Early career teachers' reflections of teaching in an age of performativity

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Acknowledgments

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Declaration of original authorship

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

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Abstract

The performative culture shaping the nature of teaching is reportedly causing tension for teachers struggling to meet results-driven targets while balancing personal values about educating children (Ball, 2003). Given the multi-complexities of performativity, teachers face numerous problems and issues arising in their practice (Keddie, 2017). Reflection is recommended as a problem-solving strategy that supports professional growth, but there is limited literature specific to experiences of early career teachers (ECTs) (Schön, 1983). Therefore, this study investigated the topics prioritised in ECTs' reflection and influences affecting this. The theoretical framework draws on Habermas' (1972) categories of reflection as a lens to review the data.

The interpretivist paradigm guided this investigation with qualitative narrative inquiry methodology. This small-scale study involved five ECTS and data from two narrative interviews provided insight specific to their experiences of performative teaching. The processes of data analysis generated theory to develop themes that contribute new knowledge of ECTs' reflection. Firstly, this study identified ECTs' various reflections on positive elements of their role. However, their reflections represented high levels of technical focus to ensure practice achieved expected outcomes. Whilst existing research identifies teachers' wellbeing is improved through relationships with colleagues, it was the extent to which ECTs depended on colleagues' for technical and practical support that this study offered new insight. Furthermore, ECTs' reflections were more inclined with technical compliance or even resignation, than emancipatory thinking about the social, political and cultural factors of performative teaching. These findings and analysis of literature about emancipatory reflection enabled theory to develop theory that culminated in the contribution of a new reflection model

to challenge ECTs to think more critically to build their professional understanding and develop autonomy for solving problems. Hence, this study offers rich insight into the nature of ECTs' reflections in an age of performativity to help school leaders in their planning of professional learning for teachers in the early stages of their career.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Personal and professional background to this study

I had just provided newly qualified teacher, Katie, with positive feedback from her first lesson observation as a year 3 teacher, when she stood up and said with relief, 'At least I haven't got to reflect on that now – it was such a chore after every lesson last year'. As she walked out, I found myself engaging in reflection of her dismissive attitude towards the value of reflective thinking processes and the difference between her perception and my own. Having always been keen to engage in deep reflective thinking to improve my own teaching practice, I was troubled to learn that other teachers might consider this a waste of time, thus missing the personal and professional learning reflection offers. I wanted to understand this situation better by learning more about current thinking on teacher reflection, so I pursued this through reading and discussions with other teachers I work with to gain insight into modern reflective practices.

However, I soon realised that, whilst the literature provided me with theory from previous research studies, I wanted to learn from an up-to-date picture of teacher reflection specific to the context of modern education culture in England. With limited literature available offering insight of current teacher reflection, this doctoral programme provided an ideal opportunity for me to engage in researching this phenomenon. My motivation for investigating this particular aspect of teaching practice originates from my primary school deputy head role where we use a coaching model to support the professional development of teachers. In this approach, coaches and teachers engage in sustained dialogue with a focus on developing skills to enhance classroom practice based on each teacher's individual needs

(Kraft, Blazer & Hogan, 2018). The benefit is that, during coaching, the complex act of teacher reflection has the potential of being a catalyst for practice improvements and their professional growth (Stover, Kissell, Haag & Shoniker, 2011). Hence, my personal interest in seeking to offer effective professional support for the teachers I coach by furthering my knowledge and understanding of the nature of teacher reflection in the current educational climate.

1.2 Context of study

The background context for this study is that, in education, teacher reflection is recommended as an important strategy for professional development for all areas of practice - such as subject knowledge and pedagogical-content knowledge of how to teach (Khan, 2017). Chapter 2, reviews the literature and describes reflection in more detail, but the outline concept for this study draws on key reflective theorists, Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983) who advocated how practitioners can focus attention on reflection to identify improvements to practice (McAlpine, Weston, Berthiaume, Fairbank-Roch & Owen, 2004). The value of reflection for teaching is that reflection can range from a focus on the micro aspects of teaching-learning processes, through to macro concerns regarding political and ethical principles underpinning education and hierarchies of society (Khan, 2017). For teachers, the reflective thinking process can occur during practice, or afterwards, when self-awareness and introspection can lead to new personal learning (Schön, 1983).

The key point here is that reflection offers teachers a strategy to improve their teaching, as well as turning experiences into new knowledge that expands their ability to further develop

as a teacher (McAlpine et al., 2004). Yet, the impact of modern classroom culture in England can affect teachers' engagement with reflection as a problem-solving strategy. For example, teaching is traditionally associated with the delivery of academic outcomes, rather than developing teachers' deeper reflective thinking about the political and social context of education (Khan, 2017). In this respect, the literature review expands on the development of a performative culture of education in England, where external pressures to meet national expectations of students' academic outcomes affects the nature of teaching practice (Wilkins, 2011).

Certainly, for new teachers, the perception is that they may be more inclined to learn the specific techniques for teaching, rather than reflect on how to do things independently (Akbari, 2007). Indeed, a common element of initial teacher education programmes is the promotion of reflection as an essential professional skill and this features both implicitly and explicitly in the professional teacher training standards (Meirerdirk, 2016). However, Moon (1999) suggests that teacher educators advocate reflective practice more strongly than those engaged in teaching practice and, combined with my experience of Katie's lack of enthusiasm for reflection, I am keen to learn more of the reflective journey that follows on from teachers' early training experiences.

1.3 Focus and relevance of study

Therefore, the focus of this study narrows towards the group of teachers who have been teaching less than five years - commonly referred to in literature as early career teachers

(ECTs). The rationale for researching this specific group is two-fold. Firstly, my leadership responsibilities involve coaching several teachers who are ECTs and secondly, the current teacher retention crisis in England presents a worrying situation where, in 2017, only 67% of teachers remained in the profession after five years (NFER, 2018). Indeed, the Government express their significant concerns about the rate of teachers leaving the profession early and are currently in the process of organising a strategy of support for ECTs which is to be rolled out nationally in 2021 (DfE, 2019).

Yet, in the meantime, the existing knowledge available about the role of reflection as a problem-solving strategy for teachers is covered well in the context of teacher education, but there seems little research available about the nature of ECTs' reflection during the next phase of their career. The media is keen to report how teachers join the profession positively, but the current climate of education of heightened focus on academic outcomes creates working conditions that changes the nature of the teaching beyond their initial expectations, which causes dissatisfied teachers to leave (Adams, 2019). With so many teachers leaving the profession after such a short time, the personal assumption I am making here is that there are probably problems and negative aspects of practice that are not resolved satisfactorily - which prompts teachers to seek alternative careers.

Whilst there is plenty of literature providing detailed insight into the problematic nature of modern teaching practice, I am unable to find detailed information to further my understanding specific to the role of reflection as a problem-solving strategy for ECTs in the current educational culture. Therefore, this investigation benefits not only my own professional development, but also contributes to existing field of knowledge of teacher

reflection by offering new insight of the nature of ECTs' reflections when reviewing their practice.

1.4 Aims and research questions

Based on the principle that teachers' personal deep reflection can facilitate problem solving strategies pertinent to issues of modern education, the aim of this research is to learn directly from ECTs by giving them a voice to share their reflections on the practice. My personal objective here is to learn from this so I am better informed when reviewing how to support ECTs' reflective practice and to facilitate their enjoyment, success and motivation to continue their teaching career. Therefore, to learn of the nature of ECTs reflection, I will benefit from knowledge of the topics dominating their reflective thinking and the issues that shape their reflections. Hence, the following research questions drive this inquiry:

Key research question:-
What is the nature of early career teachers' reflections in an age of performativity?

- Sub-question one - What do early career teachers reflect on when reviewing their teaching career and practice?
- Sub-question two - What is shaping the nature of early career teachers' reflections?

I believe the processes of analysis of data acquired from this study were effective in enabling me to respond to these questions and, as such, fulfilled my need to further my knowledge and understanding about the nature of ECTs' reflection so that I can review my approach to supporting teachers in the early stage of their career. Therefore, the next section

sets out the structure of this thesis that describes the approach to this study and the formulation of my conclusions about the current nature of ECTs' reflection of their practice.

1.5 Structure of thesis

This thesis is organised into seven chapters. The following Chapter 2 provides my review of the literature to create a foundation of understanding about the context of teacher reflection in an age of performativity. Whilst my study is a narrow focus on ECTs' reflection on their practice, their classroom experience is subsumed within various layers of institutional, national and global influences that affect the nature of education culture in England. Therefore, an analysis of some of these factors establishes the prominence of the current results-driven performative education culture that affects teaching and learning experiences. With tensions identified from political ambitions for education that may not match with those of the teaching workforce, the literature is reviewed for insight of how the professional skill of reflection offers teachers a problem-solving strategy when faced with challenging external demands from their practice. The limited literature on ECTs' reflection in this respect, thus, led to the formulation of the research questions that drive the line of inquiry of this investigation.

Chapter 3 provides detail of the personal ontological orientation of this study and the methodological approach to implement it. From my evaluation of the research questions, a narrative inquiry was chosen as an appropriate approach to research the phenomena of ECTs' reflection and the decisions for the data collection methods are explained. An important consideration of engaging in social science research is with regard to the ethical concerns for the participants involved and so this chapter includes the strategies adopted to protect them from any adverse consequences of engaging in this investigation. The chapter ends with an

account of the various procedures used to analyse the data, as well as an explanation of how the findings and conclusions drawn from this were determined.

In Chapter 4, the findings presented reflect the data acquired from ECTs by offering a snapshot of their personal narratives about what they reflected on when reviewing their practice. My analysis of the common themes arising in their narratives presents a response to research sub-question 1 by reporting of the topics ECTs reflected on when reviewing their career and practice. Furthermore, the data analysis processes facilitated identification of various prominent reflection topics common to the participants involved that provided insight of the issues shaping the nature of ECTs' reflections and, thus, the chapter includes a response to sub-question two with an account of these factors.

Chapter 5 offers a discussion of the findings and response to the research questions drawn from my subjective interpretation and understanding of this research phenomenon. To respond to the main line of inquiry into the nature of ECTs' reflection in an age of performativity, four main themes have been prioritised for discussion to offer insight of how my own knowledge and understanding has developed from this specific research focus.

The final chapter 6 provides a conclusion to this investigation by drawing together the key findings and my learning from this study. In this chapter, I offer my opinion of how this study has contributed to existing knowledge about teacher reflection and the potential implications for professional practice from the insight gained from this research. It is important that this whole research project is reviewed in light of the subjectivity and my personal interpretation as researcher that affects the credibility of this study and the findings reported herein. Acknowledgement of such limitations are provided, as well as suggestions for

future research that could further knowledge about ECTs' reflection in an age of performativity. The final paragraphs offer my conclusion as a personal reflection on this whole research project and the significant value of undertaking this doctoral challenge.

Chapter 2 - Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Previously, in the introduction chapter, I outlined my personal interest in improving knowledge for my school leadership role and responsibility to support teachers as they develop their professional skills in the current performative culture. My work involves teachers with a range of length of practice experience, but the current retention crisis in England causes me to hone my research interest specifically on the group of early career teachers (ECTs). To provide an example, the NFER (2018) report that the retention rate for teachers in their third year reduced from 80% in 2011, to 73% in 2017. Furthermore, the retention of teachers for five years has dropped from 73% to 67% in the same period (NFER, 2018). Hence, this furthers my concerns to enhance understanding of the issues of practice these teachers face and how the problem solving strategy of reflection may offer the potential of overcoming barriers that cause these new teachers to leave.

Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to start by exploring existing literature for knowledge about the general nature of teaching in order to build a picture of the educational context that affects ECTs' practice, which leads to the rationale for this particular research project.

To set the scene of modern day teaching experiences in England, the chapter commences by exploring the development of state intervention in the education system over the past few decades, which has resulted in a demanding performative culture that influences the nature of modern teaching practice. Examples of state interventions are examined herein to demonstrate how political ambitions are driving reforms to improve the quality of teaching so

that national academic outcomes are advanced. However, a common feature in the literature about performative education are tensions regarding state imposed neoliberal reforms, because they have not all been implemented effectively. Thus, causing frustration experienced by both Government and teachers alike - albeit from their different perspectives (Ball, 2003). Therefore, this analysis explores some of the key issues of tension to gain insight into how the performative culture pervades classroom practice and the response from the teaching workforce towards accountability regimes.

From the examination of education culture and identification of the state's expectation that improving quality of teaching is the key to the nation's academic success, the literature focus narrows to review the problem-solving strategy of reflection that teachers can use for their practice (Schön, 1983). This review examines key theories about reflection and the practical issues of reflective teaching in a performative culture. The theoretical framework is established using the types of reflection to structure data analysis and discussion of the findings from this study. However, with the personal context of my professional need to learn more specifically about the practice experiences of ECTs, my review of literature specific to this group identified that the knowledge available seems somewhat limited regarding insight of the current nature of reflective practice for these relatively inexperienced teachers. Therefore, to further my own knowledge and understanding so I can be more effective in my professional role, this chapter concludes by explaining the rationale for undertaking this particular study and the specific research questions that drive the approach for this investigation.

2.2 Globalisation and the knowledge economy

This research project explores the nature of reflective teaching, but in order to understand modern education culture, it is important to identify the broader issues that drive national, local and school policies and currently shape teaching practice. The starting point is the development of globalisation with greater inter-connectedness between nations facilitated by world economic integration through free trade agreements (Peters & Humes, 2003). Furthermore, collaboration with intergovernmental organisations, such as, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, or The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) led to increased economic opportunities for the United Kingdom and other states (Lakes & Carter, 2011). In competitive global markets a key development pertinent to this study, is that nations' economies are dependent on the production, distribution and use of knowledge as a commodity more than ever before (Olssen & Peters, 2005). Powell and Snellman (2004, p.199) purport that various definitions of 'knowledge economy' cover a broad range of interpretations, but their version is chosen here, explaining that it is the 'production and services based on knowledge-intensive activities that contribute to an accelerated pace of technical and scientific advance, as well as rapid obsolescence'. Hence, a knowledge economy has a stronger reliance on intellectual competencies, rather than physical contributions or natural resources. Waugh (2019) adds that technology is the driver for knowledge production and exploitation of ideas, innovation and intellectual capital that work as currency in the knowledge economy.

Another feature of the knowledge economy is the development of human capital – a term representing those who are lifelong learners and continually upgrade their knowledge and skills (Peters & Humes, 2003). The impact is that knowledge service sectors, such as

education, communications and information have become the fastest growing elements of western economies attracting high levels of private and public investment (Olssen & Peters, 2005). Inevitably, global economic demand for an increasingly skilled workforce becomes a driver for profound changes to the relationships between learners, educators and businesses (Burton Jones, 1999). The relevance of this global context for this study is the concept that the prosperity of nations and individuals rests on the knowledge, skills and enterprise of all - not just an elite few – hence, the central role of education in England's economic and social policies (Brown, Lauder and Ashton, 2007).

For example, Britain's former Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, (2004) shared ambitions for greater success in the knowledge economy by declaring the Government's mission that British people would be the most skilled – developed from the best education and training in the world (Brown et al., 2007). This vision seems to continue into recent times with the statement from the Government's (DfE, 2016) education improvement strategy for 2015-2020, demonstrating the high stakes pressure for academic attainment. 'Every young Briton unable to compete with their international peers represents a huge waste of potential, on both a personal and national level' and this seems to set the tone for Government strategies to create a world class education system for England's students (DfE, 2016, p.26). With the knowledge economy creating conditions where knowledge is regarded as a national economic asset for competitive advantage in global markets, it is not surprising that economic policy to enhance knowledge productivity has led to reforms to improve existing education systems (Peters & Humes, 2003). Schools, colleges, universities, think tanks, design centres and research laboratories became the front line in the search for competitive advantage (Brown et al., 2007).

2.3 Neoliberal approach to education

In England, there was a political shift towards neoliberal approaches to transform knowledge production and the rethinking of education for knowledge creation, acquisition and communication (Olssen & Peters, 2005). David Harvey's (2005, p.2) definition of neoliberalism establishes meaning for this literature review:

> Neo-liberalism is … a theory of political economic practice that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade (Harvey, 2005 p.2).

In the neoliberal view of England, up until the late 1980s and the growth of globalisation and the knowledge economy, education polices were developed locally and supported at national level. However, with global economic pressures, the state turned to neoliberal policies to transform education to improve academic outcomes. The cultural impact of neoliberalism changed schooling from being delivered as a 'public benefit and common good,' to 'the ideology of privatisation' (Lakes & Carter, 2011 p.109). With the neoliberal approach of establishing education as human capital formation, education moved to being valued as a commodity or product that can function under market conditions (Davies & Bansel, 2007). The key point to highlight is that when the education model is based on human capital theory, the impact is that economic returns are said to be favoured over ethical, moral and personal aspects of education (Moghtader, 2017). Moghtader (2017) suggests that political ambitions for human capital based on competition and productivity, conveys a set of values on public education about generating self-maximising individuals who are motivated by market preferences (Moghtader, 2017). For teachers in England, a key cultural change affecting classroom practice was the state's neoliberal regime of reforms that undermined teachers' authority by shifting control towards state control

and compliance achieved through regulatory authorities, such as Ofsted (Davies & Bansel, 2007; DfE, 2019).

In this respect, a critical feature of the governing landscape are the mechanisms of arm's length governance through public bodies to enact education reforms, for example the Office for Students and Standards and Teaching Agency (DfE, 2019). Whilst Government ministers maintain ultimate responsibility and accountability, the arm's length public bodies have immediate responsibility and accountability, thus offering a buffer between the public and ministers (Rutter, 2014). This provides for central government maintaining control of education reforms, while the processes of arm's length governance facilitate achievement of its policy goals more effectively (Bache, 2003). However, Davies and Hughes (2009) highlight the problem of the state's capacity to ensure effective implementation of their policies in the way they were designed and this can affect the level of success achieved with their reforms. Indeed, success of education policies as designed by the state, risks policy fracture if undermined by the powerful and influential public bodies who may frustrate national objectives - either, through conflicting local priorities, or their inefficiency when policies from different organisations contradict each other or are not aligned (Bache, 2003). Indeed, Flinders and Tonkiss (2016) allude to problems of confusion through lack of clarification and issues of poor management of responsibilities for public bodies - which ultimately affects the effectiveness of the state's education reforms through this strategy of arm's length governance.

Furthermore, it is the state's position to assume schools will respond quickly and effectively to the demands of their policy requirements (Maguire, Braun & Ball, 2015). Yet, ideological differences between the state and teachers can lead to policy fractures occurring

'because of increased distance between the espousal, enactment and experience of policy' (Davies & Hughes, 2009, p.596). The conflict is exacerbated when government frustration with the pace of policy success leads to hasty decision-making and imposition of additional strategies deployed in an ineffective and uncoordinated fashion (Davies & Hughes, 2009). To add to the potential of policy fracture, the complex nature of school life and difficulties in enacting a wide range of policies effectively, may cause schools to prioritise what they do (Maguire et al., 2015). A further risk is the nature of policy processes that are iterative, additive and, therefore, open to different interpretation when leaders and teachers draw on their existing values, which could affect the translation of policies into practice (Ball, Maguire, Braun & Hoskins, 2011). Furthermore, Maguire et al., (2015, p.487) warn that dependent upon a range of factors, including the perspectives, values and positions of the policy actors involved – 'enactments are contingent, fragile social constructions'. To illustrate the fragility of policy implementation, the following section includes examples of current tensions between the state and its teaching workforce that provide insight of some of the problematic issues shaping the nature of modern teaching practice.

2.4 Performative education culture

Inevitably, the neoliberal marketisation of education in England changed the culture experienced in schools (Hadad, 2017). For example, knowledge and learning moved from being understood as socially constructed, historically and culturally situated - to modern rigorous testing regimes placing knowledge as an individual possession and a form of acquisition (Pratt, 2016). Lyotard's (1984) term 'performativity' is commonly used in the literature to represent the various political and bureaucratic mechanisms of control deployed to regulate education culture (Locke, 2015). The meaning of the term for this study also draws on

Ball's (2003 p.216) definition that performativity is a 'mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as a means of incentive, control, attrition and change based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic)'. The key concept to emphasise about performativity for this study is that, in a performative culture the complex social processes are reduced to numerical classification, so that quality educational experiences are limited to specific measurement from pupil performance in standardised tests (Singh, Heimans & Glasswell, 2014).

Hence, performative indicators of individual school success are represented in potentially favourable awards from the national inspection service, along with raised pupils' academic levels in national tests, which combine to enhance a school's attractiveness to parents and students in the competitive educational market place (Jeffrey, 2002). In order to achieve the performative criterion and sustain success - schools have to improve their overall resources and be more selective about pupils, as well as the quality of teachers they employ (Jeffrey, 2002). In the context of this study being set in English primary schools, here the culture of performativity refers to the relationships of systems including: targets; Ofsted inspections; national school league tables; teachers' performance management; performance-related pay – with the overall combined effect of a demand for teachers to perform and held accountable for their practice (Troman, 2008).

Whilst the majority of literature on performative education tends to represent tensions amongst the teaching workforce about the various accountability systems, it is important to not lose sight of the key driver for a performative culture in that it is a mechanism for governments to raise standards in education to benefit the mass of the population (Craft & Jeffrey, 2008). In setting of targets for itself as government, for local authorities and schools, the whole aim is to develop highly skilled workers who can compete in the knowledge economy. Certainly, the

higher the level of skills - the higher the levels of excellence of knowledge acquired and how that is used can have a positive economic return for the UK (Craft & Jeffrey, 2008). Hence, in the political arena and given the competitive nature of the global knowledge economy, many nations favour neoliberal reforms for education, including governments in England, because a performative culture facilitates state control of education and ability to exert pressure on the teaching workforce for areas deemed needing improvement (Wedell, 2009).

Another dimension of a performative education culture reflects the state's lack of trust that educators have sufficient professional expertise to produce the outcomes needed for a nation to compete successfully in the knowledge economy (Wedell, 2009). Hence, the context in England resulted in reforms originated from pressure from politicians' lack of confidence in educators' capacity to judge student performance and political ambition to improve academic outcomes prompted state imposed policies and initiatives to effect improvements (Ozga, 2009). For example, the 1988 Education Act introduced a National Curriculum and system of statutory testing in response to Government dissatisfaction with performance and accountability of the teaching profession against the national investment in education (Wilkins 2011; Wyse & Torrance, 2009).

Furthermore, the Conservative Education Secretary of the early 1990s, Kenneth Clark, was keen to replace the school inspection process led by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) who reported directly to the state, with a new system of independent inspection offering transparency to support parents' choice – to be a key driver of education reforms (Wilcox & Gray, 1996). Therefore, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) was established in the 1992 Education (Schools) Act to inspect and report on school performance. In response to Ministers criticism of the lack of clarity in previous HMI reports,

Ofsted inspections involved judging school performance in accordance with a single framework of categories on a seven point scale ranging from ‘excellent’ (1) down to ‘very poor’ (7). The Ofsted handbook detailed the criteria for evaluations from inspection on various focus areas of school life, along with descriptions for each grade and reports on school performance followed the same format (Elliott, 2012).

From these regulatory measures, the professional judgement on quality of teaching and good practice in schools became subject to specific criteria set out in Ofsted’s inspection handbook and the assessment of inspectors (Ozga, 2009). Ofsted inspections are said to be a supervisory measure and a power mechanism to control behaviours of school leaders and teachers, so they strive to achieve grades of accepted standards and avoid unsatisfactory judgments of ‘requires improvement’ or ‘inadequate’ (Perryman, Ball, Braun & Maguire (2017). With short notice for inspections, schools are pressured to work in a state of readiness for inspections (Perryman et al., 2017). The tensions amongst the teaching workforce about Ofsted inspections and the new Ofsted framework (Ofsted, 2019) illustrate the problematic nature of implementing state improvements for education and this topic is reviewed later in this chapter.

Although there have been changes in Government in England over the past few decades, the performative culture has been supported with each party’s plethora of education policies covering a wide range of school matters (Maguire et al., 2015). For example, issues of funding, safeguarding, reforming curriculum content, reducing pupil exclusions, healthy eating, examination system and the leadership of schools (Maguire et al., 2015). Yet, across the world, political ambitions for human capital have resulted in the main focus of education reforms being directed at improving the teaching workforce.

The important key concept of this discussion about performative education and state intervention in modern classroom practice is that the quality of teaching is considered a major indicator to determine academic improvements (OCED, 2005). Indeed, from their extensive research of international education systems, McKinsey & Co (2010, p.5) make the simple, but profound statement, that 'the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers' and, therefore, the effectiveness of the classroom teacher is the crucial element in improving academic productivity.

Therefore, it is important to emphasise here that the discussion of this chapter so far has developed from highlighting political ambitions for national economic growth in human capital markets by enhancing academic success, to identifying the state's strong motivation to intervene to improving the quality of teaching in order to achieve this advantageous outcome. Hence, the fundamental theoretical concept underpinning this study is that quality teaching is deemed to be a key component to the nation's prosperity and so this research study sits firmly within this context of teachers' professional endeavours to improve the quality of their teaching to enhance the outcomes of their practice. To back up this key concept with an example of the state's position on this, the former Secretary of State for Education in England, Damien Hinds (2019) supports the view that teachers are the key to education and commented that they 'shape the lives of their pupils and – in turn –the future of our country' (DfE, 2019, p.3). Given the significance of the impact of teachers' daily classroom practice with regard to political objectives for national economic gain, it is not surprising that fears of teacher underperformance have led to implementation of various monitoring systems devised to support state control which has resulted in the development of an accountability culture prevalent in modern education (Ball & Olmedo, 2013). Indeed, the imposition of accountability strategies are driven by the state's ambitions for

national academic success - combined with the state's fears of overall detrimental outcomes from poor inspections, poor exam results, low league table rankings and negative parental feedback if the quality of teaching and outcomes fail to match their expectations for improved growth (Page, 2017).

To explore the manifestation of accountability regimes that affect daily teaching practice, focus now moves to explore the literature about this, which includes an examination of how teachers draw on their professional toolkit of skills to respond to performative demands.

2.4.1 Accountability regimes in the performative culture

In England, the drivers for academic advancement led to measures by the state to gain control of education that involved accountability regimes offering an infrastructure for close scrutiny of school practices and enabling bureaucratic bodies to govern schools from a distance (Ball, 2003). Hence, in the modern performative culture, various methods of control of teacher performance are instigated, which Ball (2003, p.220) describes as 'the mechanics of performativity'. Stemming from the pressures of school performance, teachers are increasingly subjected to close monitoring, evaluation and judgements set against specific measurement targets that are deemed to reflect their performance through their pupils' outcomes (Ball, 2003). In schools, the manifestation of accountability regimes include teacher surveillance and monitoring systems, learning walks, leadership observations of lessons, student voice feedback and parental networks (Page, 2017). It is important to emphasise that all these performative mechanisms are driven by the state's desire to ensure the quality of teachers' performance successfully responds to neoliberal pressures of quality and competition for national economic benefit (Page, 2017).

For example, to reinforce the education reforms the Government introduced a new performance management system in 2000, where annual targets for each teacher related to pupils' progress, as well as objectives directed at improving their own practice (Bubb & Hoare, 2013). Against challenging targets to meet performative requirements, teachers generate a range of evidence to demonstrate professional success (HCEC, 2017). The system involves Head-teachers' regular monitoring and assessment of the quality of teaching. In addition, they hold in-year reviews with teachers about pupils' data, provide feedback on practice and discuss training opportunities. The annual performance review informs pay decisions under the performance-related-pay guidance (Bubb & Hoare, 2013; DfE, 2018). Yet, the whole aim of the performance management system is to reinforce the accountability of teaching practice in order to meet the state's aspirations for students' enhanced academic performance (Forrester, 2005).

Whilst there are many reports in the literature of teachers responding negatively to workload expectations, where burdensome bureaucratic systems create demand for numerous replications of data and excessive levels of detail to evidence their teaching practice for their performance reviews, some teachers are embracing elements of such accountability mechanisms (Green, 2018). For these teachers, the performativity measures can provide fresh understanding of teacher success through clarity of knowledge of what to perform and how to improve both their own skills and outcomes of their practice (Holloway & Brass 2018). Indeed, the literature revealed insight that some teachers are not dispirited by the effects of neoliberalism, such as the prevalence of surveillance strategies common in accountability regimes (Keddie, 2017). For example, Perryman et al. (2017) found that some teachers viewed lesson observations as an opportunity for learning and self-improvement. Additionally, research by Hall and McGinity (2015) found some

teachers experienced high levels of autonomy regarding their involvement and contributions to localised school policies that affected their practice. The finding was that increased teacher involvement in policy approach and enactment, positively affected how teachers viewed the direction and implementation of reforms.

However, whilst it is important to reflect this positive stance towards accountability regimes, my trawl of the literature found reports tended to be more commonly negatively representative of teachers' response to performance measures. To support understanding of the source of teachers' accountability experiences, it is helpful to acknowledge the pressurised, high-stakes environment where Head-teachers play a pivotal role in driving their school's success (Crow, 2007). Ultimately, the Head-teacher is 'accountable and responsible for the school's survival and wellbeing' (Maguire & Braun, 2019, p. 104). Head-teachers hold the responsibility for ensuring the school is compliant with the Government's mandated policies (Maguire & Braun, 2019). Recent research by Keddie (2017) reports how Head-teachers and teachers are subjected to unprecedented levels of measurement, judgment and comparisons that ultimately leads to them shaping practice to achieve success - if they are to survive in an existence of calculation. With the neoliberal influence on policies aimed at driving school performance, school leadership has had to reform - moving from 'educative leadership to 'instructional leadership' with approaches to teaching and learning targeted at improving results (Hammersley-Fletcher & Webb, 2006 p.162). Adding to this is the pressure to succeed during Ofsted inspections, which places school performance in competition with others (Stevenson & Wood, 2014). The impact of Head-teachers' concerns of Ofsted judgements can lead to increased surveillance and monitoring of their teachers' practice to facilitate a level of control of school performance (Keddie, 2017). Page (2017) offers insight into the performative expectations Headteachers' face in their school leadership:

> Schools must be inspection-ready, perpetually embodying the characteristics of good-or-outstanding laid down in the external inspection framework. Teachers must be exemplifications of the Teachers Standards, exceeding the minimum requirements at all times. Schools must be endlessly drilling students for exams, testing continuously so that future results can be known (Page, 2017 p.11).

With Government pressure on Head-teachers to organise schools so they are highly successful in terms of academic attainment, inevitably, these pressures transfer to school leaders' expectations of success from teachers' classroom practice – enforced by both external and internal accountability mechanisms to drive improvements and raise standards (Page, 2017). Certainly, a common feature in the literature about performative education and modern accountability regimes is the issue of the Ofsted inspections and the tensions this particular Government strategy for raising standards creates amongst the teaching workforce.

As previously mentioned, political ambitions to increase national academic performance resulted in the state's performative strategy of monitoring schools' compliance through Ofsted inspections and judging schools against graded criteria as prescribed in their handbook (Ofsted, 2019). Indeed, the handbook emphasises that Ofsted exists to be a force for improvement of education provision in schools and the whole aim is to improve academic standards across the nation (Ofsted, 2019). The impact of this strategy is such that a school's culture of accountability and performativity can lead to generating normalised behaviour where teachers learn to police themselves to ensure their practice is prepared for any short notice Ofsted inspection (Perryman et al., 2017).

However, the literature portrays a more negative picture of educators' response towards the state's Ofsted strategy with reports of teachers viewing inspections as an additional source of stress due to the additional administrative workload and excessive focus

on academic outcomes (Adams, 2019). For example, the YouGov (2017) survey found that teachers were more likely to agree that Ofsted inspections were burdensome, too focused on data and variances with the subjectivity of the inspection team (yougov, 2017). Once again, this tension illustrates how policy fracture occurs and educational improvement restricted if the views of the state and its workforce do not align.

A current example of this tension is the new 2019 Ofsted inspection framework designed to improve education and raise standards, yet its success is dependent upon a positive reaction from the teaching workforce (Coffield, 2019; Ofsted, 2019). Whilst the ideology of the framework may be welcomed because inspections will assess the quality of school education rather than exam outcomes, Coffield (2019) points out that 'it is teachers who make new initiatives work, not inspectors'. Hence, the new Ofsted inspection framework (2019) seeks to address some of the aspects of performativity by putting 'the interests of children and young people first, by making sure that inspection values and rewards those who educate effectively' (Ofsted, 2019). Amanda Spielman HM Chief Inspector (2019) proposes a cultural shift where inspections are aimed at assessing pupils' academic performance in the broader context of the quality of education provision (Ofsted, 2019).

Certainly, the framework has been designed in response to teachers' negative feedback and aims to appeal to them because it will 'de-intensify the inspection focus on performance data and place more emphasis on the substance of education and what matters most to learners and practitioners' (Ofsted, 2019). Yet, Damian Hinds the former Education Secretary, reveals the underlying broader political objective that reflects the state's ambitions to improve academic performance:

> Ofsted's role in the education system is of vital importance - and the introduction of this new framework is a major step in supporting our shared drive to raise standards across the school system so that every child can have access to a world class education (Damian Hinds, 2019 in Fitzpatrick, 2019).

However, whilst the new Ofsted inspection framework might be hailed as a remedy to performative teaching and any unwanted pedagogical practises of teaching to the test, some members of the teaching community debate if the framework has been rushed and Ofsted will not have the capacity to judge schools effectively (Steer, 2019). With reference to the ongoing challenges of school funding and the detrimental levels of teacher workload, concerns are expressed whether schools are actually in a position to respond to new framework improvements of a broad, inclusive and coherent curriculum (Steer, 2019). For example, Nick Brook the NAHT's Deputy General Secretary, suggests that in its current form the proposal from Ofsted may cause widespread concern amongst school leaders (Adams, 2019). Indeed, Coffield (2019) warns that the proposed new changes may be ignored if teachers feel demoralised as a result of Ofsted's judgemental grading practice, rather than their promotion of a developmental approach to school improvement.

Here, the workforce tensions associated with the state's accountability strategy with Ofsted to control, monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning demonstrates the risk of successful implementation of the new Ofsted framework (Ofsted, 2019). On the one hand, the state's position is that it aims to respect providers for their expertise and not just view them as data managers by ensuring inspections offer conversations on education provision, rather than data (Ofsted, 2019). Yet, the Conservative government elected in 2019 are keen for a bigger role for Ofsted to help raise education standards and propose no notice inspections (Coughlan, 2019). The possibility of no preparation time for important Ofsted judgment grades has furthered the discussion about this creating disruption and stress for

teachers and leaders, which illustrates the ongoing tension of this state strategy to raise standards (Coughlan, 2019).

Overall, the combined effect of various external and internal accountability strategies are aimed at driving improvements to the nation's academic output and ensuring this is achieved through high quality teaching and learning experiences in England's schools (Keddie, 2017). However, with high levels of accountability measures on modern teaching practice, the literature on this phenomenon highlights various tensions between the state and its teaching workforce that significantly impact on the teaching role. Therefore, to illustrate this the following topics of debate about educational ethos, autonomy, workload and teachers' professionalism are chosen for review here to provide insight from literature about the nature of teaching in an age of performativity.

2.4.2 Teaching in a performative culture

2.4.2.1 Ethos of education

In the literature about modern performative teaching practice, there seems to be disparity between the ethos for education and the experience of education. For example, the former Schools Minister, Nick Gibb, (2015) promoted the state's values for education that students develop a love of knowledge and culture, but he clarified that the schooling process must prepare them with moral character and resilience to help students succeed to secure good jobs (Gibb, 2015). Furthermore, he advised that the system of education reforms have been formed on the value of education being crucial to the economy, the foundation of the nation's culture and essential in providing opportunities to prepare students for adult life. Furthermore, the current education Secretary, Gavin Williamson (Conservatives, 2020),

shares ambitious Conservative plans to 'overtake Germany in delivering the best technical education' and an education policy aimed at preparing all young people 'for well paid, highly skilled jobs, and make Britain more economically productive than ever'.

However, the challenge of adapting teaching practice to implement improvements from both internal and external reforms, combined with significant accountability measures, causes many teachers to evaluate this against their own values for education and consider whether to continue in this profession – even after just a short time in practice (NFER, 2016). It seems that, whilst teachers also desire academic success for their students, there are reports that the implementation of performative regimes are negatively affecting many teachers' job satisfaction (NFER, 2016). This is because, for some teachers, their job satisfaction is inhibited by the imposition of various performative measures where teachers are 'continually accountable and constantly recorded' (Ball, 2003, p.220). Ball (2003) offers insight here with examples of the questions teachers might be reflecting on regarding their experiences of performative measures against their own ethos for a career in education: 'Are we doing this because it is important, because we believe in it, because it is worthwhile? Or is it being done ultimately because it will be measured or compared?' (Ball, 2003, p.220).

To illustrate the potential different views on the ethos and approach to education, the research by Webb, Vulliamy, Hämäläinen, Sarja, Kimonen and Nevalainen's (2004) identified that at the very heart of teachers' professionalism was their goal to inspire and develop children's learning, whilst boosting pupils' self-image and confidence. Hence, it is argued that, perhaps, the real source of teachers' tension is that the state's ambitions and pressure for pupils' academic success can limit the scope for teachers' efforts in developing caring, competent people – which may represent the fundamental principles of their own personal

ethos for education (Noddings, 1995). Ball (2003) highlights this tension in the following quote that summarises a negative view of performativity where accountability regimes demand teaching practice prioritises academic attainment, rather than a holistic, nurturing approach to educating pupils.

> Performance has no room for caring … while we may not be expected to care about each other we are expected to 'care' about performances and the performances of the team and the organisation and to make our contribution to the construction of convincing institutional spectacles and 'outputs' (Ball, 2003, p. 224).

Furthermore, Day (1999) suggests that some teachers can even experience a sense of guilt when state reforms challenge their moral orientation for education, especially if they feel unable to achieve the expectations imposed on their practice. Therefore, attention now turns to further examine this tension between the levels of teacher compliance expected and the opportunities for autonomy in their practice.

2.4.2.2. Teacher compliance and autonomy in a performative culture

Despite identification of various tensions between the state and teachers being topics of debate in various media sources, Wedell (2009) argues that teachers probably have no other option than to comply and conform to meet the expectations of accountability systems of performance management. Certainly, the state's strategy of controlling teaching practice by imposing the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011) could be perceived as providing little room for resistance when this measurement tool supports evaluation of teachers' compliance with these professional expectations (Meierdirk, 2016). Indeed, what seems to be missing in the literature is a strong evidence base of teachers' efforts to resist the imposition of reforms and

accountability measures that challenge their professional bias towards the philosophy and provision of primary education in England. An explanation for this situation is due to the level of teacher compliance imposed by regulations in the current education systems in England (Bushnell, 2003). Hence, teachers do not attempt to disrupt the system and focus efforts on developing their practice within the prescribed limitations (Bushnell, 2003).

One side of the debate on this is that any efforts by teachers towards resistance are likely to be challenged and defended by those empowered to ensure the delivery of what they perceive to be important Perryman, et al. (2017). Certainly, views are expressed that if compliance is achieved through a culture of fear of reprisals from resistance, teachers may be less likely to commence action to challenge improvements (Ball, 2003; Stevenson & Wood, 2014). Hence, the following statement provides insight of a more negative view of the impact of the performative culture on teachers when subjected to the impact of neo-liberal education policies:

> They have been successfully reduced through marketisation, metricisation and managerialism to compliant operatives where their remaining professionalism is nothing but a manufactured and managerialist discursive co-option (Hall & McGinity, 2015, p.12).

Indeed, in this respect Hall and McGinity (2015) purport that the level of teachers' compliance is now so high that any attempts of resistance would not be considered as a cause for concern.

However, to balance concerns about compliance, as previously mentioned, research is identifying teachers who embrace performative measures and welcome the external and internal direction for successful practice (Wilkins, 2011). Indeed, Frenzel, Pekrun, Goetz,

Daniels, Durksen, Becker-Kurz and Klassen (2016) draw on their findings to explain the correlation between teacher enjoyment and perceived desirable teaching behaviours that include clarity of information and instruction, variety in learning experiences, developing a culture of accepting errors and teachers' care and support for pupils when they are unsuccessful. Additionally, research by Hall and McGinity (2015) found some teachers experienced high levels of autonomy regarding their involvement and contributions to localised school policies that affected their practice. The finding was that increased teacher involvement in policy approach and enactment, positively affected how teachers viewed the direction and implementation of reforms. The higher levels of autonomy experienced by these teachers was a result of the specific approach of their school leaders to 'co-opt teachers in ways that helped enable their acceptance of 'new realities'' (Hall & McGinity, 2015, p.12).

Yet, whether teachers are personally embracing the expected levels of compliance with accountability measures or not, a common feature in the literature about modern teaching is that the performative demands have resulted in an increased workload for teachers that can negatively affect their success with their role.

2.4.2.3 Teacher workload in a performative culture.

Workload is another example of dissonance between the state and educators, which is highlighted as a key driver for teachers considering leaving the profession within the first few years (HCEC, 2017). The introduction of the House of Commons report cautions the Government and Ofsted to do more in encouraging good practice in schools, while recognising that reforms and accountability measures play an important role in increasing teacher workload (HCEC, 2017). In the current performative culture, the House of Commons

Education Committee (HCEC) research identified that increased teacher workload was generated from externally imposed expectations of provision of evidence of both their pupils and their own professional performance (HCEC, 2017). Whether this involves extra data production to evidence pupils' progress, or additional records representing the planning and delivery of lessons, teachers are responding negatively towards the increased workload that accountability requires (HCEC, 2017).

This adds to the tension between state and educators, with 76% of teachers surveyed in 2015 reporting high workload as the main reason they were considering leaving the profession (HCEC, 2017). Yet against this outcome, it is important to acknowledge other statistics that indicate the level of optimism when teachers start the role that for many, does not seem to be sustained. For example, the Association of Teachers and Learners in 2015 identified 75% of teachers joined with aspirations of engaging with pupils and making a positive difference in their lives and 80% followed this professional avenue because they enjoy working with children (Marsh, 2015).

Yet, a large-scale study by Perryman and Calvert (2019) demonstrates the change in teachers' view of the role. Their online survey of 1200 trainee teachers in 2011 identified an outcome of retention concerns - with just 48% reporting they were still committed to staying in teaching four years later. The reasons for teachers' considerations to leave the profession reflected the accountability agenda and performative context affecting the nature of their work, which resulted in expressions of fear and pressure to meet performance demands. Certainly, Perryman and Calvert's (2019) research identified that not only were teachers dispirited by the high level of workload expected from the role, but also the stresses from teachers' professional responsibility for outcomes prompts so many to reconsider continuing their career. The

important point to highlight here is that with so many teachers feeling negative towards increased workload of performance demands, this risks the outcome of a de-motivated workforce, which, yet again, affects the success of policy enactment (Wilkins, 2011; Davies & Hughes 2009).

To demonstrate how this topic continues to be an unresolved issue causing tension and debate between practitioners and the state, the Department for Education (DfE) survey of Teacher workload reported a key finding that teachers and middle leaders work fewer hours in 2019 than recorded in their previous survey in 2016 (DfE, 2019). The survey report attributes success of reducing workload to the DfE's strategy of their Workload Reduction Toolkit published in July 2018 (DfE, 2019). However, there is recognition that more needs to be done to address the fact that teachers still report workload to be a fairly, or very, serious problem (DfE, 2019). Despite this reported reduction, amongst the teaching profession there seems little to celebrate with criticism levied against the state that successive education secretaries have failed to resolve the issue of teacher workload. For example, Geoff Barton, General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders said, 'Excessive teacher workload is a persistent problem because governments constantly raise the bar on what they expect schools to do' (Busby, 2019). Certainly, it seems teachers are responding negatively to workload expectations, where burdensome bureaucratic systems create demand for numerous replications of data, as well as excessive levels of detail to evidence their teaching practice (Green, 2018).

In recognition of this workload tension affecting teacher wellbeing, the Government responded with a new initiative of an online School Workload Reduction Toolkit (DfE, 2019) which is a package of resources to support leaders and teachers to evaluate workload and

identify improvements. This is an example of where the state initiative is designed and resourced as a strategy to improve the workload experience for teachers, but whether the impact of this is effective may depend on the engagement by school leaders to provide this for their staff.

Despite the various tensions of teaching in the modern performative culture, the state is dependent on teachers to provide education at standards that will support the nations' prosperity. Indeed, Sellars (2012, p.465) suggests that the 'most powerful, durable and effective agents of educational change are not the policy makers, the curriculum developers or even the education authorities themselves; they are the teachers'. Hence, teachers have a key role to play in drawing on their professional knowledge and skills if are to overcome problems and achieve success in order to fulfil their responsibilities. With this in mind, focus now moves to review the literature on teachers' professionalism, before exploring how they can draw on the specific problem-solving skill of reflection as a key strategy for successful teaching in a performative era.

2.4.2.4 Teachers' professionalism in a performative culture

When considering the issue of teachers' professionalism in England a starting point is the state's strategy of controlling teaching practice by imposing specific criteria to direct and monitor the quality of teaching through the documentation of the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011). These standards are designed to emphasise the professional expectations of teachers' performance, achievement and output (Goepel, 2012). Compliance with the Teachers Standards is 'regarded by governments as a mark of their professionalism' (Leaton Gray & Whitty, 2010, p.8). In a performative era, with teaching designated as a profession, it means teachers have similar

responsibilities as other professionals, such as, increased responsibility, accountability and liability (Sellars, 2012). Yet, in the education system in England, Evans (2011, p.851) expresses concerns that it is a lop-sided shape of professionalism, because the DfE (2011) Teachers' Standards indicate a 'professionalism that focuses predominantly on teachers' behaviour rather than on their attitudes and their intellectuality'.

Certainly, within the literature about the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011), there are many reports that tensions arise from the state's involvement in shaping teaching professionalism and, furthermore, the relationship between the state and teachers is strained by dispute over whether the status of teaching actually warrants the term 'professional' (Hargreaves, 2000). For example, Newland (2012) reports that when Michael Gove was Secretary of State for Education, he challenged the concept of teaching and referred to it as a 'craft', thus, fuelling the debate over teachers' professionalism. Ideally, a statement of the definition of professionalism here would provide a clear foundation of understanding for this study. However, although the words profession/professional/professionalism/professionality often feature in the literature on teaching, it seems to me that readers have to adopt a general assumption of what these terms actually mean. From my research, occasionally authors attempt to offer a definition, for example, Kelchtermans (2009) suggests that a particular profession may reflect specific knowledge, attitudes and skills as key components of professional expertise. While Goodson & Hargreaves (1996) offer a traditional model of professionalism which incorporates elements of autonomy, self-regulation and characterised by a shared ethos and commitment to ongoing development of knowledge and skills to improve practice. However, my review of literature on this topic leaves me to conclude with Wilkins (2011) that, increasingly, teacher professionalism is not defined, but rather understood

as socially constructed and subjected to regular revision. To add to this Evans (2011, p.864) provides clarity on the significant state involvement in teaching as 'professional development at the macro level' - being 'demanded professionalism' and may entail accountability for achieving targets and standards imposed by the Government, and each school's management team.

Yet, when teachers were asked what it means to be professional, responses were two-fold - being professional and being a professional. Being professional reflects the quality of what they do and their conduct guided by professional standards. Being a professional relates to their perception of how they are seen by others in terms of their status and levels of professional reward (Hargreaves, 2000). It is important to acknowledge these viewpoints when considering the challenges of the state's expectations that teachers demonstrate successful delivery of the professional Teachers' standards (DfE, 2011) against the perceptions of teachers and their identity as a professional. Indeed, Troman (2008) recognises the increasing complexity of teacher identity with their responsibility in the national commitment to raise standards – an expectation that may not have featured so prominently in the past. In addition, the managerial aspects of their role in supporting the institution's development and the consequence of accountability to parents and the community affect teachers' identity (Troman, 2008). Furthermore, when considering teacher identity it is important to highlight the views that 'teaching is not only a cognitive act, nor the enactment of competences, but involves the whole person' (Spencer et al., 2018 p. 36). The implication here is that underpinning identity are the values, beliefs, ethical purpose and personal mission that operate as the 'core' of a teacher (Spencer et al., 2018). Troman (2008. p.629) advocates that the multi-complexity of teachers' identities continually develop in response to new and uncertain roles as they 'adapt their substantial selves to incorporate each new situational identity they encounter'.

The issue to emphasise here about teacher identity is the recognition of individuality of teacher's identity and understanding that the outworking of their professionalism will reflect their unique personal position. Indeed, Sellars (2012, p. 466) claims each teacher has 'personally constructed understandings of what it is to be professional, to be a teacher and to be reflective'. To illustrate differing views regarding teacher professionalism, the study by Spencer et al. (2018) identified some teachers who had a strong vocational commitment to caring for students, experienced an identity crisis and vulnerability when they failed to manage the personal values with professional responsibilities. Yet, in contrast, Wilkins' (2011) reports of identifying a different professional identity amongst recently qualified teachers who appear to be more comfortable with the priorities and competing demands of teaching. The point to make here for the purposes of this study is to highlight that, when facing challenging performative demands, each teacher's professionalism will be impacted their own identity as a teacher, their personal values and their individual competencies of knowledge and skills that they bring to the role (Spencer et al., 2018). Therefore, their needs for professional development will also vary according to the different factors that shape their teaching experiences.

In this respect, there is a wealth of literature on the issues of varying approaches for professional development for teachers, but the points to draw out for this study is the development of a mixed provision that incorporates both formal and informal professional development experiences in England (Spencer et al. 2018). Kennedy's (2005) work surveying international literature about this informs of a range of specific models commonly experienced for teachers' professional development. This spectrum extends from external training delivered by experts off-site, through to internal dissemination of knowledge colleagues have received externally, through to internal support with coaching/mentoring or individual's action research. Alongside this, school

cultures are critical to teachers' success with professional development – with some professional cultures promoting and encouraging collaboration and experimentation backed up by support from leaders, whereas other teachers may not experience the same time and effort to develop professional knowledge and skills (Kardos, Moore Johnson, Peske, Kauffman & Liu (2001).

Therefore, when faced with problems of performative practice, teachers will have an individual response that draws on their multi-faceted professionalism to support identification of solutions. This may involve a variety of strategies, but this study chooses to focus specifically on the problem-solving skill of reflection advocated as an effective approach for the professional teaching role. Indeed, Cornish & Jenkins (2012) advocate the value of reflection with the suggestion that when teachers engage in thorough reflection they can use this powerful tool strategy to shape their own professional growth and self-improvement. This discussion now moves to explore the role of teacher reflection in a performative culture.

2.5 The role of reflection for teaching in a performative culture

So far, this chapter has focused on providing insight of key issues pertinent in a performative education culture to understand how teaching practice in England is currently experienced. The review of literature about modern teaching identified various tensions between the state and its teaching workforce that affect its approach to day-to-day classroom practice. Given the political and economic context driving improvements to advance pupils' academic performance, the course of education reforms has not always run smoothly and posed problems for many teachers as they adapt their practice to succeed with new requirements (Ball, 2003). Inevitably, when seeking to implement the various policies and initiatives, teachers draw on their professional toolkit of skills to figure out the specific changes appropriate to their

class if they are to meet performance expectations (Beere & Broughton, 2013). During any period of change, the transformation and reformation processes can be problematic and, for teachers, this is particularly the case when each class is different due to the uniqueness of individuals within the class (Atkinson, 2012). Whilst some standardised procedures may be more straightforward to implement, some aspects of reforms need thoughtful consideration to identify the bespoke factors on which to focus (Pollard, Anderson, Swaffield, Swann, Warin & Warwick, 2011). Hence, the core issue driving my interest for this research project is the concept that a teacher's ability for critical, analytical self-reflection is a crucial strategy in helping them approach the challenges of implementing reforms and meeting performative demands pertinent to the current culture in education (Sezer, 2008). The following statement conceptualises the main issue that this study seeks to investigate further:

> When teachers become reflective practitioners, they move beyond a knowledge base of discrete skills to a stage where they integrate and modify skills to fit specific contexts, and eventually, to a point where the skills are internalised enabling them to invent new strategies. They develop the necessary sense of self-efficacy to create personal solutions to problems (Larrivee, 2000 p.294).

Therefore, focus now turns to examine the strategy of reflection to explore how it can be effective in supporting teachers with the challenges and demands of teaching in an age of performativity. To structure this review on teachers' reflective practice, the following section commences with an overview of key reflection theory, as well as identifying and defining three common types of reflection. Following this, focus turns to explore the practicalities of reflective teaching in the context of this era of performativity. The final section explains my personal interest in the reflective teaching experiences of ECTs and so this chapter then moves to review the literature providing knowledge on how these relatively new teachers are drawing on reflection for career development and problem-solving. This leads to the identification of gaps in reported research where this particular study has the potential to

contribute new insight – not only benefitting personal understanding for my leadership role, but also offering knowledge and insight for any other senior leaders seeking to support ECTs' reflective practice in a performative era.

2.5.1 Reflection theory

Reflection is not a recent phenomenon, with its roots drawn from the contemplative thought processes aimed at intelligent problem solving practiced by ancient Greek philosophers, such as Plato, Aristotle and Socrates (Tannebaum, Hall & Deaton, 2013). Since ancient times, variations of contemporary reflection definitions resemble the pragmatic vision of reflection of John Dewey over seventy years ago (Tannebaum et al., 2013). Dewey (1933) described systematic reflection as an intentional thought process involving serious and consecutive review, whereby theories are generated and tested. It is important to highlight that Dewey believed the reflective thinking process for complex issues is not rapid; therefore, action is suspended until the state of perplexity is eventually replaced with knowledge (Rodgers, 2002). Hébert (2015) explains that Dewey's reflection involves the inquirer stepping back from the action to engage in critical thought processes and not returning until solutions are found. The interesting feature of this form of knowledge construction is that it challenges the reflective practitioner to 'live with a suspended state of not knowing' (Attard, 2008 p.314). Donald Schön describes this as 'reflection-on-action' to represent the systematic thinking processes that occur after an event in the inquirer's quest for new learning (Schön, 1983).

However, the paradigm shift Schön (1983) offers is that, sometimes, it is appropriate to engage in reflective thought processes whilst in the middle of a situation, where efforts to

re-route action may lead to preferable outcomes (Kinsella, 2007). Schön (1983) termed this 'reflection-in-action' to represent the rapid evaluative nature of thinking needed to provide immediate solutions to problems. Schön (1983, p.49) believed that a key aspect of reflection is that 'our knowing is in our action'. Certainly, a common theme in the literature about reflection is the principle that engaging in reflection is valued for drawing on the capacity for critical thinking and using powers of analysis to further knowledge and understanding (Thompson & Thompson, 2008). Here, reflective practice is considered to be informed practice - due to the thinking analysis involved that provides opportunity to move beyond any existing routines or habitualised actions that could be improved (Argyris & Schön, 1974). So, with this in mind focus moves to explore why reflection is promoted as a valuable problem-solving and knowledge-building tool that is relevant to developing teachers' professional practice.

2.5.2 Reflective teaching

Throughout the literature on teacher reflection there was a common theme advocating that it is a powerful tool for professional growth and self-improvement (Cornish & Jenkins, 2012; Ross & Moghtader, 2007). Indeed, Koshy (2005) highlights how reflection is perceived as an important strategy for modern teaching practice.

> I believe that ultimately the quality of educational experiences provided to children will depend on the ability of the teacher to stand back, question and reflect on his or her practice, and continually strive to make the necessary changes (Koshy, 2005 p.1).

This is because when teachers engage in systematic questioning of issues involved in adapting practice, they may gain insight of any factors potentially hindering success, as well

as identify how to solve problems too (Farrell & Mom, 2015). However, in order for reflection to be effective in any way, it is entirely dependent upon the inquirer's honesty in the thinking processes. Otherwise, focus may remain on issues that are more obvious, with more deeply hidden issues being overlooked (Lipp, 2005). Hence, Schön (1983) advocated the value of teachers being skilled at both reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action to facilitate generating new theories and greater understanding when seeking to improve their practice. However, Thompson and Pascal (2012) recommend that for teachers there is a further dimension of reflection, which they refer to as reflection-for-action to represent the forward thinking processes to plan for what is to come and drawing on existing professional knowledge to organise time and resources effectively.

Certainly, there seems general agreement in literature on reflective teaching that the processes of reflective thinking enable teachers to draw on previous knowledge and then use the experience to construct new knowledge for their professional development (McAlpine & Weston, 2000). Finlay (2008) suggests that acting on reflection of performance is a professional imperative - which may explain why the official Teacher Standards (2011) now includes this element of practice in Teacher Standard 4: 'reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching' (DfE, 2011 p.11). Given the context of high stakes and high demands of teaching in a performative culture, the strategy of reflection is considered valuable for teachers implementing education reforms, especially when changes bring experiences of stressful uncertainty. Through the process of reflective thinking, teachers can develop the knowledge and understanding needed to solve problems, guide future action and make informed decisions (Fullan, 2007; Murphy & Ermeling, 2016).

From this brief summary of the theory and recommendation for reflective teaching, focus now moves to explore this phenomenon in more detail by reviewing literature about categories for three different types of reflective thinking. From this, a theoretical framework is constructed from three types of reflection to offer a lens from which to analyse data from this study to answer the research questions.

2.5.3 Types of reflection – Theoretical framework

Within the literature on reflection, there are often references to various stages of reflection or incremental levels to the processes of reflective thinking (Larrivee, 2000). Larrivee (2000) conducted an extensive review of reflective literature and found that, whilst there are indications that reflection is viewed as an incremental process, there is no common agreement on accepted terminology or definition of hierarchical reflective thinking. A few examples to illustrate this include Schön's (1983) different categories of reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action, whilst Kolb offers an experiential learning reflection model where experience is reviewed, evaluated and analysed over three stages (Vince, 1998; Schön, 1983). Alternatively, Gibbs' (1988) famous reflective cycle is a framework covering 6 stages of thinking to examine experiences.

However, from the literature review, the three categories of Habermas (1972) seemed most pertinent to the analysis of this particular study. For Habermas, the concept of reflection is a questioning of experience that brings into play a freedom from unchallenged assumptions and opportunity to generate a new perception (O'Hanlon, 1994). Furthermore, based on the assumption that knowledge is constructed by issues of human interest, Habermas (1972)

purports the obvious interests relate to social existence. For example, work – technical interests, interaction – practical interests and power – emancipatory interests (Taylor, 2004). Hence, these three categories of reflection are now explored to construct a theoretical framework for this research. As a theoretical framework, I believe these categories of reflection offer an appropriate structure for the whole of this study – from establishing the meaning of the phenomenon of reflection used herein, to framing the data analysis in order to report on the findings and respond to the research questions.

2.5.3.1. Technical reflection

Technical reflection develops from scientific methods incorporating rational and deductive thinking (Lipp, 2005). Using scientific reasoning to establish facts surrounding a situation, this offers the opportunity to learn from evidence-based practice (Lipp, 2005). When relating this to the experiences of modern classroom practice, teachers' technical reflections may involve thinking on issues of practice at a surface level - such as the methods and strategies to achieve predetermined goals (Larrivee, 2000). Hence, teachers' technical reflection generally focuses on isolated decisions and teaching skills, with reflection examining experiences as isolated events (Murphy & Ermeling, 2016). When faced with new reforms and initiatives, adopting an objective critical thinking approach to technical reflections can result in teachers adapting their practice based on a considered, justified position (Kemmis, 1985).

Kemmis (1985) offers the example that technical reflection would be appropriate for teachers' objective evaluation of policy implementation or updating procedures. Given the context of a performative education culture, this seems a pertinent form of reflection to

support teachers as they adapt practice in response to externally imposed initiatives (Larrivee, 2000).

However, it is important to highlight that this technical form of reflection for empirical knowledge, does not take into account any sense of social cultural influences affecting the problem under review (Taylor, 2004). Therefore, it is important to incorporate the category of practical reflection into this study's theoretical framework.

2.5.3.2 Practical reflection

Regarding practical reflection, Habermas (1972) recognised the basic human principle that knowledge is pursued on the basis of self-interest and the form of our thinking as social constructions links our interest to our experience (O'Hanlon, 1994). In this category, reflective thinking is formed by our interpretations about social life and interpersonal understanding is the dominant conduit of knowledge (O'Hanlon, 1994; Lipp 2005). The concept of practical reflection is that knowledge is developed through the explanation, description and subjective interpretation of the dynamics of human interaction in social existence (Taylor, 2004). For teachers, practical reflection may involve focusing on pedagogical theory to examine the congruence between current practice and theoretical beliefs (Murphy & Ermeling, 2016). Certainly, the perceived advantage of this form of reflection is that the systematic questioning processes can lead to deep reflection on the role of relationships and the identification of any dysfunctional communication patterns that need improving (Kemmis, 1985). Hence, this can lead to the potential of improvements in

communications with colleagues, which could result in an increase in both job satisfaction and outcomes (Kemmis, 1985).

However, there is the potential that critical practical reflection on social interactions might also lead to authentic insight on any experiences of coercion, manipulation or deception that operate to inhibit freedom (O'Hanlon, 1994). If a consequence of practical reflection is further thinking for emancipatory action, then it seems pertinent to incorporate Habermas' (1972) third category of emancipatory reflection into this study's theoretical framework.

2.5.3.3 Emancipatory reflection

In the literature, the third category of Habermas' (1972) emancipatory reflection is often perceived as a higher order level of teacher reflection, where the focus moves beyond the confines of class practice and explores the ultimate purpose and ethos of education (Murphy & Ermeling, 2016). The value of emancipatory reflection is that the knowledge interest is intended to release people from assumptions, customs and taken-for-granted activities (O'Hanlon, 1994). For example, emancipatory reflection can direct thinking towards transformative action in order to liberate the inquirer from reviewing problems guided by established assumptions that limit practice (Taylor, 2000). Furthermore, this form of reflection facilitates the practitioner exploring situations where they might have felt undermined or disempowered and the aim of their reflections is to facilitate enlightenment for empowerment and eventually emancipation (Lipp, 2005).

In this study's context of performative education, emancipatory reflection offers valuable questioning processes where teachers identify the subtle, but powerful forces that may

be limiting their progress towards achieving the desired goals (Kemmis, 1985). Certainly, it is important that teachers' practice is not so automatic that they bypass thinking about their own beliefs and values. Indeed, the fear is that teaching becomes so ingrained that, without reflection, teachers may not even notice when aspects of their practice contradicts their values – hence the need for critical, emancipatory reflection (Thompson & Pascal, 2012). Morley offers a quote that summarises this concept underpinning understanding of emancipatory reflection as used within this study:

> Critical reflection is a powerful educational tool that can assist practitioners to connect with a sense of agency to achieve emancipatory aims by elucidating the ways in which the discourses we participate in and assumptions we hold may operate contrary to our intentions and interests (Morley, 2012, p.1515).

Although this theoretical framework distinguishes between these three types of reflection, it is important to emphasise that, given the complex nature of teaching and multidimensional nature of performative reforms, teachers may draw on any combination of these when seeking solutions for practice (Fullan, 2007; Kemmis, 1985).

2.5.4 Reflective teaching in a performative culture

Given the context of the performative culture with state's reliance on the quality of teachers' professional skills to successfully implement educational changes, it is argued that this is only 'as reliable and proficient as the teachers' individual capacities for reflective practice and the development of self-knowledge' (Sellars, 2012). Furthermore, with the ethical and moral commitment to prepare all students for society with high levels of academic achievement, teachers will need the motivation and cognitive skills to identify ethical dilemmas and examine their personal perspectives on the issues they face their professional obligations analytically and critically (Burgh, Field, & Freakley, 2005). While the various

expectations from government policies, national curriculum, standardised testing and the Teacher Standards all direct classroom practice, but these directives do not automatically empower teachers who will bring their own values, understandings and competencies to each professional situation to improve practice. Therefore, it is argued that the notion of teacher reflectivity, whilst not a new concept, is a crucial element of contemporary teaching practice (Sellars, 2012). This is because teachers will need to draw on their reflective evaluations to find new insight to inform their understanding for the specific detail to drive improvements to their practice (Boud, 2001).

Indeed, Farrell and Mom (2015) also advocate the considerable benefits of teachers' reflections, which can help to meet performative demands and achieve success in the current education culture. In support for the value of effective teacher reflection, Thompson and Pascal (2012) suggest that practitioners who claim they are too busy for reflection are short sighted and may miss opportunities to improve their practice. Hence the recommendation that 'the busier we are, the more reflective we need to be' (Pascal, 2012, p.320). This is because the pressures of performance mean that practitioners need to be clear about what they are doing, why they are doing it, with knowledge of what is needed to succeed (Thompson & Pascal, 2012). Furthermore, the literature provides endorsement for reflection on the imposed elements of performative teaching – otherwise it might not occur to teachers that their practice could be thought of or done differently (Christenson, 2001).

However, concerns are also expressed regarding the successful opportunities for teachers to engage in meaningful reflection given some of the potential constraints of teaching in a performative culture. For example, Khan's (2017) case study of trainee teachers

in the UK, identified that reflection may be inhibited if the teacher's institutional context does not encourage honesty and openness. This is an important point when discussions on reflections between colleagues may expose teachers to an element of risk-taking due to identifying flaws in practice that need improving. A supportive environment is essential if teachers are to expose themselves to periods of doubt and uncertainty whilst they suspend action to engage in reflective processes as Dewey (1933) recommends. Corcoran and Leahy (2003) warn that the sense of vulnerability teachers may experience can serve to discourage them from engaging in reflective thinking.

Ultimately, it is the cognitive processes of reflection that facilitate teachers the opportunity to discern a better way of teaching, but whether there is any scope to implement improvements given performative regimes, is an important issue of concern (Evans, 2011). When a performative culture leads to a top-down external approach to change through state direction of the delivery and assessment of teaching, it brings into question whether there is any role for reflection at all (Finlay, 2008). In fact, Finlay (2008) highlights the situation where the performance and accountability culture has led to teachers becoming increasingly de-professionalised, due to having to comply with both state and school imposed initiatives aimed at controlling teaching practice. Certainly, there are concerns that genuine, self reflection to evaluate practice may even be discouraged if performance targets are the goal and teaching needs to focus on results success (Wilkins, 2011; Khan, 2017). To provide an example, in the study by Thompson and Sanders (2009) they found staff meeting agendas were tightly framed by a focus on mandatory policy implementation, which meant that the promotion of teacher debate on issues of practice was limited.

Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge other concerns expressed that teacher reflection on performative issues can actually lead to teachers experiencing an overall negative impact on their wellbeing (Stevenson & Wood, 2014). For example, teachers' private reflections of accountability systems of measurement and surveillance can lead to a sense of overwhelming pressure of their personal professional performance, while also having to ensure their practice leads to students performing well on tests too (Ball, 2003). Indeed, the discourse of performativity even includes suggestions that go as far as warning that reflections on the pressures for their performance might lead to teachers being paralysed by fear. Hence, the impact of these negative emotions may manifest by overriding any impulse teachers might have towards emancipatory reflective action to challenge the accountability systems imposed (Ball, 2003). Furthermore, there are concerns that if teachers do feel overwhelmed by performative pressure, they may feel less inclined to engage in reflection to learn of ways to improve their practice (Stevenson & Woods, 2014). Given the performative context, the underlying concern is that teacher reflections may only focus on identifying ways to achieve performance success, which may jeopardise their considerations for emancipatory reflective action to challenge the imposed reforms (Goodson, 2001).

An example of this is when teachers adopt a technical approach to using reflective processes to collect data to evaluate their practice, but achieve this with the sole focus of simply identifying how to improve results further (Farrell & Mom, 2015). The issue is that opportunities for their professional development resulting from teacher reflection may be missed, if the aim of reflection is to find a quick fix to succeed with accountability measures of performance management (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). In line with this concept, Jones

(2002) purports that even the Government's professional Teacher Standards (DfE, 2011) direct reflection towards a technicist approach - where reflection is viewed as just a means to an end.

Whilst it may be ideal for teachers to be effective reflective practitioners, Finlay (2008) challenges that busy professionals may tend to find that their reflective processes receive mechanical, bland, unthinking approaches and this could explain why new problems are not resolved as effectively as they could be. Davis (2006) calls this unproductive reflection and Dewey (1933) provided examples of the types of thinking that do not represent reflection. These include impatiently acting with uncertainties, skimming over various possibilities, jumping at suggestions and quickly drawing conclusions before thorough contemplation (Galea, 2010). Dewey's reflection is so much more than superficial thinking resulting from pausing from time-to-time in situations without analysis or aim for developing new knowledge from a situation (Thompson & Pascal, 2012). The challenging context of performative education is that a barrier to systematic reflection is the heavy teacher workload and hectic demands of classroom culture (Eraut, 1994; Steer, 2019). Hobbs (2007) suggests that given the time-consuming nature of reflective processes - often teachers are more likely to rely on past practice for an easier route. Furthermore, Eraut (1994) proposes that teachers sometimes operate in a state of autopilot by engaging in a process of routinisation where they are not regularly evaluating issues of practice. One reason that explains this occurrence is that some teachers may need to incorporate repetitive routine practices just to cope with the multiple demands that require their attention (Eraut, 1994).

Whilst Eraut's points were made at a time of performative teaching over two decades ago, it seems this element of repeated routines is still relevant in modern teaching practice

(Ewens, 2014). Indeed, Ewens (2014) purports that it is essential that teachers realise that each routine task still needs their periodic systematic reflective review so that they can identify and implement improvements.

However, Larrivee (2000) acknowledges that the escalating performance pressures on teachers may leave them feeling powerless, but recommends the best antidote is to engage in the habit of systematic reflection about their practice to help them take control of their teaching lives. It is important to highlight here Larrivee's (2000) advice that, regardless of the length of their practice, teachers benefit from carefully constructed guidance to support their engagement in pedagogical critical reflection to improve practice. Hence, this is a key concept that dominates my professional interest in this particular research project - to further my understanding of the current nature of teachers' reflective practice so I can review how I might be able to offer effective support that will promote their engagement with this effective problem-solving strategy.

2.6 Early career teachers' reflective practice

Building on the foundation from this review of teachers' reflective practice, I am keen to further my knowledge by gaining specific insight into the reflective experiences of those relatively new to teaching. The reason for narrowing my research focus to this particular group of teachers is that, in my leadership role I have responsibility for several teachers who fall within this category of practice experience under five years. Having personally reflected on gaps in my own knowledge when thinking about how I can support ECTs' reflection with carefully constructed guidance, as recommended by Larrivee (2000), I felt I would benefit

from deep insight into nature of ECTs' reflective practice and the issues that are prioritised for reflection when teaching in a performative climate.

The problem for me is that the trawl of recent literature on reflective teaching tends to focus on issues of practice that are specific to trainee teachers, or generalised to all teachers - whatever the length of their teaching experience. Insight of teachers' early experiences of reflective practice does not seem to be accounted for within the literature currently available to me, despite an extensive exploration to discover this. However, what I did find was that the literature about the practice and experiences of ECTs generally focuses on two main areas: (i) the challenges and problems of ECTs' teaching in a performative culture and (ii) Government support strategies for ECTs' practice. To illustrate this, the following few examples demonstrate the literature about ECTs on the issues commonly experienced by teachers, followed by a brief review of Government action to support them.

Regarding the previously mentioned issue of teacher workload in section 2.4.3, Tension 3, the Government has taken note from feedback that workload is a key driver for teachers leaving the profession early, hence the creation of the document entitled 'Reducing workload: supporting teachers in the early stage of their career' (DfE, 2019). In this initiative, school leaders are challenged by numerous questions with the expectation that solutions are found to support ECTs if they find workload untenable. For example, 'school leaders, induction tutors, mentors, appropriate bodies and teachers themselves can use this advice to help remove the burdens that might be associated with the first five years of a teacher's career' (DfE, 2019 p. 3) Certainly, it seems that this statement reflects the state's optimism that this recurring problem of excessive workload can be resolved. However, in the

meantime, the workload tension feeds into ECTs' feedback about their job satisfaction and impacts on the disparity between their ambitions for the role and the reality of performative expectations on their teaching practice, as previously mentioned in section 2.4.4 -Tension 4. For example, the Association of Teachers and Leaders union survey (2015) reported that, out of 858 trainee and newly qualified teachers, 80% wanted to teach for enjoyment of working with young people. Furthermore, 75% said they wanted to make a difference (Marsh, 2015).

Unfortunately, the reality of heavy workload affects their job satisfaction, which results in a negative perception of their work life balance. Hence, the same survey revealed 79% of young recruits found the extent of their workload commitment to be unsatisfactory (Marsh, 2015). Therefore, it is not surprising that performative pressures and heavy workload affects their early optimism for job satisfaction and results in ECTs' consideration of whether to continue with their teaching career (Marsh, 2015). However, it is important to balance this with the point made by Stallions, Murrill and Earp (2012) that some enter teaching with a short-term commitment to the role anyway and are unwilling to stay if they do not achieve success with their students. Therefore, it would be helpful for me to learn more about this through an investigation offering a voice to ECTs to learn of the nature of their reflections on teaching in the performative culture.

Furthermore, regarding the accountability strategy of Ofsted inspections in section 2.4.2 Tension 2, the YouGov (2017) survey reports that those with up to five years of teaching practice are more likely to develop their views and attitudes towards Ofsted drawn from the views of colleagues and general reputation, rather than their own personal experience (yougov, 2017). However, when seeking to investigate this concept further to gain insight of ECTs'

specific experiences with Ofsted, I found it difficult to access any recent research that provides ECTs a voice to share their practice so that I can build my own understanding about this issue.

However, regarding the previously mentioned issues in 2.4.1 Tension 1- Accountability regimes and 2.4.5 Tension 5 – Compliance, the literature also provides the view that ECTs' response to accountability measures and performative expectations can lead to a policy dependency for guidance and direction - thus achieving high levels of their compliance (Maguire, Ball and Braun, 2010). It is also possible that ECTs rely heavily on senior colleagues for policy interpretations as they seek to cope with the reality of classroom practice (Maguire et al., 2010). Once again, I feel my professional understanding would benefit from gaining insight of the detailed experiences of ECTs – such as how colleagues offer support for all aspects of practice and, in particular, how their technical, practical and emancipatory problem-solving reflective thinking features in their teaching experiences.

Additionally, I believe it is important I find out more about the reflective experiences of those who are embracing the modern culture of teaching. Whilst section 2.4.6 Tension 6 provided an indication that there are teachers, including ECTs, who value elements of performative education, the current retention crisis in England portrays a different situation with an increasing proportion of teachers who are dissatisfied with conditions of their role, which causes them to leave within five years (HCEC, 2017). Once again, the literature available does not shed light on the specific nature of ECTs' reflective thinking processes to learn of the performative elements that either cause them to consider leaving the profession, or alternatively, how their reflections help them overcome any barriers so they remain positive about their role.

What is of particular interest to me is the fact that, early in 2017 when I commenced the literature review for this research project, the Government seemed to be at the information-gathering stage of investigating the issues that prompted a third of ECTs to leave the profession within the first five years (HCEC, 2017). Certainly, at that time, beyond the NQT induction period, there were no formally imposed state initiatives or directed strategies specifically to support and develop ECTs' reflective practice. The Teachers' Standard 4 (DfE, 2011, p. 11) includes the requirement that teachers 'reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching' and so I am interested to undertake an investigation that helps me learn more about the outworking of this as experienced by ECTs in schools beyond my own.

However, since I started this research, the teacher recruitment and retention crisis continues. Hence, the Government's recent response with the introduction of another reform for school leaders to incorporate, which is the statutory implementation of the Early Career Framework - designed to address the problems reported by ECTs (DfE, 2019).

2.6.1 Early career framework

In response to the retention crisis and need for urgency to redress the trend of ECTs leaving, the Government has organised a new initiative for additional support for ECTs, which is being rolled out in certain regions in England in 2020 and nationally in 2021 (DfE, 2019). The Early Career Framework (ECF) is proposed to respond to concerns that ECTs 'have not enjoyed the support they need to thrive, nor have they had adequate time to devote to their

professional development' (DfE, 2019, p.4). Therefore, the ECF is a statutory two year programme of structured training and support for ECTs (DfE, 2019). For ECTs, the support package includes a strategy of 5% non-teaching time in their second year of teaching and access to a range of high quality curriculum materials. Funding is also provided by the state for both mentors' training and time for supporting ECTs (DfE, 2019). With this being such a new initiative, there is yet to be literature available for this analysis to explore the effectiveness for ECTs and the capacity of schools to accommodate this new support package. However, in outline, the ECF provides a framework of professional standards that ECTs receive support for with the aim of enhancing their professional development and practice. Below are the headings for the standards as an indication of the content the training programme will cover (DfE, 2019):

> High Expectations. (Standard 1 – Set high expectations)
>
> How pupils learn. (Standard 2 – Promote good progress)
>
> Subject and Curriculum (Standard 3 – Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge)
>
> Classroom Practice (Standard 4 – Plan and teach well structured lessons)
>
> Adaptive Teaching (Standard 5 – Adapt teaching)
>
> Assessment (Standard 6 – Make accurate and productive use of assessment)
>
> Managing Behaviour (Standard 7 – Manage behaviour effectively)
>
> Professional Behaviours (Standard 8 – Fulfil wider professional responsibilities)
>
> (DfE, 2019, p.8-25)

Whilst as a school leader I personally welcome this Government intervention funding further training and support for the challenges of modern teaching, especially for those relatively inexperienced in the role, it is going to take two years to implement. Yet, in the meantime, from my understanding of the literature and reports of retention crisis for ECTs, as

well as my own experience of teachers leaving the profession early, I am keen to focus my research to learn of the reflective experiences of this vulnerable group. To enhance my professional knowledge I need to develop greater insight into the nature of ECTs' reflection and the issues prioritised in their reflective thinking, so that I can use this learning to identify ways to be more effective in my leadership support role.

2.7 Research questions

Therefore, based on the principle that teachers' personal deep reflection, whether technical, practical or emancipatory can facilitate problem-solving strategies pertinent to a performative culture, this is an area of research I am keen to pursue to give a voice to ECTs and learn of their particular reflective experiences (Kemmis, 1985; Meirerdirk, 2016). From this position, this study is designed to answer the following key research question, which is aimed at encapsulating my interests and need for new professional learning on this issue.

2.7.1 Key research question:

What is the nature of early career teachers' reflections in an age of performativity?

To unravel the complexity of this broad topic, two sub-questions facilitate the analysis of ECTs' data, so that the combined result is effective in sharing the insight gained about the nature of ECTs' current reflective practice.

2.7.1.1 Sub-question one:

What do early career teachers reflect on when reviewing their career and practice?

To gain understanding of the nature of ECTs' reflection, this sub-question aims to facilitate identification of the topics that invade and dominate ECTs' reflective thinking. Certainly, in my leadership role, I realise it is essential to avoid trying to guess what issues particularly concern these teachers and so this study gives ECTs a voice to share their reflective thinking about their performative teaching experiences. It is crucial that this research is organised in a manner that participants feel confident to disclose their inner reflective thinking without fear of reprisals and, therefore, the design of the study and ethical concerns are addressed in the following chapter.

2.7.1.2 Sub-question two:

What is shaping the nature of early career teachers' reflections?

The purpose of this sub-question is to draw together the themes from an analysis of what ECTs reflect on, in order to identify the significant influences that affect their reflective thinking. I believe it is important to move beyond the initial surface level of the topics ECTs reflect on to explore more deeply the influences that affect why certain issues dominate ECTs' reflective thinking. From this knowledge, I will be more in a position to understand the current nature of ECTs' reflective thinking processes, which will help me design how I might be able to support ECTs' engagement with reflection that may enhance their experiences of the teaching role.

2.8 Chapter summary

The purpose of this literature review was to establish the educational context for this research project about reflective teaching in an age of performativity. The early focus

provided an outline at the macro level about the impact of globalisation and the development of neoliberal approaches to transforming education in England to support the nation's academic and economic advancement. Whilst state involvement and intervention is designed to enhance academic performance, the examination of the literature revealed how policy fractures can occur if the objectives of the state and its workforce are not aligned. Illustration of this was provided by reviewing a few key issues of tension to further understanding of the experiences and nature of modern teaching practice in this performative era. Having highlighted various problems that teachers have to overcome to meet performance demands of both themselves and their pupils, focus turned to review the problem-solving strategy of reflection to identify how this can support teachers with performative practice. Three main types of reflection – technical, practical and emancipatory formed the theoretical framework as a lens to analyse the nature of modern reflective practice. However, with my personal interest in improving my understanding of ECTs' reflection given that so many are choosing to leave the profession early, attention turned to narrow the literature research to this specific group. With little insight offered in the available literature specific to ECTs' current reflective practice, it seems pertinent to conduct this research study and contribute to this gap in the existing field of knowledge about this particular phenomenon. Therefore, the following chapter explains the design of the study and how it was implemented to acquire new knowledge about the nature of ECTs' reflective practice in an age of performativity.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explain and justify the many decisions taken when approaching this study on teacher reflection. The chapter commences with the rationale for the philosophical orientation of this study with an analysis of how this directs the methodological approach and research design. To respond to the research questions of this study, specific methods to collect the data were chosen and the reasons offered here demonstrate the appropriateness of the decisions made. This chapter also includes an important section on the ethical considerations that were essential to the design and implementation of this study. The final section reflects the procedures used to analyse the data acquired from this study investigating the nature of ECTs' reflection in an age of performativity.

3.2 Research Questions

The previous chapter outlined my professional interest in learning more about teachers' reflection given the modern culture of performativity and especially for those in the early stages of their teaching career. Whilst, I regularly hear of the reflections of ECTs I work with, I felt my practice would be enhanced by learning about ECTs working in schools in different locations to my own. However, when seeking to review the literature about ECTs' reflective practises, I was unable to find the answers to the questions that became the drivers of this research project.

Therefore, the following research questions were carefully formulated to enable me to cast a broad net when seeking to gain insight into issues of ECTs' reflective practice. Hence,

the key question seeks to capture the aim of this study, whilst subsidiary questions support the main goal (Janesick, 2000).

Key research question:

What is the nature of early career teachers' reflection in an age of performativity?

- Sub-question 1) What do early career teachers reflect on when reviewing their career and practice?
- Sub-question 2) What is shaping the nature of early career teachers' reflection?

The wording of the first research sub-question is deliberately open, because the aim was to avoid drawing on any potential preconceptions I may have held and simply offer ECTs the opportunity to share insight of any issues that occurred to them when reflecting on their career and practice. The second sub-question sought to identify the issues that shape the nature of what ECTs' reflect on. Collectively, the responses from the two sub-questions answered the key line of inquiry of this investigation. The whole aim was to further my knowledge of the nature of ECTs' reflection in the performative culture - especially when I had been unable to answer these questions from the literature available. The value of drawing on this knowledge was to place me in a better position to reflect on my own professional practice and evaluate how to support the ECTs of whom I have responsibility for to further their engagement in reflective practice as part of their professional development.

From this steer of such a specific line of inquiry, focus now turns to the philosophical and practical elements of conducting this particular research project.

3.3 Ontology – constructivism

When engaging in social science research such as this, the ontological position of the researcher directly affects the nature and essence of the social phenomena under investigation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). It is important to identify the theoretical positioning of the researcher to acknowledge that the methods and outcomes are affected by the unspoken values underpinning the investigation (Usher, 1997). Inevitably, the ontological position is value-laden and shapes the whole purpose of this research through the lens of how understanding of the world is further developed (Cohen et al., 2011).

From the realist perspective, the social world consists of certain and unchangeable reality that can be quantified objectively (Rahman, 2017). Within this paradigm, there is little difference between the social sciences and natural sciences - where objects have an independent existence and meaning is not dependent on the knower (Cohen et al., 2011). Broadly speaking, the epistemology of realism is positivism where knowledge develops from gathering facts to provide the basis of laws and science must be conducted objectively and value-free (Bryman, 2004). In the context of this study, positivists may believe that it is possible to learn of the reality of teacher reflection through an objective approach and using measurement tools to ascertain facts (Bryman, 2004).

However, this research project falls under the influence of my own philosophical orientation, which aligns with the constructivists' view of the world (Kumar, 1996). Unlike positivism, constructivists view that there is no single reality or truth. Therefore, reality is

constructed and understood through interpretation of the social actors of the phenomena being investigated (Bryman, 2004). Through cognitive processes, each individual mentally constructs their experience of the world and can be referred to as antirealist or relativist position (Andrews, 2012). Whilst the relativist position resonates with my own worldview, I acknowledge the tension between the two positions – particularly when regarding the value of research. For example, the position of realism assumes findings from research report a true interpretation of knowable and independent reality and will ignore the ways researchers interpret their findings.

In contrast, relativism assumes that there are no definites from which to build knowledge - due to the existence of multiple realities of social phenomena (Andrews, 2012). Therefore, it is important to highlight at the outset that all the decisions taken to conduct this study are based on the assumptions of constructivist ontology and the research should be evaluated within this context.

3.4 Epistemology - interpretivism

When adopting the philosophical position that reality can be constructed, this leads to epistemological considerations of what is acceptable as knowledge within this paradigm (Cohen et al., 2011). The epistemology of constructivism is interpretivism where knowledge of reality is understood through value-laden interpretations of social phenomena (Cohen et al., 2011). An important issue separating the two paradigms that particularly influences my philosophical position, is that the emphasis of positivism is to explain human behaviour through methods of

logic and quantification, whereas interpretivism seeks to understand human behaviour through the interpretations of social action (Bryman, 2004). Given the context of this study and the deliberate wording of the research questions, the emphasis is to gain knowledge by understanding the interpreted reality of reflective practice in an age of performativity directly from teachers' perspectives.

In my view, the positivist position is less appropriate for this study, because of the approach that knowledge can be achieved through objective research where the researcher is detached from the phenomena investigated. Using deductive methods of hypothesis testing, human behaviour is explained in terms of cause and effect (May, 1997). Yet, interpretivist research provides for theories to emerge out of data of the lived, subjective experiences of social phenomena (Cohen et al., 2011). Because these theories are grounded in the data, they become sets of meanings to explain social reality (Cohen et al., 2011). This concept is further explored in the Data Analysis section.

On this basis, I believe it is appropriate that this study adopts constructivism orientation with an interpretivist approach to investigating teacher reflection. The significant benefit is that this research approach values that knowledge can be gained from the subjective interpretations of teacher voice in contemporary education. Therefore, this investigation contributes to existing understanding about reflective teaching in an age of performativity through the insight offered directly from the teachers' perspective.

3.5 Methodology – qualitative

Having ascertained that this study develops from assumptions of reality of constructivist ontology, this fed into the approach and design of the study– even to the formulation of the research questions (Bryman, 2004). Any research tradition or paradigm will have its own epistemology linked to the ontological worldview of reality and its own way of validating knowledge (Usher, 1997). As the research methodology is inextricably embedded in the commitments of the ontological position, all aspects of the investigation are guided by the particular ways of knowing located within the research paradigm (Usher, 1997). Therefore, this study draws on interpretive epistemology using qualitative methodology as the approach to research.

Whilst it would be ideal to offer a definition for qualitative methodology this is difficult since it does not have its own theory or complete set of methods and practices that define it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This is because it is associated with a vast array of approaches and methods (Rahman, 2017). When seeking to contrast it directly to quantitative methodology of positivism, the term 'qualitative research' reflects the types of research where the findings are not achieved by positivist means of quantification or statistical procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). An important advantage of qualitative methodology for this social research is that it accommodates the multiple realities of human existence. For example, multi-complex issues of behaviour, emotions, organizational functioning and culture are not reliant upon statistical evidence to further knowledge and understanding (Rahmen, 2017).

Flick's (2014) definition offered here demonstrates the main purpose of the qualitative methodological approach grounded in constructivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology:

> Qualitative research is interested in analysing subjective meaning or the social production of issues, events, or practices by collecting non-standardised data and analysing texts and images rather than number and statistics (Flick, 2014, p. 542).

To add to this description, Berg (2001) offers that the qualitative techniques enable the researcher to share in the understandings, interpretations and perceptions of others to explore how they give meaning to their daily lives. The overarching principle of qualitative methodology is that it seeks unquantifiable information and is useful when little is known about the particular issue of concern (Berg, 2001). In this respect, the open-ended nature of the research questions was designed to illuminate the issues featuring in teachers' reflective thinking. Hence, the objective of this study was to further knowledge by reporting on teachers' reflections and subjective interpretations about their practice in an age of performativity – accommodated within the broad paradigm of qualitative methodology. By using qualitative methodology, understanding of the reality of teacher reflection was potentially enhanced by data that incorporates and values what subjects reveal both explicitly, as well as tacitly, about their experiences (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007).

3.6 Research Design – narrative inquiry

The research design is an important feature, because it forms the structure and framework to guide the execution of data collection methods and analysis (Bryman, 2004). Within the broad parameters of qualitative methodology, there are various designs for research, but following my appraisal of various options, attention turns to the research design decision of narrative

inquiry to explain why this is appropriate as a framework to structure this research project. Within the literature on narrative inquiry, there are many ideas of what practitioners and researchers mean when this term is used. I have chosen to draw upon the ideas of Clandinin, Pushor and Orr (2007) for their views of narrative inquiry research, due to how this fits within the frame of my philosophical orientation adopted for this study. Their view of human experience is that humans lead storied lives and people shape daily life by their interpreted stories of who they are and who others are (Clandinin et al., 2007). When seeking to study human experience, stories are the portal through which people experience the world and making meaning of it (Clandinin et al., 2007). In terms of research, narrative inquiry is the study of human experience as interpreted as story, which offers a way of thinking about experiences (Clandinin et al., 2007). Bruner's (1986) constructivist theory supports researching education through narrative - where the actors make meaning through interpreting their actions as 'storied texts' (Cohen et al., 2011).

The important point to emphasise here is that, when researching social science, narrative inquiry legitimises peoples' stories as valuable sources of empirical knowledge (Bruce, Beuthin, Sheilds, Molzahn & Schick-Makaroff, 2016). Furthermore, the reason I viewed this as an effective approach to researching teacher reflection is that a common experience in primary teaching is that stories 'are the woven fabric of school landscapes' and teachers often represent their experiences in story form (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 33). With this study set in the context of primary education using the familiar territory for teachers of storytelling and story making, I believe this approach was most appropriate to study teachers' thoughts and reflections on their professional practice. (Fraser, 2004).

With the aim of this study to improve my professional understanding of ECTs' reflective practice, the benefit of this research design was that it provided the opportunity to investigate ordinary people and find out about their experiences to answer questions that may otherwise go unnoticed (Berg, 2001). In line with interpretivist epistemology, the potential of this study is to unlock some of the hidden reflections on teaching in an age of performativity through the narratives of teachers' interpretations of their experiences (Berg, 2001).

On the basis that narrative inquiry was an appropriate framework for this investigation, attention now moves to explore the methods used to collect data that provided insight of ECTs' reflections on teaching in the performative culture. These methods are best appraised against Flick's (2006, p.205) recommendation that data collection methods should be chosen 'on the basis of the character of the material' needed to acquire data that is most suited to address the research questions.

3.7 Research methods - narrative interview

The narrative interview was chosen as an appropriate data collection method for this study and comprised two narrative interviews, with the second designed to elicit response to a focus on a critical incident.

3.7.1 Narrative interview

The narrative interview took the format of an unstructured interview with a deliberately worded single question that allowed the interviewee to respond freely using their own frames of

reference (May, 1997). Edwards (2005) recommends the best questions invite interviewees to focus their stories about specific times and situations if a long historical account is not needed for data collection. Based on this principle, the main interview question was 'How has your practice developed from initial teacher training, the NQT induction period and on to more recent times?' Participants who were able to respond without any need for prompts proceeded with the narrative flow uninterrupted – allowing for insight to develop from their choice of topics to share. However, at the design stage, I had anticipated question prompts might be needed to support the flow of participant's narrative response. The planned prompts involved encouragement to break down their narrative into stages, for example, 'tell me about key experiences during …your teacher training, or … first year of teaching, or … more recent experiences' (May, 1997). The aim was to give ECTs confidence to continue their narratives allowing them to choose the issues to share, which provided me with insight of the topics ECTs reflect on in response to sub-question one as previously mentioned.

Yet, despite this planning of question prompts, the interview experience with each participant evolved from the initial question and the flow of narrative continued seamlessly and, thus, uninterrupted by myself as interviewer. I believe this outcome offered real value in that the data acquired from the interview transcripts incorporated minimal impact from myself beyond the initial question and offered me insight of the issues ECTs reflected on and chose to share in this interview scenario.

Furthermore, using this narrative interview method interviewees were able to draw upon their ideas and meanings that were familiar to them. The significant value of this is that it

provided qualitative depth with a greater understanding of the interviewee's point of view (May, 1997). Indeed, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest that because we think narratively about experiences, then it is appropriate for education to be studied narratively. As previously mentioned, primary teachers may be familiar with the concept of narratives and storytelling due to their professional role, hence this data collection method allowing the telling of their own reflective tale of modern teaching offered the potential of accessing in-depth insight this study aimed to achieve.

Although structured and semi-structured interviews could have provided qualitative data, the researcher has to predetermine lines of questioning to elicit the responses required (May, 1997). Therefore, the unstructured, narrative interview was favoured over these types of interview, because it provided space for people to share their reflections in whichever manner they chose (May, 1997). Another key reason for preferring this method was the potential to gain new insight about the issues of reflection from teachers' uninterrupted narratives. Muylaert, Sarubbi, Gallo, Neto and Reis (2014) warn that the format of semi-structured interviews risks suppressing stories that deviate from the prepared schedule of questions. Yet, it is important to recognise that these stories could hold the key insight needed when seeking to understand the phenomenon of teacher reflection. Furthermore, because the format of the narrative interview meant the interviewer's influence was minimal, the interviewee was free to be spontaneous and share their stories of what was real to them, even if this varied from the facts themselves (Muylaert et al., 2014).

The interviews were designed to last between 30 and 60 minutes, commencing with the main question to elicit the stories that enlighten ECTs' reflections on performative teaching. The narrative interviews were audio recorded for the purposes of providing a transcript for data analysis. Following the data analysis of the first round of interviews, the second narrative interview was organised, but this time the data collection method was adapted to incorporate a narrative interview with a critical incident focus.

3.7.2 Narrative interview – critical incident focus

The second interview narrowed the focus of the participant's narrative towards the events of a specific period time – in this case, a day of teaching practice. Hence, the difference was holding the second interview after school with the critical focus on their lessons and experiences of that day. The aim was to learn from participants while memories were still fresh in their minds and offered the potential of providing insight from their initial reflections of their practice experiences that day. Tripp (1994) advises that a critical incident focus does not need to be dramatic and can involve commonplace events occurring in routine practice. The incident becomes critical through the approach to reviewing the situation and the interpretation of the event's significance (Tripp, 1994). Hence, this narrative interview method sought to explore the interviewee's critical review of their teaching practice that day in order to learn of their experiences and the issues shaping the nature of their reflection. As with the first interviews, the key emphasis of narrative inquiry was not just the insight from interviewee's narrative, but the inquiry into what they viewed as important to include in their explanations and how they made meaning of events (Bryman, 2004).

Therefore, in line with the guidance from Tripp (1994), the second interview commenced with the broad simple question of 'How was your day?' Participants then responded with their reflections of this period of time that I had chosen as the critical incident focus. At the planning stage, a further question was designed to prompt participants' reflections to support narrative flow if needed: 'If you were to repeat today – what would be the same and what you would you change?' The aim was to generate a narrative response that shared insight into teachers' thinking processes as they reviewed their day's practice and, from this, the opportunity to learn of the pertinent issues that shape the nature of their reflections. If needed, further prompts were planned, for example, 'So, how did your first lesson go …' 'What happened next ….' until the participant was confident to lead with their own direction of the narrative. Once again, despite the planning of prompts, each teacher seemed confident to share their reflections about their day through an uninterrupted narrative and this provided insight of the issues they chose to prioritise to communicate to me in this interview format.

3.7.3 Pilot study

To support the effective implementation of this research design, I conducted pilot interviews for both types of narrative interviews. The aim was to provide an opportunity to refine any areas that would benefit from improving before commencing the study with the sample participants. For example, to ascertain whether the design of both interview main questions and prompts were clear and effective for stimulating narratives about teaching practice to provide insight of teacher reflection about performative teaching. The participant for the pilot study was a teacher whom I know, but do not work with. The aim was to receive

feedback on improvements to the research design, for example, issues of making contact, appropriateness of venue, my manner and verbal/non-verbal participation during the interview (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). However, from feedback and my reflections on the pilot study regarding the success of achieving the data required, the only development was to ensure participants were fully aware that the anticipated interview time would be between 30-60 minutes for each interview. Overall, my analysis of the pilot study was that the open nature of the simple interview questions to elicit narratives on both the career journey and the critical incident focus was effective in gaining insight into the nature of ECTs' reflections. However, it was important my reflections evaluated whether the successful outcome of narrative flow and data acquired during these interviews was influenced by the sense of familiarity between myself and the participant for the pilot study. On balance, my decision was to continue with the planned design of the study, with the aim of regularly reviewing whether further interviews would be required if the data yield proved to be insufficient to enable me to respond successfully to the research questions.

3.7.4 Participants

The assumptions of the interpretivist paradigm direct the decision-making regarding sample size and participants where the logic of explanation has more emphasis than the logic of justification (Maltarud, Siersma & Guassora, 2016). Within the qualitative research literature about sample size, there is little guidance on satisfactory numbers of participants for a study such as this (Mason, 2010). However, a common theme is the pursuit of saturation - where data from additional participants sheds no new light on the investigation and additional information is superfluous (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Mason, 2010). Yet, without seeking to dilute the value of this study, I am guided by principles of qualitative methodology where a single occurrence

of data is potentially as useful as many, when seeking to understand social phenomena (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). Indeed, Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) suggest research with social constructivist roots is not dependent on a totality of facts, because knowledge is partial and dependent on the situated view of the researcher. Hence, my sample decisions build on this premise and that a complete description of reflective teaching in a performative era is not the objective, but new insights into this phenomenon should be valued. Underpinning this are expectations that sample adequacy and quality of data are more important factors than number of participants (Maltarud et al., 2016). In this respect, the quality of data for this study is supported by rigorous, systematic procedures for analysis as outlined in the section 3.9 Data analysis.

The sample of participants for this study comprised five teachers with two-five years' practice. This nature of the sample was a purposeful convenience sample to facilitate selecting participants with knowledge and experience of the phenomenon of reflective teaching in a performative culture (Cresswell & Clark, 2011). My sample decisions are influenced by Yin's (2011, p.311) definition of purposeful sampling that the participants are selected 'based on their anticipated richness and relevance of information in relation to the study's research questions'. For qualitative inquiries, purposeful sampling is valued for the information-rich source when there are limited options for alternatives, for example a random sample (Patton, 2001).

3.7.4.1 Access to participants

The strategy to recruit participants for this study commenced with my personal acquaintances who were asked to share the Participant Information sheet (Appendix 1) with any teachers they knew who had been teaching between two and five years. My acquaintances understood their role was to pass on the information to any potential participants and emphasise there was no sense of obligation to respond to the research request. Indeed, my advice was that no pressure or disappointment should be expressed if potential participants declined. Although the plan was to initially meet as strangers, this approach was not entirely value free due to the risk of coercive influence from our mutual contact. Certainly, a further ethical concern was that the mutual acquaintances could add their own opinions pertinent to this research project and potentially influence participants. To address this I relied on the good relationships between the mutual acquaintances and myself by asking them to avoid sharing their personal views that might influence or jeopardise the participant's involvement and contribution to this study. Additionally, there were no enticements in terms of rewards or incentives to engage their participation. I believe this was important to protect any influence on participant's freedom to exert their right to withdraw any part or the whole of their contribution to this study.

In this respect, this study relied on participants' goodwill to give up their personal time to engage in this research project that was purely driven by the context of advancing my own professional knowledge and understanding. Fortunately, the participants were willing to share their share their practice with another professional interested in their stories and contribute their voice to the field of education research. BERA (2014) promotes the benefit of teachers engaging in self-improvement through processes of inquiry and the participants were made aware their contribution was valued for supporting my own research endeavours for self

improvement and professional development. However, once the interview processes had concluded, the participants received a small gift token to reflect my appreciation of their time commitment in providing me with the data for this research project (Kumar, 1996).

Fortunately, overall, the recruitment strategy proved to be effective and did not need amending, so I was able to organise the participation of five early career teachers as the sample for this study. The practical element of conducting the interviews involved the organisation of a meeting room in a hotel local to each participant. The important elements of ethical considerations for participants' engagement in this study are reported in the following section.

Certainly, issues of access and convenience were key deciding factors in the sample design and, whilst this study does not seek to claim representativeness in any way, the participants did offer experiences of teaching in different locations in England and included male and female teachers across the age span 20-40 years. The findings chapter provides a brief background of each teacher participant.

Overall, when planning this study, I anticipated that the data generated from five participants during two narrative interviews would provide sufficient insight and learning of the nature of early career teachers' reflections in an age of performativity (Cohen et al., 2011). However, throughout the process of data analysis, I constantly reviewed whether the quality of the data acquired was successful in achieving the level of saturation required, or if further interviews needed to be conducted (Mason, 2010). The outcome of my evaluation of this was

that the yield of data was sufficient to provide satisfactory findings to answer the research questions, therefore, no further interviews were undertaken.

3.8 Ethics

This section explores the considerations identified prior to commencing this research to ensure ethical interests of participants were protected (Edwards & Talbot, 1994). The guiding influence is the British Educational Research Association's (2011) report that sets out researchers' ethical responsibilities. A research proposal for this study received scrutiny by University of Reading's Ethics Committee to verify that procedures for data collection adhered to ethical guidelines, see Appendix 2 (Denscombe, 2002). The common ethical issues of qualitative research are explored in this section, but initial attention turns to the additional responsibilities pertinent to research adopting narrative methods.

Due to the nature of narrative interviews, the whole process depends upon the openness of participants to retell their personal stories about their lives and experiences. The researcher also participates through listening, interpreting, editing and reporting, which establishes a transaction between people that raises ethical issues and concerns (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, Chase, 2005). This is because these relationships do not exist independently of the narrative inquiry, but deemed as central to the work (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Inevitably, the nature of the data is bound up in individuals' personal stories and their representation of truth offered from their perspectives (Bignold & Feng, 2013). Hence, the ethical concern here regards participants' vulnerability when revealing stories exposing issues of their personal identity and

professional practice. Indeed, the line of open questioning offered participants the opportunity to reflect on their teaching practice that, at times, led to emotional challenges for participants - when both positive and negative experiences resurfaced in their thinking. Furthermore, when participants shared personal evaluations of their professional practice, each participant risked emotional distress from identification of potential negative issues, such as flaws or errors and exposure by disclosing this insight with me at interview. To develop their trust, I offered empathetic listening and conscious avoidance of critical thinking when hearing participants' personal stories. I assured participants that there was absolutely no sense of judgement about their practice and that the whole objective was to learn about actual reflective teaching experiences in this modern culture of performative education (Clandinin & Murphy, 2007).

Therefore, to further support developing the nature of the relationship conducive to openness at interview, the concepts of my Positionality Statement (Appendix 3) were shared with participants during an introductory conversational time before commencing and recording the interview. The aim of sharing my own positioning was to support participants' understanding of the study, as well as demonstrate an authentic level of openness and vulnerability myself - in order to communicate the sense of mutual trust and respect underpinning the interview experience. This also provided an opportunity for me to respond to any questions or concerns before proceeding with agreement and signature of the Consent Form (Appendix 4).

At each stage of their involvement, participants were reassured that their contributions would not be identifiable. The strategies to achieve anonymity involved all data collected

held in strict confidence and no real names used in this study. The records of this study were kept private. No identifiers linking participants, the children or the school to the study were included in any sort of report. Participants were assigned a number for my reference purposes and a colour name in the processes of data analysis to identify their contribution. Research records were stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer. Only myself, and my University supervisors, had access to the records. My supervisor's email address was provided on the Participant Information sheet so participants could make contact if needed. It was also important to offer participants control of their data contribution through the option they could review the typed transcript and withdraw any part, or whole, of their account.

The overriding aim of these ethical considerations was to ensure that participants were not exposed to any detrimental effects – whether personally or professionally – from being involved in this investigation into the modern nature of ECTs' reflection.

3.8.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent reflects the participants' ethical rights in their decision to engage in the research with full awareness of any risks and possible consequences of doing so (Cohen et al., 2011). An initial consideration is participants' concept of volunteering to engage in the research as they should not feel pressurised or coerced to volunteer (Cohen et al, 2011). To avoid any professional influence as researcher, the sample comprised teachers who were unknown to me, although access to each participant was achieved through a mutual contact as described above. The aim was the benefit of learning from participants who may be more open

to confide in a stranger when reporting the positive and negative aspects of practice identified by their reflective analysis (Fielding, 1999). Certainly, with no previous connection between our professional practices, the aim was to build participants' trust and respect by removing any sense of judgement to support their confidence towards openness.

Once potential volunteers made contact with me, I expanded on the issues covered in the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 1). When I was confident participants understood the potential risk of their involvement and the various measures of protection adopted to minimise this, they were offered the Consent Form to review and sign before commencing the research (Appendix 4). This included information on the measures that supported participants' right to privacy and details of their right to withdraw (Cohen et al., 2011). As previously mentioned, protection of privacy was supported through anonymity achieved by changing the names and places so that participants cannot be identified from the research report. However, Scott (1997, p. 163-164) warns that 'individuals and locations cannot be disguised completely though it is easier to deceive outsiders than insiders'. Indeed, Bryman (2004) also advises that, whilst steps are taken for protection, for example, pseudonyms commonly used, it may not be possible to ensure identities are completely protected. Therefore, during the initial contact I advised participants on the measures taken for anonymity, confidentiality, the nature and scope of this study, as well as their rights to withdraw. The whole aim was to ensure that when they signed the Informed Consent, participants were clear on the implications of their involvement in this research (Bryman, 2004).

Furthermore, as researcher, it is crucial I continue to maintain a high level of confidentiality about this whole research project, especially bearing in mind the mutual contacts connected to the participants. Through discussion, the participants were assured that the parameters in which the research and data was discussed and reported remain within the context specific to the University of Reading's Doctorate in Education (Cohen et al., 2011). During the research process, all texts were anonymised, password protected on my own laptop and deleted on the conclusion of the research reporting stage. The aim was to ensure participants had assurance of protection from harm through the strategies to anonymise their personal details and that their data contributions were non-attributable so that, overall, they are not identifiable for their involvement in this study.

Having established the approach for engaging participants for interview, attention now moves to explore the processes of data analysis that facilitated identification of findings from this investigation that developed my learning about ECT reflection in an age of performativity.

3.9 Data analysis

Based on epistemological principles that social science knowledge can be constructed from interpretivist methodology, qualitative data needs analysis to search for ideas and patterns to explain the nature of reflective teaching in a performative era (Bernard, 2000). It is important that an ethical framework applies to the processes of data analysis too, which is guided by the principle that no harm to participants results from any analysis and representation of their narrative accounts (Cohen et al., 2011). Once again, adopting a conscious reflexive approach to the procedures of data analysis supported my adherence to ethical guidelines of causing no harm.

For example, being open to any negative evidence that may not fit with any preconceived theory and using this to re-examine established ideas (Callaway, 1992). However, I acknowledge that despite efforts for reflexivity, it is inevitable that the data analysis of this study on teacher reflection is influenced by my positionality as researcher. Therefore, the data analysis and reported findings needs appraising in light of how my personal beliefs and experiences influence my approach to data analysis – see Positionality Statement, Appendix 3.

On the basis that the concept of fitness for purpose applies to the decisions for data analysis too, then the research questions seem an appropriate starting point for the design of the data analysis processes (Cohen et al., 2011). Because the aim was to investigate the unknown element of the nature of participants' reflections on teaching in an age of performativity, I was not starting with a hypothesis to test. The main strategy for analysing the data was coding with the aim of reducing the material into different categories (Cohen et al. 2011). However, in this study, the process of analysis did not involve the creation of categories from predetermined theoretical constructs or interests, but rather the approach incorporated some of the techniques of grounded theory where there was provision for the theory to emerge from the data on the phenomena of reflective teaching (Newman & Benz, 1998). The purpose of this was with regard to the views of Glaser's (1998) recommendation that the data should not be forced to match preconceived concepts and researchers suspend knowledge and experience in order to identify theories emerging by continually re-examining the data.

However, I acknowledge that the theory developing from my analysis of the data, inevitably, was influenced by my learning from the literature review and my own experiences

of reflective teaching in an age of performativity (Bulawa, 2014). Therefore, whilst I kept the specific focus of this study in mind, it was also imperative to remain open-minded to unanticipated results that may emerge from the data acquired (Berg, 2001). This is where I engaged in conscious reflexivity throughout the data analysis process to challenge any pre-conceived assumptions influencing my interpretations of this research (Callaway, 1992).

From this theoretical positioning of my approach to data analysis, focus moves to explain the procedures adopted to synthesise the data in order to understand the focus phenomena and respond to the research questions. Following the first round of each narrative interview a transcript of the discussion, along with field notes, were subjected to the first form of analysis – open coding. The process involved fragmenting the transcripts and then rearranging them through categorisation of codes to explore similarities and differences across the different narrative accounts of the five participant teachers (Cohen et al., 2011). The rationale of choosing open coding for the first stage of the analysis was to open the inquiry widely (Berg, 2001). The benefit of this process is that data is segmented into units of analysis that can represent ideas, events, names or concepts (Bryman, 2004). The process of open coding involved categorising the concepts that relate to the same phenomenon, which were then labelled as a conceptual category – see Figure 1 (Bryman, 2004).

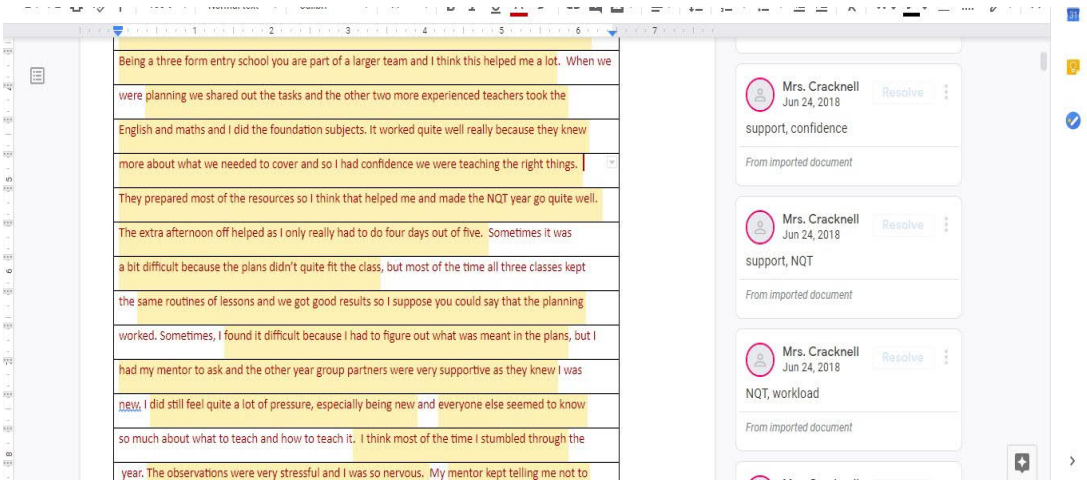

Figure 1. Example of open coding

The next stage was axial coding where data was re-formed in new ways using the categories of the theoretical framework to explore linking causal interrelationships between categories – see Figure 2. The advantage of this process was that by further exploring the data and making explicit connections between categories and sub-categories, I developed greater understanding of the issues shaping reflective teaching in the current culture of performative education (Bryman, 2004). Each time new interview data was collected, the process was continually reviewed and refined through open and axial coding in order to explore the interconnections to clarify concepts (Berg, 2001).

OPEN CODE	AXIAL CODING – grouping open codes
Test strategies	**PLANNING**
Planning	Planning
Data- results	Time constraints
Pupil engagement	Teacher lesson expectations
Interactive learning	Curriculum coverage
Teacher modelling learning	
Applying teaching	**TEACHING**
Success criteria	Pupil engagement
Time constraints	Interactive learning
Teacher lesson expectations	Teacher modelling learning
Identification of error	Applying teaching
Curriculum coverage	Success criteria
Success	Behaviour management – strategies
Ofsted	TA
Academic achievement	Limited subjected knowledge
Behaviour management – strategies	Differentiation – strategies
TA	CPD training
Limited subjected knowledge	Self study
Differentiation – strategies	Data driven practice
Interventions for results	Directed practice
Policies and initiatives	Routines
SATS	safeguarding
CPD training	learning behaviours
Self study	hook
Data driven practice	
Directed practice	
Routines	**OUTCOMES**
Assessment procedures	Data- results
safeguarding	Identification of error
learning behaviours	Success
hook	Ofsted
school performance	Academic achievement
	Policies and initiatives
	SATS
	Assessment procedures
	school performance

Figure 2. Example of axial coding

Selective coding was the third stage of analysis where a core category for a central issue (or a focus point integrating other categories) was systematically analysed to validate and clarify the relationships it holds with other categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). To achieve this, my initial approach was to investigate whether the three types of reflection of this study's

theoretical framework were appropriate as selective codes and represented the key relationships with the axial codes. I believe this was a successful strategy, because it enabled me to develop understanding from theory emerging from the relationships of axial codes featuring in each of the selective codes – see Figure 3 below.

Technical	Practical	Emancipatory
• Lesson improvements Modelling Learning • Limited subject knowledge • Data driven practice • Differentiation • Behaviour for learning • Surveillance/accountability/ Performance management • Directed practice	Main issues • Support: – colleagues, HT, to succeed to meet performative expectations • Behaviour management to support learning success • Workload To a lesser extent: • Pupil engagement • Parents • Ofsted • Ambition	• Identifying changes to improve practice • Moving schools or leaving teaching • Considering leaving teaching

Figure 3. – Selective coding

During the processes of open, axial and selective coding the method of constant comparison underpinned the whole approach to data analysis. This involved continually comparing new data against existing categories to achieve a best fit. However, any new theme arising needed a new code in order to involve the theme in the analysis and, therefore, existing data was re-coded to establish interconnectedness (Bryman, 2004).

To support theoretical development the following aids were incorporated into the analysis process where appropriate: memos, re-reading and diagrams as jottings (Boeije, 2002). A benefit of memoing is that field notes remind of how elaborative thought processes evolved

in the establishment of codes and categories (Bryman, 2004). Memoing initially occurred during open and axial coding where the process of organising and integrating memos within the coding framework supports identification of relationships between categories and codes – see Figure 4 (Newman & Benz, 1998). The continuing process of constant comparison eventually moved the analysis towards theoretical saturation and theory development (Holton, 2010).

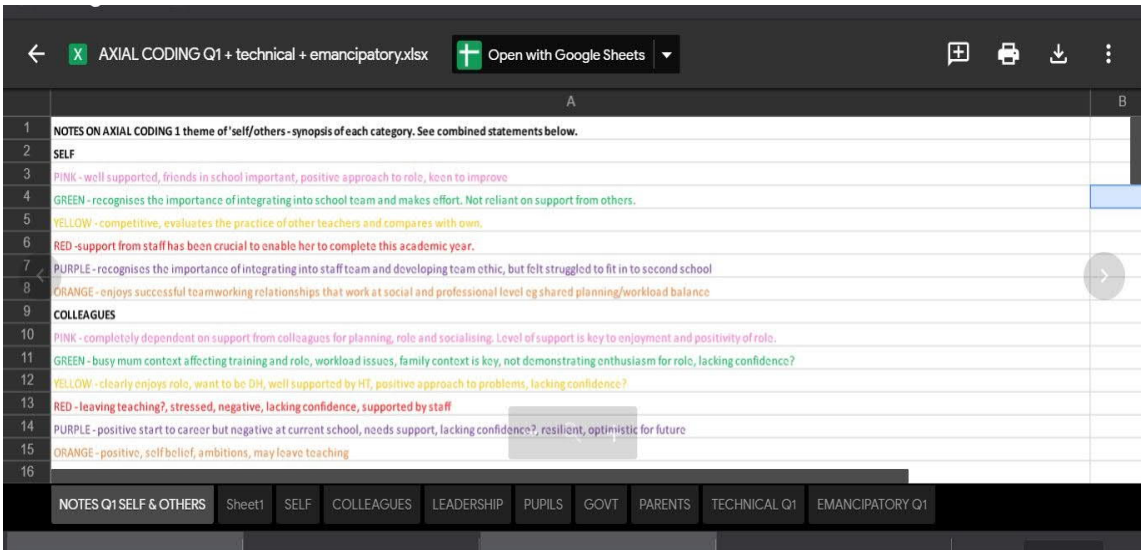

Figure 4. Example of memos

These procedures for data analysis were applied to data from the first round of interviews, with emerging themes arising from this analysis process before the second interview was conducted. In this study, the second interview involved reflective narratives with a critical incident focus where ECTs responded to the simple question enquiring into how their day had been. The specific aim was, once again, to leave the choice of content to the participants as this provided me with insight into the issues of performative practice they prioritised when offering a reflective account of their day.

The data acquired from the second interviews was then subjected to the same approach to coding and analysis of constant comparison to further support theory development (Newman & Benz, 1998). Bartlett and Payne (1997, p.194) suggest the advantage of further data

collection is that researchers can explore emerging theories where not much data exists, so that the final theory builds on 'conceptual density and specificity'. Therefore, I believe this form of grounded theory data analysis was pertinent to this study due to the thorough procedures of data interrogation that led to new insight, knowledge and understanding of the nature of ECTs' reflection in an age of performativity.

However, I also acknowledge that the approach of data analysis adopted in this study is open to critique and, therefore, my aim was to think reflexively to anticipate the issues of concern so that any negative effects would be minimised. For example, one issue of concern is with regard to the researcher's assumptions and bias when approaching identification of themes emerging from the data. Certainly, I was conscious that my pre-existing values and beliefs, as reported in my positionality statement, could cast a shadow over potential fresh new insight to be gained from ECTs reflections of teaching in an age of performativity. Hence, through the analysis processes I regularly challenged my thinking to approach the appraisal of ECTs' narratives with an open mind. For example, I found I needed to reread a participant's interview transcript several times before approaching each stage of the coding process. The aim of this was to refresh my memory of the interview experience so I could focus on the ECT's voice coming through their narrative and block out any thinking of my own experiences that may have compared with the experiences shared by participants. Furthermore, by repeating each stage of the coding process to develop my confidence with my findings, I felt satisfied that the outcome, as reported in the Chapter 4, represents a fair representation of the reflective accounts of each ECT.

Another potential criticism of the coding process adopted for this project is with regard to fragmenting the data into coded segments - which may result in a loss of context and flow of the narrative (Bryman, 2004). The analysis process did involve sectioning the narrative text into many different topics to identify theory emerging from the various themes identified. However, my reconstruction of the narrative text, as provided in the Findings chapter, provides a synopsis of each ECTs' story, yet this is reported offering a true reflection of the order of the narrative content as it was shared during each interview.

Bryman (2004) offers insight that the coding process may be effective in providing various categorisations of data, but this does not necessarily ensure explanatory theory emerges from the processes of fragmenting narrative text. This is an important concern hence my approach throughout the data analysis process was to engage in regular conscious reflections to ensure participants' views were well represented. My strategy to achieve this was time-consuming, but I believe most valuable, because the process of repeating each stage of the coding process enabled me to develop confidence in identifying the emergent theory from the dense categorisation of coded concepts about reflections on teaching in a performative culture.

3.10 Chapter summary

The aim of this chapter was to establish the theoretical basis of this study and the epistemological approach to designing an investigation into the nature of ECTs' reflections in an age of performativity. The design and implementation of the ethical framework was aimed at ensuring participants experienced no harm by being involved in this research. Although only a small sample of teachers provided the data for this study, I believe the rigorous methods of

data analysis supported the credibility of the findings that offer new learning and understanding from the narrative accounts of teachers in the early stages of their career. Lincoln & Guba (1990) claim that trustworthiness in research is achieved by credibility, auditability, fittingness and confirmation of the data and, to this end, I believe the design of measures and procedures as outlined in this chapter were effective in meeting this aim. Where my personal assumptions, bias or misrepresentation of participants' stories threatened to weaken the interpretation and reporting of the findings herein, the strategy of continual reflexive analysis throughout aimed to minimise these effects so that the voice of ECTs' reflective thinking of teaching in an age of performativity can be heard.

Chapter 4 - Findings

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters set out the context of this study and specific methodological approach taken to achieve the findings presented here. Having identified in the Literature Review there seems to be a gap in research about ECTs' current reflective practice, this study offers teachers a voice to share their professional experiences of teaching in a performative culture. Using narrative inquiry methodology, five ECTs shared their personal reflections about their current teaching role. Hence, the key research question driving this study: 'What is the nature of early career teachers' reflection in an age of performativity?' To help unravel the complexity of this phenomenon, the following questions generate insight into the lived experience of primary teaching in England for those in the early stages of their career: (1) What do early career teachers reflect on when reviewing their career and practice? (2) What is shaping the nature of early career teachers' reflections? These sub-questions structure the findings from this study.

As described in the previous chapter, the narrative framework continues with the findings presented as a series of short stories, followed by an analysis of what ECTs' reflect on. Before commencing each story, a synopsis about each participant is provided to share insight of their individual backgrounds and sets the context of their narrative as they reflect on their teaching in an age of performativity. The short story created from each teacher's narrative follows their storyline with their comments written in italics. Throughout each short story, I have added signposts of my interpretation of teachers' reflections about issues they raised, but the full discussion on these findings is provided in Chapter 5.

4.2 Theoretical framework summary

The literature review provided the rationale for the theoretical framework of 'types of reflection' used here as a lens for data analysis. To support the reading of these findings, the meanings for each type of reflection used in this study are briefly summarised.

- Technical reflection means teachers' thinking focuses on problems of pedagogical skills and techniques affecting learning outcomes (Leitch & Day, 2000). The aim is acquisition of skills and technical knowledge to meet objectives (Taggart & Wilson, 2005).
- Practical reflection is characterised by the description, explanation and interpretation of human interactions and socio-cultural influences of teaching practice (Taylor 2004). Teachers' reflection on practical, contextual elements improves understanding too.
- Emancipatory reflection relates to teachers' transformative action to liberate from assumptions or forces that limit practice (Taylor, 2004). The manifestation of this is political and practical action to promote change (Lipp, 2005; Grundy 1987).

4.3 Research sub-question (1)

What do early career teachers reflect on when reviewing their teaching career and practice?

The following five stories provide insight of ECTs' reflections, which is followed with a table and brief commentary to identify the key findings to respond to this particular sub-question.

4.3.1 Maria's story

Maria's background – three years' practice, two schools

Maria started her teaching career in a challenging area with the school supporting pupils experiencing considerable deprivation. Coming from a more advantaged background herself, the culture of the school was a new learning environment for Maria and she shared insight of how she enjoyed her NQT year. Whilst Maria acknowledged the increase of workload from her teacher training experience, her mentor, year-group partner and Teaching Assistants supported her. Moving to a new school at the end of her NQT year, Maria has taught in key stage 2 with years 5, 4 and 3. She values the friendships made with colleagues within the school – 'I'm really happy here and have lots of friends'. It's really nice that we meet out of school as well as work together professionally'. During her three years of teaching, Maria has yet to experience Ofsted. Looking forward, Maria says she is very keen to have opportunities to attend more courses for subject development.

During the interview process Maria appeared to have a gentle manner and quietly confident as she shared with me her stories of her professional life. As the Findings chapter demonstrate, it became apparent that the main focus of Maria's retrospective thinking about her career and day's teaching was technical reflection with elements of practical reflection included too.

4.3.1.1 Interview 1, Question 1: Career journey so far

Maria commences her career story with the claim she always wanted to be a teacher due to her positive childhood experiences.

4.3.1.2 Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) year

Maria speaks fondly of her NQT year, but acknowledges the challenges she faced. Maria's practical reflections on the context of her training period led to the recognition that the role extends well beyond teacher-training experiences.

I had good training, but nothing prepares for you the whole teaching job. You have to do everything - no one is going to sweep in and sort everything for you.

Maria's NQT review begins with her sharing how she had to overcome difficulties with pupils' behaviour.

My first year was tricky because of behaviour issues. I had to keep trying different strategies to get children's attention and keep them on task. Eventually, when I got to know them well, the behaviour improved and wasn't a problem anymore.

Maria demonstrates technical reflections here when her thoughts about behaviour are focused on pupils' task commitment. Her further reflections on the NQT experience also reveal a technical focus on pupils' outcomes with Maria expressing both concern and relief with her achievement of satisfactory data.

The usual spring panic came when you constantly worry about data and whether you get enough children to age-related expectations, or not. Looking back, I didn't really have much understanding of the whole data picture. Fortunately, my Headteacher seemed pleased with results.

In reviewing the NQT year, Maria moves from technical reflections about outcomes, to practical reflective considerations of the socio-cultural influences of positive relationships with pupils' parents.

They seemed pleased their child was doing well and were hoping they would have a better life than they have. The parents made a big impression, especially compared to where I work now, because they were just so appreciative and supportive. It's so different to my current school, where parents seem quick to criticise and complain – even though I think we are doing a pretty decent job overall.

Maria indicates her current practice received parental critique, although she offers balance from her perception these complaints might be without merit. Maria's overall review of the year is a positive memory.

I really enjoyed my NQT year as my mentor was really supportive and the Headteacher was very encouraging. I felt I fitted in well.

Yet, before Maria completes her story of the NQT year, her thinking seems to switch back to technical reflections as she remembers limitations in her professional knowledge and she remedied this by relying on colleagues' advice to counteract the weaknesses of her own expertise.

The first year was hard in knowing how to create lessons for different abilities and I'm not sure I always got it right. My year-group partner helped with planning and I would find it difficult if I had to figure it out on my own… I don't know how I would find it, or if I would like it.

Insight of her thinking about subject knowledge, differentiation and lesson planning, demonstrate examples of problems of pedagogical skills that Leitch & Day (2000) include in their definition of technical reflection.

4.3.1.3 Recent Years

Following her NQT year, Maria experienced changes in both location and school culture where the new leadership heavily directs teachers' practice.

We all do similar things as there are so many policies for everything e.g. marking, assessment, what books look like. The leadership check policies are followed by having books in fortnightly and regular mini-lesson observations. There is quite a lot of pressure from the Head-teacher to get the data she wants.

However, as Maria shares reflections of a technical nature about aspects of outcome driven directed practice, it seems she gains confidence from the clarity of guidance the policies and procedures provide.

Some teachers don't like the way we have to do planning and marking in the same way, but I understand the pressure the Head is under to make sure we get the results.

Despite indicating support for elements of directed practice, Maria's technical reflection explores the impact of the restrictive nature of a performative educational culture.

It would be nice to be more creative and go with what children want, or good ideas my year-group partner and I have. Mostly, there isn't enough time to explore anything that may not be results-driven in case we don't get the results. When I started teaching, I wasn't expecting to be so focused on data.

However, it seems that Maria's reflections are weighted towards the technical elements of teaching to achieve data outcomes, which overshadow her practical reflections about providing creative, child-centred education. Furthermore, Maria's story does not provide insight of any emancipatory action she might take to address this.

Similar to her NQT year, when Maria talked about her recent practice, she acknowledged how she values colleagues' support for her professional success.

I'm just lucky to be in a school I like, with great friends. Sharing the planning and resources helps work-life balance. Sometimes, I 'wobble' and worry a lot, but it helps to talk things through with colleagues.

When expanding on issues of friendships and workload, viewed as practical reflections using the definitions applied herein, Maria shared how she fears working autonomously - because teamwork is fundamental to her personal enjoyment of the role.

As the story of Maria's career journey unfolds, her memory draws attention to technical reflections of her desire to improve practice by receiving further training to develop subject knowledge.

I wish I could go on courses for foundation subjects … the only courses people can go on are literacy and maths to support getting the data.

When considering her personal teaching expertise, Maria's comments provide insight of her understanding of the performative culture where her perception of school leaders seems to reflect they only value professional training that supports performative success. Yet, rather than revealing any emancipatory reflective action to challenge this so she develops her subject knowledge, Maria's reflections seem to represent her acceptance of the restrictive nature of her school's approach to professional development.

In her concluding remarks about her career journey, Maria's talks about her enjoyment of the teaching role and claims she has no plans to leave the profession.

4.3.1.4 Interview 2, Question 2: Review of the day

When considering her teaching day, Maria starts with technical reflections that are outcome-orientated as she reviews behaviour improvements resulting from her new strategy.

First thing in the morning, I spent time going through the growth mind-set approach, as it is important to hook them in and encourage that they can all achieve success in their day.

Maria's technical reflections continue on this behaviour theme as her thinking draws on childhood experiences of an inspirational teacher who Maria said made learning '*come alive'*.

If lessons are a bit dull, their messing around increases and, if lessons are fun and they like the challenge, I don't have a problem with them at all.

Maria's story then includes technical reflections about the various strategies and resources she found successful in motivating pupils to engage with their work. As Maria talked about pupils' engagement, it seemed to prompt her to share technical considerations about the outcomes of pupils' progress in her Maths lessons.

We have done so much intervention … yet they still haven't got quick recall. It's bugging me and I need to figure out what we can do. It's easy to say 'Well they've had loads of interventions,' but obviously we haven't been effective enough.

With the aim of improving learning outcomes, Maria said she sought guidance from the Maths' leader to learn from his expertise. This topic prompts her thinking again about her inexperience and limited subject knowledge. With technical reflections about how this issue might jeopardise pupils' outcomes, Maria shares insight of concerns for her practice.

There is always that slight panic when you feel you don't know enough and feel an idiot if you get it wrong, or can't answer the question. That's the difficulty of Primary teaching, because you are expected to know so much in every subject. With

the older children it can feel a bit intimidating as you fear they could know more than you!

Maria concludes her review of the day by explaining that to solve the problem she has identified, she intends to spend more time researching the knowledge she needs to improve her teaching and the outcomes of her practice.

4.3.2 Bev's story

Bev's background – four years' practice, three schools plus supply cover.

Bev shared how she found the teacher training experience and NQT year problematic - 'not so much the difficulty of the job, but mainly because my personal circumstances have changed. My NQT year was tough because I realised I had to do everything.' Bev explained that being a sole parent was challenging when starting out on a new career.

Bev was offered an NQT role in her training school, and believes this considerably helped her first year due to already knowing the staff, school, policies and resources. Due to budget cuts her NQT contract was not continued. To support her family circumstances, Bev spent the next two terms doing various supply and gained experience of many different schools. In the third term, a fixed term supply contract was made permanent and Bev found herself enjoying the new challenges of being a Reception teacher and continued this the following year. When Bev became unhappy with the school, she changed schools and has taught a mixed year 3 and 4 class for the last two years. From Bev's accounts of her practice, it seems she is quite confident to have autonomy in her role and is passionate to invest time building good relationships with parents in order to support the pupils in her classes. Bev values being part

of the staff team. Whilst Bev has yet to experience Ofsted, her current school and in special measures and they are working hard to improve this judgement.

When I am evaluating Bev's reflective profile in the data, there are indications of a more even spread between Bev's technical reflection and practical reflection from her accounts of her teaching experiences.

4.3.2.1 Question 1: Career journey so far

Bev starts by explaining that her entry into teaching was really challenging. The combination of single parenthood and teacher-training assignments posed difficulties regarding time commitments. After her NQT year, Bev delayed full-time teaching until her home life had settled and she undertook supply work between permanent posts.

4.3.2.2 NQT year

Bev does not share much about her first year, although practical reflections on her home context feature when she recalls personal and professional demands upon her.

The NQT year was tough, because I realised I had to do everything. You get extra time off, but with workload, targets and newness of the job - it didn't feel like extra time off.

Bev's further practical reflections about the school context identify the advantage of continuing at the school she trained in for her NQT year. She believes familiarity with the school culture, procedures and policies helped her to cope.

My mentor already knew me and knew I had done well in my training year. That boosted my confidence and I felt I could continue.

Bev concludes her NQT review with information the school terminated her temporary contract due to budget cuts.

4.3.2.3 Recent years

Following a period of supply cover, Bev agreed to a job-share role in Reception, which was a new teaching experience for her.

> *I surprised myself that I enjoyed the early years' job, as I never thought this would interest me. I seemed to be natural at it and had great feedback from the parents, other staff and the Head-teacher.*

However, Bev advises that changes occurred in the school leadership, which she believes had a negative impact on her enjoyment working there. This prompted Bev's emancipatory reflections where she took practical action to promote change (Lipp, 2005). Bev sought alternative employment to where the school leadership ethos was more compatible with her own. Bev's story does not provide any details to give insight of the incompatible issues that provoked this move.

> *I probably would have stayed there if things hadn't changed in the school that I wasn't entirely happy with.*

So Bev moved to a new school that was closer to home. Bev briefly mentions practical reflections of her concerns about the context of the new school, which she said Ofsted had recently graded as requiring special measures for support. Bev said that when she took the job she was aware that she would be involved in improving the school in their quest to change this Ofsted judgment. Bev did not give any further information directly about her role in school

improvement, but she did choose to focus the remainder of the first interview talking about issues of practice that commonly feature in descriptions of a performative educational culture.

Now in her fifth year of practice and teaching in Key Stage 2, Bev's story shares technical reflections revealing frustrations with directed practice, for example, writing detailed lesson plans.

> *I find it annoying to keep writing lesson plans all the time when I know what I am doing. I don't value the time writing a lesson plan that is in my head - just because somebody might come and want to see it what looks like. I would rather be writing something of quality, or involved in something worth doing.*

Although this seems to represent a level of Bev's confidence for planning and delivering lessons, her story then moves on to share technical reflections about lesson outcomes that are affected by her limited subject knowledge. Bev relates this technical reflection to her practical consideration of the impact of workload that leaves little time for her research and professional development.

> *It's like one of these days someone will find me out! To be a good teacher has been a huge learning curve and you are always conscious of the subject knowledge that you should know more of. There just never seems to be the space and time to develop your foundation subject knowledge, especially when we have all the politics of being in a school judged at special measures.*

As Bev reflects on her perception of having inadequate subject knowledge, she provides insight of how she intends to approach this particular problem.

> *Everyone else seems to muddle through and so I'll do the same and hope that over the years I will just gain more and more knowledge so I can offer it to the children.*

It seems Bev's technical reflective concerns to improve her knowledge to benefit her practice are ignored in light of her perception of how colleagues' respond to similar responsibilities for their practice. These contextual practical reflections about workload and colleagues' practice appear to block out any emancipatory reflection that might drive Bev to seek changes to workload that could facilitate time to address her initial technical concerns.

However, as Bev tells her story, her thoughts change direction with practical reflections about the context of Head-teachers and her experiences of their role in her professional development.

> *I think it comes top down and the Head-teacher has a really strong influential role in how you turn out as a teacher. With my two previous Head-teachers - one you knew full well had done the job, done it well and was using that experience to help others to do the job. The other Head got there by learning the right responses and, actually, there wasn't the foundations … so eventually it will crumble.*

This is the total of Bev's comments about this, but seems to indicate she has further reflections about her perception of the credibility of Head-teachers she worked with. Bev's story continues with practical reflections of the socio-cultural influences on her practice and the topic moves from Head-teacher to her relationships with colleagues and parents.

> *I have learnt not to worry about admitting failure that something has gone wrong or you have made a mistake. I'd rather go to someone and say 'Look I'm really sorry I've made a mistake and would appreciate your help in getting out of this'.*
>
> *If a parent keeps complaining - don't just be angry with them and let animosity develop – get them in and discuss their expectations and what they would like to happen and manage the relationships.*

When elaborating on this, Bev appears to have developed confidence in managing these relationships and acknowledges the importance of working through these types of problems. This was the final topic in Bev's reflective narrative about her career journey so far.

4.3.2.4 Interview 2, Question 2: Review of the day

At the second interview, Bev's practical reflections about the context of her lesson introduce the story by advising her class had been on a 'trip' the previous day. Although no details of the trip were provided, this event seemed to shape Bev's reflections which related to pupils' wellbeing and the impact on her expectations for their learning and progress. She started by providing a context to her review of lessons.

> *I could see they were tired and not as great and sparky as they usually are... I don't think they have fully recovered.*

As Bev reflected on the technical elements of her literacy lesson with practical reflections woven in her review as she considered pupils' welfare – particularly their tiredness. This featured in her review of other lessons too. For example, her later comments revealed her expectations of the afternoon's French lesson:

> *They are tired and I didn't think I would get much quality out of them.*

The first lesson involved pupils writing about their trip. From Bev's technical reflections about their progress, she described strategies, such as drama and modelling writing that she incorporated to support successful outcomes. Whilst Bev claimed '*Overall, I'm happy about what they produced,*' she identified improvements with pupils' handwriting and presentation. Bev's technical reflections focused on her techniques to progress this and gave insight of her perception of how the leadership will review this lesson's outcome.

> *I know I will be criticised for their handwriting and punctuation … I probably should have worked them harder on the presentation too.*

However, Bev's summary of the lesson referred again to her practical, contextual reflection of pupils' capacity for success - given her perception of their tired state.

> *I'm just pleased that they got on with the lesson and got the writing done as best they could.*

Bev continues by reviewing the afternoon with technical reflections about the outcome of her ICT teaching. She advises the lesson structure was designed to achieve progress and the effectiveness evaluated through her observations and outcomes produced. Yet, her reflections also reveal frustration at externally imposed direction, which she believes affected pupils' progress in both of her afternoon's foundation lessons.

> *The only thing I think would have improved the lesson is if we had more time. Many of them were in mid-flow. There is so much to fit in … the consequence is that it's all a bit rushed.*

It seems that Bev's reflections on this particular topic remain within the technical domains in her appraisal of the outcome of the lesson and she does not indicate any emancipatory reflective action to investigate the possibility of time flexibility that might enhance pupils' ICT learning experience.

Moving on to her French lesson, Bev informs her school uses a programme of online lessons, but technical reflections about lesson outcomes reveal her view that the pace of the programme inhibits pupils' progress.

> *It wasn't a great lesson, because they are not ready for this vocabulary and haven't picked up the basics yet. The programme has a weekly focus, which they find difficult to keep up with. A key change for me would be to slow down the pace of the French programme and go at our own pace.*

Bev's technical reflections identify the negative impact of this externally imposed strategy for learning French, but there are no indications of her emancipatory reflections to

challenge this directive and seek autonomy to adapt the pace of the programme to meet the needs of her pupils.

Bev ends her story by providing insight of commitment to her teaching role.

> *I do long hours and probably longer than some others here do, but that is just the way I am – I just want to do my best and feel happier when I'm on top of it all.*

Having overcome the early challenges of training and induction years, Bev's final practical reflections on the issue of teacher workload reveals that she appears to have developed confidence and strategies to cope with challenges of fulfilling her role.

4.3.3 Caitlyn's story

Caitlyn's background - 3 years' practice, one school

Caitlyn completed her teaching training before moving to her current school where she has stayed following her NQT year. At the time of the interviews, Caitlyn had just handed in her notice and was seriously evaluating whether to continue her teaching career.
With good support to help her complete her induction hear to achieve newly qualified status, Caitlyn has found the following years of teaching to be too stressful to enjoy the role. With fears for her health, Caitlyn is considering whether to have a fresh start by teaching in a new school, take a teaching assistant role next year or possibly leave education completely. During the interviews, Caitlyn shared her considerable appreciation of the support she has received from colleagues, but her manner conveyed both her sadness and anxiety regarding her current role.

Overall, there seemed only a small difference between Caitlyn's technical and practical reflections about her career so far and when reviewing her teaching day.
Emancipatory reflective thinking is now driving Caitlyn's thought processes as she evaluates the future path to take.

4.3.3.1 Interview 1, Question 1: Career journey so far

Caitlyn's career story begins with the statement she has just resigned because she finds the teaching role too much. Caitlyn shares emancipatory reflections of action for change she has taken to have space from school life to evaluate whether to leave teaching permanently. Caitlyn apologised for how this affects her storytelling and was reassured of interest in hearing about her experiences.

> *Its no-one's fault really – just mine. The school have been great and everyone has been so supportive. I'm not really a quitter, but I'm just getting so much anxiety about everything that it's time to make changes.*

Caitlyn talks about each of her three years of practice in the same school, without providing any personal background information that led her to securing an NQT appointment.

4.3.3.2. Newly Qualified Teacher

When Caitlyn considers her NQT year, it seems colleagues' support is central to her thinking. Caitlyn's first memories draw on technical reflections of a positive first year by identifying how professional support from colleagues helped her achieve success.

I like teaching and my NQT year went OK as I had lots of support from the other year group partners and this helped me a lot.

Being in a large school, Caitlyn says she valued learning from other teachers in her year group. Her technical reflections about solving pedagogical problems reveal that experienced teachers took control of shared lesson planning, but this seems to have presented both an advantage and disadvantage for Caitlyn.

It worked well because they knew more about what we needed to cover and so I had confidence we were teaching the right things. Yet, sometimes, the plans didn't quite fit my class. Also, I found it difficult, because I had to figure out what was meant in the plans and had to get my mentor to help me.

Whilst there were problems to overcome, Caitlyn's final technical reflection on this offers insight into the underlying objective of the planning, which was to improve pupils' academic success.

The end of year results were very good - so I suppose you could say that the planning worked.

Alongside guidance for lessons, Caitlyn shared that she also received assistance with workload. This seems to be insight of her technical reflective thinking, because she directly relates the help with workload as a contributory factor towards the success of her year.

They prepared most of the resources so I think that helped me and made the NQT year go quite well. The extra afternoon off for NQT time helped as it meant I only really had to do four days out of five.

Furthermore, Caitlyn shares her perception of the technical elements of the teaching role that felt overwhelming.

Not only are you worried about what you are teaching, but you also have to think about whether it is engaging and exciting for the children. It just seems so much to do.

Yet, beyond professional technical support for her practice, Caitlyn's practical reflections acknowledge the personal context of her practice with colleagues also providing emotional support when she struggled with the pressures of the role. Caitlyn talked about the stress she experienced from the accountability and surveillance aspects of the current performative culture in primary education.

> *I did feel a lot of pressure. The observations were very stressful and I was so nervous. My mentor was supportive, but is so brilliant at teaching and I felt I couldn't keep up to his standards.*

However, Caitlyn's NQT story concludes with positive reflections of the year from belief she was highly supported to deliver her practice and succeed her NQT induction period.

The support of my year-group partners was crucial to surviving that year.

Unfortunately, the same level of support did not continue into the following year and Caitlyn believes this affected her professional development.

4.3.3.3 Recent years

When Caitlyn recalls the subsequent year, her story seems less positive.

> *The trouble with the second year was that I worked with a different team and the support fell away. So, I went from loads of help, to much less and yet my confidence hadn't really grown that much.*

Caitlyn's technical reflections on her pedagogical skills identify how reduced colleagues' support for planning and workload affected her practice. Combined with this insight of her second year, Caitlyn's practical reflections reveal how it began to affect the context of the nature of relationships with colleagues too.

I didn't have the extra NQT preparation time and it was awkward with colleagues, because I felt I should know what I was doing. I don't mind doing long hours, but there just seems so much to do which makes me feel enough is enough.

However, it seems the underlying issue driving Caitlyn's emancipatory reflections for change was recognition of negative impact on her wellbeing caused by the performative education culture. For example, Caitlyn's performance management involved regular scrutiny by leadership through book checks, lesson observations and performance feedback meetings. Caitlyn demonstrates her awareness of a data-driven culture and shares how this affects her job confidence.

I keep worrying we won't get the results and I particularly get anxious about being observed. When I get feedback on things I need to improve, for example, more work in the books, it just makes me feel down. During our meeting time, I find it hard to hear about what I should improve and it starts the worrying off again.

For Caitlyn, the emancipatory reflection of her stress from performative expectations resulted in action for change so she can leave her employment at the end of term.

I'm hoping the summer break and move to a new town will give me the fresh start I need. I'm wondering whether to take a Teaching Assistant role until I am sure if I want to continue teaching. This will help me see what the levels of pressure are like for teachers in a different school and then I will be able to evaluate my future career.

These comments indicate Caitlyn's practical, contextualised reflections about comparing her current performative experiences, with potential improvements under new school leadership in a different school context.

As Caitlyn talked about her exit strategy, her manner seemed to be lighter as she focuses on trying to enjoy the final months with her class.

I just need to focus on enjoying the children and make sure I can make it to the end of the year without the Doctor signing me off with stress.

4.3.3.4. Interview 2, Question 2: Review of the day

When Caitlyn reviewed the day, her story focused on two lessons. The first was a Maths lesson when she covered a class for another teacher. Initially, Caitlyn shared outcome focused technical reflections about specific strategies she planned to support pupils' achievement of the learning objective.

I spent time working through the lesson beforehand and made sure everything worked by doing the activity myself first. This helped as a model and I wanted to check it was all fine before I gave it to them.

However, when sharing technical reflections on pupils' progress, Caitlyn revealed her frustration with the outcome of her practice from her perception that she was unable to differentiate support effectively.

Some children seem to be way behind the others and the rest of the class are so much further ahead. There just isn't enough time in the lessons, or enough adults, to give all the children the support they need.

Furthermore, Caitlyn's technical reflections on this lesson also incorporated consideration for how pupils' behaviour affects outcomes. One pupil in particular receives focus on the effect he had on other pupils' learning.

He has such a big personality that he affects the dynamics in the class with his distracting behaviour. I wonder how the others would have progressed over time if he had not been dominating the dynamics within that class.

Having identified problems of practice in her technical reflections about these issues affecting pupils' success, Caitlyn does not share insight of any emancipatory reflective action to effect a positive change and improve the learning experiences for pupils in her class.

However, Caitlyn does link these thoughts about behaviour by moving her story on to share her observation of the cricket coach taking her PE lesson and the impact of his behaviour management techniques.

> *It was strange to see the children respond so differently to someone who is not a teacher. Every time he sorted one group, a few others were distracted, because the whole instruction time was too long and they must have got bored. It's only then you realise the level of skill teachers have from their training to manage behaviour.*

From her review of this PE lesson, Caitlyn's emancipatory reflections caused her to consider her involvement in taking action to effect an improvement in this particular learning experience with the sports coach.

> *I need to follow this up so children behave better for visitors in the future and I will speak to the Head so we can sort this out.*

Caitlyn's story of her teaching day ends on this point despite encouragement to share any further experiences of her teaching day.

The conclusion of this particular period in Caitlyn's career story is that she was able to fulfil her desire to work to the end of term and she finished with optimism for fresh challenges following the summer break.

4.3.4 Tom's story

Tom's background, 3 years, 1 school

Following his degree, Tom had a role as a teaching assistant for a few years, until he decided to do his PGCE and train to be a teacher. He has been teaching Y4 since his NQT year and particularly appreciates and values the collaborative approach to planning and assessment achieved with his year group partner. Tom is keen to do a SATs year in either year 2 or 6 for the challenge this represents. Tom has experienced an Ofsted inspection and, although he received good feedback at the end of the visit, he found the experience unnerving and reported that it damaged his confidence for some time. Tom is considering doing his masters and then seeing what career options are available. He mentioned tutoring or a different job either inside or outside of education.

When analysing the different types of reflection it seemed to me that Tom was equally reflective about technical and practical issues with some indication that emancipatory change features in his thinking too.

4.3.4.1 Interview 1, Question 1: Career journey so far

Tom's career story starts at the point he completed his degree and was a teaching assistant for a few years to see if the school environment was going to be the career path for him. With support from his older sister who is a teacher, Tom commenced his PGCE training period. He recalls practical reflections about the context of school relationships with colleagues during his training.

I got on really well with my keyworker and had good feedback. My middle placement was in a tiny, rural school and my mentor was very particular about how everything had to be done and there was no movement for doing it another way. In a small school, you all have to get on, because if you don't, it would be very awkward when you work in close proximity to each other.

Tom successfully completed his training and secured permanent employment teaching Year 4 pupils.

4.3.4.2 NQT year

The context of relationships with colleagues are first to feature in Tom's practical reflections of his NQT year. He seems to value the partnership with the other Y4 teacher and talks of fearing moving year groups, in case the connection with a new colleague is less strong.

Although we are very different, we just work really well together. We share all the planning and resourcing which helps our work-life balance. I know there are some teachers here who don't work closely with their year group partner and that worries me, especially after the good experience I've had so far.

However, as Tom remembers the year, his practical reflections about the contextualised nature of his practice with recall of a difficult start due to a child's problematic behaviour that affected his confidence.

Every day I was trying my best to be the teacher I had been trained to be and he would be jumping around, shouting and disrupting most of the lessons. I remember feeling quite emotional, yet I was trying to put on a brave face and pretend it didn't matter and I could cope.

Tom's practical reflections shed light on his emotional experience of this situation. Also he provides insight of technical reflections where he evaluates his performance against his perception of not being able to meet the performative expectations of the role he had learnt during his training. Fortunately, with action by his mentor and professional support from colleagues, the behaviour problem was resolved. Tom's conclusion of his NQT year is positive as his technical reflections bring to mind his perception that his year ended successfully.

4.3.4.3 Recent years

In the last two years, Tom's story moves to other issues where his confidence was knocked. The first was Tom's technical reflections about learning outcomes in his experience of critical review from the Head-teacher's lesson observation.

> *I know the head was worried about Ofsted and the pressure of making sure everything was going well before they came, but I felt the feedback was unfair and I took it badly. It has made me feel that I would never want to get on the wrong side of the Head and feel the trust has gone. The weird thing is that he seems to be ignorant that his feedback would affect me and carries on as if nothing was said.*

Tom's comments reveal how that particular feedback affected the relationship between himself and his Head-teacher. The second negative experience was an Ofsted inspection where, despite receiving feedback that his practice was good, Tom's confidence was affected by the inspector's visit to his classroom.

> *When Ofsted came in, I found it intimidating. I thought I was going to get terrible feedback. It was an awful experience and made me lose my confidence. Even though we got a 'Good', it unnerved me.*

When Tom talks about this experience, his emotions of fearing a critical review are insight of his technical reflections, where the focus of his thinking is on the outcome of the

Ofsted judgment grade. Tom shared how this surveillance experience - common in a performative culture - damaged his confidence and that it took some time to rebuild.

Tom's finishes this part of his story with practical reflections about the beneficial relationships with colleagues that he perceives as being fundamental to the enjoyment of his early teaching career.

4.3.4.4. Interview 2, Question 2: Review of the day

Tom continues his personal story and reviews the detail of his classroom experience that day. He starts by drawing on technical reflections that are ultimately outcome-driven and resolve a pedagogical problem he experienced. Tom talked about his classroom organisation of pupils from the moment they arrive in the morning.

> *I believe it is important to have clear routines at the beginning of each day. We have similar options every day and this helps the children to come in and settle down quickly. It helps to create a calm learning atmosphere for them, as well as time to deal with issues if they arise or chat with individuals.*

Tom acknowledges these routines took effort to embed, but he seems to value this practice, because he found it supported the development of pupils' expectations for class learning. His story moves on from the early morning activities to his technical reflections reviewing a trial of a new strategy to improve progress in his Maths' lesson.

> *I've been trying out a new strategy for maths – a carousel. This was suggested to me during a discussion with colleagues about differentiation, because it is so hard to help all ability levels with their maths. This enabled me to spend a short period with each group and pitch the teaching to where they need it.*

Tom also provides insight of collaborative technical reflection of how he discussed the progress problem with colleagues, which led to this particular strategy to solve it. Further technical reflections reveal Tom's focus on pupils' outcomes that prompted strategies to improve this.

> *The high ability group pick things up so quickly – it all makes so much sense to them and only need a quick check that they understood. The more-able group are good too, but they often rush what they are doing and make silly mistakes, but it's the next group who really need adult help to go over it all again.*

Tom's technical reflections indicate his evaluative thinking about how effective the carousel was for improving outcomes, rather than just accepting it as a directed teaching method.

> *I don't know if I would do this every day, because sometimes you just need to teach something new to all of them at the same time, but it has been good to try it and I can see the benefit of working with a small group each day.*

Tom also provides insight that his evaluation of the strategy relates to performance and data expectations indicated his in comment:

> *I have to keep an eye on the coverage as we have so much to make sure they reach the levels expected at the end of the year.*

Furthermore, the pressures of Tom's own performance management targets also feature in his review of this lesson.

> *The data says my class did amazingly well last year and it is a pressure on me to make sure they do as well this year. My performance management targets are really high, because they did so well last year. When I look at a few of them I wonder how those figures were achieved … it really surprises me from what I have seen of the children.*

This example of Tom's technical reflection reveals the performative culture where data driven practice is shaping the nature of primary teaching and learning experiences. Hence, Tom's reflective evaluation of the carousel strategy is reviewed in the context of the outcomes he needs pupils to achieve if he is to meet his own performance targets.

The conclusion of Tom's review of his day includes the story of his lesson being observed again by the Head-teacher as part of his ongoing performance management. Tom's outcome-orientated technical reflections give insight of his additional efforts to ensure pupils achieved success during this surveillance activity.

> *This was a carefully planned lesson and I put a lot more planning time into it than usual. Knowing I was being observed added a level of pressure. To show progress, the lesson was structured to phase the input, so pupils were active and could practice the skills. This time, I incorporated technology by getting the pupils to use iPads to capture videos of their peers to use this to reflect and advise next steps. I definitely would repeat this lesson as it achieved what it needed to achieve, but I haven't had my feedback from the Head yet!*

Despite Tom's previous experience of negative feedback from the Head-teacher, he completes his story in a manner that seems to convey he is now confident and optimistic to hear the views on his observed lesson and practice.

4.3.5 Sarah's story

Sarah's background - five years' practice in three schools.

Sarah's early ambitions were to be a doctor but tried a teaching degree to see if she might like it instead. She says she absolutely loves teaching and others see this in her too. She tells of her Ofsted experience when the inspector commented that she had so much enthusiasm and

energy with the children. Certainly, her bubbly manner during the interviews conveyed to me her drive, passion and clear ambitions for career progression. Following her NQT year Sarah stayed for a further year before changing schools to add the maths co-ordinator role. At the end of the year she moved again to her current school where she is a middle phase leader. Although Sarah trained in early years, her qualified teaching practice has been in years 1, 3 and 6. Sarah is confident to work within a team, as well as autonomously and is very keen to gain a Deputy Head role in the near future.

Through my analysis of Sarah's narratives of her teaching, it appeared to me to be more common for her to reflect on the technical elements of her practice than the practical reflections she shared too.

4.3.5.1 Interview 1, Question 1: Career journey so far

Sarah's story begins with insight she always wanted to be a doctor and she says, coming from an Indian background, this would have fulfilled her family's ambition for her.

> *I think it's that aspiration that you want to be the best and, in my family, medicine is thought of in that way. I thought I'll do the first year of teaching and see how it goes, but I absolutely love it! A friend said to me 'You've always loved it and you've always got so much from it'. So I think I'm very suited to teaching.*

Sarah endorses this with an anecdote about an Ofsted inspector's comment to her 'You have so much enthusiasm and energy with the children'. Certainly, Sarah spoke passionately, enthusiastically and animatedly about teaching during both interviews.

4.3.5.2 NQT year

Sarah only briefly mentions her NQT year with regard to practical reflections on the challenging school context. Her comments convey her perception there was potential for racial prejudice.

> *The school had been headed by an Asian Head-teacher who had been ousted. So, when I was employed there were a lot of raised eyebrows, because they thought 'She's going to be awful' and within two weeks they thought I was brilliant!*

Sarah says she thoroughly enjoyed two years there before moving on and claims *'it ended up being the warmest school I've worked in'.*

4.3.5.3 Recent years

In her third year, Sarah moved to another school and acquired an additional role of Maths co-ordinator. Sarah's technical reflections identify the performative context of data-driven practice that led to her frustrations that this role did not give her access to leadership meetings. She complained she '*received information 'second-hand'*.

> *I felt the Maths Co-ordinator and English Co-ordinator need to be part of the leadership team to contribute to discussions and decisions. Because, basically, the school hangs on the English and Maths results and as much as it shouldn't matter, and I wish it didn't, that's what you are judged on. Despite this whole broad and balanced curriculum of which I completely agree - we <u>have</u> to get the Maths and English results.*

Having provided her personal viewpoint on the restrictive nature of the performative culture, Sarah does not share any insight of emancipatory reflections that might result in action to free her practice from the dominant focus of Maths and English outcomes. It is

possible her statements reflect her acceptance of the performative expectations of current primary practice. Sarah's comments about being judged on these results, seemed to prompt her further thinking of comparing the performative success of her school against others graded 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.

> *When I visit outstanding schools, they are not better than us - just their results are outstanding. But when you draw down into what they do – it's an awful of lot of practising for tests. It's about knowing the tricks of the trade! For example, getting the children to write 'In my opinion…!'*

Yet despite concerns, Sarah moves her story on to share practical reflections of the context of her personal career ambition to be a Deputy Head. Initially, she explains how her Head-teacher is supporting her to develop from her maths and phase leader roles, but she also gives insight of her deeper insecurities that affect her confidence.

> *I haven't had any specific training as such, but my Head-teacher has an awful lot of confidence in me. She believes I can do it. I know that I haven't always been a confident person and sometimes the doubts creep in. With everything I do I always question it - can I do this? I definitely don't intend to be a Head – it's that self-belief again - because I don't believe I can!*

However, there seems more than just career ambition driving Sarah towards Deputy Headship. Her story continues with the revelation from emancipatory reflections to effect change from her belief that the Deputy role will provide a release from the extensive workload she experiences as a teacher.

> *Most days, I'm probably working 15 hours a day - the class teaching role of planning lessons, marking books and leading the phase. Last year it was really all beginning to feel a bit too much. I think this is pushing me into a Deputy role, because I'm finding it hard to sustain the class teaching and phase leadership, even though I love it.*

It seems Sarah's emancipatory reflection is identifying her need to make changes, because she says she is finding the teaching workload untenable. Sarah claims she intends to achieve this change by applying for the next Deputy role that arises, if she perceives it involves an acceptable workload.

4.3.5.4 Interview 2, Question 2: Review of the day

Sarah's review of the day mainly focused on her Year 1 literacy lesson as she explored various outcome-driven issues from her technical reflections about it. Two features of the lesson dominated her recollection. The first issue was pupils' engagement and the second, data-driven practice.

Sarah shared her delight with pupils' engagement with her creative context of a missing dinosaur egg to stimulate their writing.

> *They absolutely loved doing this and couldn't stop talking about it all day - it was such fun for them and us I think – we're loving this too as the children are absolutely buzzing about this idea. Because we are really passionate about making learning fun, I think it is coming over and enthusing the children. I'd find it a bit boring actually if I just had to do plain lessons that we couldn't make interesting.*

While enthusiastic about the engaging writing context, Sarah's technical reflections identify the specific purpose of the lesson, which was to improve the outcome of pupils' skills at punctuating sentences with capital letters and full-stops.

We need both of these objectives on our writing assessment, so we need to find ways to push this and have evidence of what they can do in their independent writing.

With indications of data-driven practice, Sarah's shares insight of her technical thinking about this lesson and her story explains how specific teaching strategies are designed to further pupils' progress.

From our assessments, we realised we needed to push this a lot more – which was why we made the input of modelling errors to enforce the punctuation rules. They love spotting mistakes, especially the top group who are not getting to the exceeding levels at the moment and need two more points to get it. I've been working with the bottom group who seem to have a misunderstanding about it. We've also challenged the children to be better at reflecting on their own work and then editing it before we look at it.

With the same goal of striving for academic progress, Sarah reveals her technical reflection on pupils' behaviour and the potential this negatively impacts on expected outcomes.

The main thing for our year group is to keep an eye on behaviour, because if that starts to deteriorate it affects the learning as well.

Sarah's final comments on this reveal her positive reflection on the lesson overall, although, she seems careful not to become complacent by acknowledging the work still to be done to meet data expectations.

I'm happy with the writing now and should be able to meet the assessment criteria if we keep pushing this over the next few weeks.

Sarah had not taught the afternoon lessons on the day of the second interview, but she was keen to share practical, contextual reflections relating to her concerns about the quality of the cover teacher's practice for her class.

I'm concerned about the children's behaviour when the cover supervisor stands in. I know she is doing her best, but when I got back she was moaning about the children and getting cross about what they couldn't do. I've even had a few children complaining about her, because they say she is always cross with them and cross with their work.

Sarah's thinking processes lead towards indications of emancipatory reflection when she concludes how she can take action to improve this situation.

I'm not sure what to do about this and think I will have to tell the Head-teacher, otherwise I can't see how it is going to change.

Despite these concerns, Sarah does not expand on this further and draws a conclusion to her review of the day.

4.3.6 Summary sub-question (1)

The narrative style used here for reporting the data of these ECTs' stories about their career and practice provides insight into their lived experiences of teaching in an age of performativity. The data analysis process identified that the main findings for this sub-question were six key topics of reflection that were common themes occurring in these ECTs' narratives. The interpretation of the word 'common' used here is that it applied to four or more ECTs' reflective accounts. Table (1) lists the six topics and the participants who reflected on these issues. This table presents the topics ECTs reflected on and the following section on subquestion (2) explores the reasons these topics receive priority focus in ECTs' reflective thinking.

Common topics of reflection about ECTs' career development and teaching practice.	Participants who reflected on these topics.
Key reflection topic (1) Data-driven practice (Technical reflection)	Maria, Bev, Caitlyn, Tom, Sarah
Key reflection topic (2) Colleagues' technical support (Technical reflection)	Maria, Caitlyn, Tom, Sarah
Key reflection topic (3) Colleagues' practical emotional support (Practical reflection)	Maria, Bev, Caitlyn, Tom, Sarah
Key reflection topic (4) Head-teacher's practical support (Practical reflection)	Maria, Bev, Caitlyn, Tom , Sarah
Key reflection topic (5) Workload (Practical reflection)	Maria, Bev, Caitlyn, Tom , Sarah
Key reflection topic (6) Enjoyment of teaching role (Practical reflection)	Maria, Bev, Caitlyn, Tom , Sarah

Table (1) Common topics of ECTs' reflections

Whilst the six most common topics these ECTs' reflected on when reviewing their career and practice fall within the categories of technical and practical reflection defined herein, a key finding is identification of the lack of ECTs' emancipatory reflection for transformative action in this data set. Chapter 2 laid out the endorsement for teachers to lift their reflective focus beyond the narrow confines of classroom issues and critically explore the range of political, socio and ethical influences pervading their practice. The value of engaging in this type of emancipatory reflection is so teachers can evaluate their personal values and ultimate ethos for education when seeking to identify improvements to their provision of teaching and learning experiences (Thompson & Pascal, 2012).

Yet, none of the participating ECTs in this study provided any insight of any emancipatory, critical thinking about broader issues as described in Chapter 2, 2.5.3.3. In fact, the data analysis only identified ECTs' critical thinking that led to emancipatory action when Bev removed herself from a particular school where she was unhappy and Caitlyn's resignation to leave the profession. Sarah's gave insight of her planned action for promotion to effect the change in workload she desires.

Table (2) below lists the emancipatory reflection topics raised at interview and a discussion of this outcome is provided in the following chapter.

• Leave role when conditions unfavourable (Emancipatory reflection)	Caitlyn, Bev, Sarah
• Effect action for internal improvements (Emancipatory reflection)	Caitlyn, Sarah

Table (2) Topics of ECTs' emancipatory reflections

Therefore, having identified the main topics that ECTs reflected on, attention now turns to my findings on the influences that cause each of these topics to feature more prominently in ECTs' reflective review of their teaching career and practice. The aim here is to develop understanding of what is currently shaping the nature of ECTs' reflection in an age of performativity.

4.4 Research sub-question (2)

What is shaping the nature of early career teachers' reflection?

The headline finding for this second sub-question is the overwhelming significance of the performative educational culture in how it dominates the reflective thinking processes of these ECTs when they reviewed their career and practice. The Literature Review explored the meaning of the term 'performative culture' used for this study, with a reminder here from the definition by Troman, Jeffrey and Raggl (2007) that it represents the systems of surveillance, measurement and accountability of pupils, teachers and school performance. Whilst the data analysis processes identified teachers' experiences of pressure to meet performative demands, the findings of this study also provide understanding of how ECTs cope with the various challenges in order to succeed and enjoy their teaching role.

To respond to the inquiry into the influences shaping the nature of ECTs' reflections, two themes stood out as key factors of how the performative culture affects their reflective practice. The first theme is that ECTs are reflecting on the approach of data-driven practice with the technicalities of their teaching focused on steering pupils' outcomes to meet performance expectations. Secondly, in light of the performative demands of their practice, ECTs' reflections revealed how they find it valuable to draw on the technical expertise of colleagues for guidance, as well as building important social relationships to benefit from their emotional support too. Both of these factors seem fundamental to ECTs' survival, success and enjoyment of teaching in a performative era. Therefore, focus now moves to examine these two main themes to learn about the nature of ECTs' reflections.

4.4.1 ECTs' data-driven practice

To understand why ECTs' revealed a reflective focus on the data outcomes of their practice, it is important to identify the influential pressures of accountability systems associated with a performative educational culture. For example, Maria's reflections give insight of her perception of the experience of data-driven practice.

> *Mostly, there isn't enough time to explore anything that may not be results-driven in case we don't get the results.*

Further evidence of this concept occurred in Sarah's data when she indicated awareness of the judgements on her data-driven practice. Her comments reflect the Government's expectations for a school's performance in the core data subjects of Maths and English.

> *Basically, the school hangs on the English and Maths results and, as much as it shouldn't matter, and I wish it didn't, that's what you are judged on.*

Bev also provided an example of her sense of accountability for English outcomes, which shaped her technical reflections. Bev knew she needed to improve the writing data, so she intentionally modelled writing to develop pupils' knowledge of her specific expectations. Initially, Bev was satisfied with the outcome. Yet, her subsequent reflections about potential judgements from her school leaders' scrutiny caused her to view the outcome less positively. Bev's two contrasting comments demonstrate the performative influence on her reflective thinking about pupils' writing.

> *Overall, I'm happy about what they produced.*

> *I know I will be criticised for their handwriting and punctuation … I probably should have worked them harder on the presentation too.*

With similar concerns for accountability of practice, Tom shared his technical reflections that focused on his data-driven practice when being observed by the Head-teacher. Tom admitted putting considerably more effort into the observed lesson to ensure pupils demonstrated their achievement of required outcomes. This accountability element of a performative culture seems to shape Tom's technical reflections when he disclosed he wanted to impress the Head-teacher with both his teaching and pupils' performance. Yet, Tom's story also revealed that, previously, he received negative feedback for a lesson and felt pressure to perform successfully on this occasion to improve the Head-teacher's opinion of his practice.

> *It has made me feel that I would never want to get on the wrong side of the Head and feel the trust has gone.*

Certainly, there was evidence from this study that ECTs are experiencing a 'top-down' performative pressure of high expectations of their practice and this seems to pervade the nature of their reflections about their role. To provide an example, Maria's reflections sum up similar views expressed by the other ECTs with her statement:

> *There is quite a lot of pressure from the Head-teacher to get the data she wants.*

However, the performative pressure for data that influences ECTs' reflection receives varying emotional responses from the participants of this study. On a negative note, Maria mentioned her '*usual panic*' over data outcomes and Tom talked of feeling pressured that his class repeats their previous success.

> *The data says my class did amazingly well last year and it is a pressure on me to make sure they do as well this year.*

Tom's reflections also reveal he found an Ofsted visit '*intimidating'* and the findings of this study provided evidence that the nature of ECTs' reflection of their career and practice was

influenced by their sense of responsibility for the outcomes of their practice. Indeed, all five stories demonstrated ECTs' approach of data-driven teaching practice where pupils' academic performance seemed to be the core objective.

Yet, the findings from this study also identified that not all ECTs are responding negatively to the imposed demands of data outcomes. In this respect, Bev's story provided her reflections on how she overcame initial challenges of managing home and work-life by developing strategies that help her to succeed and enjoy her teaching practice.

> *I just want to do my best and feel happier when I'm on top of it all.*

Maria's reflections indicated she was positive about enjoying her role overall and said '*I'm just lucky to be in a school I like'*. Sarah provided examples of her reflective strategies to succeed, as well as giving important insight of how this contributes to her positive emotional experience of teaching in a performative culture.

> *I thought I'll do the first year of teaching and see how it goes, but I absolutely love it!*
>
> *I'm happy with the writing now and should be able to meet the assessment criteria if we keep pushing this over the next few weeks.*

However, an important point to draw out of Sarah's story is that, whilst her enjoyment of her teaching role might not be jeopardised by performative expectations of her practice, her practical reflections reveal that the considerable teacher workload is a significant negative component of a performative culture that is causing her to move on from the class-teaching role. In this study,

workload issues were a factor shaping the nature of ECTs' reflections of their practice as evidenced in their comments.

> *Caitlyn: I don't mind doing long hours, but there just seems so much to do.*
>
> *Sarah: Most days, I'm probably working 15 hours a day ... I'm finding it hard to sustain the class teaching and phase leadership, even though I love it.*

Furthermore, in this study, Bev found extensive workload caused challenges to her home life, so she moved to part- time working. Sarah's strategy to avoid the untenable workload is to seek a Deputy Head role in her belief this will reduce the pressure of work commitment.

However, this study also found that Maria, Caitlyn and Tom shared insight of their strategies where sharing elements of practice with colleagues was effective in supporting their success, because it reduced the extent of their own personal workload. Although, it is important to mention here their personal advantage of working in large primary schools that facilitated this level of practical assistance for workload, whereas teachers from small schools might not experience this benefit.

So far, this analysis has explored some of the key components prevalent in a performative culture that have a considerable impact on ECTs' practice, thus shaping the nature of their reflections about it. All the ECTs demonstrated an approach of data-driven practice, because of the priority focus on pupils' academic performance. This study found that the common experience was for ECTs to find technical strategies that help them to achieve success so they could continue to fulfil their role.

However, the findings of this data were that, out of the five ECTs interviewed, two of them demonstrated emancipatory reflections that led to action to liberate themselves from a job they deemed unsatisfactory and a third ECT is considering this prospect. Bev provided very little information of reasons prompting her to move schools, other than she was unhappy with the leadership of the new Head-teacher. However, Caitlyn's story revealed how the overwhelming performative pressures were the dominating influence causing her emancipatory reflections for action to break away from the stress of her job. She shared insight of the stress from accountability measures of surveillance strategies and critical feedback that diminished her confidence for her practice. Sarah is currently evaluating whether to leave class teaching in favour of a different role in education that she believes will have a more acceptable workload for her.

These points represent this study's findings of ECTs' reflections on their data-driven practice and the issue of the nature of, or lack of, emancipatory reflective action will be discussed in the following chapter.

In light of the insight gained of performative influences shaping the nature of ECTs' reflections on their data-driven practice, focus now moves to explore the second main finding for this sub-question to understand ECTs' reflections of their need for support from colleagues to succeed and continue in their role.

4.4.2 Colleagues' technical and emotional support

The Literature Review identified a wealth of research about newly qualified teachers benefiting from mentoring support, as well as supportive coaching strategies other teachers may receive, but the aim of this study was to provide a voice for the specific group of teachers who have recently moved on from their first induction year - yet their professional experiences are still limited. When analysing what shapes the nature of their reflective practice, this study found that the pressure of performative demands influenced the technical reflections of four of the five ECTs when they demonstrated their considerable need for guidance from more experienced colleagues. In fact, Maria, Tom and Caitlyn's technical reflections revealed a sense of reliance on professional advice to help their practice meet performance expectations. The level of their dependency is such that it seems they fear the consequences if support is reduced in the future.

> *Maria: My year-group partner helped with planning and I would find it difficult if I had to figure it out on my own… I don't know how I would find it, or if I would like it.*
>
> *Tom: I know there are some teachers here who don't work closely with their year group partner and that worries me, especially after the good experience I've had so far.*
>
> *Caityln: The support of my year-group partners was crucial to surviving that year*
>
> *Cailtyn: I worked with a different team and the support fell away. So, I went from loads of help, to much less and yet my confidence hadn't really grown that much.*

For Caitlyn, her reflections recall that when professional support levels were high, she was able to cope with the challenges of the role, but when these reduced, she felt unable to fulfil the expectations of the role. However, this finding of reliance and dependency for support by these ECTs certainly warrants further discussion in the next chapter.

Having identified that colleagues' technical assistance featured as a key element for ECTs' performative success, their stories also demonstrated how they valued colleagues' emotional support for their personal wellbeing. From the data acquired, it seems that one of the outcomes of the pressures of teaching in a performative culture for these ECTs is the development of positive social interactions with colleagues for friendship and personal support. For example, Maria identified the beneficial impact of making good friends at her school and Caitlyn certainly seemed to appreciate the emotional support for her wellbeing that boosted her confidence so she could continue to the end of the year. Similarly, Tom shared his belief that friendships with colleagues are fundamental to his personal enjoyment of his teaching role. Bev's reflections also revealed that she had learnt the benefit of investing in relationships with colleagues, which positively contributes to her wellbeing.

In addition, Maria provides insight of how she values the relationships with colleagues.

Maria: Sometimes, I 'wobble' and worry a lot, but it helps to talk things through with colleagues.

Having established how colleagues' technical and practical support influences ECTs' reflective practice, a further factor shaping the nature of their reflections as identified in this analysis, is the relationship with their Head-teacher. Although the data analysis process revealed varying experiences amongst the ECTs in their experiences with Head-teachers, the common theme arising was how the relationship affected the nature of their reflective practice. For example, Sarah talked positively about how her Head-teacher has developed her to take on additional leadership roles and how she is now encouraged to move to a deputy role.

Sarah: *My Head-teacher has an awful lot of confidence in me.*

In Sarah's full narrative, she regularly referred to how she reflects on the Headteachers' confidence in her, despite sometimes lacking in her own positive self-belief for aspects of her role.

> '*I know that I haven't always been a confident person and sometimes the doubts creep in'*.

Both Bev and Maria's practical reflections in their stories included accounts that conveyed they received positive endorsement and encouragement from their Head-teacher. Bev went on to reveal very different experiences with her two previous head-teachers. She shared views on their contrasting leadership styles and how changes in the Head-teacher brought a change in ethos at the school that prompted her to seek alternative employment. Without providing many details, Bev did indicate that the experience with the Head-teacher was a key factor in her decision to move schools.

When Tom was reflecting on teaching, his reflections were shaped by concerns to impress the Head-teacher following previous criticism for his practice. Tom shared that his planning for the observed lesson aimed at ensuring pupils clearly demonstrated the expected progress, so the Head-teacher would review his lesson favourably. For Tom, the problematic nature of their relationship shaped his reflections of his practice as evidenced in the following comment:

> *It has made me feel that I would never want to get on the wrong side of the Head and feel the trust has gone.*
>
> *Knowing I was being observed added a level of pressure.*

In this scenario, Tom's reflections of his teaching practice seem influenced by the nature of his relationship with the Head-teacher and there were indications in Tom's story of his desire that pupils demonstrate their progress in order for the Head-teacher to be satisfied with his practice.

4.4.3 Positive performative teaching

So far, this analysis of the nature of ECTs' reflection in a performative era has identified some of the challenges of ensuring teaching achieves expected outcomes and how ECTs' draw on the expertise and emotional support of colleagues as they build their knowledge, skills and experiences. However, in this data set, the difficulties of performative teaching was not the only picture portrayed from ECTs' reflections and positive elements of their practice were identified in the data analysis process. In my opinion, the open nature of the narrative inquiry approach was effective in enabling participants to talk freely and share the discussion topics when they came to mind during the interview period. The outcome was that the positive elements of ECTs' reflections were part of their flow of narrative and not provided as a response to a specific questions inquiring into their enjoyment of the role. Hence, the positive indicators are sporadic throughout the narratives, with a collation of a few comments offered here as a snapshot to demonstrate this element shaping the nature of ECTs' reflective thinking about performative teaching.

Maria: '*I'm just lucky to be in a school I like'*

Sarah: *I thought I'll do the first year of teaching and see how it goes, but I absolutely love it! So I think I'm very suited to teaching.*

Sarah*: I'm finding it hard to sustain the class teaching and phase leadership, even though I love it*

Bev: *I surprised myself that I enjoyed the early years' job… I just want to do my best and feel happier when I'm on top of it all.*

Tom*: Although we are very different, we just work really well together*

For Caityln, she too started with optimism and enjoyment of the role with her reflections that '*I like teaching and my NQT year went OK as I had lots of support from the other year group partners and this helped me a lot'*. Yet, the finding from Caitlyn's reflections indicate how her early enthusiasm and motivation was destroyed by performative pressures that caused her to leave her role.

However, whilst these findings provide insight from ECT's reflections of recognition of enjoyable, rewarding elements of their role, what the data analysis failed to identify was the concept in earlier studies suggesting a new style performative teacher who embraces the neoliberal systems of marketization and thrives on the rewards and incentives available in performative regimes (Popkewitz & Kirchgasler, 2014). Yet, no mention was made in this data by any of the participants regarding either positive rewards or negative sanctions awarded as a consequence of pupil or teacher performance.

4.4.4. Conclusion

This chapter has provided the findings of my research presented in the form of five reconstructed stories from the narrative interviews that offer insight into the nature of ECTs'

reflection on their practice in an age of performativity. Through the various processes of data analysis previously described, the findings herein have been organised to respond to each of the research sub-questions. This has facilitated provision of knowledge of the issues prioritised in ECTs' reflections on their career and a focused period of teaching practice, as well as drawing together the themes that give insight into the factors that currently shape the nature of their reflections. Therefore, in light of the findings from this study, the following chapter provides a discussion on my interpretation of this particular phenomenon and an appraisal of the value of the learning gained from this research project.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together the themes identified from the findings of this study and offers a discussion of the theory generated from this project that I can use to develop my own school leadership practice. The study was driven by the key research question enquiring into the nature of ECTs' reflection in an age of performativity. This line of inquiry developed from my need to gain deep insight into the issues ECTs' are prioritising for reflective thinking so I can review how to be more effective in supporting this group of teachers who are in the early stages of their career. The chapter with the first theme 'Reflection of positive teaching' to briefly review the findings of ECTs' reflections and insight of some of the enjoyable aspects of teaching in the modern culture. It is important to highlight this positive context, especially when the focus of my investigation was to explore the 'problem' solving strategy of reflection and learn of the nature of ECTs' reflection to develop my knowledge to support the ECTs I work with.

The discussion unfolds over three further sections to incorporate themes I have chosen to help clarify how the findings of this study provide answers to the research questions I was keen to learn more of. Discussion of the first theme starts by demonstrating that the nature of ECTs' reflective thinking is strongly influenced by the performative education culture that demands high ambition for pupils' outcomes and, consequently, teachers' highly skilled professional performance to facilitate this. Hence, the second discussion theme focuses on ECTs' technical reflections about the outcomes of their practice.

A key finding from this study was the identification of the level of support ECTs' seem to require evidenced by both their technical and practical reflections about their practice. The discussion divides into two sections to review ECTs' reflections on both technical and practical support, which they report contributes to their positive experiences of the teaching role. The fourth theme reviews the findings from this study of ECTs' emancipatory reflection and the nature of their thinking about transformative action. As previously reported, analysis of the data from this investigation was unable to establish evidence of ECTs' emancipatory reflective thinking about the broader issues influencing their daily practice, so the discussion moves to explore this outcome and the learning to be gained from this insight.

Before commencing the discussion and as a point of reference - the following diagram (Figure 5) offers a summary representation of key findings about the nature of ECTs' reflection and these are the issues now presented for discussion in this chapter.

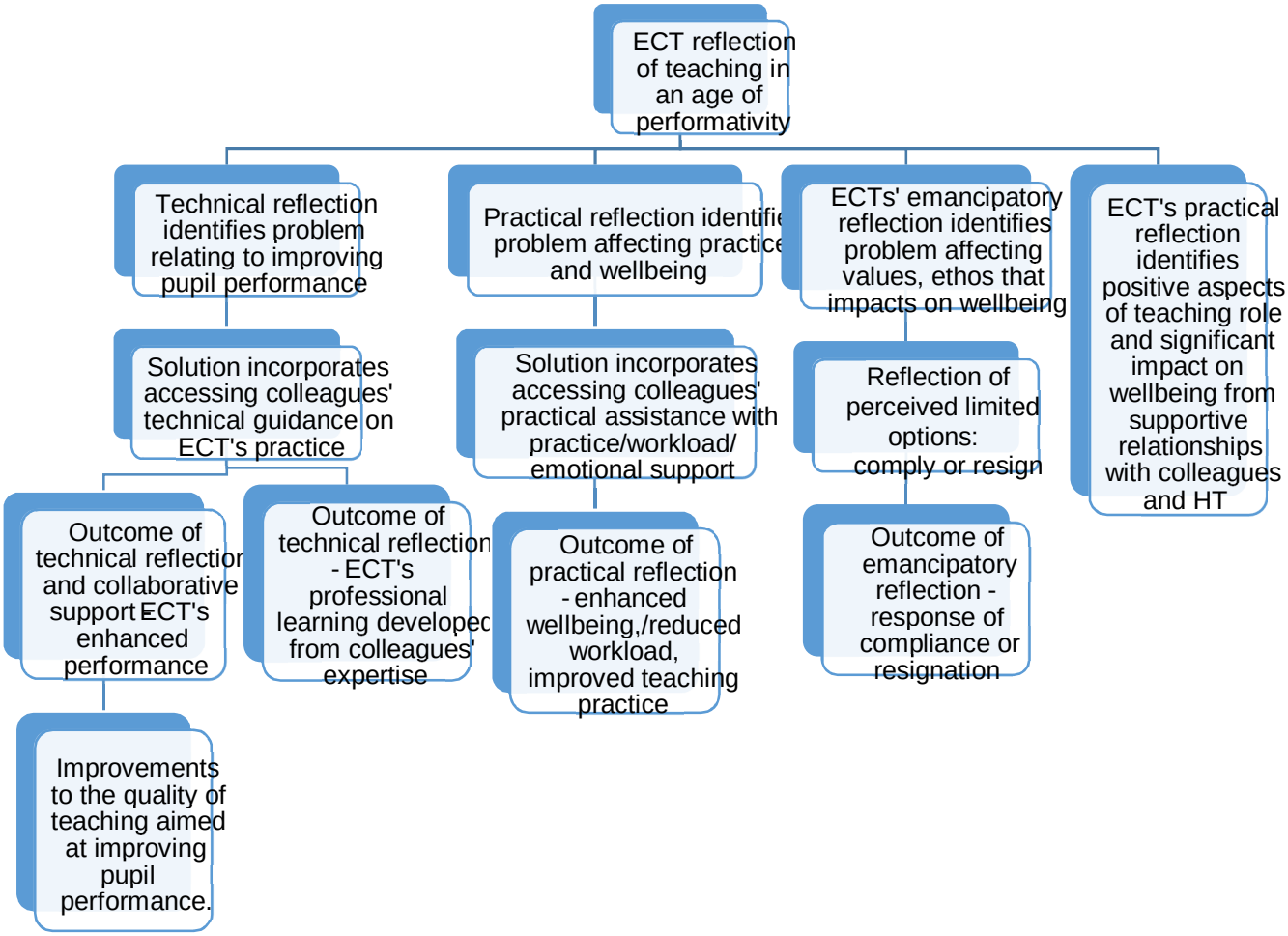

Figure 5. Diagram summarising key findings of the nature of ECTs' reflection

5.2 Discussion theme (1) Reflection of positive teaching

This discussion theme draws on the findings in chapter 4, section 4.4.2 to acknowledge identification of ECTs' practical reflections of their positivity towards their role. Sometimes, the data was clear with ECTs' reflections using positive and emotive words in their stories about their career and practice. For example, Maria considers herself to be '*lucky*' to work in a school she likes and Sarah expressed her passion and '*loves*' teaching. In addition, Bev shared *'I surprised myself that I enjoyed the early years' job'*. Tom's positivity came through his reflections on how he enjoys working with his team: '*we just work really well together'* and *'the good experience I've had so far'*. This finding falls in line with recent research that

identified teachers who find ways to achieve job satisfaction within the conditions of a performative culture (Perryman et al., 2017; Keddie, 2017).

However, in this dataset, none of the ECTs' stories seemed to depict the profile of the new marketised teacher who might be incentivised by the objectification and quantification of their practice that can lead to additional rewards, such as additional merit pay, contracts or leadership roles (Popkewitz & Kirchgasler, 2014). Holloway & Brass (2018) explain how the performative culture of judgment mechanisms monitoring teacher performance can lead to evaluators offering high value teachers rewards and consequences to incentivise the direction of practice in ways deemed favourable by managers of school institutions. If the ECTs in this study had shared experiences of exposure to external rewards and incentives to steer their practice in certain directions, this may have affected the data acquired regarding the topics of reflection and the nature of their reflective thinking. My personal view of the absence of indicators of marketised teachers in this data is to reflect on the design of the research methods and acknowledge the effect of just one open-ended interview question to prompt ECTs' reflective narratives. Without an interview schedule with questions specifically targeting this line of inquiry, the narrative interview method has not provided insight of incentives or rewards in any of the ECTs' accounts.

Whilst, I believe it was important to include this theme of positive teaching in the discussion to provide a more-rounded view of the nature of ECTs' reflection, my interpretation from this data is that reflections of the positive, enjoyable elements of modern teaching are significantly affected by teachers' concerns to ensure the outcomes of their practice meet performance demands. For example, Caitlyn's story about the role started positively with her reflection: *'I like teaching'*, but it seems her enjoyment of working with children and the

pressures of performative teaching contaminated her experiences to the extent she cannot continue. Whilst my own teaching experiences align with ECTs in the study who reflected on their passion, enthusiasm and enjoyment for teaching, the goal of this study was a personal quest to gain insight of the nature of ECTs' reflections – whether positive or problematic - so I can identify how to be more effective in my leadership of ECTs. The detail of the impact on my practice from this learning about the nature of ECTs' reflection is provided in the following chapter. Therefore, focus now moves to review some of the challenges of teaching in an age of performativity that featured in the reflections of the ECTs' in this study.

5.3 Discussion theme (2) Technical reflections about outcomes

To structure this discussion about the nature of ECTs' technical reflections, initial focus is given to their reflections on pupil performance, followed by reflections on their own professional performance. The discussion then explores the overriding pattern of the impact of neoliberal policies that generated a performative culture and led to data-driven practice being rooted in the nature of ECTs' professional reflective thinking.

5.3.1 Pupil performance

A key point of learning for me from the results of this study was the extent to which academic outcomes focused in the reflections of the ECTs taking part in this research project. Evidence of this pervaded the snapshots of narratives presented in the Findings chapter 4, where ECTs' reflections about their career and teaching practice frequently demonstrated a technical focus on pupils' results. Indicators of the level of ECTs' concern for pupil performance were communicated in their reflections, expressing emotions of '*panic*' (Maria),

'*worry*' (Caitlyn) and fear of '*judgment*' (Sarah) which provided insight of their level of concern about academic outcomes.

Given the known nature of performativity as described in the Literature Review, this finding of ECTs' results focus was not a total surprise bearing in mind the professional obligations on teachers and pressures to meet the state's performative demands for the outcomes of their practice. Yet the clear theme coming through was how extensively the results-driven agenda featured during both their reflections about their career journey and their critical review of their day of teaching. The current insight gained from the findings of my study contributes to understanding of ECTs' experiences of professional accountability which involves achieving standards imposed by the Government, as well as any other performance criteria imposed by Government agencies and each school's management teams (Beck, 2008). Certainly, the expressions of concerns from Maria, Caitlyn and Sarah mentioned in the previous paragraph tended to represent their reflective response to the accountability measures of their school leadership.

When appraising my finding and learning of the nature of ECTs' reflection that prioritises an outcome-driven approach to their practice, this insight offers a similar comparison with outcomes identified in other recent studies. For example, Biesta, Priestly and Robinson's (2015) study of stories from six teachers in Scotland found teachers were driven by the pupil outcomes and they also took the responsibility of their data targets very seriously. However, whilst there are correlations with Biesta et al.'s (2015) study that provides a level of comparison due to being a similar scale of research study to mine, inevitably, the culture of education will be different in Scotland. In addition, their participants' views represented a broader length of teaching experience, which does not offer comparisons regarding the

reflections on data specific to the group of ECTs that I am particularly interested in learning about.

Therefore, to review my finding of ECTs' concern for pupil outcomes against other existing knowledge, focus turns to Wilkins' (2011) study who commenced researching experiences of ECTs ten years ago and found a results-driven approach to feature strongly in teachers' reflections on practice in the early stages of their career. However, in Wilkins' (2011) study, the direction of specific interview questions drew out insight that rewarding feedback from positive relationships with pupils was a key finding. Although his main finding about relationships did not correspond with my main findings, this is possibly explained by the broad open questions and design of my study that enabled ECTs to choose for themselves the topics to share when asked about their career and practice. Indeed, I believe that it was through this specific research methodology and choice of data collection methods I was able to access this key finding about the nature of ECTs' reflection and how data concerns are a strong component of their reflective thinking.

Furthermore, my finding that pupils' results are a priority focus in ECTs' reflection relates to two more recent larger-scale studies. The first is Perryman and Calvert's (2019) survey of 1200 trainees in 2011, but four years later only 48% reported being committed to staying in teaching. Those considering leaving the profession blamed the accountability agenda and performative context expressed in terms of fear and pressure to meet performance demands. This research identified teachers' negativity towards high workload, but also the stresses from teachers' responsibility for results prompted so many to consider whether to continue with their career. In this respect, Maria's quote from my findings demonstrates how her current thinking aligns with pressures for outcomes and data-driven practises as

experienced by other teachers in the aforementioned studies: '*Mostly, there isn't enough time to explore anything that may not be results-driven in case we don't get the results. When I started teaching, I wasn't expecting to be so focused on data'*. Yet, whilst Maria's reflections reveal her recognition of the impact of performative expectations imposed on her practice, she does not go on to indicate any further thinking about taking any transformative action to address this.

When I personally reflected on this outcome of ECTs' reflective thinking focus on their data-driven practice, I believe the design of the theoretical framework and data analysis processes were effective to facilitate drawing out this specific insight of ECTs' technical reflections on pupil outcomes. However, I also need to incorporate my own reflexive thinking on this to consider this outcome against the views of others who challenge the value of teachers' reflections if the purpose is narrowed to technical concerns to simply identify how to improve results further (Farrell & Mom, 2015). Indeed, the literature review chapter presented views that the DfE (2012) Teacher Standards promote reflection that is more technical in nature and geared to lead teachers' behaviours to organise practice for pupils' academic performance (Meierdirk, 2016). The findings from this study contribute to this perspective with ECTs' professional reflections mainly concerned with their approaches towards the technicalities of achieving outcomes and accessing colleagues' expertise to facilitate this when needed. Furthermore, the findings seem to me to indicate insight of each of the participant ECTs that their professional identity incorporates high levels of personal responsibility for the data outcomes expected from their practice. Certainly, the extent of their comments during the narrative interviews reflect the level of their concerns, combined with their openness about accessing colleagues' support for successful practice – demonstrate this aspect of their professional identity from the nature of their reflections on performative teaching.

Therefore, to build on this picture of the performative culture about ECTs' technical reflection on pupils' results, focus now moves to review the findings of reflection on teacher performance too.

5.3.2. Teacher performance

Alongside the pressure for pupils' successful academic performance, these findings also identified ECTs' technical reflection on the perceived pressures of results of their own performance targets. Tom provided insight of this explaining the pressure on him to '*make sure they do as well this year. My performance management targets are really high, because they did so well last year'*. In Chapter 4, Maria, Bev and Caitlyn all added to the picture of accountability measures of surveillance and close scrutinisation of their planning, lessons and books when school leaders evaluate their teaching performance. Again, this finding is not surprising given the wealth of literature on the accountability systems of measurement and surveillance of teachers that can lead to overwhelming pressure of their personal professional performance, especially when their practice must ensure students perform well on tests too (Ball, 2003). However, the discourse of performativity includes suggestions that reflections on the pressures for their professional performance might lead to teachers being paralysed by fear – which was the sentiment expressed by Caitlyn in chapter 4, 4.4.2 (Ball, 2003).

From this insight, my understanding and interpretation of this theme aligns with the views of Bubb and Hoare (2013) that external pressures for pupil and teacher performance can significantly influence a stronger focus on teachers' technical reflections aimed at supporting their success with the performance management systems and culture experienced in schools (Bubb & Hoare 2013). Certainly, there are correlations with my findings where ECTs'

reflections at an emotional level prompted further technical reflection on various elements of their teaching - with the overriding objective of ensuring their practice delivered successful pupil outcomes.

Furthermore, from their awareness that pupil results matter, ECTs' technical reflections also identified the potentially limiting factors of flaws in their own subject knowledge that might impact on students' learning success. This illustrates the value of ECTs' reflection where the outcomes of their analytical thinking identifies a flaw in their practice that could then be the subject of further focus for self-improvement and professional growth. For example, Bev advises '*you are always conscious of the subject knowledge that you should know more of*' and, whether this is the plight common to all ECTs, it certainly featured as a concern amongst the group participating in this research. In addition, when the topic of pupil behaviour arose in the ECTs' narratives, it tended to represent their technical reflections about managing pupils' behaviour to help them refocus to support achievement of learning goals. For example, Sarah demonstrates how behaviour feeds into her concerns for results when she commented: '*if that starts to deteriorate it affects the learning'*.

The overall image of performative practice portrayed here highlights the current experiences of ECTs whose reflective thinking focuses on technical problem solving to improve students' academic outcomes - whilst succeeding with their own performance management too. These findings match the opinions of teachers in Pratt's (2017) study of their reflection of external pressure to ensure pupil data is achieved in accordance with school leaders' requirements.

With this growing picture of the nature of ECTs' reflective thinking affected by the pressures of performance and results from themselves and their pupils, it is important to include the layer of school scrutiny and judgment through Ofsted's inspection of schools described in chapter 2, 2.4. In this study, not all the ECTs had been exposed to an Ofsted visit, yet for Bev, her school's strategy to move out of the category of special measures resulted in heavily directed practice to improve results, which she reflected negatively about. For example, *'I don't value the time writing a lesson plan that is in my head - just because somebody might come and want to see it what looks like'*. For Tom, the experience of Ofsted seemed negative with him using the adjectives '*awful*' and '*intimidating*' as he described how it '*unnerved*' him as a result of the inspection process. Chapter 2, section 2.4.2 provided the Ofsted context and, since the time of undertaking this research, Ofsted (2019) have responded to negative teacher feedback about the stress of inspections and excessive focus on pupil outcomes by creating a new framework to evaluate schools on a broader range of issues to inform a quality of education judgement (Adams, 2019). However, at the time of writing, it is too soon to comment on the effectiveness of this improvement strategy.

When considering this overall theme of ECTs' reflection for results, it is important to identify the broader performative context that, ultimately, feeds into the nature of these reflections. As identified in the literature review 2.3, the political move towards neoliberal education in England resulted in a policy direction of transforming education towards the knowledge economy (Olssen & Peters, 2005). Inevitably, political ambitions for the global economy ultimately feed into the classroom experiences where teachers have responsibility to ensure students acquire the knowledge necessary to engage in economic human capital markets (Sabbah, Naser & Awajneh, 2016).

Certainly, these findings demonstrate how ECTs are taking their professional responsibilities for the outcomes of their practice very seriously and seem keen to achieve academic success. In fact, the ECTs' reflections for results seemed more directed towards meeting the schools' expectations of outcomes from their practice, than offering any mention of broader national objectives for education. However, my findings did portray a similar picture provided in earlier larger scale surveys of teachers who reported having to generate a range of evidence for external validation in order to demonstrate their professional success and survive in an existence of calculation (HCEC, 2017; Keddie, 2017).

Therefore, in light of the findings of ECTs' positive reflections of teaching combined with their significant concerns for being successful teachers and delivering the required results, it is not surprising that those who are relatively inexperienced and in the early stages of their career draw on the guidance and expertise of their colleagues. Hence, this discussion moves to consider the technical and practical support that was identified as a key issue in ECTs' reflective thinking about their practice.

5.4 Discussion theme (3) Practical reflections about support

To structure the discussion of this theme, focus is given to the main three elements ECTs reflected on regarding technical, practical/social and Head-teacher's support to share my learning on the nature of their reflective thinking about teaching in an age of performativity.

5.4.1 Technical support from colleagues

Given the challenges of performative teaching and my research of literature, I had anticipated this theme before commencing this study, yet the new knowledge I gained was ECTs' reflections that indicated the significant extent of their requirement for colleagues' support. Evidence of technical support was provided in chapter 4, 4.4.2 and demonstrated the strength of ECTs' reflections that support was '*crucial*' (Caitlyn) and Maria expressed her concerns '*if I had to figure it out on my own'*. For further examples, Tom shared how he acted on colleagues' guidance to try a new teaching strategy when he felt his teaching was not meeting pupils' differentiated needs. Additionally, Sarah's description of her day regularly incorporated the pronoun 'we' when she reflected on the collaborative approach to improving outcomes.

This finding of ECTs' need for technical support has elements that correlate with a pattern identified from previous studies where teachers acknowledge the benefits of collaboration with colleagues to support their own teaching experiences. For example, Wolgast and Fischer's recent (2017) longitudinal study in Germany found that teachers who engaged in collaborative preparation for their classes, continued higher levels of colleague support two years later than those who did not commence this type of collaborative approach. Additionally, the teachers who worked collaboratively throughout the research period, experienced lower levels of perceived work-related stress four years later, than those who worked independently.

This insight about German teachers also relates to the experiences of teachers in England where Opfer and Pedder (2010) investigated teachers' experiences of continuous professional development (CPD). Whilst they found CPD tends to involve passive and decontextualised learning with little positive impact, teachers did report their views on the considerable benefits of collaborative working with colleagues for training and gaining new

information for their practice. Furthermore, when considering this theme within the narrow focus of the group of teachers in the early stages of their career, Maguire et al. (2010) suggest that a dependency on senior colleagues' assistance with policy interpretation can occur.

However, whilst there are connections with the themes identified in my findings and those in other studies, the value of new learning from this investigation is the insight that, currently, ECTs' in England's primary schools seem extremely concerned to ensure their practice meets the outcomes expected of them and this leads them to access colleagues' technical guidance to support this. Hence, the reflection model (Figure 6) below offers this key finding in a simplified form to summarise my insight from this study that the nature of ECTs' reflections about performative teaching has a strong technical focus on outcomes and colleagues' support is often a main element of ECTs' reflective action.

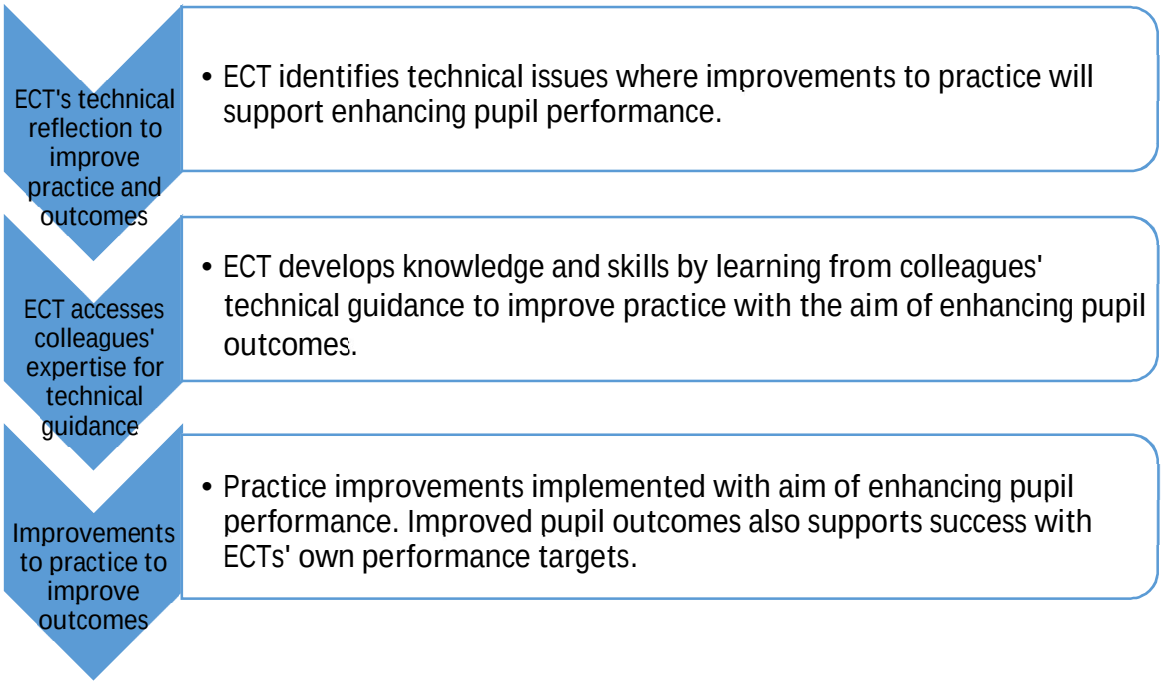

Figure 6. ECTs' technical reflection on outcomes

Alongside this theme of technical support from colleagues is the connection with ECTs' practical reflection on collaboration with colleagues to support the practical elements of their practice, as well as how positive relationships with peers contributes to their wellbeing.

5.4.2. Practical support from colleagues

The key finding as described in chapter 4, 4.3.7 provided insight into the nature of practical reflections - with ECTs' identifying the benefit of collaborative working and how their workload reduces when colleagues' support involves sharing the lesson planning and resources for learning. It is interesting that the ECTs shared insight about the issue of workload and the positive impact of colleagues' assistance – especially bearing in mind the current context of many teachers complaining workload is a key reason for leaving the profession. For example, the HCEC (2017) survey in 2015 identified 76% of teachers claimed workload was a key factor causing them to leave. My perception from the findings of my study was the demonstration of a strong work ethic of these ECTs, but it seems the level of effort needed to sustain practice that gets results had an impact on their practical reflective thinking. The following quotes provide a snapshot of the reflections on workload from ECTs in my study: '*I do long hours and probably longer than some others here'* (Bev), '*I don't mind doing long hours, but there just seems so much to do'* (Caitlyn) and '*Most days, I'm probably working 15 hours a day'* (Sarah). From this data, four of the five ECTs gave insight of the impact of colleagues' help with workload and only Bev's narrative did not include this element.

Given the known culture of heavy teacher workload, it is not surprising that this finding occurred in ECTs' reflections on how valuable colleagues' support is to them if this also includes the practical element of reducing their workload. Yet, even with colleague's practical

assistance, the ECTs' reflected negatively on the extent of their workload. In this study, evidence was provided in both Caitlyn's and Sarah's stories that matched existing research acknowledging that untenable teacher workload risks a de-motivated workforce who then may not strive to achieve Government ambitions for improved academic outcomes (Wilkins, 2011). Certainly, this provides an example of the fragile nature of policy implementation if teachers' values do not align with the state direction for education and workload capacity prompts teachers to prioritise for themselves which issues they focus on (Maguire et al., 2015).

In the context of ECTs in my study, the need for colleagues' support for guidance on various elements of practice confirms Maguire et al.'s (2010) suggestion that ECTs may rely heavily on senior colleagues for policy interpretations as they seek to cope with the reality of classroom practice. For example, as previously mentioned, Maria indicated that she would struggle without support. In the same way, Caitlyn demonstrated her feeling of awkwardness and need for further guidance if she did not understand how to implement the work colleagues shared with her.

However, whilst the theme that ECTs reflection for support was a key finding from this study, one issue that was not mentioned in my data was the addition to teacher workload if time for technical conversations with colleagues happens regularly and, thus, impacts on the workload for all involved. As a solution to the negative feedback the state has received about increased teacher workload due to the provision of additional evidence for accountability regimes, the Government has responded with the School Workload Reduction Toolkit (DfE, 2019). My research with ECTs was conducted before the publication of this strategy and it seems to offer the potential of improving teacher workload, but only if school leaders' have knowledge of it and fully implement this strategy for their staff.

An additional layer of ECTs' reflections is that they appreciated colleagues' practical support that seemed to positively affect their wellbeing. The findings chapter 4 provides evidence of this with Bev being the only participant whose reflections did not include support from colleagues for the technical elements of practice. Yet, all the participants' stories incorporated reflections of value for colleagues' involvement and support for their personal enjoyment of the role. In the narratives provided in chapter 4, the ECTs' reflected on how they had developed friendships with colleagues at school and the beneficial effect of having this support network to share some of the stresses of their work.

This outcome is in line with existing studies on teachers' wellbeing where teachers' perceptions of stress seem less when they report of working in positive collegiate environment (Johnson & Johnson, 2005; Wolgast & Fischer 2017). Kinman, Wray and Strange's (2011) study identified that teachers' social support alleviates some of the negative experiences of their emotional responses to performative demands. In fact, the benefit of a supportive working environment is that it is believed to be conducive to enhancing teachers' job performance as they manage the issues of their practice (Kinman, Wray & Strange, 2011). Indeed, this concept of colleague's guidance and support for teachers' practice is also considered to be a defining characteristic of teachers' professional development. Kennedy (2005) identifies the importance of relationships between two, or small groups of teachers, as beneficial to support continuing professional development. This relationship can involve elements of coaching, mentoring, counselling and professional friendship – which combine to offer professional learning within the school context and is enhanced through the shared dialogue between colleagues. Certainly, a school's professional culture can be crucially important in creating an

environment for laying down the foundations of professional development through the sharing of knowledge and skills that will particularly those in the early stages of their teaching career.

On this theme, the Government has recognised the value of teachers collegiate and peer support and their proposed Early Career Framework (ECF) is designed to respond to concerns that ECTs 'have not enjoyed the support they need to thrive, nor have they had adequate time to devote to their professional development' (DfE, 2019, p.4). The aim of the ECF is to provide networking opportunities to build in capacity for support and friendships amongst those in the similar stages of the career. Indeed, in this respect Kinman et al. (2011) recommended that leaders facilitate opportunities for teachers to engage in peer coaching to provide mutual support and develop knowledge and skills.

However, in this study, the ECTs reflected positive support networks from colleagues for both technical and practical support, yet Caitlyn and Sarah still both seek a move out of teaching and Tom expresses his real concerns and commitment to the role if his colleagues' support network diminishes. From my study, it was the pressure for teacher performance to secure pupils' outcomes causing Caitlyn to leave teaching and, for Sarah, an untenable workload is the issue driving her search for a different role. Future research on the effectiveness of the ECF will be needed to identify if the networking and mentor support element over an increased 2-year period is effective enough to redress the trend of ECTs leaving the profession.

5.4.3 Technical and practical support from Head-teachers

In my analysis of this study's data, when ECTs' reflected on their colleagues' support the narratives did not include reference to whom they were supported by other than mention of

their NQT mentor or their Head-teacher. However, these narratives did provide insight that their relationship with Head-teacher was an important one that affected the nature of their wellbeing, positivity and, even their future at the school. Furthermore, the data demonstrated differences amongst these teachers' early career experiences with Head-teachers. The negative example shared by Tom gave insight of his disappointment to the extent that he feels he can no longer trust his Head-teacher, while Bev moved schools searching for a better experience and relationship with the Head. In contrast, Maria reflects how she was encouraged by the Headteacher and Sarah reflects so positively on the endorsement and encouragement for promotion that her Head-teacher inspires in her.

The research studies and existing literature about Head-teachers and their staff tends to link the pressures of performative education with the nature of this particular professional relationship. For example, Keddie's (2017) study reminds of the modern culture of unprecedented levels of measurement, judgment and comparisons that ultimately impacts on Head-teachers' leadership role and their need for teachers' and pupils' performance to support school success. This is a result of a neoliberal approach to the education system where market conditions for schools draw on competitive league tables of pupils' attainment, along with Ofsted grades and generates performance pressure for Head-teachers (Stevenson & Wood, 2014).

In a study of Head-teachers in England, Hammersley-Fletcher (2013) identified their strong support for pupils' education, yet it was imperative their leadership achieved school success with externally imposed targets. In the neoliberal education culture, Head-teachers strive to avoid public disapproval by acting to meet targets to improve performance of neoliberal agendas for compliance (Hammersley-Fletcher, 2013). In my study, Maria reflected

on this element of pressure on Head-teacher's leadership: *I understand the pressure the Head is under to make sure we get the results.* Tom also shared how he tried to understand the burden on his Head-teacher and the reasons why he received negative feedback from his observed lesson: *I know the Head was worried about Ofsted and the pressure of making sure everything was going well before they came.* Indeed, with Government pressure on Head-teachers to organise schools so they are highly successful in terms of academic attainment, inevitably, these pressures transfer to school leaders' expectations of success from teachers' classroom practice (Page, 2017).

When considering the topic of Head-teacher's support from my data, comparisons are made with Storey's (2004) study of school leaders in England, where conflicting agendas between staff and the head-teacher were identified as issues of tension. Storey (2004) suggests that from the study's findings that it was not the different personality traits or characteristics of Head-teachers that posed problems, but rather the immense pressures for school performance that created conditions that affected the nature of their relationships with staff. Once again, it is evident how the pressure for success in the performative culture is an issue that permeates all aspects of modern teaching practice - right through to ECTs' reflections on their relationship with the main school leader.

In my study, Bev did not offer any detailed insight into the reasons why the leadership of her previous school was such that it caused her to change schools - as this would have been helpful insight for me to understand the issues that concerned her. Whilst overall, I believe my data collection method was effective by using just one introductory question, in this instance my insight is potentially limited as I felt it was inappropriate to interrupt the flow of Bev's narrative with questions serving my own interest in her reasons for leaving. Therefore, as Bev

chose to leave out the detail of what happened in her story, I am unable to learn about the impact of school leaders' practice that may have been beneficial for my own professional development.

To summarise this discussion theme, teachers benefiting from colleagues' support is not a new concept and reported in previous studies. However, this study contributes insight specific to the group of teachers in the early stages of their career who need practical and emotional support from colleagues and their head-teacher as they continue to learn the skills of teaching in an age of performativity. This data also provided new insight about ECTs' practical reflections revealing the extent of their concern if the level of colleagues' and head-teachers' support is not able to meet the level of their needs. Therefore, Figure 7 below offers a summary of this finding with a model of ECTs' pSractical reflection as identified in this study.

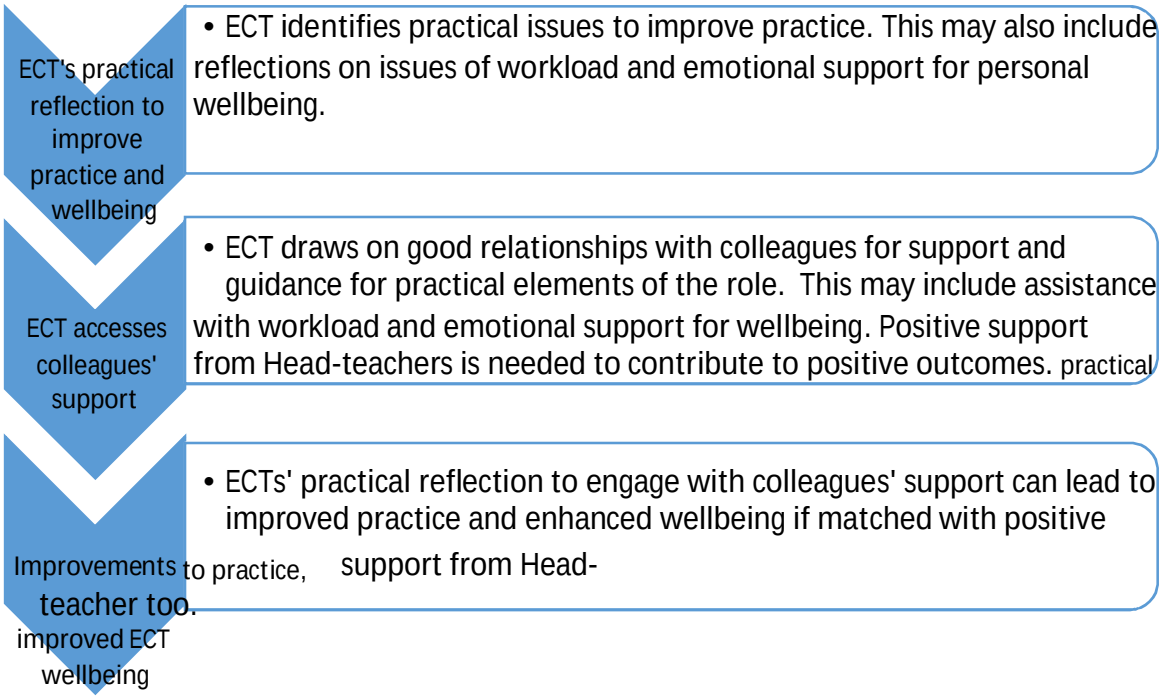

Figure 7. ECT's practical reflections on colleagues' support.

With these themes in mind of ECTs technical reflection for results and their practical reflection about support, focus moves to the findings of the category of emancipatory reflection to review how this featured in the nature of ECTs' reflective thinking on performative teaching.

5.4 Discussion theme (4) Emancipatory reflection

The Findings chapter reported how my study offers limited insight of ECTs' emancipatory reflection about their values for education and the issues of performativity that affect their daily teaching practice. Certainly, from this study's data, it appears that when reviewing the nature of ECTs' reflection, it seems the level of emancipatory reflection for change and transformative action is low when compared to their technical and practical reflective thinking towards compliance with performative demands. However, when making this judgment about low levels of emancipatory reflection it is important to acknowledge some of the specific research methods when appraising the conclusions drawn in this discussion. Firstly, the open nature of both interview questions facilitated participants to choose the topics to share, hence, it is possible that the existence of higher levels of emancipatory reflections were simply not represented on these occasions - in favour of other issues to talk about during the interview. Furthermore, the findings draw on the experiences of just five participants based on the principle that qualitative methodology offers credibility from valuable new learning gained from the rich detail of data acquired, rather than the necessity of many repetitions of information to validate claims (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). These factors are discussed further in the following chapter, however attention turns to review this study's findings and my interpretations of this to develop understanding of the nature of ECTs' reflection in a performative culture.

In this study, the findings are that three ECTs expressed transformative action from their emancipatory reflection to effect improvement, but their strategies were limited to leaving the school or the teaching role altogether. The model below in Figure 8 draws together what I learned specifically from this study's findings about the nature of emancipatory reflective experiences of the ECTs participating in this research. This demonstrates the limited scope of their reflective thinking about transformative action to explore other potential options for improvement, than the outcome of resignation from their role.

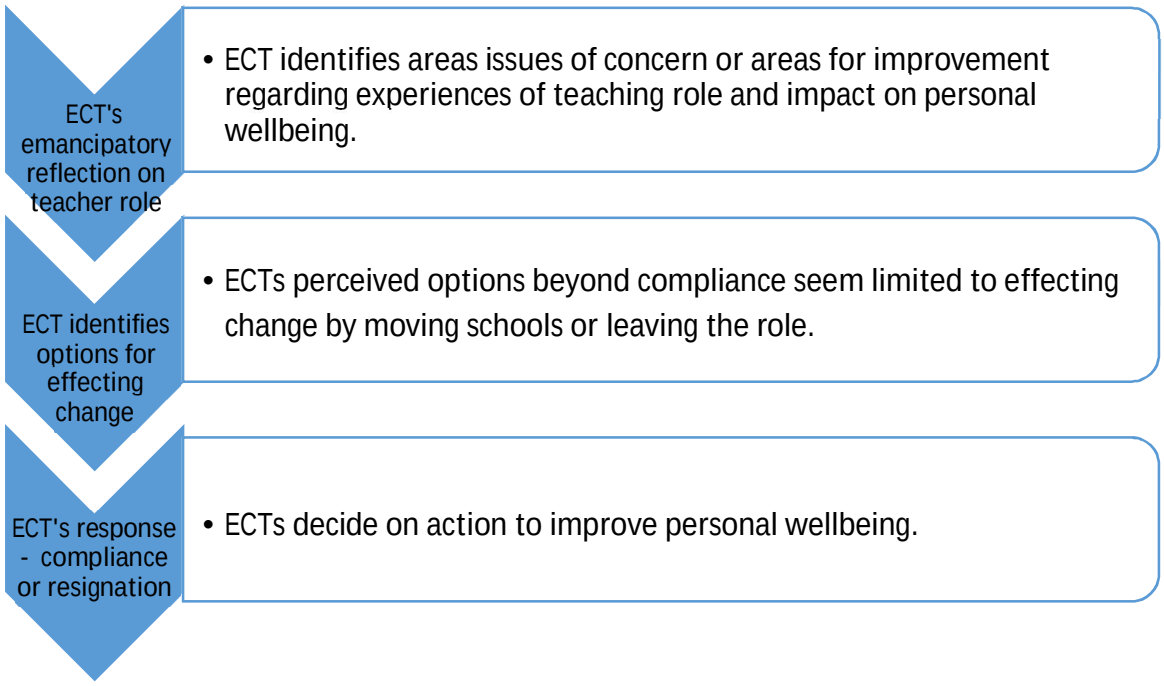

Figure 8. ECTs' emancipatory reflection about teaching in an age of performativity

To consider this outcome of such an extremely narrow view from ECTs' emancipatory reflection, I believe it is helpful to analyse this by returning to the main aim of this study which was to learn of the nature of ECTs' reflections about teaching in the modern performative culture. To structure the analysis of data to support identifying theory about ECTs' reflection, I

chose a theoretical framework on the premise proposed by Habermas (1972) that our knowledge is constructed from issues of human interest. Therefore, it seemed pertinent to explore how our knowledge is constructed through reflection and Habermas' categories regarding human interests of work (technical) and social interactions (practical) (Taylor 2004). In respect of these first two categories, I believe my choice to adopt the reflective categories of Habermas (1972) proved to be successful, because it provided me with valuable insight and new knowledge about the nature of ECTs' reflections of performative teaching.

Yet, it is important I evaluate the strength of this theoretical framework bearing in mind the findings of limited insight of ECTs' emancipatory reflective thinking. Certainly, the literature offered other options on models about the types of reflection that may have provided me with alternative outcomes and a different perspective. For example, Van Manen's (1977) model incorporates three categories of reflection, but this runs along very similar themes to Habermas (1972). Alternatively, Schön's (1983) categories of reflection-on-action or reflection-in-action may also have provided data that answered the research questions, but as these are considered more technical in nature, hence my preference lies with the three knowledge interests from Habermas (1972) (Brooker & O'Donaghue, 1993). Furthermore, my rationale to justify this choice is my personal learning from the concept from Habermas (1972) that facts and values cannot be separated (Brooker & O'Donaghue, 1993). Therefore, I personally believe the emancipatory category to be extremely pertinent to this discourse on ECTs' reflection in an age of performativity.

So, this discussion now moves from identification of ECTs' narrow perception of emancipatory reflective action to explore the theory I am developing drawn from a combination of my analysis of this data, the literature on emancipatory reflection and my own professional experiences. Initially, I aimed to build my learning about the nature of teachers' emancipatory reflection of the performative culture from existing literature to enable me to compare this with the outcomes from my study of how this applies specifically to ECTs in a performative culture. However, I encountered problems at the first stage, because the literature on emancipatory reflection tends to be in the fields of health and social work, or written before the performative culture developed in England (Kemmis, 1985; Taylor, 2004; Morley, 2012). In contrast, recent work regarding emancipatory reflection more commonly explores lines of thinking where the significant accountability regimes stifle the scope for teachers' emancipatory reflective thinking to effect improvements to their experiences of performativity (Hammersley-Fletcher, 2013; Hall & McGinity, 2015; Perryman et al. 2017).

Therefore, I feel I am left to speculate and draw on my own theory to bridge the gulf between the philosophical knowledge of emancipatory reflection provided in the 1970s and 1980s - prior to the development of the performative culture - and recent rhetoric explaining the challenges of teachers' reflection along lines of emancipation, given the constraints on their teaching practice. Yet, whilst I recognise that the following points for discussion reflect my personal opinions and subjective interpretation regarding the role of ECTs' emancipatory reflection, I believe it is important to address this concept and not ignore it just because it is not a prominent feature of literature about reflection for teachers.

With the context of my study identifying the nature of ECTs' reflection in an age of performativity falls broadly within the scope of technical and practical elements of teaching

practice, focus now explores whether there is even a role for teachers' emancipatory reflection bearing in mind the performance expectations of modern education in England.

The starting point for my theory that emancipatory reflection offers an important component of reflective teaching is to revisit the concept of our knowledge interests – where facts and values cannot be separated (Habermas, 1972). Yet, I finding it interesting that the professional Teacher's Standards (DfE, 2011) invites teachers' systematic reflection on the technical and practical aspects of practice, but the place for questioning their values about their role and the influence of social, cultural and political factors seems to be unaccounted for in this particular external directive on teaching practice. Indeed, my concern is that without the promotion of emancipatory reflection, teachers may be left with a sense of helplessness if feeling overwhelmed by the performative pressures that Ball (2003) described as potentially soul-destroying.

Therefore, my view is that it is crucial that teachers do develop the skills of emancipatory reflection and spend time exploring their own values to build a strong understanding of their own identity as a teacher. This will involve critical questioning of themselves to gain personal insight of a sense of who they are as an individual and as a teacher. The rationale for this builds on the notion that professional identity relates to teachers' concepts or self-image. The argument is that these concepts, or images of the self, factor in determining how teachers teach, the way they approach professional development, as well as their attitude towards educational changes (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004). Inevitably, teachers' professional identities are rich and complex due to the complex nature of the different relations of practice. Hence, it is important that they engage in critical questioning of themselves to access personal insight of their sense of who they are as an individual and as a teacher (Sachs

2001). Indeed, professional identity formation is a process of reflection involving many sources of knowledge, such as knowledge of affect, human relations, teaching and subject matter (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004). From this basis, ECTs can then review the bigger picture of social, political, cultural and historical factors that contribute to the challenges of practice they may be facing.

The potential is that through enlightenment of their values and perception of themselves within the performative situation, this may lead to insight of specific action that could provide emancipation from the burden of negative experiences of performative practice. Indeed, my personal belief is that when teachers have a good understanding of the broader context of national economic concerns for academic advancement from education systems, they can reflect more effectively on their values for nurturing pupils' learning and their own role for supporting outcomes. With acknowledgement of limited scope for a teacher's emancipatory reflection and transformative action to effect significant policy changes to reduce the performative effects, I do believe the response can be positive if teachers seek the spaces for autonomy within their practice. For example, this is where systematic reflection can lead to identifying effective, engaging experiences that nurture pupils' enjoyment of learning and through their high levels of engagement, the outcomes meet externally imposed performance requirements. Furthermore, an additional endorsement for the role of teacher's emancipatory reflection is that ECTs' will develop and enhance their critical thinking skills that will move their practice from technical recipe-delivery style teaching to incorporate specific practises that do not create a separation of their values and facts (Habermas 1972, Brooker & O'Donaghue, 1993).

Therefore, from this discussion identifying the significant value of this level of critical thinking analysis, I was keen to explore a model of reflection that would motivate ECTs' to engage in emancipatory thinking about their values and perspectives on the issues they will face when teaching in an age of performativity. Certainly, there are numerous teacher reflection models in existence, although it seems only a few incorporate the important elements of critical thinking on issues of emancipation. When reviewing the various models available for emancipatory reflection, I failed to find a model that I anticipated would have the clarity to prompt the direction of ECTs' thinking along these particular lines as part of their reflective problem solving process. Therefore, I have had to create my own model for emancipatory reflection to encourage ECTs to move beyond a technical or practical focus and, thus develop their professional skills by evaluating their practice from deeper understanding of broader issues the modern performative teaching role – see Figure 8 below.

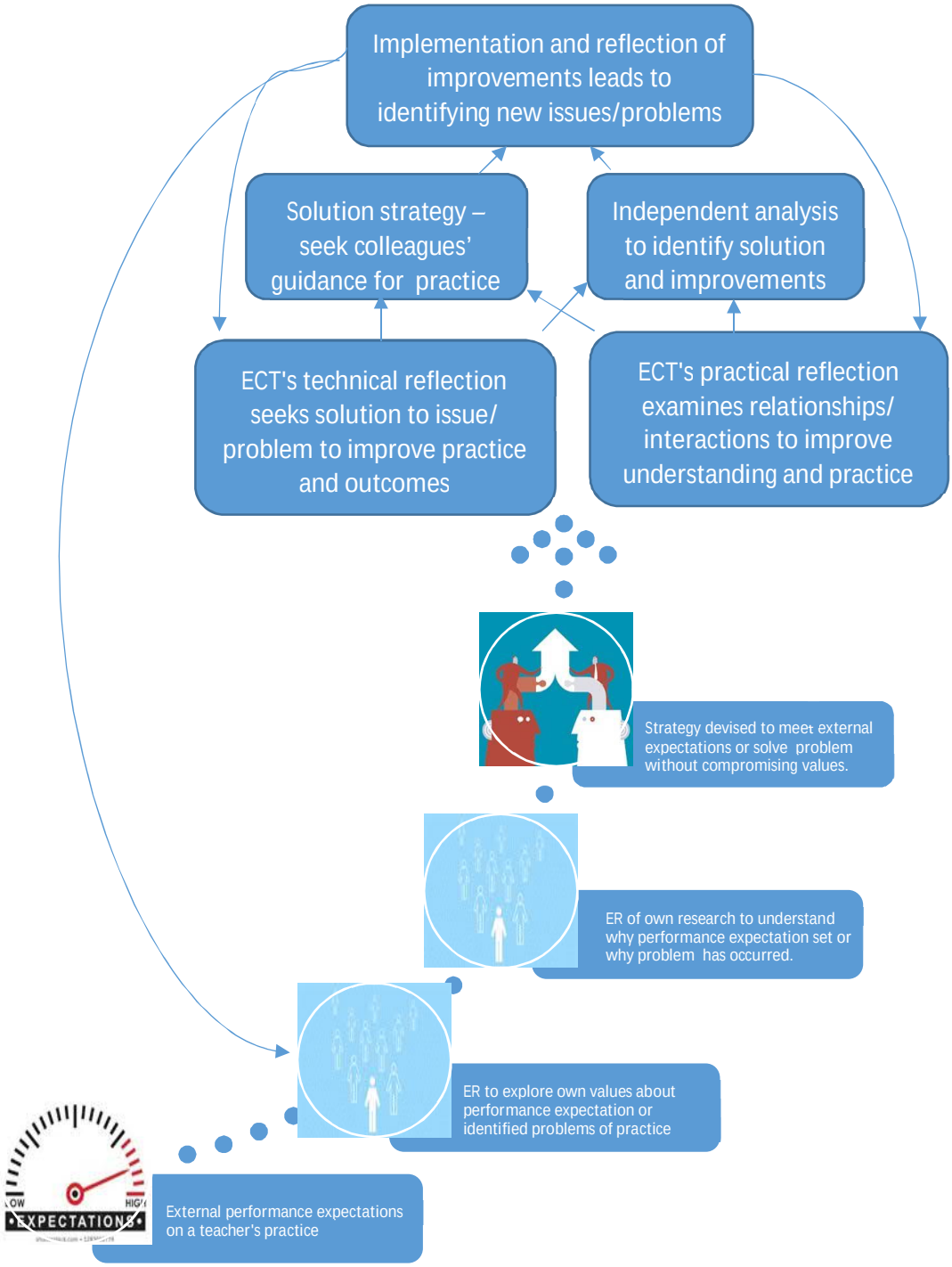

Figure 8 Model for ECTs' emancipatory (ER), technical and practical reflection (Images: HS Insider, 2020; Onstrategy, 2020; Shutterstock, 2020).

I believe the advantage of this version of a model for emancipatory reflection specifically directs ECTs' thinking for identifying their own personal values on the issue. In addition, the model supports the development of their thinking about problems of practice by prompting opportunities to suspend action while they further their knowledge and understanding about the wider-ranging factors affecting the issue at hand. This approach draws on the guidance of by Dewey (1933) advocating practitioners take time aside for thorough investigative thinking to allow for the experience of deepened reflective thinking processes to facilitate identification of effective solutions. Indeed, Sellars (2012, p466) also recognises the value of time spent reflecting along similar lines where teachers start from their own individual perspectives and experiences – considering these 'in their contextual variations and draw upon the theoretical, professional strategies that they have encountered or plan to explore'. I believe this model offers prompts for ECTs' thinking about all three types of reflection where their understanding of their values and the broader contextual factors of the issue are examined as part of the process of reflecting on the technical and practical issues of performative practice.

Furthermore, this new model of reflection has the potential to offer ECTs' the opportunity to participate in deep, critical reflection that will shape their own professional development by using this tool a powerful opportunity for growth and self-improvement (Cornish & Jenkins, 2012). Indeed, the whole aim of this model is to contribute to supporting the modern culture of education by focusing ECTs' thinking on building understanding of the broader context of performative problems and exploring strategies where their wellbeing might not be conflicted by compromising values while still meeting performance demands. Further insight on the implications of this theory and the manifestation of this reflection model in my own professional practice feature in the discussion in Chapter 6.

5.6 Chapter summary

The aim of this chapter was to review the findings from my study and offer my analysis and interpretation of how these findings fit within existing knowledge of the nature of ECTs' reflection in a performative era. To collate the patterns of ECTs' reflective thinking and respond to the main research question, four themes were chosen for discussion to explain my new learning on this particular phenomenon. Whilst it is evident, ECTs appreciate enjoyable elements to the teaching role, the pressure for results from their practice and pupils' academic performance strongly influences the nature of their reflective thinking. As part of their reflective problem-solving strategy, these ECTs had a strong reliance on the expertise of colleagues, as well as their friendships to support their performance success and overall wellbeing, which seems to positively affect their enjoyment of the role.

However, it is clear that the nature of their reflective thinking is predominantly on technical and practical issues, with little insight provided of emancipatory reflective action from this particular study. These ECTs did not share insight of concern or emancipatory action towards any of the social, moral or political elements of education, rather just offered their reflections on compliance or taking action to remove themselves from the school or the role in the efforts for personal improvement. Therefore, the final chapter explores the implications of the findings and these discussion points on my own professional role, as well as offering recommendations for other primary school leaders who support the reflective practises of teachers in the early stages of their career.

Chapter 6 - Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to summarise my personal conclusions and implications of this study about the nature of ECTs' reflective practice in age of performativity. When reviewing the research aims, the key findings are offered as answers to this line of inquiry. From this position, focus moves to consider the value of my study with regard to its contribution to existing knowledge. However, the chapter also includes an important evaluation of factors that affect the credibility of the outcomes reported herein. In light of the knowledge I have gained from this study, suggestions are offered for the implications on professional practice, as well as recommendations for future research that would add to this field of knowledge. The final section is a summary of this study and a conclusion of my personal learning from engaging in this doctoral research project.

6.2 Research aims

The aim of this study was driven by a personal interest in building my professional skills for supporting teachers in the early stages of their career. The advantage of the doctoral programme was to engage in research that broadened my knowledge by investigating the practices of teachers in other schools - representing a wider range of views of teaching in England. My research interest narrowed to the concept of ECTs' reflective thinking in order to understand the key issues that concern them so I can use this insight to evaluate and improve my approach for providing support for ECTs I work with. Having identified gaps in existing literature of ECTs' current reflective practice, it seemed pertinent to undertake this particular

study that offered them a voice to share their experiences of teaching in a performative culture. Hence, this led to the following research questions that this study sought to answer:

Key research question:

What is the nature of early career teachers' reflection in an age of performativity?

- Sub-question (1) What do early career teachers reflect on when reviewing their career and practice?
- Sub-question (2) What is shaping the nature of early career teachers' reflection?

The qualitative nature of these research questions and the ontological positioning of myself as researcher influenced the design of this investigation to provide a response to answer these specific questions.

6.3 Summary of key findings

From this study enquiring into the nature of ECTs' reflection in a performative era, the response to the main research question is provided in Chapters 4 and 5, but a brief summary is offered here in the following four points.

The first key finding is that ECTs' reflections incorporate the enjoyable aspects of the role and the nature of their reflection included the positive elements of teaching and learning experiences. One of the features of their positivity is reflection on the professional relationships and personal friendships with colleagues that contribute to their sense of wellbeing and

commitment to the role. Against the background context of reports of many dissatisfied ECTs choosing to leave the profession early, it is important that this finding is highlighted as it offers a sense of balance to the somewhat negative picture often portrayed of the plight of teaching in a performative culture.

The second key finding is that, in this age of performativity, the nature of ECTs' reflections are significantly influenced by the impact of accountability regimes that demand high performance outcomes from teachers' practice, especially in terms of pupils' results. This is a consequence of the direction of neoliberal policy initiatives for education aimed at increasing academic performance for national economic advantage in human capital markets. Hence, the impact of performativity on ECTs' reflection is the considerably high level of their technical reflections on elements of teaching practice to ensure successful achievement of expected outcomes.

For teachers who are relatively inexperienced, their colleagues' technical and practical support is crucial - which represents the third finding about ECTs' reflections in an age of performativity. Whether drawing on teachers' or Head-teachers' technical expertise for various pedagogical issues, or needing practical and emotional support - this study identified the significance of colleagues' support being a strong component of the nature of ECTs' reflections on their career and practice. With the focus on accessing assistance featuring so strongly in ECTs' reflections, this indicated a greater dependence on receiving colleagues' support for problem solving, rather than evidence of the development of their independence and systematic focused reflection to solve problems for themselves.

The final key finding from this study is that ECTs' reflections revealed they seem less inclined to engage in emancipatory reflection for transformative action on issues, such as, pedagogy, policy, education ethos or culture that may offer the potential of improving their experiences of teaching in an age of performativity. Instead, the insight from this research was the nature of ECTs' reflections were more inclined towards removing themselves from a school, or leave the profession altogether in their quest for personal improvement if the experiences of teaching become untenable. However, the absence of indicators of ECTs' emancipatory reflection has been beneficial to develop my understanding of why this outcome has occurred and review how I can support other teachers in engaging in this valuable form of reflective practice.

6.4 Contribution to knowledge

The aim of this personal research was to learn specifically about the nature of ECTs' reflections on teaching in an age of performativity, but when appraising the literature on teacher reflection there was little insight from existing knowledge and research specific to the experiences of ECTs. The reflective practises of trainee teachers are well accounted for within available literature, but reported knowledge of their teacher reflections on the next stage of their professional journey was limited. Therefore, this study offers knowledge of new and valuable insight into ECTs' reflections on teaching in a performative culture to contribute to the identified gap in literature about this phenomenon. To structure this review of my contribution to knowledge, this section covers three points of learning relating to technical, practical and emancipatory reflection to demonstrate how this study provides new insight into the nature of reflection specific to the group of teachers in the early stages of their career. In

addition, from knowledge gained from this study and being unable to find an existing model of reflection that clearly prompt ECTs' emancipatory thinking - I created my own model of reflection to draw out critical thinking to develop professional understanding of the complex issues underpinning problems of practice.

Firstly, whilst previous studies, such as Wilkins (2011) and Stallions et al. (2012) identified ECTs' valued colleagues' support, this study contributes an up-to-date picture about ECT's technical reflection and adds to existing knowledge by conveying the considerable extent of their concerns for pupils' performance. ECTs' reflective problem-solving strategy for these concerns tends to involve a heavy reliance on colleague's specific technical expertise to guide improvements to their practice with the aim of improving outcomes. However, with regard to the nature of their reflection, in this study the ECTs did not provide insight of any specific strategies for systematic reflection to identify solutions for themselves, such as those promoted by key reflection theorists, Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983). My personal view is this suggests an indication that, either ECTs have yet to develop confidence in their own professional abilities to engage in autonomous reflective problem solving, or they find it is a swift and easier option to access guidance from experienced others. My interpretation of this finding of the high need for support includes concerns that if ECTs are reliant on colleagues for problem-solving, they may not bother to further their own skills of reflection to resolve issues independently and, importantly, reflect whether advice given by colleagues is actually the best solution for their practice. Hence, from the findings of my study I believe it is vital that ECTs enhance their skills of reflection so this becomes an embedded component of every day teaching practice.

This study's second contribution to existing knowledge of ECTs' reflection is the key finding that, given the demands of the current performative culture, ECTs' practical reflections identified colleagues' overall support to be a crucial feature of their teaching experience due to how this significantly enhances their professional and social wellbeing. Importantly, from the analysis of practical reflections identified in this study, when ECTs felt supported by their colleagues and Head-teacher, they reflected more positively towards the performative pressures and experiences of practice than when they felt unsupported. As previously mentioned, other studies have reported teacher perceptions on the benefits of close collaboration with colleagues, but this study offers new insight into the significant level of support ECTs reflect they need to enjoy their role and maintain positive wellbeing (Wilkins, 2011; Stallions et al. 2012). Indeed, from my research of existing literature about teachers' early career experiences, this theme of colleagues' support had not come through so strongly when compared to the level of concern for support prioritised in the practical reflections of ECTs participating in this study. I believe knowledge of this new insight to be particularly useful for my professional role and other school leaders who are keen to support this vulnerable group of teachers as they develop their expertise and experience over time. The practical outworking of the implications of this new learning and understanding on my professional practice is provided in section 6.6.

In Chapter 2, I provided an outline of Habermas' (1972) third reflective category - emancipatory reflection. In broad terms, the literature review provided insight of the reported benefits for teachers who engage in emancipatory reflection to review problems by exploring the broader context of political, sociological and ethical factors that influence their daily practice (Murphy & Ermeling, 2016). Yet, endorsements for critical emancipatory reflection seem to be clouded by recent teacher studies explaining how the overarching dominance of

performative constraints obscure the space for this in practice (Hammersley-Fletcher, 2013; Hall & McGinity, 2015). However, this study contributes to the field of knowledge on reflection, albeit from my own theory development, that systematic emancipatory reflection can lead to a deeper understanding of performative concerns with the outcome of identifying specific strategies directly to achieve performance success without necessarily compromising ECTs' own values for their practice. Without managing to locate an existing model of reflection that specifically directs ECTs' thinking about their own values as well as promoting their wider research to deepen professional understanding, my contribution is a new model designed to support ECTs thinking at each stage of their problem-solving analysis (Figure 8). The whole aim of this model is to provide clear prompts for thinking that enables the teacher to work through the stages of the reflective process towards identification of solutions without first seeking immediate guidance from colleagues - as often seemed to be the case from the findings of my study.

I believe the advantage of this particular reflective model is to build ECTs' professional learning and understanding as they think about problems of practice in the context of their own values. In addition, this model potentially supports ECTs' new learning through their knowledge of the broader educational context underpinning the problem – with the consequence of the development of their professional skills as they work autonomously to identify solutions. Furthermore, with acknowledgement of the insight gained from my findings indicating ECTs' strong reliance for guidance from colleagues, my reflection model incorporates this option of support but, importantly, this element comes after they have engaged in personal thorough reflective thinking and analysis. I believe the benefit of this is that ECTs' independent reflection prior to the point of accessing colleagues' assistance will

enhance the quality of their collaborations through ECTs' contribution of their professional learning gained from the processes of this reflection model.

Hence, I propose my model of reflection, figure 8, contributes an effective tool for the development of ECTs' professional skills as they critically examine any existing assumptions of everyday practice, and become more self-aware, thus, facilitating emancipation and empowerment to discover new ideas and improvements for future practice (Finlay, 2008). Here, my thinking aligns with Kelchtermans (2009) who claims that only through reflection to unmask the impact of moral and political agendas can teachers re-establish the conditions for teaching where they regain authorship and a sense of autonomy for their practice. Therefore, in this respect, I believe the contribution of this new reflection model offers ECTs the opportunity for valuable new learning and sustained professional development.

Furthermore, I believe it is pertinent for this contribution of a new reflection model in this particular period of the performative culture with the Early Career Framework (DfE, 2019) proposed for national implementation in 2021 that seems planned to run along similar technicist lines as the Teacher' Standards (DfE, 2011). Therefore, it is important to raise the profile of emancipatory reflection here so that other school leaders may consider taking on board the professional responsibility of supporting new teachers when they review their practice without the sense of having to separate facts and values (Habermas, 1972). Indeed, Benade (2015) advocates that in a performative culture for national economic growth, reflective practice is a significant phenomenon due to the ability and disposition for teachers to be critically reflective for the positive impact of sustaining a flourishing teaching practice. Hence, I believe the contribution of my reflection model designed specifically to support

ECTs could also be effective for these teachers as they progress further with their teaching careers.

Having made these claims about the value of this study, attention now turns explore an evaluation of this approach to research, which impacts on the credibility of findings offered herein.

6.5 Evaluation of methodology and methods

When evaluating this study, it is important to highlight that this research needs reviewing through the lens of my personal orientation of knowledge and understanding of the social sciences. Chapter 3, explained my constructivist positioning and, inevitably, this shaped the whole design and analysis of this study (Cohen et al., 2011). I believe the value of this approach is the endorsement that reality is constructed and understood through interpretation of the social actors being investigated, hence my knowledge developed from the interpretation of ECTs' experiences of modern practice (Bryman, 2004). Using qualitative methodology, the benefit was the knowledge gained from ECTs' reflections on the multi-complex issues in education, such as, human behaviour, emotions, organisational functioning and culture (Rahmen, 2016). Furthermore, this interpretivist paradigm facilitated the option of my own contribution as a participant - with the findings presented as a co-construction of data about teacher reflection in a performative era (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007).

My personal view is that the choice of narrative inquiry was an effective approach to draw out ECTs' experiences through their narratives, because people shape daily life by their interpreted stories of who they are and who others are (Clandinin et al., 2017). Based on the premise that an inquiry into peoples' narratives enables researchers to find new ways to understand their own, and others' experiences, I believe this narrative inquiry did provide me with new insight of the nature of ECTs' reflection that is useful for me in my leadership support for ECTs I work with (Clandinin et al., 2017). Therefore, my personal opinion is that this study's design was effective and fulfilled the aims as outlined above. The real value for me was learning about the teaching experiences through the reflections of other teachers that I would not have had access to without this investigation. The analysis from the detailed narrative of each participant provided me with new knowledge and understanding, as summarised in the key findings.

However, whilst my personal view is that this study fulfilled the research aims, it is important to acknowledge the various factors that impact on credibility of the outcomes reported herein. This was a small-scaled study that does not seek to offer generalisability regarding the key findings reported. Indeed, rather than notions of generalisability from the findings presented and theory developed from this study, I believe that by shedding light on ECTs' reflections, this offers potential transferability and value for other school leaders to infer how this insight might relate to their own situations (Denscombe, 2002). Furthermore, my justification for this small sample of five ECTs draws on the premise that valuable meaning can be gained from qualitative methodology where a single occurrence of the data is potentially as useful as many when seeking to understand social phenomena (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). In further justification of sample size, I believe the various stages of the analytical coding process also proved effective in facilitating interrogation of the relationships

between the coded categories - thus enabling me to develop theory and understanding from data acquired from two interviews with five participants (Cohen et al. 2011).

With the research aim seeking to learn of the nature of ECTs' reflections, the frequencies of occurrences was less important than the potential of learning from any rich insight from their reflective thinking (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). To illustrate this, my study identified that one of the teachers (Caitlyn) had resigned and planned to leave the profession. Whilst this was an example from only one ECT and not representative of the views of others, I believe the insight she offered was extremely beneficial to develop my understanding of teacher reflections on performative practice. Furthermore, I acknowledge that the issue of gaining access to ECTs to participate was a key factor in the decision of a purposeful convenience sample. The convenience element was that, whilst the teachers were all unknown to me, access was achieved through mutual contacts. Yet, throughout the analysis process, I regularly reviewed the guidance that researchers much appraise their sample size continuously in order to ascertain whether the data collected is adequate for analysis (Maltarud et al., 2016). Certainly, it was my intent to engage in further interviews if the yield of data did not fulfil my requirements to have sufficient insight to respond to the research questions. However, due to the quantity and quality of narratives acquired from the ten interviews, I was able to engage in a thorough systematic approach to interrogate the data and present the findings with a level of confidence drawn from the rigour of the analysis processes.

Another important issue to highlight is that the key findings need appraisal in light of the constructivist paradigm where knowledge is considered to be partial and dependent on the

situated view of the researcher (Alvessono & Sköldberg, 2009). Certainly, it is important to emphasise this study is reported through the lens of my personal subjective interpretation of the data of insight into the nature of ECTs' reflections about their career and practice. Throughout the research process, my own skills developed as I made conscious efforts to be both reflective and reflexive with the aim of addressing any unintentional personal influence to approach analysis with an open mind, without bias or preconceptions. For example, given my experiences of listening to ECTs' views on performative practice as part of the coaching model we use to support their professional development, inevitably, I had some knowledge of their reflection topics, but they were specific to our school context. Therefore, the decision to use narrative interviews to collect data directly related to my quest to be open minded to learning new knowledge, hence, the interview questions were deliberately open to avoid directing ECTs' reflection along lines of pre-determined questions that would potentially influence the outcome achieved. Whilst I acknowledge my subjective thinking and understanding affected the processes of data analysis, I believe the coding strategy of open, axial and selective categories supported my identification of new insight about the nature of ECTs' reflection.

However, in light of the finding of an absence of evidence of ECTs' systematic emancipatory reflection and insight of some teachers' solution to resign from their role, the earlier discussion already raised two factors that may have contributed to this particular outcome achieved by this study. Firstly, it is possible that the research method to use just one question to prompt the narrative interview, failed to deliver insight about ECTs' emancipatory reflection and the detail of such was simply omitted during each of their interviews. My recommendation is that future research could pursuit this line of inquiry by using an interview

schedule of specific questions directed to draw out this particular information to further understanding about the nature of ECT's reflective practice. Hence, the discussion of concerns about the lack of ECTs' emancipatory reflect need to be reviewed in light of the research methods context, along with consideration of the potential limitations from using a small sample of teachers participating in this study. Yet, despite these factors and whether ECTs are engaging in effective emancipatory reflection or not, I believe the contribution of the new reflection model developed from this study has the potential to develop this particular type of reflection that may, ultimately, enhance the teaching experiences for ECTs.

Hence, my over-riding opinion is that, in consideration of these limiting factors, I believe the study fulfilled its aims with the real value being the professional development I gained from this doctorate level of study and the implications for improving my practice as provided below.

6.6 Implications for professional practice

The whole aim of this study was to learn of ECTs' reflection so I can evaluate how to provide effective support for teachers when faced with challenges of performative demands. Although I have worked with ECTs for many years, I am always conscious that my knowledge and understanding is limited to the context and culture of the few schools I have worked in. Therefore, this doctoral project provided the opportunity to enhance my knowledge by learning from a broader range of teachers' experiences, combined with engaging in a deeper analysis of data than I would normally achieve in usual personal reflections of my practice. Hence, the

following points indicate the implications for my own professional practice and, potentially, for other senior leaders who would benefit from this insight when seeking to support the development of ECTs.

6.6.1 ECTs' positive reflections

This study identified that ECTs reflected on the enjoyable elements of their role, which causes me to review my own contribution to promoting a positive school culture. However, in recognition of the significant top-down pressures on head-teachers and leaders for school, teacher and pupil performance, it is possible that the focus on school improvement can often cloud the celebrations of daily successful teaching practice. Therefore, an implication of this study for me is that, in my leadership role, I model reflective thinking that is not always problem driven, but also incorporates a regular focus on the numerous rewarding elements of teaching and learning experiences in primary school education. The practical outworking of this for me is the impact on future coaching sessions with ECTs to value the time spent with them reflecting on aspects of the teaching role they particularly find enjoyable. Hence, the specific learning I have gained from this study is not to take for granted that ECTs naturally recognise the many successes of their practice for themselves and, through coaching, encourage identification of the various ways they have been effective. In doing so, I hope to promote ECTs' independent engagement in positive practical reflections about their practice that offer a sense of balance against reflections on the difficulties of teaching in an age of performativity.

Furthermore, if, as school leaders, we all spend more time consciously reflecting on the positive experiences of primary practice, share this with staff and encourage them to do the

same - the potential impact may lead to performative class teaching being more rewarding and conducive to an increase in the number of ECTs choosing to continue their career beyond five years.

6.6.2 ECTs' technical reflections

A key element of the nature of ECTs' reflections was their focus on outcomes, yet it was the extent of their concerns for results that provided me with new knowledge and understanding of the impact of performance pressures. From this, it causes me in my role as a school leader, to reflect on the implementation of new initiatives with empathy for how teachers receive and experience new expectations of their practice. Given the insight from this study of ECTs' reflections of significant need for technical support, an implication for my role is to explore an effective provision of opportunities for teachers to access the expertise they need on any issue of practice. To provide an example, the findings identified that subject knowledge was a reflection topic causing ECTs' concern for how this can influence their desired outcomes. Therefore, in this particular example, my future leadership practice will involve being more proactive in exploring opportunities for ECTs' training, both internally and externally, in the subjects they identify need developing.

Moreover, the identification of tensions between state initiatives and effective implementation in practice causes me to review our school leaders' policy dissemination and how this is understood by ECTs. Hence, it is of interest to me to explore the potential of greater collaboration between leaders and staff on policy directives in order to reduce some of the tensions experienced when implementing new reforms. With my findings identifying

how ECTs' turn to colleagues' for support, the impact of this insight for me is to be more proactive in organising opportunities to fully discuss any new requirements so that directives are clearly understood by all, thus, aiming to minimise the experiences of policy fracture as described in the literature review (Davies & Hughes, 2009).

6.6.3 ECTs' practical reflections

Identification that ECTs' reflect on the value of relationships with colleagues was not necessarily a new concept, but the findings from this study did provide me with important new insight regarding the significant level of ECTs' need and reliance on both technical and practical support from their colleagues. The implication of this understanding for me is to work with my school leadership team to evaluate how we can promote, encourage and support networking time for colleagues - both within school and, ideally, organise more regular contact with other teachers from local schools. When working in a larger school opportunities for collaboration are more feasible, but this finding presents a challenge for leaders of primary schools who have a low number of teaching staff. This is where the new Early Career Framework (ECF) can contribute when fully implemented in coming years - by providing networking opportunities for teachers in their first two years. Not only is the ECF designed to provide further professional training for all areas of teaching practice that may alleviate the level of ECTs' requirement of colleagues' technical support, but also creates options for supportive peer relationships to develop amongst ECTs, their mentors and school leaders. The implication of the finding of the relationship with positive ECTs' reflections on collaborative support and commitment to their career is that I will be more proactive in establishing links with other schools so that supportive professional relationships can continue beyond ECTs' second year.

In addition, this study identified how ECTs' reflected that a positive relationship with their Head-teacher was desirable factor of their enjoyment of the role. The findings provided insight of ECT' reflection on the importance of encouragement and support from this influential leadership position. Although, I am not a Head-teacher, I can use this insight to evaluate the implications of other power-laden roles in schools on ECTs – for example, NQT/ECT mentors, phase leaders, assistant/deputy heads. The ECTs' reflection demonstrated the fragility of the Head-teacher/ECT relationship and, again, I believe this is a further area to ensure a positive culture is promoted through leaders' encouragement and praise for all the good teachers achieve in the various forms of their practice.

6.6.4 ECTs' emancipatory reflections

However, the findings from this study also highlighted indications of a real lack of emancipatory thinking by ECTs regarding the social, cultural, political and ethical aspects of their practice. Whilst I acknowledge, and experience, the numerous performative constraints of demanding accountability regimes, my learning from this whole study concludes with my own endorsement for teachers to engage in this particular form of critical reflection to build understanding of the broader aspects of their practice. As previously mentioned, I recognise that my own learning about the performative culture significantly developed from the encouragement of my supervisors to engage in emancipatory reflection - for example, to consider how external policy directives were causing the tensions I was experiencing at school. In doing so, I have been able to develop a much greater understanding of external political and institutional directives to improve outcomes, which has led me to support external goals without comprising my values of providing creative,

engaging learning experiences for pupils so they enjoy learning as they strive for high levels of academic achievement. The key point to draw out from this anecdote is the influential nature of my supervisors to guide the direction of my emancipatory reflection and then, through collaboration with their thinking, my research and my further reflection, the insight gained has generated greater positivity for my professional role. Therefore, the implication here for me is to identify how I can provide similar support to motivate ECTs to engage in emancipatory reflection too.

Because my findings identified the absence of any account by the ECTs of a strategy for systematic reflection, my research endeavours involved researching a reflection model to use as an initial training tool to support ECTs' as they begin to engage in deeper critical reflection. Therefore, the reflection model Figure 8 aims to support ECTs' thinking development as they engage in all three types of reflection. The model is designed to prompt ECTs' reflections on their values as well as facts and to marry the two together in a form of emancipatory reflective action that enables them to have a positive response to performative expectations, whilst delivering practice that supports their own values for learning experiences. Ideally, their technical, practical and emancipatory reflections lead to further identification of issues for improvement that prompts the cycle to commence again.

Therefore, the next step for me is to trial this model with ECTs and find ways to receive their honest feedback in order that I can evaluate whether further amendments are needed, or I need to research a different reflective model altogether. Ideally, the initial conversations about the effectiveness of this proposed model for ECTs' reflections will be a stimulus for their reflective practice in itself. Furthermore, in light of my findings that

revealed the nature of ECTs' reflective focus was on technical, practical elements and geared towards colleagues' support than systematic reflective problem solving, it raises the question whether ECTs are interested in reflection at all. Indeed, as mentioned at the outset, it was Katy's apathy to reflect on her lesson, which sparked my interest for this study. Hence, I believe that the privilege of my particular leadership role involving valuable time coaching and supporting ECTs provides an ideal opportunity to share my personal professional learning of reflection with the aim of encouraging their reflective engagement too.

However, this study also highlighted the constraints of the demanding performative culture that demands high levels of compliance, thus creating an environment that may not be conducive for ECTs to share their critical technical, practical or emancipatory thinking about issues of practice. Therefore, a further implication for me is to investigate opportunities for ECTs to collaborate with both their peers and school leaders to critically reflect and engage in open discussions to review the experiences of performative education and to identify any avenues to share their own personal reflective thinking about this. I anticipate that such an opportunity may prove to be empowering for ECTs by having their voice heard in a forum that values their critical reflection. The potential of such a strategy is that the sharing of ECTs' emancipatory reflection could lead to valuable insight on issues of performative teaching that might prompt myself, teachers and other school leaders to seek improvements to their school practice.

This doctoral study was a personal quest to develop my professional learning, yet one of the key findings identified herein was that ECTs were open to share their views that

they significantly valued the input, support and encouragement from their head-teachers and senior leaders. Therefore, I believe there are some important points to highlight here to emphasise the value of the insight and understanding gained from this study that may benefit other school leaders too. Certainly, this study emphasised the value of reflection as a key learning tool as part of the ongoing professional development for those in the early stages of their teaching careers. Hence, I believe my study builds on the premise from Spencer et al.'s (2018) research when they challenge school leaders to do more regarding the development of ECTs as reflective individuals - through a range of long-term carefully planned, deep approaches for their development. In my opinion, the continuing reports of a retention crisis in England highlights the need for school leaders to be proactive in identifying the issues that concern ECTs and to work closely with them to overcome barriers (HCEC, 2017). Indeed, in schools where they have strong professional cultures, school leaders demonstrate their understanding of the challenges of being a novice and support teachers through an active and responsive approach for professional growth (Kardos et al., 2001). Therefore, I believe that as my study gave a voice to ECTS to share the experiences they currently face, this offers valuable insight for other school leaders who can build on this knowledge and investigate the pertinent issues in their own school when seeking to support ECTs to enjoy success in their professional role.

Furthermore, my personal view is that this concept of developing ECTs' professional reflective skills is a facet of the professional imperative for school leaders in the leadership and management criteria of the Ofsted framework (Ofsted 2019, p. 11) where they must ensure 'the practice and subject knowledge of staff are built up and improve over time'. Therefore, with the insight of this study's findings and my model of emancipatory reflection, this offers potential benefit to other school leaders if they use this

to work closely with individual teachers when they 'engage with their staff and are aware and take account of the main pressures on them' (Ofsted, 2019, p.12). Ideally, through an ongoing supportive approach, ECTs will continually develop their professional knowledge and skills through reflective problem-solving, which may enhance their motivation to enjoy a long and successful career in education.

6.7 Recommendations

First of all the key finding that ECTs' reflection indicate their emotional and professional concerns for their data-driven practice is worth reviewing again when the new Ofsted (2019) framework has had time to embed. Building on teachers' feedback that they are disheartened by the constant focus on data and results, the new Ofsted (2019) framework offers a new judgement entitled the 'Quality of Education'. The aim of this is to promote a broad and balanced curriculum that reflects a move from the dominant focus of pupils' results. Therefore, it will be valuable for school leaders to learn from future research of ECTs' reflections to identify if their reflective focus follows this shift and whether this affects the level of support they currently seem to be depending on too.

Secondly, the new Early Career Framework (DfE, 2019) is planned for implementation as a national statutory requirement in 2021. Therefore, future research following teachers' reflective experiences throughout this extended induction period and beyond could offer valuable insight into the effectiveness of this training and support programme that would be beneficial for all school leaders. Certainly, given the insight of

the need for technical and practical support identified in this study, future research would investigate whether the Early Career Framework delivers and meets ECTs' needs.

My third recommendation is that future research about the nature of ECTs' reflection in an age of performativity builds on this study through an investigation into whether using a specific reflection model is effective in enhancing experiences of deep, systematic reflective thinking to solve problems of practice more independently. I have created my own model for my research, but investigations of other reflection models would add to existing knowledge about whether drawing on a structured approach supports ECTs' systematic reflections on teaching in an age of performativity. Furthermore, this study identified that ECTs did not demonstrate emancipatory reflection about their practice, yet my theory offered herein is that they would benefit from engaging in systematic critical reflection to identify strategies for delivering teaching practice along lines that support their values for education - whilst still meeting performance expectations. Therefore, further research to delve deeper into this phenomenon to identify such teaching strategies would be a really useful contribution to this gap in existing knowledge, with the potential of supporting the development of the nature of ECTs' reflection.

6.8 Conclusion

The report of this research study commenced with an anecdote of my experience with Katie, an NQT, who seemed to be uninterested in engaging in specific processes of reflective thinking to identify if she could improve her practice further. From this starting point, this thesis has travelled the journey of explaining why I am personally interested in developing my professional learning of teacher reflection and on to the detail of the investigation to find out more about this, concluding with a discussion on how this project fulfilled the aims I desired at the outset.

Inevitably, whilst I sometimes feel that daily classroom practice seems an isolated experience when involving just a teacher and pupils - the literature review in Chapter 2 demonstrated the extent to which teaching is completely subsumed within the multi-layering of institutional and political direction that affects the micro level experiences of education. Therefore, it was important that, while my focus of interest for new learning was directed at teachers' reflective thinking about their role, this phenomenon needed to be understood within the broader context of a performative education culture. Chapter 2 provided the background of the development of the modern performative culture and the continuing political agenda for global economic success, which draws on neoliberal ideologies that shape the nature of classroom practice.

However, the experiences of performative teaching have led to a significant problem for governments in England, where teachers are struggling to meet results-driven targets

while balancing their values about how to educate children (Ball, 2003). Unfortunately, this has resulted in a teacher retention crisis with nearly one third leaving before the end of their first five years (HCEC, 2017). Hence, my interest narrowed to learn more about how these relatively new teachers engaged in reflection to solve the numerous problematic issues in their practice. Whilst I work with ECTs and know of the reflective thinking they are prepared to share with me, I was keen to broaden my knowledge by learning of the experiences of others too. The literature available expanded on trainee teachers' reflection, as well as insight of teachers' reflection crossing the span of experience. However, I believe the value of this study was to contribute to the gap in existing research to offer knowledge about the nature of teacher reflection in this age of performativity- but specific to the context of ECTS. The research questions were deliberately open to investigate the nature of ECTs' reflection by inquiring in to the topics they prioritised for reflection and an analysis of these topics identified the influences shaping the focus of their reflective thinking.

Chapter 3 provided the philosophical orientation of this study with an explanation of my personal approach to gaining new knowledge through the interpretivist paradigm. I believe the research design of narrative inquiry proved effective in enabling me to give ECTs a voice to share their reflections on performative teaching in a research context where ethical measures ensured they felt protected to be open about their personal views. The data analysis strategy incorporating a grounded theory approach to identifying theory from coding processes, gave me a sense of confidence that the segmentation and reconstruction of the data provided for the voice of each ECT to come through clearly - so I could learn about the nature of their reflection. The narrative design continued with the Findings of this study

presented in Chapter 4 as mini narratives, with highlights of the theory that emerged from this.

However, whilst I continually aimed to be reflective and reflexive to avoid bias and represent the participants' views fairly, inevitably this research report needs to be appraised in light of my subjective interpretation that is a pervading influence throughout this account. I acknowledge that this research report does not offer any sense of generalisability, yet despite flaws regarding the design, implementation and reporting of the study, I have been able to benefit from valuable new learning gained from these endeavours.

This final chapter provided my personal views indicating how the key findings offer a contribution of new knowledge and understanding to the field of education gained from providing ECTs a voice to learn of the nature of their reflections in an age of performativity. This insight has been extremely beneficial for my own role to support ECTs, but I believe there is distinct benefit offered from the knowledge and insight gained from this study for other school leaders too. From learning of the level of ECTs' concern for outcomes and the detail of their reliance on colleagues for technical and practical support, this insight offers professional learning for other leaders to evaluate how they can effectively support ECTs in their schools. Furthermore, my new model of reflection offers a fresh approach for leaders to ensure that the important issues of critical emancipatory reflection are not overlooked and ECTs are supported in embedding this valuable professional skill throughout their practice.

My final point reflects the fact that I have always been keen to learn more so that I can be a more effective practitioner and reflection is one strategy I find effective in helping me to do this. Hence, new learning gained from this doctoral research process has totally motivated me to continue engaging in reflection, to research areas for improvement and, importantly, to seek how I can be more effective in inspiring others with their reflective practice too.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Participant information sheet

Research Project: Reflective teaching in an age of performativity

EdD student researcher: Mrs Julie Cracknell

Dear

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study about reflective teaching.

What is the project?

This study is being conducted at the University of Reading as part of my Doctorate in education. The aim is to investigate the issues shaping the reflective practice of recently trained primary teachers in the context of the current results-driven educational culture.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been invited to take part in the project because you are a primary teacher with 2-5 years' practice. Therefore, your personal views on your teaching experiences will offer good insight into the cultural issues shaping the nature of reflection.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you participate. You may also withdraw your consent to participation at any time during the project, without any repercussions to you, by contacting me on Email: J.Cracknell@pgr.reading.ac.uk

What will happen if I take part?

You will be asked to engage in two separate interviews of approximately up to an hour each, which will be conducted over a two-month period. The venue for the interviews will be held in a meeting room booked at a local hotel near you in order to protect your anonymity of involvement in this research. The time of the interview can be organised to suit your convenience. The first interview seeks your personal views on how your teaching has developed over time. The second interview aims to gather your thoughts as you review your school day. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded and will be transcribed and anonymised before the data is analysed.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of taking part?

The information you give will remain confidential and only seen by myself and my supervisors listed above. Neither you, the children, nor the school will be identifiable in the report which is not to be published. Information about individuals will not be shared with the school.

Whilst there is no financial incentive or reward for taking part, participants in similar studies have found it interesting to contribute to education research. I am hoping that the findings will help me understand how relatively new teachers develop and that this insight can be shared with heads or other teachers to better support teachers in the early stages of their career. Please contact me if you would like an electronic summary of the findings of the study.

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 children or the school to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Your participation 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 myself and my supervisors will have access to the records. The data will be destroyed securely once the findings of the study are written up, after five years. Your written permission will be sought if plans change to consider pursuing publishing the research.

You can change your mind at any time without any repercussions. During the research, you can stop completing the activities at any time. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, we will discard your data.

Who has reviewed the study?

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.

What happens if something goes wrong?

Please contact Dr xxx, Supervisor on email xxxxx.ac.uk. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

Where can I get more information?

For further information, please contact me on email address: Jxxxxac.uk

What do I do next?

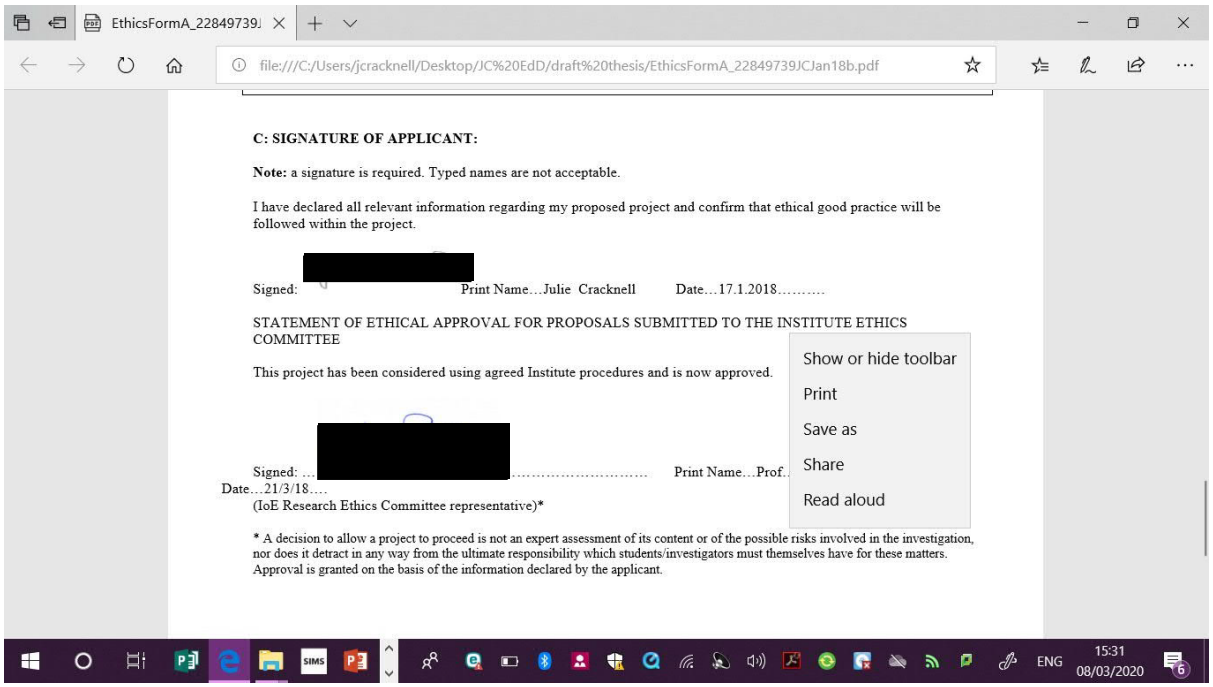
I do hope that you will agree to your participation in the study. If you are happy to take part, please contact me on the email address provided.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Julie Cracknell (Jxxxxac.uk)

Appendix 2 – Ethics Committee approval



EthicsFormA_22849739J

file:///C:/Users/jcracknell/Desktop/JC%20EdD/draft%20thesis/EthicsFormA_22849739JCJan18b.pdf

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: [redacted] Print Name…Julie Cracknell Date…17.1.2018……

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…Prof.. Date…21/3/18….

(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.

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Appendix 3 – Positionality Statement

Introduction

This statement is a summary of my values, beliefs and experiences that position my subjectivity and how this influences the whole research process – spanning the choices of procedures to the interpretation of outcomes. Therefore, this study needs to be read and reviewed with the context of my personal approach that is inextricably linked throughout.

World view

My personal view of reality is constructivism, based on the principles that the world is socially constructed, the subjective observer is part of what is observed and science is driven by human interest. Whilst I am able to access knowledge consisting of logic, measurement and testing as favoured by positivists, I personally find my actual understanding of such knowledge is enhanced by meaning made through qualitative explanations and interpretations - in line with the epistemology of interpretivism. Inevitably, if my life experiences draw on interpretivism for knowledge and understanding, this significantly influences any research endeavours I undertake for my own interest. In the context of this study, I was keen to learn more about the nature of early career teachers' reflections about working in an age of performativity. With the open nature of this line of inquiry, I discounted strategies and methods that would provide me with quantifiable knowledge from which I could build my understanding of this phenomenon. Instead, I have taken an open minded approach to the investigation by not pre-determining the outcome, despite having read literature about this topic.

Because I value accounts that reflect interpretations of real life social experience, I find I am able to evaluate new knowledge in the interpreted context it is situated. Therefore, my own research requires the reader to understand the particular perspective this study is

generated from. I am not seeking to learn from absolute certainties or complete representativeness, because I am content to evaluate the findings of interpretivist research and identify knowledge that is useful to my own personal and professional experiences.

Professional background

My training twelve years ago enabled me to achieve the desired career change from accountancy to primary teaching. The intense training and mentoring was extremely effective, but since then, budget cuts in education have meant that professional development tends to be offered in the format of a few subjective development courses, internal school inset and discussions with colleagues. In my quest to be a highly effective teacher so pupils have the learning opportunities I believe they deserve, I have had to resort to my own devices to learn how to improve my skills. Through reading and research, I have continually reflected on my classroom practice to identify where efforts need to focus to maximise impact.

Now that I hold a leadership role for teachers with various levels of experience, I am interested into how the role of reflection is used to develop their professional skills. In the current culture of difficult performative demands, I personally believe systematic reflection provides an opportunity to develop teaching expertise and enjoyment. However, I am concerned by the reports of nearly one-third of teachers leave the profession within five years, which makes me wonder what support they are receiving and how a performative culture is shaping their reflective thinking processes (HCEC, 2017). Because my knowledge base is generally drawn from literature and personal experiences at my own school, the aim of this investigation was to investigate a broader picture to learn of the nature of reflection for early career teachers in other schools. Therefore, the value of conducting this research project

was to improve my own professional practice by using the new learning gained to review how I can be more effective in supporting ECTs to develop their practice in the performative culture.

Appendix 4 – Consent form

CONSENT FORM

Research study on reflective teaching in an age of performativity by Julie Cracknell

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Participant Information Sheet dated _____ for the above study, which was explained by Julie Cracknell. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

   I agree to take part in Interview 1 YES ☐

   I agree to Interview 1 being audio-recorded YES ☐

   I agree to take part in Interview 2 YES ☐

   I agree to Interview 2 being audio-recorded YES ☐

2. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw any part or all, without any detriment.

3. I would like a copy of the typed interview transcript Yes ☐ No ☐

4. I have received a copy of this Consent Form and the accompanying Participant Information Sheet.

Participant details

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Telephone No. _____