https://doi.org/10.1363908042000267432

Friedman, I. A. (2013). Classroom management and teacher stress and burnout. In *Handbook of classroom management* (pp. 935-954). Routledge.

Fuchsman, D., Sass, T. R., & Zamarro, G. (2020). Testing, Teacher Turnover and the Distribution of Teachers Across Grades and Schools.

Fullard, J. (2021). *The pandemic and teacher attrition: an exodus waiting to happen*.

Fuller, C. (2016). The advanced skills teacher in England. . In A. Goodwyn (Ed.), *Expert Teachers: An International Perspective* (pp. 69-89). Routledge.

Fuller, C., Goodwyn, A., & Francis-Brophy, E. (2013). Advanced skills teachers: Professional identity and status. *Teachers and Teaching*, *19*(4), 463-474.

Gallagher, C., & Smith, R. (2018). The experience of Ofsted: fear, judgement and symbolic violence. *Identity and resistance in further education*, 129-138.

Gallant, A., & Riley, P. (2014). Early career teacher attrition: new thoughts on an intractable problem. *Teacher development*, *18*(4), 562-580. https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2014.945129

Gallant, A., & Riley, P. (2017). Early career teacher attrition in Australia: Inconvenient truths about new public management. *Teachers and Teaching*, *23*(8), 896-913.

Galletta, A., & Cross, W. E. (2013). *Mastering the Semi-Structured Interview and Beyond : From Research Design to Analysis and Publication*. New York University Press. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/reading/detail.action?docID=1187368

Garcia, J., Evans, J., & Reshaw, M. (2004). ``Is There Anything Else You Would Like to Tell Us" – Methodological Issues in the Use of Free-Text Comments from Postal Surveys. *Quality and Quantity*, *38*(2), 113-125. https://doi.org/10.1023/B:QUQU.0000019394.78970.df

Gendertrust.org. (2021). *Gender Inequality in the British Education System*. http://www.gendertrust.org.uk/gender-inequality-in-the-british-education-system/

George, B. G., & Tracy, S. J. (1992). Staff Development for Mid-Career Teachers. *American Secondary Education*, *21*(2), 28-33. www.jstor.org/stable/41064027

Ghamrawi, N., & Al-Jammal, K. (2013). Teacher turnover: Impact of school leadership and other factors. *International Journal of Educational Research and Technology (IJERT)*, *4*, 68-78.

Gibb, N., & Elliot, J. (2021). *Teachers: Labour Turnover*. London: Department for Education

Glazzard, J., & Stones, S. (2021). 'Nothing fazes me, I can do it all': developing headteacher resilience in a complex and challenging educational climate. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 1-21.

Gold, Y. (1985). The relationship of six personal and life history variables to standing on three dimensions of the Maslach Burnout Inventory in a sample of elementary and junior high school teachers. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 45*(2), 377-387.

Gonzalez, A., Peters, M. L., Orange, A., & Grigsby, B. (2017). The influence of high-stakes testing on teacher self-efficacy and job-related stress. *Cambridge journal of Education, 47*(4), 513-531. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2016.1214237

Gospel, H., & Howard, G. (1992). *Markets, firms and the management of labour in modern Britain*. Cambridge University Press.

Gov.uk. (2020). *School workforce in England*. https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england

Grippo, A. (2016). *Psychology Today*. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-wide-wide-world-psychology/201601/why-stress-is-both-good-and-bad

Groundwater-Smith, S., & Sachs, J. (2002). The Activist Professional and the Reinstatement of Trust. *Cambridge journal of Education, 32*(3), 341-358. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764022000024195

Gür, B. S. (2014). Deskilling of teachers: The case of Turkey. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice, 14*(3), 887-904.

Haigh, N. (2000). Teaching teachers about reflecting and ways of reflecting. *Waikato Journal of Education, 6*.

Halcomb, E. J., & Davidson, P. M. (2006). Is verbatim transcription of interview data always necessary? *Applied Nursing Research, 19*(1), 38-42. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apnr.2005.06.001

Hansen, A. (2009). Researching 'teachers in the news': the portrayal of teachers in the British national and regional press. *Education 3-13, 37*(4), 335-347. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004270903099900

Hanushek, E., Rivkin, S., & Schiman, J. (2016). *Dynamic effects of teacher turnover on the quality of instruction* (22472).

Hargreaves, A. (2005). Educational change takes ages: Life, career and generational factors in teachers' emotional responses to educational change. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21*(8), 967-983. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2005.06.007

Hargreaves, A., & Ainscow, M. (2015). The top and bottom of leadership and change. *Phi Delta Kappan, 97*(3), 42-48. https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721715614828

Harley, B. (2018). Sociology, the labour process and employment relations. In *The Routledge Companion to Employment Relations* (pp. 81-92). Routledge.

Harmsen, R., Helms-Lorenz, M., Maulana, R., & van Veen, K. (2018). The relationship between beginning teachers' stress causes, stress responses, teaching behaviour and attrition. *Teachers and Teaching, 24*(6), 626-643. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2018.1465404

Harmsen, R., Helms-Lorenz, M., Maulana, R., & van Veen, K. (2019). The longitudinal effects of induction on beginning teachers' stress. *British journal of educational psychology, 89*(2), 259-287.

Harris, K. (1994). Teachers: Constructing the Future. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 21*(1), 108.

Harris, L. R., & Brown, G. T. (2010). Mixing interview and questionnaire methods: Practical problems

in aligning data [1]. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation, 15*.

Harris, S. (2002). Transforming the School Workforce Pathfinder Project--freeing teachers to teach: an individual school's experience. *education review, 16*(1).

Hartney, E. (2020). Stress management to enhance teaching quality and teaching effectiveness: A professional development framework for teachers. In *Occupational Stress: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice* (pp. 306-331). IGI Global.

Harvery, D. (2005). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.

Harvey, P. (1983). Marx's Theory of the Value of Labor Power: An Assessment. *Social Research, 50*(2), 305-344. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40970881

Hasting, M. (2019). *Neoliberalism and Education*. Oxford Research Encyclopedia. https://oxfordre.com/education/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.001.0001/acrefore-9780190264093-e-404#acrefore-9780190264093-e-404-div1-1

Hedegaard-Soerensen, L., & Grumloese, S. P. (2020). Exclusion: the downside of neoliberal education policy. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 24*(6), 631-644. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1478002

Helms-Lorenz, M., van de Grift, W., & Maulana, R. (2016). Longitudinal effects of induction on teaching skills and attrition rates of beginning teachers. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 27*(2), 178-204.

Hendrikx, W. (2020). What we should do vs what we do: teachers' professional identity in a context of managerial reform. *Educational Studies*, *46*(5), 607-623. https://doi.org/10.1080/03055698.2019.1620694

Hill, D., & Kumar, R. (2012). *Global neoliberalism and education and its consequences* (Vol. 3). Routledge.

Holmes, E. (2005). *Teacher well-being: Looking after yourself and your career in the classroom*. Psychology Press.

Hong, J. Y. (2010). Pre-service and beginning teachers' professional identity and its relation to dropping out of the profession. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *26*(8), 1530-1543. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.06.003

House of Commons Education Committee. (2017). *Recruitment and Retention of Teachers*. London: House of Commons

Hout, M., Elliott, S., & Frueh, S. (2012). Do high-stakes tests improve learning? *Issues in Science and Technology*, *29*(1), 33-38.

Howes, L. M., & Goodman-Delahunty, J. (2015). Teachers' career decisions: Perspectives on choosing teaching careers, and on staying or leaving. *Issues in Educational Research*, *25*(1), 18-35.

Hu, B. Y., Li, Y., Wang, C., Reynolds, B. L., & Wang, S. (2019). The relation between school climate and preschool teacher stress. *Journal of Educational Administration*.

Huang, S., Yin, H., & Lv, L. (2019). Job characteristics and teacher well-being: the mediation of teacher self-monitoring and teacher self-efficacy. *Educational Psychology*, *39*(3), 313-331.

Huberman, M. (1993). *The lives of teachers*. Teachers College Press.

Hunzicker, J. (2011). Effective professional development for teachers: a checklist. *Professional development in education*, *37*(2), 177-179. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2010.523955

Hustler, D., O., M., Jarvis, J., Londra, M., & and Campbell, A. (2003). *Teachers' Perceptions of Continuing Professional Development*.

Ingersoll, R. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American educational research journal*, *38*(3), 499-534.

Ingvarson, L., Kleinhenz, E., Beavis, A., Barwick, H., Carthy, I., & Wilkinson, J. (2005). Secondary teacher workload study: report. *Teacher Workforce and Careers*, 2.

ISBL. (2021). *What is Professional Development?* Institute of Business Leadership. https://isbl.org.uk/training/careers/what-is-professional-development.aspx

Ismail, S. N., & Abdullah, A. S. (2019). A Structural Equation Model Describes Factors Contributing Teachers' Job Stress in Primary Schools. *International Journal of Instruction, 12*(1), 1251-1262.

Iwanicki, E. F., & Schwab, R. L. (1981). A cross validation study of the Maslach Burnout Inventory. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 41*(4), 1167-1174.

Jacobson, D. A. (2016). *Causes and effects of teacher burnout* Walden University].

Jacobson, W. S. (2009). Planning for today and tomorrow: Workforce planning. *Public human resource management: Problems and prospects*, 179-202.

Jerrim, J., & Sims, S. (2019). The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018: June 2019.

Johnson, J. L., Adkins, D., & Chauvin, S. (2020). A review of the quality indicators of rigor in qualitative research. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education, 84*(1).

Johnstone, M. (1993). *Time and Tasks: Teacher Workload and Stress. Spotlights 44*.

Kantas, A., & Vassilaki, E. (1997). Burnout in Greek teachers: Main findings and validity of the Maslach Burnout Inventory. *Work & Stress, 11*(1), 94-100.

Kasunic, M. (2005). *Designing an effective survey*. C.-M. U. P. P. S. E. Inst.

Kelchtermans, G. (1993). Getting the story, understanding the lives: From career stories to teachers' professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 9*(5-6), 443-456.

Kelchtermans, G. (2017). 'Should I stay or should I go?': unpacking teacher attrition/retention as an educational issue. *Teachers and Teaching*, *23*(8), 961-977. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2017.1379793

Kelchtermans, G., & Vandenberghe, R. (2006). Teachers' professional development: a biographical perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *26*(1), 45-62.

Kilderry, A. (2015). The intensification of performativity in early childhood education. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *47*(5), 633-652.

Kishita, Y., Uwasu, M., Hara, K., Kuroda, M., Takeda, H., Umeda, Y., & Shimoda, Y. (2018). Toward designing sustainability education programs: a survey of master's programs through semi-structured interviews. *Sustainability Science*, *13*(4), 953-972.

Klenowski, V., & Wyatt-Smith, C. (2012). The impact of high stakes testing: the Australian story. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, *19*(1), 65-79. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2011.592972

Kloosterman, V. (2019). *The Importance of continuing professional development*. https://continuingprofessionaldevelopment.org/why-is-cpd-important/

Knights, D., & Willmott, H. (1990). *Labour Process Theory*. Macmillan Press.

Kompf, M., & Boak, T. (1996). *Changing research and practice: teachers' professionalism, identities, and knowledge*. Psychology Press.

Konstantinides-Vladimirou, K. (2013). Mid-career teacher motivation and implications for leadership practices in secondary schools in Cyprus.

Korthagen, F. (2017). Inconvenient truths about teacher learning: towards professional development 3.0. *Teachers and Teaching*, *23*(4), 387-405. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2016.1211523

Kutsyuruba, B., Walker, K., Stasel, R. S., & Al Makhamreh, M. (2019). Developing Resilience and Promoting Well-being in Early Career Teaching. *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, *42*(1), 285-321.

Kvale, S. E. (1989). *Issues of validity in qualitative research*. Studentlitteratur.

Kwee, C. T. T. (2020). The Application of Career Theories in Teachers' Professional Development and Career Decision: A Literature Review. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, *8*(9), 3997-4008.

Kyriacou, C. (1987). Teacher stress and burnout: an international review. *Educational Research*, *29*(2), 146-152. https://doi.org/10.1080/0013188870290207

Kyriacou, C. (2001). Teacher Stress: Directions for future research. *Educational Review*, *53*(1), 27-35. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131910120033628

Kyriacou, C., Kunc, R., Stephens, P., & Hultgren, A. (2003). Student teachers' expectations of teaching as a career in England and Norway. *Educational Review*, *55*(3), 255-263.

Kyriacou, C., KUNC, R., STEPHENS, P., & HULTGREN, A. G. (2003). Student teachers' expectations of teaching as a career in England and Norway. *Educational Review*, *55*(3), 255-263.

Kyriacou, C., & Sutcliffe, J. (1978). A model of teacher stress. *Educational Studies*, *4*(1), 1-6.

Lamote, C., & Engels, N. (2010). The development of student teachers' professional identity. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, *33*(1), 3-18.

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2008). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership. *School Leadership & Management*, *28*(1), 27-42. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632430701800060

Lemaire, J. (2009). Addressing teacher workload. *Education*, *90*(9), 6.

Lester, J. N., & Coulter, S. (2011). Finding and redefining the meaning of teaching: Exploring the experiences of mid-career teachers. *Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*, *5*(2). https://doi.org/10.3776/joci.2011.v5n2p5-26

Lewis, S., & Holloway, J. (2018). Datafying the teaching 'profession': remaking the professional teacher in the image of data. Retrieved March 16, from https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764x.2018,1441373

Llewellyn, A., & Mendick, H. (2010). Does every child count? Quality, equity and mathematics with/in neoliberalism. In *Mapping equity and quality in mathematics education* (pp. 49-62). Springer.

Loubere, N. (2017). Questioning Transcription: The Case for the Systematic and Reflexive Interviewing and Reporting (SRIR) Method. Forum: Qualitative Social Research.,

Low, J. (2013). Unstructured and semi-structured interviews in health research. *Researching health: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods*, *2*, 87-105.

Lycett, M. (2013). 'Datafication': Making sense of (big) data in a complex world. *European Journal of Information Systems*, *22*(4), 381-386.

Lyotard, J.-F. (2000). The postmodern condition. *Sociology of Education: Theories and methods*, *1*, 362.

Macdonald, D. (1999). Teacher attrition: a review of literature. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *15*(8), 835-848. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(99)00031-1

Magsood-Shah, A. (2022, 22 February). How School Leaders can build a flexible working culture. https://teaching.blog.gov.uk/2022/02/22/how-school-leaders-can-build-a-flexible-working-culture/

Majid, U., & Vanstone, M. (2018). Appraising Qualitative Research for Evidence Syntheses: A Compendium of Quality Appraisal Tools. *Qualitative Health Research*, *28*(13), 2115-2131. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732318785358

Manuel, J., Carter, D., & Dutton, J. (2018). 'As much as I love being in the classroom...': Understanding secondary English teachers' workload. *English in Australia*, *53*(3), 5-22.

Martin, D. R. (2017). *Investigating English Language Teacher Identity Trajectories at Mid-Career* Washington State University]. Washington, USA.

Marx, K. (1970). *Capital volume 1*. Lawrence & Wishart.

Maslach, C., Jackson, S., & Leiter, M. (1997). The Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual. In (Vol. 3, pp. 191-218).

Mays, N., & Pope, C. (1995). Rigour and qualitative research. *British Medical Journal*, *311*, 109.

McDevitt, J. (2011). *Teacher suicide rate rises by 80%*. Channel 4. https://www.channel4.com/news/teachers-suicide-rates-double-in-a-year

McGrath, C., Palmgren, P. J., & Liljedahl, M. (2019). Twelve tips for conducting qualitative research interviews. *Medical Teacher*, *41*(9), 1002-1006. https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2018.1497149

McLellan, E., MacQueen, K. M., & Neidig, J. L. (2003). Beyond the Qualitative Interview: Data Preparation and Transcription. *Field Methods*, *15*(1), 63-84. https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X02239573

Mead, M. (1934). *Mind, Self and Society*. Chicago Press.

Meadmore, D., & Meadmore, P. (2004). The Boundlessness of Performativity in Elite Australian Schools. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, *25*(3), 375-387. https://doi.org/10.1080/0159630042000247944

Meng, J. (2009, July). Saving the teacher's soul: exorsicing the terrors of performativity. *London Review of Education*, 159-167.

Mercer, D., & Evans, B. (1991). Professional myopia: Job satisfaction and the management of teachers. *School organization*, *11*(3), 291-301.

Mockler, N. (2013). Teacher Professional Learning in a Neoliberal Age: Audit, Professionalism and Identity. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *38*(10), Article 3.

Moore, J. (2021, 30th January 2021). Teacher-bashing has become a national sport, but it's your children who will suffer. *The Independent*. https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/teacher-coronavirus-school-safety-b1795126.html

Morrow, D. (2021). Why no Ofsted inspections has led to open leadership. *Times Education Supplement*. https://www.tes.com/magazine/leadership/strategy/why-no-ofsted-inspections-has-led-open-leadership

Moss, R. (2020). *Proposed salary increases not enough say teaching unions*. Personnel Today. https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/teacher-pay-increases-2020/

Mullin, S. (2020, 16th December 2020). A message for all those teacher-bashers out there. *TES*. https://www.tes.com/news/message-all-those-teacher-bashers-out-there

Munn, Z., Peters, M. D. J., Stern, C., Tufanaru, C., McArthur, A., & Aromataris, E. (2018). Systematic review or scoping review? Guidance for authors when choosing between a systematic or scoping review approach. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *18*(1), 143. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-018-0611-x

National Education Union. (2019). *Stress Risk Assessment: A step by step guide for school managment*. https://neu.org.uk/media/966/view

National Education Union. (2019). *Tackling Stress*. https://neu.org.uk/advice/tackling-stress

Nayak, M., & Narayan, K. A. (2019). Strengths and Weakness of Online Surveys. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, *24*, 31-38. https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-2405053138

Naylor, C. (2001). Teacher Workload and Stress: An International Perspective on Human Costs and Systemic Failure. BCTF Research Report.

Neale, I. (2018). *Teachers: stressed and undervalued – but satisfied with their job*. YouGov. Retrieved 29 November from https://yougov.co.uk/topics/economy/articles-reports/2018/11/29/teachers-stressed-and-undervalued-satisfied-their-?nh=find-solutions,custom-research

NEU. (2018). *School Funding: new analysis shows £5.4bn cut from school budgets in England since 2015*. https://neu.org.uk/funding/school-funding-new-analysis-shows-cut-from-school-budgets

Noble, H., & Smith, J. (2015). Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Evidence-based nursing*, *18*(2), 34-35.

Nordgaard, J., Revsbech, R., SæBYE, D., & Parnas, J. (2012). Assessing the diagnostic validity of a structured psychiatric interview in a first-admission hospital sample. *World Psychiatry*, *11*(3), 181.

NowTeach. (2019). *NowTeach*. Retrieved July 2019 from https://nowteach.org.uk/home/programme/

O'Brien, P. C. (2015). Performance Government: Activating and regulating the self-governing capacities of teachers and school leaders. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *47*(8), 833-847. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2014.930682

OECD. (2019). *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I)*. https://doi.org/doi:https://doi.org/10.1787/1d0bc92a-en

Ofsted. (2018). *Ofsted Inspections - Clarification for schools*. (150066). Manchester: Ofsted

Ofsted. (2019). *Teacher well-being at work in schools and further education providers*. Manchester: Ofsted Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/819314/Teacher_well-being_report_110719F.pdf

Oliver, D. G., Serovich, J. M., & Mason, T. L. (2005). Constraints and Opportunities with Interview Transcription: Towards Reflection in Qualitative Research. *Social forces; a scientific medium of social study and interpretation*, *84*(2), 1273-1289. https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2006.0023

Oplatka, I. (2018). Understanding Emotion in Educational and Service Organizations through Semi-Structured Interviews: Some Conceptual and Practical Insights. *Qualitative Report*, *23*(6).

Osanloo, A., & Grant, C. (2016). Understanding, selecting, and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research: Creating the blueprint for your "house". *Administrative issues journal: connecting education, practice, and research*, *4*(2), 7.

Ost, B., & Schiman, J. C. (2017). Workload and teacher absence. *Economics of Education Review*, *57*, 20-30.

Pace, F., D'Urso, G., Zappulla, C., & Pace, U. (2019). The relation between workload and personal well-being among university professors. *Current Psychology*, 1-8.

Pace, F., D'Urso, G., Zappulla, C., & Pace, U. (2021). The relation between workload and personal well-being among university professors. *Current Psychology*, *40*(7), 3417-3424.

Patience, L. (2021). A Raw Deal for Part-Time Leaders. *Journal of the Chartered College of Teaching*. https://impact.chartered.college/article/a-raw-deal-for-part-time-leaders/

Paton, G. (2007). Inspection pressure 'drives teachers to suicide'. *The Telegraph*. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1548157/Inspection-pressure-drives-teachers-to-suicide.html

Pearce, J., & Morrison, C. (2011). Teacher identity and early career resilience: Exploring the links. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education (Online)*, *36*(1), 48.

Pedditzi, M. L., Nicotra, E. F., Nonnis, M., Grassi, P., & Cortese, C. G. (2020). Teacher Stress and burnout: a study using MIMIC modelling. *Electronic Journal of Applied Statistical Analysis*, *13*(3), 739-757.

Perryman, J., & Calvert, G. (2019). What motivates people to teach, and why do they leave? Accountability, performativity and teacher retention. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 1-21.

Perryman, J., & Calvert, G. (2020). What Motivates People To Teach, And Why Do They Leave? Accountability, Performativity And Teacher Retention. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *68*(1), 3-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2019.1589417

Pillen, M., Beijaard, D., & Brok, P. (2013). Tensions in beginning teachers' professional identity development, accompanying feelings and coping strategies. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, *36*(3), 240-260.

Pillen, M., Den Brok, P., & Beijaard, D. (2013). Profiles and change in beginning teachers' professional identity tensions. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *34*, 86-97.

Player, D., Youngs, P., Perrone, F., & Grogan, E. (2017). How principal leadership and person-job fit are associated with teacher mobility and attrition. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *67*, 330-339. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.06.017

Polkinghorne, D. E. (2007). Validity Issues in Narrative Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *13*(4), 471-486. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800406297670

Postholm, M. B. (2012). Teachers' professional development: a theoretical review. *Educational Research*, *54*(4), 405-429. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2012.734725

Pratt, N. (2016). Neoliberalism and the (internal) marketisation of primary school assessment in England. *British Educational Research Journal*, *42*(5), 890-905.

Prentice, W. (1944). The Interruption of Tasks. *The Psychological Review*, *51*(6), 329.

Preston, J. P., & Barnes, K. E. (2017). Successful leadership in rural schools: Cultivating collaboration. *Rural Educator*, *38*(1), 6-15.

Price, A., Mansfield, C., & McConney, A. (2012). Considering 'teacher resilience' from critical discourse and labour process theory perspectives. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *33*(1), 81-95. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2011.614748

Prichard, C., & Moore, J. (2016). The balance of teacher autonomy and top-down coordination in ESOL programs. *TESOL Quarterly*, *50*(1), 190-201.

Prilleltensky, I., Neff, M., & Bessell, A. (2016). Teacher stress: What it is, why it's important, how it can be alleviated. *Theory Into Practice*, *55*(2), 104-111. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2016.1148986

Prior, M. (2017). Accomplishing “rapport” in qualitative research interviews: Empathic moments in interaction. *Applied Linguistics Review*, *9*. https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2017-0029

Proweller, A., & Mitchener, C. P. (2004). Building teacher identity with urban youth: Voices of beginning middle school science teachers in an alternative certification program. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, *41*(10), 1044-1062.

Qu, S. Q., & Dumay, J. (2011). The qualitative research interview. *Qualitative research in accounting & management*.

Råheim, M., Magnussen, L. H., Sekse, R. J. T., Lunde, Å., Jacobsen, T., & Blystad, A. (2016). Researcher-researched relationship in qualitative research: Shifts in positions and researcher vulnerability. *International journal of qualitative studies on health and well-being*, *11*, 30996-30996. https://doi.org/10.3402/qhw.v11.30996

Ravhuhali, F., Mashau, T. S., Kutame, A. P., & Mutshaeni, H. N. (2015). Teachers’ Professional Development Model for Effective Teaching and Learning in Schools: What Works Best for Teachers? *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, *11*(1), 57-68. https://doi.org/10.1080/09751122.2015.11890375

Reay, T., Goodrick, E., Waldorff., B., & Casebeer, A. (2016). Getting Leopards to Change their Spots: Co-creating a New Professional Role Identity. *Academy of Management Journal*, *60*(3).

Reid, A. (1997). *Towards A Labour Process Theory of Teachers' Work* AARE annual conference, Brisbane.

Reid, A. (2003). Teachers' Work: is there still a place for labour process theory? *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *24*(5), 559-573.

Reid, A. (2003). Understanding Teachers' Work: is there still a place for labour process theory? *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *24*(5), 559-573. https://doi.org/10.1080/0142569032000127134

Rhodes, C., & Beneicke, S. (2002). Coaching, mentoring and peer-networking: challenges for the management of teacher professional development in schools. *Journal of In-Service Education*, *28*(2), 297-310. https://doi.org/10.1080/13674580200200184

Richardson, R., Goodman, P., Flight, S., & Richards, G. (2018). *Reducing teacher workload*. London: DfE

Richter, D., Kunter, M., Klusmann, U., Lüdtke, O., & Baumert, J. (2011). Professional development across the teaching career: Teachers’ uptake of formal and informal

learning opportunities. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27*(1), 116-126. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.07.008

Roberts, J. (2019). Teachers 'drown in an Ofsted workload tsunami'. *TES*. https://www.tes.com/news/exclusive-teachers-drown-ofsted-workload-tsunami

Roberts, J. (2020). 'Brutal' Ofsted leaves teachers 'shattered'. *TES*. https://www.tes.com/news/exclusive-brutal-ofsted-leaves-teachers-shattered

Roberts, N. (2022). *School funding in England*. (CBP08419). London: House of Commons Library

Rolls, S., & Plauborg, H. (2009). Teachers' career trajectories: An examination of research. In *Teachers' career trajectories and work lives* (pp. 9-28). Springer.

Rothman, S., Ingvarson, L., & Matthews, D. (2018). Queensland teacher workload study.

Rothstein, H. R., & Hopewell, S. (2009). Grey literature. *The handbook of research synthesis and meta-analysis, 2*, 103-125.

Rout, U., Cooper, C. L., & Rout, J. K. (1996). Job stress among British general practitioners: Predictors of job dissatisfaction and mental ill-health. *Stress Medicine, 12*(3), 155-166.

Rus, C., Tomsa, A., Rebega, O., & and Apostal, L. (2013). Teachers' Professional Identity: A Content Analysis. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 78*, 315-319.

Ryan, S. V., Nathaniel, P., Pendergast, L. L., Saeki, E., Segool, N., & Schwing, S. (2017). Leaving the teaching profession: The role of teacher stress and educational accountability policies on turnover intent. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 66*, 1-11.

Sachs, J. (2001). Teacher professional identity: Competing discourses, competing outcomes. *Journal of education policy, 16*(2), 149-161.

Saunders, D. (2007). The impact of neoliberalism on college students. *Journal of College and Character, 8*(5).

Scanlan, D. (2021). *Teacher Wellbeing Index*. E. Support. https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-organisations/research/teacher-wellbeing-index/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwmtGjBhDhARIsAEqfDEdGSuGesgEFojPOrc8wJotqCR5-DsKfRAepHXez4jQ7VFKPy7SJz6gaAofuEALw_wcB

Scanlon, M. (1999). *The Impact of OFSTED Inspections*. N. F. f. E. Research.

Schulte, B. (2015, 1st June 2015). Work interruptions can cost you 6 hours a day. An efficiency expert explains how to avoid them. *The Washington Post*.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/inspired-life/wp/2015/06/01/interruptions-at-work-can-cost-you-up-to-6-hours-a-day-heres-how-to-avoid-them/

Scott, J. (2019). Wellbeing and workload: What are our graduate teachers telling us? *Independent Education*, *49*(3), 14.

See, B. H., & Gorard, S. (2019). Why don't we have enough teachers?: A reconsideration of the available evidence. *Research Papers in Education*, 1-27. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2019.1568535

See, B. H., & Gorard, S. (2020). Why don't we have enough teachers?: A reconsideration of the available evidence. *Research Papers in Education*, *35*(4), 416-442.

Sellen, P. (2016). *Teacher workload and professional development in England's secondary schools: insights from TALIS*. E. P. Institute.

Sellen, P. (2016). *Teacher workload and the professional development in England's secondary schools: insights from TALIS*. E. P. Institute.

Selwood, I., & Pilkington, R. (2005). Teacher workload: using ICT to release time to teach. *Educational Review*, *57*(2), 163-174.

Shafie, S., Kadir, S. A., & Asimiran, S. (2017). Workload of technical secondary school teachers: management and administration's perceptions. *MOJEM: Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Management*, *2*(4), 21-35.

Shanlick, S. (2011). Qualitative Research Series:Debating the Question Question. *Research Salad*. https://researchsalad.wordpress.com/2011/10/12/qualitative-research-series-debating-the-question-question/

Shannon, R., von der Embse, N., Pendergast, L., Saeki, E., Segool, N., & Schwing, S. (2017). Leaving the teaching profession: The role of teacher stress and educational accountability policies on turnover intent. *Teacher and Teacher Education*, *66*.

Sharp, C., Smith, R., Worth, J., & Van den Brande, J. (2019). Part-Time Teaching and Flexible Working in Secondary Schools. *National Foundation for Educational Research*, ii.

Shepherd, S. (2018). Managerialism: an ideal type. *Studies in Higher Education*, *43*(9), 1668-1678.

Shirrell, M. A. (2014). *School working conditions and teacher attrition: The roles of policy, teacher preparation, and school principals* Northwestern University].

Sikes, P. (1985). The life cycle of the teacher. *Teachers' lives and careers*, 27-60.

Sikes, P. J., Measor, L., & Woods, P. (1985). *Teacher careers: Crises and continuities* (Vol. 5). Taylor & Francis.

Simons, S. (2019). 'Boring CPD sessions turn teachers into stroppy teenagers'. *TES*.

Sims, S., & Jerrim, J. (2020). *TALIS 2018: Teacher Working Conditions, Turnover and Attrition. Statistical Working Paper*. ERIC.

Singh, P. (2018). Performativity, affectivity and pedagogic identities. *European Educational Research Journal*, *17*(4), 489-506.

Singh, P., Heimans, S., & Glasswell, K. (2014). Policy enactment, context and performativity: ontological politics and researching Australian National Partnership policies. *Journal of education policy*, *29*(6), 826-844. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2014.891763

Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2017). Teacher stress and teacher self-efficacy: Relations and consequences. In *Educator Stress* (pp. 101-125). Springer.

Skerritt, C. (2020). School autonomy and the surveillance of teachers. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 1-28. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2020.1823486

Skinner, B., Leavey, G., & Rothi, D. (2019). Managerialism and teacher professional identity: impact on well-being among teachers in the UK. *Educational Review*, 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2018.1556205

Skinner, B., Leavey, G., & Rothi, D. (2021). Managerialism and teacher professional identity: impact on well-being among teachers in the UK. *Educational Review*, *73*(1), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2018.1556205

Smith, K., & Ulvik, M. (2017). Leaving teaching: lack of resilience or sign of agency? *Teachers and Teaching*, *23*(8), 928-945. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2017.1358706

Smythe, W. E., & Murray, M. J. (2000). Owning the Story: Ethical Considerations in Narrative Research. *Ethics & Behavior*, *10*(4), 311-336. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327019EB1004_1

Spence, D. P. (1982). *Historical truth and narrative truth*. Norton.

Spencer, D. A. (2000). Braverman and the Contribution of Labour Process Analysis to the Critique of Capitalist Production — Twenty- Five Years On. *Work, Employment & Society*, *14*(2), 223-243. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23747866

Staufenberg, J. (2019). School CPD spending plummets by £23m as funding pressures bite. *Schools Week*. https://schoolsweek.co.uk/school-cpd-spending-plummets-by-23m-as-funding-pressures-bite/

Sugawara, K., & Fujita, H. (2012). Interruption theory for improving work efficiency by reasoning workflow. International Conference on Industrial, Engineering and Other Applications of Applied Intelligent Systems,

Sugden, N. A. (2010). *Relationships among teacher workload, performance, and well-being*. Walden University.

Tams, S., Thatcher, J. B., & Grover, V. (2018). Concentration, competence, confidence, and capture: An experimental study of age, interruption-based technostress, and task performance. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, *19*(9), 2.

Taylor, F. W. (1911). *The principles of scientific management*. Harper & Brothers.

Terrell, S. R. (2012). Mixed-methods research methodologies. *Qualitative Report*, *17*(1), 254-280.

Tocino-Smith, J. (2019). *What is Eustress and how is it different than Stress?* https://positivepsychology.com/what-is-eustress/

Torres, A. C. (2016). Is this work sustainable? Teacher turnover and perceptions of workload in charter management organizations. *Urban Education*, *51*(8), 891-914.

Toynbee, P. (2013, 22nd April 2013). Teacher-bashing: a political sport with no winners. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/apr/22/teacher-bashing-gove-performance-pay

Travers, C. J., & Cooper, C. L. (2018). *Mental health, job satisfaction and occupational stress among UK teachers*. Routledge.

Tye, B. B., & O'Brien, L. (2002). Why are Experienced Teachers Leaving the Profession? *Phi Delta Kappan*, *84*(1), 24-32. https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170208400108

Tyson, P. (1991). Talking about lesson planning: The use of semi-structured interviews in teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 87-96.

Van den Brande, J., & Zuccollo, J. (2021). *The effects of high-quality professional development on teacher and students: A cost-benefit analysis*. E. P. Institute.

Van Heugten, K. (2004). Managing insider research: Learning from experience. *Qualitative Social Work*, *3*(2), 203-219.

van Lankveld, T., Schoonenboom, J., Volman, M., Croiset, G., & Beishuizen, J. (2017). Developing a teacher identity in the university context: a systematic review of the literature. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *36*(2), 325-342. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2016.1208154

Wada, T. (2016). *Teacher change: A case study of the evolution of language. Teacher identity at mid-and later career* Temple University].

Walker, M., Worth, J., & Van den Brande, J. (2019). *Teacher workload survey 2019*. London: Department for Education

Walkington, J. (2005). Becoming a teacher: Encouraging development of teacher identity through reflective practice. *Asia-Pacific Journal of teacher education*, *33*(1), 53-64.

Weale, S. (2019). theguardian.com. *The Guardian*. Retrieved April 16, from https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/apr/16/fifth-of-teachers-plan-to-leave-profession-within-two-years

Wellard, S., & McKenna, L. (2001). Turning tapes into text: issues surrounding the transcription of interviews. *Contemporary Nurse*, *11*(2-3), 180-186. https://doi.org/10.5172/conu.11.2-3.180

Werler, T. (2015). Commodification of teacher professionalism. *Policy Futures in Education*, *14*(1), 60-76.

Westervelt, E. (2016). How Learning Happens. Retrieved September 15, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236784276_Teachers%27_Professional_Identity_A_Content_Analysis

Weston, D. (2013, Wed 1st May). The future of career progression in teaching. *The Guardian*.

Whelan, R. (2018). It's time to get serious about: Teacher workload. *Independent Education*, *48*(2), 30.

White, B., Barwick, T., Cook, E., Donald, L., Forde, S., King, S., Dann, R., & Sims, S. (2018). *Reducing teacher workload*. https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/31208/1/Ashford_Teaching_Alliance_-_Reducing_teacher_workload.pdf

White, J., & Moss, J. (2003). Professional paradoxes: Context for development of beginning teacher identity and knowledges. AARE 2003: Educational research, risks, & dilemmas: Proceedings of the 2003 Australian Association for Research in Education conference,

Whittaker, F. (2019). *Teach First offered places to 82% of assesses applicants*. https://schoolsweek.co.uk/teach-first-offered-places-82-assessed-applicants/#:~:text=Figures%20obtained%20by%20Schools%20Week,in%20the%20past%20five%20years.

Wilkins, C. (2011). Professionalism and the post-performative teacher: new teachers reflect on autonomy and accountability in the English school system. *Professional development in education*, *37*(3), 389-409.

Wilson, E., & Deaney, R. (2010). Changing career and changing identity: how do teacher career changers exercise agency in identity construction? *Social Psychology of Education*, *13*(2), 169-183.

Wilson, T. (1991). The proletarianisation of academic labour. *Industrial Relations Journal*, *22*(4), 250-262.

Wong, J. L. N. (2006). Control and professional development: are teachers being deskilled or reskilled within the context of decentralization? *Educational Studies*, *32*(1), 17-37. https://doi.org/10.1080/03055690500415910

Worth, J., De Lazzari, G., & Hillary, J. (2017). *Teacher Retention and Turnover Research: Interim Report*. NFER.

Worth, J., & Van den Brande, J. (2020). *Teacher autonomy: how does it relate to job satisfaction and retention?*

Wright, K. B. (2017). Researching Internet-Based Populations: Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Survey Research, Online Questionnaire Authoring Software Packages, and Web Survey Services. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *10*(3). https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2005.tb00259.x

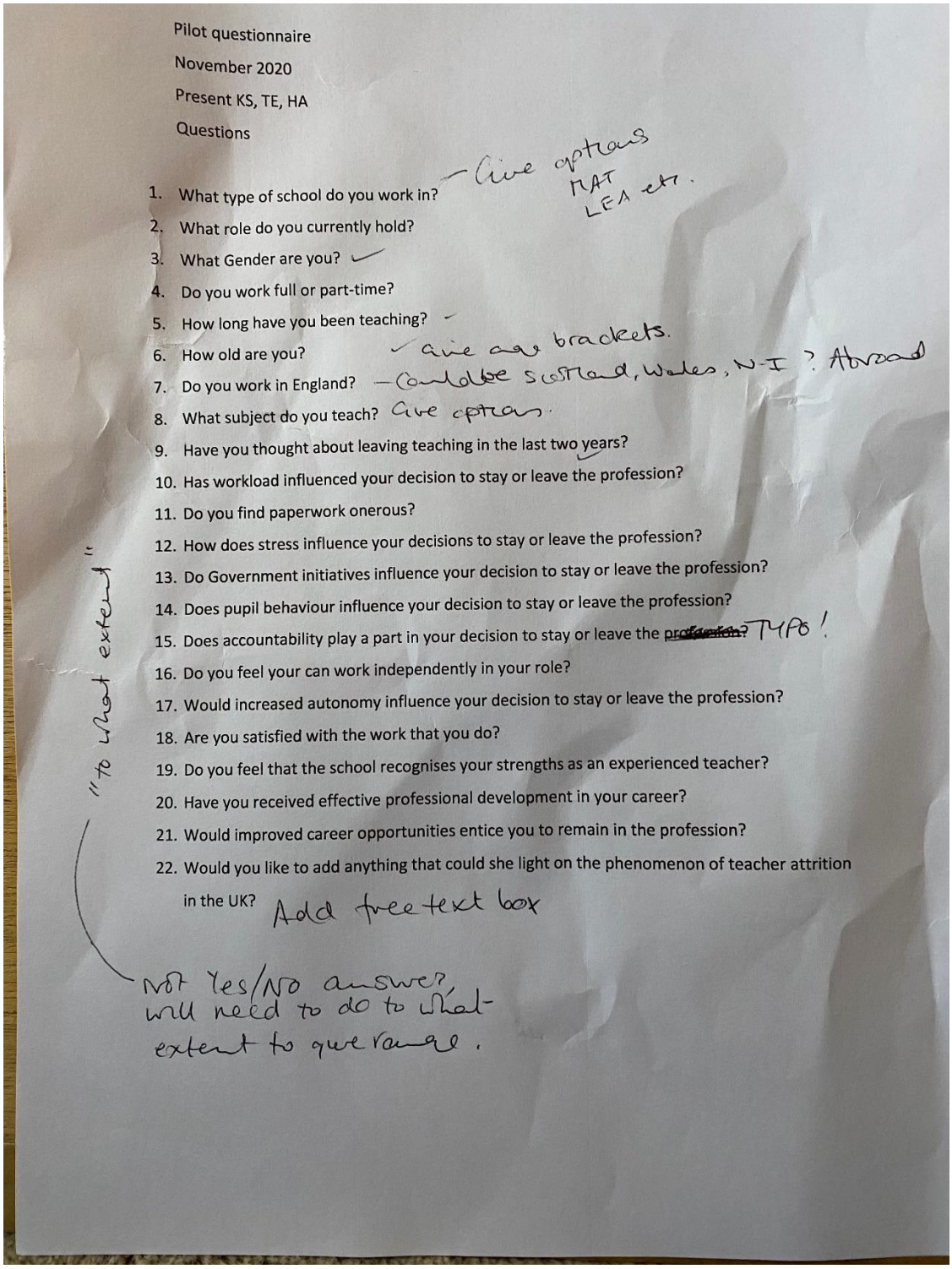
Yin, H., Huang, S., & Lv, L. (2018). A multilevel analysis of job characteristics, emotion regulation, and teacher well-being: a job demands-resources model. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *9*, 2395.

Züll, C. (2016). Open-ended questions. *GESIS Survey Guidelines*, *3*.

Appendices

Appendix A

Pilot questionnaire discussion



Pilot questionnaire

November 2020

Present KS, TE, HA

Questions

1. What type of school do you work in? — Give options MAT LEA etc.
2. What role do you currently hold?
3. What Gender are you? ✓
4. Do you work full or part-time?
5. How long have you been teaching? -
6. How old are you? ✓ Give age brackets.
7. Do you work in England? — Could be Scotland, Wales, N-I ? Abroad
8. What subject do you teach? Give options.
9. Have you thought about leaving teaching in the last two years?
10. Has workload influenced your decision to stay or leave the profession?
11. Do you find paperwork onerous?
12. How does stress influence your decisions to stay or leave the profession?
13. Do Government initiatives influence your decision to stay or leave the profession?
14. Does pupil behaviour influence your decision to stay or leave the profession?
15. Does accountability play a part in your decision to stay or leave the ~~profession~~? TYPO!
16. Do you feel your can work independently in your role?
17. Would increased autonomy influence your decision to stay or leave the profession?
18. Are you satisfied with the work that you do?
19. Do you feel that the school recognises your strengths as an experienced teacher?
20. Have you received effective professional development in your career?
21. Would improved career opportunities entice you to remain in the profession?
22. Would you like to add anything that could she light on the phenomenon of teacher attrition in the UK? Add free text box

"To what extend"

Not Yes/No answer, will need to do to what extent to give range.

Appendix B

Full questionnaire

Mid Career Teachers Leaving Teaching

Page 1: Thinking of Leaving Teaching?

If you are a mid-career secondary phase teacher with between 10-30 years in the teaching profession, I would like to invite you to take part in short questionnaire (24 tick boxes) to investigate the work that experienced teachers do and how you feel about your work. I want to understand how the nature of work influences decisions to stay or leave the profession before normal retirement age. This information will be used as part of a Doctorate of Education at the University of Reading.

This questionnaire will ask if you would be prepared to be part of a longer semi-structured interview via Teams. If you express an interest, further information will be given to you regarding this at a later stage. It is entirely up to you whether you take part and there will be no repercussions if you choose not to.

This questionnaire will be conducted via a secure platform, take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete, and any data collected will be held securely and in strict confidence for the purposes of the research questionnaire only. Participants will be assigned a unique number whilst the study is undertaken. The results of the study will be written up as a report for the University and may also be used presented at national and international conferences and published in written articles. The results of the study will not be presented in a way that will identify you.

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request. By completing this questionnaire, you are consenting to your participation in this research study.

If you would like more information, please contact Mary Bilton at
If you have any queries regarding protection of your personal data, please contact

Page 2: About you

*1.*Which best describes your place of work? *Required*

- Academies or Multi Academy Trust
- Local Authority School
- Private Sector school
- Foundation School
- Voluntary Aided School
- Other

*a.*If you selected Other, please specify:

*2.*Which best describes your current role? *Required*

- Main scale classroom teacher
- Head of Department or Subject Lead
- Senior Leadership
- Pastoral or Phase Leader
- SENCO Lead
- Other

*a.*If you selected Other, please specify:

*3.*What gender are you? *Required*

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

*4.*Do you work full or part-time? *Required*

- Full time
- Part-time
- Have done a mix of both

*5.*How many years have you been teaching? *Required*

- 10-15
- 16-20
- 21-25
- 26-30

*6.*Which age range are you in? *Required*

- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45-49
- 50-54
- 55-60

*7.*What type of environmental denomination do you work in? *Required*

- Urban
- Rural

*8.*Where do you currently work? *Required*

- England
- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland
- Other

*a.*If you selected Other, please specify:

*9.*What subject do you mainly teach? *Required*

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Humanities
- Technology/ Engineering
- Art
- Modern Languages
- Drama/Dance
- ICT
- Psychology
- Philosophy and Ethics/RE
- PE / Sport studies
- Music
- Other

*a.*If you selected Other, please specify:

Page 3: How you feel about your work

*10.*Have you considered leaving teaching in the last 2 years? *Required*

- Yes
- No
- Occasionally

*11.*To what extent has workload influenced your decision to stay or leave the profession?
Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	My workload is seriously impacting my well-being	My workload is impacting my well-being	Occasionally the workload impacts my well-being	I can manage the workload	I have a light workload	
The workload is driving me from the profession	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	The workload is not a cause for concern

*12.*To what extent does onerous paperwork* influence your decision to remain or leave the profession?
Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	Significantly	Moderately	Slightly	Not at all	
Paperwork is a significant factor in my decision to stay or leave the profession	☐	☐	☐	☐	Paperwork is not a significant factor in my decision to stay or leave the profession

*13.*To what extent does stress influence your decision to stay or leave the profession?
Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	Stress is a major issue for me	Stress is an issue for me	I occasionally feel stressed	I rarely feel stressed	I never feel stressed	

Stress plays a big part in my decision to remain or leave the profession	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Stress plays no part of my decision to remain or leave the profession

14. To what extent do changing Government initiatives influence your decision to leave or remain in the profession?

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Government initiatives have a big impact on my decision to leave or remain in the profession.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Government initiatives do not influence my decision to leave or remain in the profession.

15. To what extent does pupil behaviour influence your decision to remain or leave the profession?

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Pupil behaviour is strongly influencing my decision to remain to leave teaching	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Pupil behaviour does not influence my decision to remain or leave teaching

16. To what extent does accountability play a part in your decision to leave or remain in the profession?

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	

Accountability is a major factor in my decision to remain or leave the profession	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Accountability is a not major factor in my decision to remain or leave the profession

17. To what extent do you feel you are able to work autonomously in your current role?
Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	Significantly	Moderately	Slightly	Not at all	
I work autonomously	☐	☐	☐	☐	Not at all

18. Do you feel that increased autonomy with your work would influence your decision to remain in the profession?
Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	Significantly	Moderately	Slightly	Not at all	
Working more autonomously would influence my decision to stay or leave the profession	☐	☐	☐	☐	Working more autonomously would not influence my decision to stay or leave the profession

19. Are you satisfied with the tasks you are required to undertake (exclude face to face teaching) ?
Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	Very satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Neutral	Moderately dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	
I see value in all the tasks I am required to do	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	I think that many of the tasks are unnecessary

Page 4: About your experience

*20.*To what extent do you feel that your school recognises your strengths as an experienced practitioner?
Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	Significantly	Moderately	Slightly	Not at all	
My experience is valued	☐	☐	☐	☐	My experience is not valued

*21.*Have you had opportunities to engage with regular professional development during your career?
Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	A great deal	Considerably	Sporadic	Not at all	
I've had regular professional development opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐	I've had very little professional development opportunities

*22.*To what extent would improved career development opportunities influence your decision to leave or remain in the profession?
Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	Not at all	Slightly	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
Improved career development would not make a difference to my decision to remain or leave the profession	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Improved career development would make a difference to my decision to remain or leave the profession

*23.*Is there anything you would like to add to which may explain how you feel about remaining or leaving the profession?

Page 5: Further participation

*24.*Would you be willing to take part in a 40 minute face to face via Teams to explore your feelings about work further? *Required*
More info

- Yes I'd be willing to take part
- I'm afraid I can't spare the time

*a.*If you wish to be considered for interview, please pop your email in the box below.

Page 6: Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire, I really appreciate your time. If you wish to add any comments or contact me about this research please don't hesitate to do so on

Appendix C

Thematic questions given to participants prior to interview.

Workload

What, specifically bothers you about the workload

Stress

What specifically causes you stress at work?

Career

Has your career gone as you would have wanted it to go

CPD

What CPD would you have found beneficial

Appendix D

Full ethical approval form

University of Reading

Institute of Education

Ethical Approval Form A (version May 2019)

Tick one:

Staff project: _____ PhD ____ EdD ✓

Name of applicant (s): Mary A Bilton

Title of project:

The attrition of mid-career teachers in a neo-liberal world

Name of supervisor (for student projects): [redacted]

Please complete the form below including relevant sections overleaf.

	YES	NO
Have you prepared an Information Sheet for participants and/or their parents/carers that:	✓	
a) explains the purpose(s) of the project		
b) explains how they have been selected as potential participants	✓	
c) gives a full, fair and clear account of what will be asked of them and how the information that they provide will be used	✓	
d) makes clear that participation in the project is voluntary	✓	
e) explains the arrangements to allow participants to withdraw at any stage if they wish	✓	
f) explains the arrangements to ensure the confidentiality of any material collected during the project, including secure arrangements for its storage, retention and disposal	✓	
g) explains the arrangements for publishing the research results and, if confidentiality might be affected, for obtaining written consent for this	✓	
h) explains the arrangements for providing participants with the research results if they wish to have them	✓	
i) gives the name and designation of the member of staff with responsibility for the project together with contact details, including email . If any of the project investigators are students at the IoE, then this information must be included and their name provided	✓	
k) explains, where applicable, the arrangements for expenses and other payments to be made to the participants	NA	
j) includes a standard statement indicating the process of ethical review at the University undergone by the project, as follows: 'This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct'.	✓	
k)includes a standard statement regarding insurance: "The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request".	✓	
Please answer the following questions		

1) Will you provide participants involved in your research with all the information necessary to ensure that they are fully informed and not in any way deceived or misled as to the purpose(s) and nature of the research? (Please use the subheadings used in the example information sheets on blackboard to ensure this).	✓		
2) Will you seek written or other formal consent from all participants, if they are able to provide it, in addition to (1)?	✓		
3) Is there any risk that participants may experience physical or psychological distress in taking part in your research?		✓	
4) Staff Only - have you taken the online training modules in data protection and information security (which can be found here: http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/humanresources/PeopleDevelopment/newstaff/humres-MandatoryOnlineCourses.aspx Please note: students complete a Data Protection Declaration form and submit it with this application to the ethics committee.			
5) Have you read the Health and Safety booklet (available on Blackboard) and completed a Risk Assessment Form to be included with this ethics application?	✓		
6) Does your research comply with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research?	✓		
	YES	NO	N.A.
7) If your research is taking place in a school, have you prepared an information sheet and consent form to gain the permission in writing of the head teacher or other relevant supervisory professional?			✓
8) Has the data collector obtained satisfactory DBS clearance?			✓
9) If your research involves working with children under the age of 16 (or those whose special educational needs mean they are unable to give informed consent), have you prepared an information sheet and consent form for parents/carers to seek permission in writing, or to give parents/carers the opportunity to decline consent?			✓
10) If your research involves processing sensitive personal data[1], or if it involves audio/video recordings, have you obtained the explicit consent of participants/parents?			✓

[1] Sensitive personal data consists of information relating to the racial or ethnic origin of a data subject, their political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, sexual life, physical or mental health or condition, or criminal offences or record.

11) If you are using a data processor to subcontract any part of your research, have you got a written contract with that contractor which (a) specifies that the contractor is required to act only on your instructions, and (b) provides for appropriate technical and organisational security measures to protect the data?			✓
12a) Does your research involve data collection outside the UK?		✓	
12b) If the answer to question 12a is "yes", does your research comply with the legal and ethical requirements for doing research in that country?			✓
13a) Does your research involve collecting data in a language other than English?		✓	
13b) If the answer to question 13a is "yes", please confirm that information sheets, consent forms, and research instruments, where appropriate, have been directly translated from the English versions submitted with this application.			✓
14a. Does the proposed research involve children under the age of 5?		✓	
14b. If the answer to question 14a is "yes": My Head of School (or authorised Head of Department) has given details of the proposed research to the University's insurance officer, and the research will not proceed until I have confirmation that insurance cover is in place.			✓
If you have answered YES to Question 3, please complete Section B below			

Complete **either** Section A **or** Section B below with details of your research project.

Complete a risk assessment.

Sign the form in Section C.

Append at the end of this form all relevant documents: information sheets, consent forms, tests, questionnaires, interview schedules, evidence that you have completed information security training (e.g. screen shot/copy of certificate).

Email the completed form to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration.

Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.

A: My research goes beyond the 'accepted custom and practice of teaching' but I consider that this project has **no** significant ethical implications. (Please tick the box.)	

Please state the total number of participants that will be involved in the project and give a breakdown of how many there are in each category e.g. teachers, parents, pupils etc.

All data will be collected from practicing mid-career teachers or teachers who have left the profession earlier than retirement age; so 33-59 age group.

This research is in two phases, Phase 1 – an online questionnaire, and Phase 2 - interviews with either small focus groups or 1:1 with participants.

The online questionnaire will be distributed to teachers who are members of Facebook teaching groups, so it is anticipated that several hundred could be involved in this initial data collection. A link will be posted to the Bristol online survey site.

These will be mid-career teachers, with between 10-25 years teaching.

The majority will be current in practice in state funded secondary schools.

I will make an online survey available to 300 teachers via an online platform.

I am aiming to undertake 15 semi-structured interviews for data collection in phase 2. I anticipate that I will also carry out interviews with at least two participants who have left state funded secondary schools earlier than retirement age (this will be included in the 15).

Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words noting:

title of project

The attrition of mid-career teachers in a neo-liberal world

The aim of this research is to investigate what precursors influence mid-career teachers to leave the profession prior to retirement age. I will be exploring why so many mid-career teachers are leaving their jobs, and how this (if at all) this links to the ***nature*** of work that they undertake. There is much research into beginning teachers and how they form their professional identity and how this impacts their decision to either stay or leave the profession, yet there is a paucity of investigation into the exodus of experienced teachers (both in the UK and world-wide), to explain why this phenomenon occurs. By obtaining rich insights into why teachers are leaving prior to retirement age, this research hopes to cast light on the phenomenon.

brief description of methods and measurements

A mixed-method approach will be used to gather data in two phases; a questionnaire to gain preliminary data on which to base more focused questions for semi-structured interviews with either small focus groups or 1:1; participants will be given the option which best suits their circumstances. The participants will all be experienced teachers (defined as having between 10 and 25 years teaching experience), all be employed in publicly funded schools, and be based in the UK.

participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria

Participants will identify as being either full-time secondary school teachers, part-time secondary school teachers or having done a mixture of both throughout their career. They will most likely be aged between 33-59 years old. Both male and female participants will be invited to take part. Participants will be an information sheet and consent form in accordance with UoR's policy see Doc 3 attached.

I will also conduct interviews with the same target group who have already left the profession to explore whether their reasons for leaving support the new data from my own research. The participants will be recruited via the first phase of data collection, the online questionnaire. One of the questions will be to ask if they are willing to take part in an interview or focus group which will be Phase 2 of the data collection.

In Phase 1 I will be asking questions about their current status, and broad questions about how they currently feel about their work, including but not limited to, their feelings about leaving or remaining in the profession. See Doc 1 attached.

In Phase 2 I will be conducting semi-structured interviews using themes drawn from the Phase 1 questionnaire. See doc 8 attached.

consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary)

Consent will be obtained from participants in accordance with UoR's policy. I intend to launch an initial questionnaire which will give some primary data (phase 1), and also elicit willing participants for Phase 2 of the data collection via interviews. Participants will have

to agree to the terms before moving on with the survey at phase 1, see Doc 3 Declaration for participants. If they decline they will not be able to access the remainder of the survey. A data protection declaration form has been completed in accordance with UoR's policy, see below.

Phase 1 Ethics documentation

Doc 1 Indicative survey questions phase 1 data collection– copy attached

Doc 2 Data declaration form – copy attached

Doc 3 Declaration for participation in a survey copy attached

Doc 4 Data protection declaration for information sheets– copy attached

Doc 5 Data Management Plan for data collection – copy attached

Phase 2 Ethics documentation

Doc 6 Information sheet for phase 2 of research - copy attached

Doc 7 Consent form for phase 2 – copy attached

Doc 8 Rationale for interview questions – copy attached

a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with then.

This research does not pose any contentious ethical considerations, however these are the potential implications I have considered and will mitigate against. Possible ethical considerations may be brought up in the focus groups or 1:1 interviews;

will this research inadvertently encourage participants to think about leaving the profession?

Will participants feel comfortable talking in a group situation about their experiences?

Participants must not be 'lead' into any particular direction during interview.

Colleagues may be reticent to discuss their feelings and intentions of leaving the profession in front of others, so I will need to establish trust at the earliest stage to ensure that reliable data is collected if they are part of a focus group.

Some participants may have concerns about being seen on a Teams video link

I will pay particular consideration to the questions that are asked, and ensure that they are non-biased.

Participants will not be identifiable by position in school; their school name will not be required or requested.

Participants will be given the option of being part of a group meeting or a 1:1 interview – I will explain that group meeting online will have the option of being 'invisible' and just their voice heard.

At any time, a participant will have the option of withdrawing.

Participants will be given their preferred time to take part in the interview; by giving them control over this they will hopefully find a time when demands on their time is satisfactory.

estimated start date and duration of project

The initial survey will be completed by January 21st 2021.

Interviews will start in late January 2021 and be complete by February 2021	
~~**B:** I consider that this project **may** have ethical implications that should be brought before the Institute's Ethics Committee.~~	
~~Please state the total number of participants that will be involved in the project and give a breakdown of how many there are in each category e.g. teachers, parents, pupils etc.~~	
~~Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words.~~ ~~title of project~~	

RISK ASSESSMENT: Please complete the form below

Brief outline of Work/activity:	I will be conducting an online questionnaire and face to face semi-structured interviews with participants, and (or) online 'Teams' meeting due to the on-going Covid 19 restrictions.

Where will data be collected?	The online questionnaire will be via a secure, password protected online survey tool – Bristol Online Survey- which complies with GDPR in the UK and recommended by UoR. Face to face interviews will be at a mutually convenient meeting room. Any public space would be carefully chosen to ensure that we could

	talk in confidence, and that the participant was comfortable with the location. This will depend on the Covid restrictions, and all appropriate PPE will be worn as per the government directive at that time. Within online interviews data will be collected via Teams (as recommended by UoR) as a focus group with up to three participants OR one to one sessions. Timed sessions would be booked in advance at the convenience of the participant/s. I will seek permission to audio record the sessions for the purposes of transcription. Participants will have the option to opt into or out of having their camera on.

Significant hazards:	All government directives will be followed with regard to Covid 19; social distancing, meeting outside, wearing of PPE etc will be adhered to if face to face meetings take place. If meeting are held on a school site, all H&S requirements will be acknowledged and followed.

Who might be exposed to hazards?	Myself and the participants.

Existing control measures:	The current regulations for meeting during the current pandemic can be seen on the Government website. I will check regularly for the latest advice.

	https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Are risks adequately controlled:	Yes

~~If NO, list additional controls and actions required:~~	~~Additional controls~~	~~Action by:~~

C: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

Note: a signature is required. Typed names are not acceptable.

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm that ethical good practice will be followed within the project.

Signed: Print Name Mary Bilton Date 13th December 2020

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE ETHICS COMMITTEE

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed: [redacted] Print Name……[redacted] Date27/1/2021

(IoE Research Ethics Committee representative)*

* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is granted on the basis of the information declared by the applicant.

Document 1 indicative survey questions – phase 1 data collection

Total time – up to 20 minutes

I have included the response method after each question.

The questions you will be asked are:

Which best describes your place of work? – List of options

Which country do you work in? – free text box

Which phase do you work in? – List of options

Which best describes/described your main role? – List of options

What type of environmental denomination do/did you work in? List of options

How old are you? – List of options

How many years have/had you been teaching? - List of options

Do you work full-time or part-time? - List of options

What subject do you mainly teach? - List of options

Have you considered leaving teaching in the past 12 months? - List of options

What factors are influencing your decision to leave or remain in teaching? – List of options

To what extent does workload impact your decision to remain or leave the profession? – Odd number scale

To what extent do you feel you are able to work autonomously in your current role? – Odd number scale

Do you feel that increased autonomy within your work would influence your decision to remain or leave the profession? – Odd number scale

How would you characterise your feelings towards the tasks you are required to undertake? – List of options

To what extent do you feel that your school recognises your strengths as an experienced practitioner? – Odd number scale

Have you had opportunities to engage with regular professional development? – Odd number scale

What type of professional development opportunities have you engaged in over the last five years? – List of options

Would you be willing to be contacted via email to take part in a further round of data collection (this does not commit you to taking part, and is just an expression of interest).

Information Management and Policy Services

Document 2 Data Declaration Form for Questionnaire

data protection declaration for ethical approval

This document can be used to provide assurances to your ethics committee where confirmation of data protection training and awareness is required for ethical approval.

By signing this declaration I confirm that:

I have read and understood the requirements for data protection within the *Data Protection for Researchers* document located here:

I have asked for advice on any elements that I am *unclear on* prior to submitting my ethics approval request, either from my supervisor, or the data protection team at:

I understand that I am responsible for the secure handling, and protection of, my research data

I know who to contact in the event of an information security incident, a data protection complaint or a request made under data subject access rights

Researcher to complete

Project/Study Title_____ Attrition of mid-career teachers in a neo-liberal world

NAME	STUDENT ID NUMBER	DATE
Mary Bilton	[redacted]	13th December 2020

Supervisor signature

Note for supervisors: Please verify that your student has completed the above actions

NAME	STAFF ID NUMBER	DATE
[redacted]	[redacted]	13th December 2020

Submit your completed signed copy to your ethical approval committee.

Copies to be retained by ethics committee.

VERSION	KEEPER	REVIEWED	APPROVED BY	APPROVAL DATE
1.0	IMPS	Annually	IMPS	

Document 3 Declaration for participation in a survey

QUESTIONNAIRE INFORMATION AND CONSENT COVER PAGE

If you are a mid-career secondary phase teacher with between at least ten years in the teaching profession, I would like to invite you to take part in short questionnaire to investigate the work that experienced teachers do and how they feel about their work. I want to understand how the nature of work influences decisions to stay or potentially leave the profession before retirement age. Findings from this project will provide important knowledge of how experienced teachers make decisions about their careers and what makes them decide to remain or leave the profession. This information will be used as part of a Doctorate of Education at the University of Reading.

This questionnaire will also ask if you would be prepared to be part of a longer semi-structured interview via Teams. If you express an interest, further information will be given to you regarding this at a later stage.

It is entirely up to you whether you take part and there will be no repercussions if you choose not to.

The questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The questionnaire will be conducted via a secure questionnaire platform and any data collected will be held securely and in strict confidence for the purposes of the research questionnaire only. Participants will be assigned a unique number whilst the study is undertaken. The results of the study will be written up as a report for the University and may also be used presented at national and international

conferences and published in written articles. The results of the study will not be presented in a way that will identify you.

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request. By completing this questionnaire, you are consenting to your participation in this research study.

Please read the Data Protection statements attached for information regarding data protection.

If you would like more information, please contact Mary Bilton at

If you have any queries regarding protection of your personal data, please contact

Doc 5 Data Management Plan for Phase 2 of data collection

Name	Mary Bilton
Email address	[redacted]
Project title	Attrition of mid-career teachers in a neo-liberal world
Supervisor(s)	[redacted]
Document version	1
Date of last update	n/a
Changes from previous version	n/a

1 Project information
1.1 Project information
What is your research question? Teacher attrition in a neo-liberal world
1.2 Organisations
What organisations in addition to the University are directly involved in your research, either as funders, or as research partners or collaborators, and what is their role? None
1.3 Contracts
Is your research subject to any contract, such as a CASE/industrial sponsorship agreement or IP assignment? If so, where is your copy of any the contract held? N/A
2 Data collection
2.1 Secondary data sources
Are there any secondary data sources you will use as inputs into your research? If so, where can they be accessed? What are their terms of use? N/A
2.2 Primary data collection
What are the types, formats and quantities of data that you will collect or create? Why have the specified data formats been chosen?

Phase 1 – questionnaire I will gather data from an online survey platform which is GDPR compliant (Bristol Online)– I will use a link from Facebook teaching groups to the survey site. Phase 2 – Semi structured interviews I will use Microsoft Teams to carry out and audio record interviews where it is not possible to meet face to face I will use a secure app on my iPhone (Voice Recorder) to audio-record face to face interviews
2.3 Instruments and methods
What methods will you use to collect the data? What instruments and software will you use to collect and process the data? Will you create any software or write any code to process or analyse data? Teams software will be used to conduct online interviews; I will audio record the session with participants' permission For face to face interviews, I will use my iPhone and the app called 'Voice Recorder' to record verbal exchanges. I will use Nvivo to process the verbal data I may use a professional transcription service to transcribe the interview data
2.4 Quality control
What quality controls will you use to reduce the likelihood and impact of errors in your data? I will review any transcript data and cross reference with the original recordings to ensure the accuracy of the transcripts
3 Storage and organisation
3.1 Storage and security

Where will you store your data?

How will the data be backed up?

How will the data be recovered in the event of an incident?

What volume of data storage will you need? Are there any costs for this?

If you will be collecting data in the field, how will you back it up locally and manage safe transfer to your main secure storage location?

What access controls or security techniques (e.g. encryption) will you use to keep data secure and protect any sensitive/confidential data?

How will you ensure your Supervisor and any collaborators can access your data securely?

All data will be stored digitally in my University of Reading onedrive account – this is password protected.

Any recordings on my iPhone will be secured with a password. I will upload this as soon as possible after interview to my onedrive account and deleted as soon as possible after transcription.

No personal emails will be exchanged.

3.2 Organisation

How will you structure and name your folders and files?

How will you handle file versioning?

Files will be organised by the following protocols

'Interview (# number), the date in numeric form'.

For example: Interview 4 23-11-2020

These will be kept in a file called ‘Interview data’ The corresponding transcriptions will be kept in the same file with the protocol ‘Interview #, the date in numerical form, transcription’ For example: Interview 4 23-11-2020 Transcription
4 Documentation and metadata
What information will you need to record to ensure that your data can be read and interpreted in the future? How will this information be captured and recorded in your metadata and documentation files? Are there any metadata standards you can use to create standard representations of the data and enable machine readability? All my data will be kept in Microsoft Office compatible files. I do not anticipate this data being difficult to access in the future; all Office files can be accessed with previous versions of word/Excel
5 Ethics and Data Protection
Will you collect and personal/confidential data from research participants? First names on will be required, age and number of years in the teaching profession will be required Will you gain consent for data preservation and sharing?

Yes

How will you ensure that any processing of personal data is in compliance with the Data Protection Act?

I will follow the protocols provided by University of Reading

How will you protect the identity of participants if required, e.g. by anonymization?

First names only and a participant number; Bethany 0124

How will sensitive data be handled to ensure it is stored and transferred securely?

All data will be stored in a password protected file storage system, and only shared through University of Reading email.

6 Intellectual Property Rights

Who will own the data?

I will own the data

Are there any restrictions on the re-use of third-party data?

N/A

Will data sharing be delayed or restricted, e.g. until IP protection is secured?

7 Preservation and sharing

7.1 Data selection

What data will you preserve and share at the end of your project?

All data will be retained in secure digital storage

What will be the format(s) of the final dataset?

I will present the data in printed tables, discussion documents and possibly charts

What are the foreseeable future uses of the data?

Beyond the dissertation, I will have the right to use the data for executive summary to present to interested parties; Government agencies, teaching unions or other relevant organisations.

Will there be any restrictions on access to the data?

Raw data will not be accessible; only the results in the format in which the thesis is presented.

How will the data be licensed for re-use?

N/A

7.2 Data repositories

What repository or repositories will you use to preserve and share your data?

Will there be any costs charged by repository or associated with preparation of the data for archiving?

Not applicable – digital storage only via my University of Reading Onedrive account.

7.3 Code and research software

What research software source code or analysis scripts will you preserve?

What code platform and/or repository service will you use to preserve and share the code?

How will the code be licensed for re-use?

NA

7.4 Timeframe for data sharing

When will you make the data available?

Post thesis submission in Spring 2022

8 Implementation
8.1 Responsibilities
Who will be responsible for data management activities? Myself
8.2 Resource requirements
Will you need any hardware or software which is additional to existing institutional provision? Will you need any specialist expertise or technical support? Will there be any costs for additional resources or support? How will these be met? None
8.3 Training and information requirements
What training will you need to enable you to deliver the plan? What information will you need to find out? None

Document 6 Information sheet for phase 2 of data collection

Researcher:

Name Mary Bilton

Phone: [redacted]

Email: [redacted]

Supervisor:

Name [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Email: [redacted]

INFORMATION SHEET

Research Project:

Why are mid-career teachers leaving their profession?

Dear Participant

I am a EdD candidate at the University of Reading, UK. As part of the data collection stage of my dissertation, I am writing to invite you to take part in a research study about mid-career teachers who are considering leaving the profession.

What is the study?

The aim of this study is to understand why mid-career teachers, with their wealth of knowledge and experience are leaving their profession. It hopes to make recommendations regarding how we can best help policy makers understand the underlying reasons for this attrition and hopefully how to reverse the trend.

Why have you been chosen to take part?

You have been invited to take part in this project because I am looking for mid-career teachers who have between 10 and 25 years' experience in state funded secondary education. A total of 15 people have been invited to participate in this study.

In addition, you completed the initial survey and indicated that you would be happy to take part in an interview.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you give permission to participate. You may also withdraw your consent to participation at any time during the project, without any repercussions to you, by contacting me, the Project Researcher, Mrs Mary Bilton Tel: 07941935156, email: pj903740@student.reading.ac.uk

What will happen if I take part?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview with the researcher, lasting no more than one hour. The interview will be recorded and transcribed with your permission. The transcription will be shown to you in order for you to check its accuracy and to confirm that you are still happy for its contents to be used. The information gathered will be used by the researcher for data analysis. You will be offered the choice of either a 1:1 interview (this could be face to face if you are local to Oxfordshire, or online via Teams) or an on-line group meeting via Teams. Covid restrictions will determine the possibility of face to face meetings and Teams will be used where this is not possible.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

The information given by participants in the study will remain confidential and will only be seen by the researcher and the supervisor listed at the top of the letter. You will be assigned an identification number (ID) only to distinguish your responses from those of other participants. This ID is in no way associated with your name. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published.

We anticipate that the findings of the study will be useful when looking at developing strategies to help retain the mid-career work force in the UK.

What will happen to the data*?*

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you, the pupils or the school to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Participants will be assigned a number and will be referred to by that number in all records. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only the researcher and the Supervisor will have access to the records. In line with the University's policy on the management of research data, anonymised data gathered in this research may be preserved and made publicly available for others to consult and re-use. The results of the study will be presented at national and international conferences, and in written reports and articles. We can send you electronic copies of these publications if you wish.

What happens if I change my mind?

You can change your mind at any time without any repercussions. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, we will discard the data.

What happens if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact [redacted], University of Reading; Tel: [redacted], email: [redacted]

Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information, please contact the researcher me on [redacted]

We do hope that you will agree to your participation in the study. If you do, please complete the attached consent form and return it via email to me – a digital signature will be accepted.

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

Signed: (Researcher)

Date:

data protection for information sheets

The organisation responsible for protection of your personal information is the University of Reading (the Data Controller). Queries regarding data protection and your rights should be directed to the University Data Protection Officer at [redacted] or in writing to: Information Management & Policy Services, University of Reading, Whiteknights, P O Box 217, Reading, RG6 6AH.

The University of Reading collects, analyses, uses, shares and retains personal data for the purposes of research in the public interest. Under data protection law we are required to inform you that this use of the personal data we may hold about you is on the lawful basis of being a public task in the public interest and where it is necessary for scientific or historical research purposes. If you withdraw from a research study, which processes your personal data, dependant on the stage of withdrawal, we may still rely on this lawful basis to continue using your data if your withdrawal would be of significant detriment to the research study aims. We will always have in place appropriate safeguards to protect your personal data.

If we have included any additional requests for use of your data, for example adding you to a registration list for the purposes of inviting you to take part in future studies, this will be done only with your consent where you have provided it to us and should you wish to be removed from the register at a later date, you should contact [redacted]

You have certain rights under data protection law which are:

Withdraw your consent, for example if you opted in to be added to a participant register

Access your personal data or ask for a copy

Rectify inaccuracies in personal data that we hold about you

Be forgotten, that is your details to be removed from systems that we use to process your personal data

Restrict uses of your data

Object to uses of your data, for example retention after you have withdrawn from a study

Some restrictions apply to the above rights where data is collected and used for research purposes.

You can find out more about your rights on the website of the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) at [redacted]

You also have a right to complain the ICO if you are unhappy with how your data has been handled. Please contact the University Data Protection Officer in the first instance.

Below information to be added unless covered in other areas of the Information Sheet (see guidance for what needs to be included)

The purposes of the use of personal data (what the study is for)

The categories of personal data that are not obtained directly from the participant (if applicable)

The recipients or categories of recipients of the personal data (to include third parties the data may be shared with, for example, other researcher at HEI's, organisation or job role)

The details of transfers of the personal data to any countries outside the EU including international organisations (if applicable).

The retention periods for the personal data.

The details of the existence of automated decision-making, including profiling (if applicable – more information on whether this would apply to your study can be found here: _____

Document 7 - Consent Form for Phase 2 of data collection

Project title:

Why are experienced teachers leaving their profession?

I have read and had explained to me by the Information Sheet relating to this project.

I have had explained to me the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the Information Sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.

I understand that I will be interviewed and that the interview will be recorded and transcribed.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the project any time, without giving a reason and without repercussions.

I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Information Sheet.

Please tick as appropriate:

I consent to being interviewed	Yes	No
I consent to being audio-recorded	Yes	No

Name:

Signed:

Document 8 Rationale for interview questions

The questions for the interview phase of this research will broadly be in distinct phases:

Are you thinking of leaving the profession

How do teachers feel about the levels of accountability in their daily work?

What their experiences are with regard to CPL (continued professional learning)

How do you feel about workload?

How stress impacts their lived experiences.

The results of the survey, may steer questions to a direction which I have not anticipated, and so this list is not exhaustive.

Indicative questions for next phase

Have you considered leaving teaching prior to retirement age, and how likely is this to become a reality?

If so, where will you go?

Is anything preventing you from leaving the profession?

What would entice you to stay?

Do you find any aspects of your job particularly frustrating?

Are you able to manage your time productively?

Do you feel autonomous in your decisions with regard to your work?

Would you like to contribute more to whole school decision making, and how might this affect your self-esteem?

What would great CPL look like?

Would CPL give you an improved sense of professionalism

Would CPL affect your sense of ‘professionalism’?

Would CPL influence your decision to stay in the profession?

Tell me about your workload. How would you characterize its manageability?

Are there any tasks that you feel are particularly empowering or demoralising?

Do line managers impact your decision to stay or leave the profession?

Would further support influence your decision to stay or leave the profession?

How would you rate your stress levels at the moment?

If any, what aspects of your work lead to increased stress?

Are you aware of any initiatives to help you cope with stress?

Appendix E

Participant declaration prior to taking the initial survey.

If you are a mid-career secondary phase teacher with between 10-30 years in the teaching profession, I would like to invite you to take part in short questionnaire (24 tick boxes) to investigate the work that experienced teachers do and how you feel about your work. I want to understand how the nature of work influences decisions to stay or leave the profession before normal retirement age. This information will be used as part of a Doctorate of Education at the University of Reading.

This questionnaire will ask if you would be prepared to be part of a longer semi-structured interview via Teams. If you express an interest, further information will be given to you regarding this at a later stage. It is entirely up to you whether you take part and there will be no repercussions if you choose not to.

This questionnaire will be conducted via a secure platform, take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete, and any data collected will be held securely and in strict confidence for the purposes of the research questionnaire only. Participants will be assigned a unique number whilst the study is undertaken. The results of the study will be written up as a report for the University and may also be used presented at national and international conferences and published in written articles. The results of the study will not be presented in a way that will identify you.

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request. By completing this questionnaire, you are consenting to your participation in this research study.

If you would like more information, please contact Mary Bilton at [redacted]

If you have any queries regarding protection of your personal data, please contact [redacted]

Appendix F

Standard University of Reading ethical protocol

Researcher:

Name [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Email: [redacted]

Supervisor:

Name [redacted]

Phone: 44 (0)118 378 2661

Email: [redacted]

INFORMATION SHEET

Research Project:

Why are mid-career teachers leaving their profession?

Dear Participant

I am a EdD candidate at the University of Reading, UK. As part of the data collection stage of my dissertation, I am writing to invite you to take part in a research study about mid-career teachers who are considering leaving the profession.

What is the study?

The aim of this study is to understand why mid-career teachers, with their wealth of knowledge and experience are leaving their profession. It hopes to make recommendations regarding how we can best help policy makers understand the underlying reasons for this attrition and hopefully how to reverse the trend.

Why have you been chosen to take part?

You have been invited to take part in this project because I am looking for mid-career teachers who have between 10 and 30 years' experience in state funded secondary education. A total of 15 people have been invited to participate in this study.

In addition, you completed the initial survey and indicated that you would be happy to take part in an interview.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you give permission to participate. You may also withdraw your consent to participation at any time during the project, without any repercussions to you, by contacting me, the Project Researcher, Mrs Mary Bilton Tel: [redacted], email: [redacted]

What will happen if I take part?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview with the researcher, lasting no more than one hour. The interview will be recorded and transcribed with your permission. The transcription will be shown to you in order for you to check its accuracy and to confirm that you are still happy for its contents to be used. The information gathered will be used by the researcher for data analysis. You will be offered the choice of either a 1:1 interview (this could be face to face if you are local to Oxfordshire, or online via Teams) or an on-line group meeting via Teams. Covid restrictions will determine the possibility of face to face meetings and Teams will be used where this is not possible.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

The information given by participants in the study will remain confidential and will only be seen by the researcher and the supervisor listed at the top of the letter. You will be assigned an identification number (ID) only to distinguish your responses from those of other participants.

This ID is in no way associated with your name. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published.

We anticipate that the findings of the study will be useful when looking at developing strategies to help retain the mid-career work force in the UK.

What will happen to the data*?*

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you, the pupils or the school to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Participants will be assigned a number and will be referred to by that number in all records. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only the researcher and the Supervisor will have access to the records. In line with the University's policy on the management of research data, anonymised data gathered in this research may be preserved and made publicly available for others to consult and re-use. The results of the study will be presented at national and international conferences, and in written reports and articles. We can send you electronic copies of these publications if you wish.

What happens if I change my mind?

You can change your mind at any time without any repercussions. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, we will discard the data.

What happens if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact Dr David Kerr, University of Reading; Tel: [redacted], email: [redacted]

Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information, please contact the researcher me on [redacted]

We do hope that you will agree to your participation in the study. If you do, please complete the attached consent form and return it via email to me – a digital signature will be accepted. This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

Signed: (Researcher)

[redacted]

Date: 10th February 2021

Data protection for information sheets

The organisation responsible for protection of your personal information is the University of Reading (the Data Controller). Queries regarding data protection and your rights should be directed to the University Data Protection Officer at [redacted] or in writing to: Information Management & Policy Services, University of Reading, [redacted].

The University of Reading collects, analyses, uses, shares and retains personal data for the purposes of research in the public interest. Under data protection law we are required to inform you that this use of the personal data we may hold about you is on the lawful basis of being a public task in the public interest and where it is necessary for scientific or historical research purposes. If you withdraw from a research study, which processes your personal data, dependant on the stage of withdrawal, we may still rely on this lawful basis to continue using your data if

your withdrawal would be of significant detriment to the research study aims. We will always have in place appropriate safeguards to protect your personal data.

If we have included any additional requests for use of your data, for example adding you to a registration list for the purposes of inviting you to take part in future studies, this will be done only with your consent where you have provided it to us and should you wish to be removed from the register at a later date, you should contact imps@reading.ac.uk.

You have certain rights under data protection law which are:

- Withdraw your consent, for example if you opted in to be added to a participant register
- Access your personal data or ask for a copy
- Rectify inaccuracies in personal data that we hold about you
- Be forgotten, that is your details to be removed from systems that we use to process your personal data
- Restrict uses of your data
- Object to uses of your data, for example retention after you have withdrawn from a study

Some restrictions apply to the above rights where data is collected and used for research purposes.

You can find out more about your rights on the website of the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) at https://ico.org.uk

You also have a right to complain the ICO if you are unhappy with how your data has been handled. Please contact the University Data Protection Officer in the first instance.

Below information to be added unless covered in other areas of the Information Sheet (see guidance for what needs to be included)

The purposes of the use of personal data (what the study is for)

The categories of personal data that are not obtained directly from the participant (if applicable)

The recipients or categories of recipients of the personal data (to include third parties the data may be shared with, for example, other researcher at HEI's, organisation or job role)

The details of transfers of the personal data to any countries outside the EU including international organisations (if applicable).

The retention periods for the personal data.

The details of the existence of automated decision-making, including profiling (if applicable – more information on whether this would apply to your study can be found here: https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/individual-rights/rights-related-to-automated-decision-making-including-profiling/

Consent Form for Phase 2 of data collection

Project title:

Why are experienced teachers leaving their profession?

I have read and had explained to me by the Information Sheet relating to this project.

I have had explained to me the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the Information Sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.

I understand that I will be interviewed and that the interview will be recorded and transcribed.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the project any time, without giving a reason and without repercussions.

I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Information Sheet.

Please tick as appropriate:

I consent to being interviewed	Yes	No
I consent to being audio-recorded		

Name:

Signed: