Social Class and the Emerging Professional Identities of Novice Teachers

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Table of Contents

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence that social class identity has on the emerging professional identities of novice teachers. The study argues that schooling in the UK is classed in terms of its history, outcomes and processes, and as a result, situates teaching as a form of 'class work'. Given the strong arguments for situating teaching in this way, this thesis seeks to increase our understanding about the way class actually works in relation to teachers' identities and the impact this has on their work as teachers.

This study was qualitative and longitudinal in nature and used semi-structured interviews as the main method of data collection. A group of eleven novice teachers were followed over a two year period as they both learnt to become teachers on a postgraduate initial teacher education programme and then one year later after most had started teaching in secondary schools.

The thesis begins by examining the complexities of the heightened, emotive and fiercely debated issue of class and draws strongly on understandings that locate class in contemporary Britain as being about culture as well as social structures. It recognises that whilst the emerging professional identities of teachers are heavily shaped by life experiences prior to becoming a teacher, new and varied teaching experiences have the capacity to impact on the way teachers see themselves and their understandings of their work in schools.

Using data rich stories of six of the novice teachers to exemplify the wider sample, this thesis illustrates the ways in which classed identity shapes novice teachers' early understandings of schooling and becoming a teacher. It demonstrates that class really does matter for novice teachers but that it plays out in complex and sometimes contradictory ways.

In particular, the thesis draws on the notion of social class boundaries and the way in which teaching often involves the crossing of these. The crossing of class boundaries is identified as being a central feature of the novice teacher experience. It is argued that class boundary crossing creates tensions for novice teachers not least because their own class identities are called into question and troubled by this process. One feature of this process is that many novice teachers recognise teaching as 'class work' and additionally understand that the cultural capital they bring to this context may not be equally valued in all educational settings. This can result in a class identity acting in restrictive and constraining ways. Whilst some novice teachers are bound by their class identities, others are able to play strategically with their class minimising the disadvantages of a perceived lack of appropriate cultural capital. This study suggests that the ability to know how and when to strategise is itself classed, a coping mechanism employed by middle rather than working class novice teachers.

The study concludes by examining the implications of these findings for novice teachers and their preparation for work in schools. It argues that the classed identities of teachers need to be explicitly examined in a supportive and reflexive manner within initial teacher education.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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For

Mam and Dad

List of Abbreviations

PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate of Education
ITET	Initial teacher education and training
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
DCSF	Department for Children Schools and Families (June 2007 – May 2010)
DfES	Department for Education and Skills (2001 – 2007)
FSM	Free School Meals
SfCC	Schools facing Challenging Circumstances
CoE	Church of England
MFL	Modern Foreign Languages
EMA	Education Maintenance Allowance
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
GCSE	General Certificate of Education
SEN	Special Educational Needs

List of Figures and Tables

Section One

Chapter One

Introduction

This thesis is concerned with novice teachers and the influence of social class identity on their emerging professional identities. This introductory chapter has three main purposes. The first is to outline in more detail the focus of this study and its research aims. The second purpose is to set the context and offer a rationale for this study and the third is to offer an overview of the remaining structure of this thesis.

Formalised education, often referred to as 'schooling', has been compulsory in England for over a hundred years. Yet to date, relatively little is known about those individuals responsible for facilitating this in the classroom. In summary, this thesis is concerned with exploring the role that a social class identity has on the emerging professional identities of novice teachers. Within this study I start from the premise that teachers do not arrive at the beginning of their teaching careers as neutral beings. Instead, each new teacher can be seen as bringing to bear a range of values and perspectives that influence their work as teachers.

These values and perspectives that may influence the work of teachers are numerous. However, values and perspectives rarely exist independently and as such, are likely to be shaped by an individual's identity. This study is an exploration of one aspect of identity on the work of teachers, that associated with social class.

The term 'novice teachers' is used throughout this thesis and was chosen to reflect the individuals' new status in teaching. The novice teachers featured in this study were all at the start of their one-year, full-time secondary Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) programme when this research began. The aim of the study was to follow them through their initial teacher education and training (ITET) year and then one year later when they would be nearing the completion of their newly qualified teacher (NQT) year in secondary schools.

As argued, there are many possible factors that may impact on becoming and being a teacher. In this study I sought to look at the influence of social class and the classed

identities of novice teachers primarily because education and social class in affluent societies are inextricably linked in a range of complex and dynamic ways (Smith and Noble, 1995; Davies, 2000; Tomlinson, 2001; Gillborn and Mizra, 2000; Ball et al., 1996; Reay, 2006; Raffo et al., 2007; 2010; Cassen and Kingdon, 2007). However, how novice teachers fit into this complex and dynamic web of relationships is largely missing from these literatures and as such, is under-theorised.

Moreover, novice teachers offer a fascinating window into understanding teachers and the influences on their work. This is because they are at the earliest point in their careers allowing us valuable insights into the ways in which existing values and beliefs act as important shaping influences on their work as teachers. In addition, as far as novice teachers are concerned, their early motivations and thoughts that have driven them to become teachers are still relatively fresh in their minds and are, as yet, un-influenced by the day-to-day pressures of being a teacher. Previous work also tells us that the class experiences (and values) of novice teachers are not only diverse but are likely to pre-dispose them to having affinities to some teaching contexts whilst distancing them from others (Hall et al., 2005; Ash et al., 2006; Raffo and Hall, 2006). However, what is happening in this respect is still relatively unexplored.

Study rationale: The relationship between education and social class

In England, education, and in particular schooling, is not a neutral space but instead may be seen as 'classed' (Maguire et al., 2006). The ways in which education and schooling can be seen to be classed are multifaceted. For instance, education is directly linked to discourses of social transformation and social mobility whereby through education, people are seen to be able to improve their life styles and life chances (Van Galen, 2007).

In addition, the communities served by schools are often thought of as 'classed' (Reay, 2007). Schools in England are also hierarchically ordered through official school league tables in ways that are 'classed', with those schools categorised as 'challenging' and/or 'failing' usually attended by working class children. Historically, the development of state-controlled and state-funded schooling in England has also been directly linked to social class. In particular, urban schools were arguably: '...set up to "gentle" the masses but not to "gentrify" them' (Maguire and Dillon, 1997: 88,

cited in Maguire, 2001: 315), with such schools still most often regarded as the domain of '…black and white working class 'difficult and disruptive' children…' (ibid).

However, by far the most damaging result of the classed nature of education is that children from working class backgrounds consistently and systematically do less well in terms of academic outcomes than their middle class counterparts (Hills et al., 2010; DfES, 2006; Ball et al., 2001). In addition, students from working class backgrounds still face a variety of barriers to and are still underrepresented in higher education (Connor et al., 2001; Archer and Hutchings, 2000; Lynch and O'Riordan, 1998; Marsh and Blackburn, 1992).

Despite well-versed claims that education has a 'transformative' effect on young working class people's lives, the true nature and extent of social mobility through education are still relatively unknown (Fine and Burns, 2003). In addition, where such social transformations do indeed occur, it has been argued that this can create anxiety and a sense of dislocation from one's identity for those 'lucky' enough to have been transformed (Kaufman, 2003; Lucey et al., 2003).

Furthermore, it is not just the case that working class children appear to do less well than their middle class counterparts, but that the education system itself may be seen as actively excluding them and systematically advantaging middle class children through its policy and practices (Ball, 2003a; 2006; Ball et al., 1996; Reay 2001; 2006; 1998c; Gewirtz, 2001; Crozier et al., 2008). Schooling in affluent capitalist societies such as England has also long been argued to be active in (re)producing class inequalities in wider society (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, Willis, 1977).

Thus education and schooling, in terms of its history, its outcomes and its processes, may be seen as inequitable on the grounds of class. Due to its compulsory nature in England[1], all members of society experience a significant period of time within the education system, but how this is experienced by middle class and working class

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[1] In England, at the time of writing, young people must remain in school up to age of 16. In 2009, the Labour government announced it was raising the school leaving age to 18 by 2015 (DCSF, 2009).Whether these plans will go ahead is now unknown given change of government from 2010.

young people is likely to (though not exclusively) differ significantly on account of those factors described above. The classed nature of schooling therefore impacts on everybody who has been educated in this country, whether they recognise this or not.

Central to education and schooling are teachers. As all teachers who were educated themselves in England have already experienced a classed education, novice teachers have already been exposed to class at work, though many certainly will not be aware of or articulate it in this way. Furthermore, what all novice teachers share in common is that they have each been relatively 'successful' in the education system. This stems from having gained at the very least, an undergraduate degree, a compulsory prerequisite to become a teacher in England. Therefore, the act of entering into teaching itself cannot be interpreted as a class-neutral act especially since novice teachers have prior class and educational experiences. In this way, class is likely to have played an important role in shaping their views about education and teaching as well as understanding the children they anticipate coming into contact with.

However, the classed nature of education (and society) is all too often hidden (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Sennett and Cobb, 1993). As a result, many novice teachers (and teachers generally) have little or no understanding of the ways in which the education system they have entered is inequitable on the grounds of class (Gazeley and Dunne, 2007).

This thesis therefore argues that exploring the classed identities of teachers, and in particular, novice teachers, is critical in further understanding how ongoing educational processes may simultaneously cause (through both production and reproduction) and are caused by class inequities. This study therefore supports Van Galen's (2004: 133) argument that teaching should be seen as 'class work'. Within this, Van Galen adds that teachers often operate as 'mediators of class' for many of the children they teach (ibid). By this, Van Galen means that for many working class children, their middle class (or even working class) teacher is often the only link between their own class norms and values and the dominant (largely middle class) norms and values of society.

The rationale for this study then is linked to evidence suggesting that more equal societies produce better outcomes for their citizens (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009).

Thus, in an education system that is inequitable, none more so than in relation to social class, we can only hope to make it more equitable by further understanding all aspects of the way in which inequities are produced and reproduced. This includes further understanding teachers and their classed identities. Identity has been a powerful concept in understanding the differential attainment of groups of students in schooling (Francis, 1998; Archer and Francis, 2006; 2007; Reay and Wiliam, 1999) and yet, relatively speaking, teacher identity is under-theorised for understanding how those processes may work. Only by gaining greater insights can we begin to explore the ways in which teachers' classed identities may be both part of the inequity problem in schooling as well as part of the solution.

Further investigating novice teachers and their classed identities can therefore make a contribution to knowledge in both theoretical and practical ways. Theoretically, exploring this relationship offers the potential to further understand the dynamic and persistent relationship between education and social class. Practically, in a system characterised by inequity, there are strong arguments for suggesting change must be systemic and only by understanding can we begin to challenge long standing and firmly embedded inequities.

Omissions and clarity

In choosing to focus on class identities, the aim is not to underplay the role or importance that other social identities or inequalities play in (re)producing educational inequities. Gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability and religion to name a few are also areas that may benefit from further analysis in relation to teachers and novice teachers. However, this is a small scale study where the focus has remained tight. It is important to note that social class in England both cuts across and is cut across by the range of other social identities mentioned above (Bennett et al., 2009; Reay, 2008a). Thus class identity (as will be explored in Chapter Two) is not an isolated or static entity but rather is intricately linked to other aspects of social identity.

Scope and focus of study

This is a small scale study which aimed to explore and understand how class identity may influence a small group of novice teachers as they embarked upon a career in

teaching. In order to address this aim, the way in which class featured in the novice teachers' lives needed to be understood. Therefore it was necessary to consider how the novice teachers described themselves in class terms. In particular, it was hoped this would help to examine whether class was something that had resonance to the novice teachers and whether class helped them to understand who they were, where they had come from and how they viewed the social world in which they live.

To help explore these aims, it was also necessary to consider how notions of social class informed novice teachers' thinking about teaching, schools and the children and communities they served. It was hoped that this would help demonstrate whether social class and a classed identity was a useful (either explicitly or implicitly) concept in helping novice teachers to understand education and teaching in general as well as the schools, pupils and communities they wanted/did not want to teach in.

Structure of thesis

This thesis is organised in three sections. The first section contains all of the background and contextual information to locate this study. There are three chapters within this section. This chapter is the first in Section One and has attempted to introduce the study. Its purpose was to outline the rationale and context as well as provide its scope and aims as well as omissions and structure. Chapter Two is a focused literature review that has two purposes. Firstly, it aims to outline the literature that has influenced and shaped this study and to which this thesis hopes to contribute. Secondly, the purpose is to introduce some of the concepts that have been used to make sense of the data collected and presented in this thesis, many of which will be returned to in Section Three. Literature is included that relates to social class, social class identity, teacher identity and the relationship between teachers and social class as these form the basis for this study. Chapter Three is the final chapter in Section One and includes an outline of the research design looking at methods and methodologies used within this thesis. The purpose of this is to offer a full description of what and how data was collected and an appropriate rationale as to why particular methods and methodology were selected in order to meet the aims of this study.

Section Two presents the data being used in this thesis and begins with an introduction that explains that six of the eleven novice teachers' stories are presented in detail.

These six exemplify the data as a whole and the section introduction explains their choice. The section then contains two chapters where these six novice teachers' stories are presented on a case-by-case basis. Chapter Four includes the presentation of three of the 'middle class' novice teachers whereas Chapter Five contains case studies of three of the 'working class' novice teachers. The cases presented rely heavily on verbatim accounts in order to allow the novice teachers' own words to be represented.

Section Three of this thesis aims to discuss the data and what findings emerged as well as conclusions and implications. Chapters Six and Seven aim to discuss and interpret the findings that emerge out of the data as a whole and are exemplified in the six case studies featured in Chapters Four and Five. Chapter Six presents the themes that emerged from the data in terms of the role that social class and a class identity have on the process of learning to teach and becoming a teacher. Chapter Seven sets out to offer some potential explanations that may help to further understand the way in which a class identity is influential on an emerging professional teacher identity. Chapter Eight, the final chapter, summarises the thesis and pulls together some concluding remarks. It also draws out the implications that this study has in relation to both wider understandings of class and specifically in relation to teachers and novice teachers as well as for ITET in England.

Chapter Two

Teacher Identity, Social Class and Classed Identities

The aim of this chapter is to offer a tightly focused account of the literature that underpins this study. In particular, this chapter explores three separate but interconnected areas within the literature. The first is the concept of a professional teacher identity; the second is the concept of social class and notions of a classed identity and finally, the area of teachers and social class. Each of these areas are, on their own, vast in relation to the breadth and depth of arguments. Thus this review cannot and does not claim to be systematic in its coverage. It does however include literature that both informed the direction of this study and that emerged as a way of making sense of the data.

Teacher Identity

The concept of teacher identity in this study is crucial. Ultimately, this research is concerned with the way in which teacher identities are formed in the early days of teachers' careers and go on to impact on their work as teachers. Thus, this exploration of existing studies of teacher identity is vital to help further understand the ways it has been previously conceptualised.

The concept of identity across the social sciences has been used in a variety of ways to explore how and why people do, feel, act and say what they do. Based on this, any one attempt at definition is likely to result in the imposition of sometimes artificial and arbitrary categorisation. The purpose here is to link the idea of a professional teacher identity into notions of a more fundamental identity, that of the 'self'.

In order to begin to understand the importance of teacher identities, it is crucial to set the context of teaching in England. The Education Reform Act of 1988 signalled a large-scale restructuring of education policy that saw significant changes impact on the day-to-day work of teachers (Maguire and Ball, 1994; Gewirtz, 1997; Van den Berg, 2002). In particular, some argue that teachers have undergone a form of de-professionalisation (Bottery and Wright, 2000) whilst their work has intensified (Van

den Berg, 2002). Arguments also follow that teachers have had to contend with a prescriptive curriculum (Whitty, 1989; Ball and Bowe, 1992), competitive school structures with de-contextualised league tables (Glatter et al., 1997; Higgs et al., 1997; Gewirtz, 1998) and a culture of scrutiny and surveillance (Troman, 1997; Perryman, 2006).

The context described above has led some to argue that teachers now find themselves as sandwiched between two distinct and often contradictory cultures. On the one-hand, there is a culture of 'ecologies of practice' (Stronach et al., 2002) or 'democratic professionalism' (Sachs, 2001) where teaching is linked to the skill and/or craft of teaching and the development of oneself as a practitioner. On the other hand there is a culture borne out of the changes above whereby 'performance' (Ball, 2003b; Stronach et al., 2002) or 'managerialist professionalism' (Sachs, 2001) is under strict external scrutiny, linked into market discourses of effectiveness and accountability.

In discussing teacher identity, it is useful to start by referring to the work of Olsen (2008) who summarised existing studies that have taken teacher identity as their focus. Olsen argues that:

> …a teacher's professional identity is (a) dynamic, and not fixed; (b) a relation between some kind of core identity and multiple selves; (c) both a process and a product; (d) an ongoing and situated dialectic among person, others, history, and professional contexts; (e) a political project as much as an ontological frame; (f) socially situated and therefore not traditionally psychological; (g) clearly differentiated from a teacher's "role;" and (h) not clearly differentiated from a teacher's "self."'

(Olsen, 2008: 19)

From the searches of the literature carried out for this study, Olsen's summary appears to have a great deal of value. However, for the purpose of this thesis, selected aspects described above need further unpicking and clarification with some being more central than others.

Most work that exists on teacher identity has been used as a means to understand the work and lives of teachers as they are engaged in the day to day evolution of their teaching career (Kelchtermans & Vanderberghe, 1994). This concentrates on teaching activity as well as the wider context of teaching (i.e., social and policy contexts) and is

often referred to as a professional identity. Identity has also been used to make sense of trainee and new teachers and how a 'pre-teaching' identity impacts upon becoming a teacher and the early decisions new teachers make (Hall et al., 2005; Ash et al., 2006; Raffo and Hall, 2006). Studies of this latter kind however are relatively scarce in the English context but more substantial literature of this kind exist in the US and Australia[2] (see Ladson-Billings, 2001; Bartolome, 2002; Allard and Santoro, 2006; Whitfield et al., 2007). These studies will be returned to and discussed in more detail later in this chapter. The two different approaches to understanding teacher identity identified above and the way they dynamically interact is a key focus of this thesis and will now be explored in more detail.

Understanding teacher identities inevitably draws on existing identity theory. The work of Mead (1934) is widely acknowledged as developing identity theory when it was suggested that notions of 'the self' were socially constructed, multiple and developed through continual interactions and experiences rather than being entirely stable. This understanding of multiple selves in relation to teacher identity has caused some debate. Ball and Goodson (1985) highlight the potential usefulness of the work of Ball (1972). Writing in relation to crime and deviance, Ball argued there are two fundamental aspects of identity these being the 'substantive' (the more stable and core) and the 'situated' (the changeable and reactive to different contexts) 'self'. Nias (1989) argues that a core essence of the type reported by Ball existed amongst a sample of primary teachers she studied. Nias also suggested that for many, being a teacher actually became a part of their core identity, which she attributes to the emotional nature of teaching (Nias, 1996) and the difficulty teachers have in separating themselves from the 'craft' of teaching (Nias, 1989: 203).

By contrast, Stronach et al. (2002) suggest that, especially in the changing context in which teachers work, this notion of a largely unified teacher identity is vastly overstated. To demonstrate this, Stronach et al. and also MacLure (1993) discuss the 'discursive' nature of constructing teacher identities. These are claimed not only to be plural but also often conflicting. Moreover, both Stronach et al. and MacLure seemingly reject notions such as Ball's 'situated self' as being insufficient in

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[2] This is important as this study has necessarily had to draw much of the theorising around English teachers from international perspectives given that there is not a substantial body of existing and/or appropriate work focusing specifically on the context in question.

incorporating their own views because they argue the 'situated self' is considered too secondary to the idea of a 'core self' in models such as Ball's.

This study is concerned with the interface between the personal and professional identities of teachers. The idea of an underpinning/core identity based around personal beliefs and images of self in relation to the emotive nature of teaching (Van den Berg, 2002; Hargreaves, 1998; Nias, 1996), is what underpins this study. As this work is concerned with the classed identities of novice teachers and its impact on their emerging professional identities, the link between the personal and professional are viewed as being intimately intertwined. This is because the notion of a substantial self is implicated in the very use of the concept of class (as will be discussed later in this chapter). But seeking to explore the impact this may have as one becomes a teacher, inevitably involves an exploration of the relationship between existing ideas of self, alongside developing understandings.

Having directly linked this study to the interface between the professional and the personal identities of teachers, understanding the biographies and life histories of teachers becomes a valuable way to understand their personal and professional motivations and choices (Kelchtermans, 1993; Kelchtermans & Vanderberghe, 1994). This is particularly pertinent at the start of a teaching career since the direct relationship between existing identities and becoming a teacher are at their most dynamic.

The terms 'identity' and 'self' are often used interchangeably in literature on teachers. Though this may be little more than a linguistic choice for some, for others, the use of 'the self' represents something much deeper. As Kelchtermans & Vanderberghe (1994: 48) suggest, 'the self is not something found in the heads of people' but rather, needs to be understood as something that shapes our perceptions and actions, as well as being shaped by them. In addition, the 'self' also needs to be understood as shaped by a complex interplay between social structures and personal agency.

In agency terms, Kelchtermans & Vanderberghe (1994: 52-4) usefully discuss the role of 'critical incidents', 'critical persons' and 'critical phases' as a means by which to examine influences and changes to a developing professional teacher identity. These refer to any people, events or periods of time that a teacher may experience or come

into contact with that challenge, confirm or change the professional identity of that particular teacher. What Kelchtermans & Vanderberghe are arguing is important to understanding the emerging professional identities of teachers. This is because their argument views teacher identities as complex and not static but that they may be rooted in some kind of existing identity that is subject to change or confirmation.

Cooper and Olson (1996) suggest that training teachers have not yet constructed a substantive self with regard to the profession of teaching. They argue the construction of the professional self is an ongoing 'process' (p 78) and that it is through day-to-day experiences and interactions that meaning is made. They also suggest a major issue for new teachers and their emerging professional identities is balancing their own personal understandings of children and education (identified through their own experiences of education, their memories of being a child and/or their experiences with their own children) with a professional view of children and education. They also argue that new teachers' actions are not fully influenced by either the past or present but rather a complex interplay between the two.

Thus, understanding the ways in which the personal aspects of identity interact with the professional are essential in this study. As part of what is called 'the personal', a classed identity is one aspect of what this may encompass. For the moment, taking a broader understanding of what class may involve, Van den Berg (2002: 591) suggests that new teachers are strongly influenced by a variety of factors including 'cultural-ideological considerations', of which, understandings of their 'self' and others in relation to social class is one aspect. As outlined in the introductory chapter, new teachers do not approach teaching from a neutral starting point. Therefore their perceptions on arrival into teaching are likely to be influential (to varying extents) on their early professional development. Olsen (2008: 21) argues that:

> The prior experiences of pre-service teachers produced deeply embedded conceptions about content, teaching, and learning that proved resilient against programmatic intervention.

In addition, Beijaard et al. (1999) also note that the experiences that teachers have during their first professional years strongly influence the course of their future careers. Interestingly, this implies that the personal knowledge new teachers arrive with and the professional knowledge they acquire in the early stages of becoming a

teacher, fuse to create what we call an emerging professional identity. However, as Van den Berg (2002: 589) suggests, these often constitute a varied range of 'subjective educational theories'. This study is therefore particularly interested in the role of social class and a classed identity within these 'subjective educational theories'.

The idea that there is a substantive/core self that is relatively stable and more difficult to change is an important point within this study. This assumes that individuals have a set of key values, beliefs and perceptions which are not subject to change every time we meet new people, hear different viewpoints or experience a new situation. But, despite being more resistant to change, this is not to say the self does not develop or change. This is because the self is likely to be responsive (in varying degrees from person to person) and subject to change over time possibly through the types of critical 'incidents', 'people' and 'phases' as referred to by Kelchtermans and Vanderberghe (1994).

In addition to this relationship between a core and a more situated self, Olsen (2008) argues the interplay between structure and agency is also important in understanding teacher identity. He notes: 'any self is situated inside macro and micro contexts and histories' and that the developmental processes are 'located in, and mediated by, the many layers of social context in which humans participate' (Olsen, 2008: 13). Olsen argues against locating identity in large macro structures alone due to their deterministic and essentialising tendencies. Instead Olsen argues that the self should be seen as shaped by both 'macrosocial strata', i.e., gender, race and class as well as what he calls the 'microstructures' which he describes as:

> …those specific and immediate contexts, practices, and social relationships any person engages in (of course, themselves influenced by history and macrostructures, but also possessed of their own site-specific contours), and the mediated patterns of power, discourse, and agency they carry.

(Olsen, 2008: 15)

The interplay between structure and agency is then a key aspect of identity and teacher identity and as such, an important part of this study. The complex relationship between structure and agency will be returned to later in this chapter when class identity is discussed.

It is important to once again state that this research takes as its focus the way in which a classed identity, as a possible aspect of an individual's core identity impacts on their emerging professional teacher identity. However, it is important to say that class, seen broadly as a social identity, is only one possible shaping influence on any notion of a core identity or substantial self. Other social identities such as gender, ethnicity, religion and age (to name the more obvious ones) may also impact on this.

In addition, a professional identity (as part of an occupational identity) is just one type of identity that a researcher may seek to explore. There are many other aspects of an individual's identity that one may also wish to investigate such as a political identity or a domestic identity (Banks et al., 1992). Therefore, the focus upon teacher professional identity and a classed identity in relation to this does not imply that either or both are more central to ideas about identity than any other aspect of an individual's identity. Rather, it is simply the focus of this study. This chapter now turns to the focus of social class and classed identities before moving on to explore class in relation to teacher identities later in this chapter.

Social class

What does social class mean?

The main aim of this thesis is to explore the influence that a social class identity has on an emerging professional teacher identity. Above the scene was set for what a professional teacher identity means in the context of this study. This section now moves on to consider the concept of social class.

In the introductory chapter, it was argued that education is a non-neutral space, none more so than in relation to social class (Maguire, 2006). It was argued that education and schooling, in terms of its history (Maguire and Dillon, 1997), its outcomes (DfES, 2006; Ball et al., 2001) and its processes (Ball, 2003a; 2006; Reay, 2001; 2006) are inequitable on the grounds of class. Furthermore, it was also argued that schooling was fundamental to producing and reproducing class inequalities in societies such as ours (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, Willis, 1977). However,

what it did not focus on was what social class actually means and the role it plays more generally in contemporary Britain.

The idea of class in Britain has a somewhat chequered past. More than merely an academic concept, social class is a widely (albeit variably) understood concept that has been embedded in British public life and politics throughout the twentieth century. However, from the late 1970s and the start of the 1980s, class seemingly fell from grace (Rees, 1985).

In academia, 'class' as an explanation for life chances alongside social and political behaviour, appeared to have gone out of fashion (Evans, 1999), giving way '…to new concerns with identity, ones considered more appropriate to the postmodern condition' (Kirk, 2002: 343). In British public and political life, a New Right-inspired government led by Margaret Thatcher, with its neo-liberal discourses of the market and individualism triumphed (Kirk, 2002).

However, the latter half of the 1990s and the early 21st Century has seen something of a 'mini-revival' of class in academia (Skeggs, 1997; 2004; Savage, 2000; Devine et al., 2005). Similarly, the word 'class' has reappeared in policy discourse (Cabinet Office, 2009; Geo, 2009; Hills et al., 2010) after it seemed to have been abandoned by almost all politicians (Cannadine, 1998) including New Labour (SEU, 1997).

What social class actually means in British society though is both complex and open to a variety of interpretations (Edgell, 1993). In terms of academic understandings of class, there exists a breadth and depth of detailed academic theories, conceptualisations and arguments. In attempting to summarise these Ball (2003a) suggests existing works on class can be seen as fitting into one of four types. These are:

- Class theory
- Class analysis
- Class practices
- The demise of class.

Class theory then refers to work that attempts to define what class means based on ideas, or theories, that are speculative and hypothetical rather than applied or based on empirical research (Ball, 2003a). The influential writings of Karl Marx and Max Weber who set out to theorise class on the basis of inequalities in westernised societies are central within this grouping.

Class analysis can be understood as deciding 'who fits' where and why and generally involves empirical work of some kind. The work of Goldthorpe (1987 plus Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1985) that sought to develop class schema based around occupational locations and status can be seen as directly fitting into this grouping and such work has been used to study social mobility (Goldthorpe & Marshall, 1992; Erikson, Goldthorpe & Portocarrero, 1979).

Inevitably, class theory and class analysis of this kind are heavily intertwined as an understanding of what class means is central to then identifying 'who fits where and why' and understanding the resulting inequalities that exist in westernised societies (Wright, 1997; 2008).

Ball's notion of class practices again cannot be isolated from class theory and class analysis. Work of this kind tends to investigate particular social practices that can be seen as classed. Much of the work in this realm has developed in relation to aspects of education and the way in which social advantage and disadvantage are realised through particular classed practices (Ball, 1993; 2003a; Ball et al., 1996; Ball et al., 2004; Reay & Ball, 1997; Gewirtz, 2001; Gewirtz et al., 1994; 1995).

Ball's final category contains work that examines the way in which class may no longer be a useful concept for understanding modern westernised societies (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1990; Lash and Urry, 1987; 1994; Bauman, 1982). Although such work critiques the current usefulness of class as a concept, Ball nevertheless considers them a central component to examining class in modern Britain (Ball, 2003a).

In a similar vein, Savage et al. (2001) attempt to make sense of the varying work that exists in relation to class but specifically refer to studies that take class identities as their focus. Savage et al. seek to locate current debates about whether class identity as a concept is still relevant and meaningful in contemporary Britain. They identify three

broad 'camps' that the arguments about the usefulness of class identity can be separated into: the demise of class camp; the class matters 'keepers of the flame' camp and finally the class matters 'but' camp (Savage et al., 2001).

As for Ball, the demise of class thesis is seen by Savage et al. as important in understanding the usefulness of class identities in contemporary Britain. The authors state that such arguments should be taken as a result of '…the contemporary failings of class analysis' (p876). Therefore arguments about the demise of class need to be fully explored to help understand the tensions and complexities of the meaningfulness of class.

By contrast, writers who Savage et al. would place in the other two 'camps', all see class as remaining salient in contemporary Britain, but vary in important ways. On the one hand, there is a camp that comprises of 'keepers of the flame' (Savage et al., 2001: 876). Savage et al. suggest that work in this camp (see Marshall et al., 1988; Devine, 1992a; 1992b.) seems to argue that since people still identify themselves as belonging to a social class and are still class aware, this provides evidence that class identity is still important. Savage et al. call this camp 'keepers of the flame' because implied in these arguments is that existing understandings and conceptualisations of class are as adequate today as in the past.

In Savage et al.'s final camp, the argument is that class identities are seen as generally weak and ambivalent but this is not regarded as being contradictory to class analysis. On the contrary, Savage et al. argue that this means we need to seriously re-think some of the arguments around class and re-examine what class now means in contemporary Britain. Within this perspective, the influence of Pierre Bourdieu is clearly evident as more cultural understandings of class are sought. Writers such as Skeggs (1997) are prominent here.

In relation to this study, Ball's framework is a useful starting point in thinking about the broader literature on class. From this it becomes possible to begin to think about how and where one's own work would sit. But, this study focuses on classed identity which is difficult to precisely locate in Ball's framework. What it does do though is to highlight that this study is not about class theory since the purpose is not to attempt to redefine what class means in any theoretical sense. This study could be viewed as a form of class analysis but what this means needs more interpretation as it is not a

simple question about who fits where and why. Ball's 'classed practices' however is a central part of what a classed identity means in relation to this study and this will be returned to later in this chapter.

The framework offered by Savage et al. is similarly useful in this study as it helps organise the arguments around the salience of classed identities in modern-day Britain. It also helps to locate this study within that debate around class identities.

In drawing on both Ball and Savage et al., it becomes much clearer to identify how the discussion of class needs to be focused within the remainder of this part of this chapter. Importantly, both Ball and Savage et al. situate the demise of class thesis as key to understanding the usefulness and meaning of class in contemporary Britain. Savage et al. argue that there is little recent empirical evidence on class identities for instance and this is, at least in part, due to the chequered past of class and the success of the 'demise of class' thesis (see also Crompton, 1998; Pakulski and Waters, 1996). Given the importance of these arguments about the demise of class, these will be examined more closely shortly.

After discussing the demise of class arguments, this chapter will then focus on Savage et al.'s (2001) class matters 'but' school of thought. Within this study, the arguments presented in the 'keepers of the flame' camp will not be discussed in any great detail. In brief, this way of thinking about class argues that class still dictates people's life styles and chances (Wright, 1997), and people do still identify with class (Reid, 1998). On the strength of this, Savage et al. suggest this 'camp' argue class identities are alive and well, and therefore class as a concept is relatively unproblematic, needing little re-conceptualising (Marshall et al., 1988; Devine, 1992a; 1992b).

Given the powerful arguments of the demise of class thesis (see below), this study takes the view that it is problematic to simply accept that understandings of class do not need to be re-considered to become more nuanced in their conceptualisation and theorisation, particularly in relation to culture. Within this, Ball's (2003a) notion of 'class practices' becomes especially relevant and helps to explain why classed identities are still salient in contemporary Britain.

The end of class?

Debates about the extent to which Britain is becoming classless have been long running (see Hall, 1958 and Samuel, 1959). However, the rise in prominence of the demise of class thesis in Britain is generally argued to coincide with dramatic changes in the economy and work/life structure from the 1970s onwards. Broadly understood, this shift, particularly accelerated from the 1980s onwards (Rees, 1985), has involved the large-scale reconfiguration of the economy from dependence on labour-intensive and industrialised manufacturing.

These changes have led some to argue that western societies have moved from 'organised' capitalism towards a more fragmented and 'disorganised' capitalism (Lash & Urry, 1987) with countries like Britain now described as 'post-industrial' (Bell, 1976). What then emerges from this shift is a large, more service-orientated employment sector characterised by new forms of employment, namely flexible, insecure, mundane and part-time working (Brown, 1999). Alongside this service-orientated sector emerges a high-end knowledge sector (e.g., finance/media). This sector is driven by new forms of individualisation that are rooted in notions of 'self-development, the 'transformative capacities of the self' (Savage, 2000: 156) and risk taking (Beck, 1992).

These changes have led some to question whether social class as a concept has the ability to explain the new complexities that emerge in a vastly restructured post-industrial society (Bauman, 1982; Giddens, 1990). Central to these concerns is that historically, class, as both a popularly understood and academic concept, is deeply tied to industrial societies. Crucial in these arguments is that such views of social class emanate from the work of Karl Marx. For Marx, social class, and in particular, the idea of the working class, was used to help understand power and domination in industrial societies as occurring through their relationship to the means of production. Thus, since post-industrialised societies are no longer tied to 'organised' capitalism (i.e., manufacturing with 'owners' and 'workers'), the power relations have become more complex and/or hidden.

This has meant that many regard post-industrialised societies as having moved away from collective identities (and thus class/classes) towards more individualised

identities (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1992). This leads some to argue that class alone no longer helps to fully understand new forms of power and domination (Bauman, 1982), new groups/'communities' with varying interests and identities (Lash & Urry, 1994) or the new 'risk society' (Beck, 1992) that have resulted from this restructuring (Giddens, 1991) [3].

Whether we agree or not with the theories put forward by the likes of Giddens (1991; 1992), Beck (1992) or Bauman (1982), what is clear is that these ideas have helped to fragment the explanatory power of class as a meta-narrative. At the very least, understandings of 'class' that seek to locate people in groups based on occupational status or based around collective identities have been complicated. The salience of class as an explanatory concept and notions of collective identities have similarly been complicated by arguments as to the supposed embourgeoisment of the working classes and the proletarianisation of many white-collar (formerly) 'middle class' jobs (Evans, 1999). However, it is fair to say class has always been a debated and contested concept due in large part to it not describing something outwardly identifiable and/or tangible to all.

In addition to the restructuring of economic and work life in post-industrial Britain, Kirk (2002) suggests that politically, these changes co-existed with a major shift in ideology. Informed by 'New Right' thinking (Levitas, 1986), Margaret Thatcher's 1979 Conservative government promoted a highly ideological neo-liberal agenda (Aronowitz, 1992). With a strong focus on individualism alongside a systematic programme of market-orientated politics and economics, this aimed at reconfiguring all citizens as consumers.

This neo-liberal agenda is largely regarded to have been a resounding success and most importantly, may be seen as being most successful in normalising a particular worldview. Abercrombie and Turner (1978) call this the 'dominant ideology thesis'[4]

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[3] Over the last three years however we have witnessed some loss of public faith in certain aspects of the forms of 'disorganised' capitalism that Lash & Urry (1987) describe. In particular, the finance sector and some of their unethical practices have been brought to public attention and widely cited as responsible for the 'credit crunch' of the late 2000s resulting in the need for state intervention in some cases. Thus only time will tell whether the arguments presented here remain salient or will need re-thinking, or whether capitalism as we now know it is in the type of 'crisis' Marx predicted.

[4] This suggests that a particular set of beliefs, generally of the most powerful, become dominant and serve to ensure subordinate groups do not descent.

that effectively encourages all members of society 'to see our world through the distorting mirror of ruling class ideology' (Saunders, 1990: 9).

In class terms, neo-liberalism in British politics, with its focus on the market, competition and individualism, helped to further break down the idea of collective identities. The British people were being actively encouraged to think of themselves as individuals in a competitive market economy. It is also argued that rather than it simply being a by-product of economic changes and policies, the New Right actively sought to break the British public's association with the idea of 'class'. According to Cannadine (1998: 2), Margaret Thatcher openly referred to class as a 'communist concept', an emotive term given the Cold War connotations and the competition between capitalist and communist ideologies at that time. This view of class in British politics was firmly etched when in 1990, John Major the then Prime Minister declared that the UK was indeed a 'classless society' (Trowler, 1995).

The 1980s onwards also saw a complication (but not total dissolution) of class voting patterns (Evans, 1999), the abolition of Clause IV and the birth of New Labour (Freeden, 2003) all of which can be seen to have further convoluted class in British politics. An increasing focus on issue-based politics (Evans, 1999) and a victory of 'populism' in policy (Cannadine, 1998: 174) is asserted to have further fragmented the relationship between social class and politics.

The demise of class thesis has not been without its critics (Milner, 1999; Munt, 2000). For instance, far from the above arguments signalling the end of class in Britain, some argue that 'classlessness' is an explicitly and highly successful class discourse in itself (Adonis and Pollard, 1997). This is because it operates in the interest of some classes by powerfully privileging them at the expense of others. This is achieved by rendering social inequality invisible (Mahony and Zmroczek, 1997; Reay, 1998b). It is also achieved by perpetuating the 'myth of meritocracy' (Bell, 1973; Young, 1994), that is, the fallacy that through hard work alone, anybody can achieve anything they want to. It is through this fallacy that social advantage and privilege can be denied asserting instead that it was achieved through merit. Therefore, the discourse of 'classlessness' can, and for the purpose of this study should, be seen as a form of collective class identity. This means that the demise of class argument actively serves the interests of those who have benefited from social advantage, namely the middle and upper classes.

Furthermore, the discourse of classlessness is not just 'out there' benefiting small numbers of 'privileged people'. Rather, it has and continues to dominate public and political life in Britain, with the socially advantaged participating in 'class practices' and 'class strategies' (Ball, 2003a) that seek to normalise these whilst simultaneously downplaying social advantage and disadvantage.

The breakdown of collective class identities, and in particular Savage's (2000: 153) notion of the 'dissolution of the working class' in post-industrial Britain is also helpful in understanding contemporary social and cultural change. Savage (2000) argues that images of the working class in industrial societies acted as a 'moral identifier'. He says that it is the loss of what he views as working class 'respectability' (see also Skeggs, 1997), through the loss of the male working class jobs and trades that has led many people to disassociate with being working class, not the disappearance of class, or working-classness per se.

As above, the demise of class thesis is central to this study for three main reasons. The first is that its arguments have arisen due to substantial social, political and economic changes in British society that cannot be ignored in terms of how people view both society and themselves in post-industrial Britain. The second is that discussions of classlessness may actually be a strong class discourse because it operates in the interest of some classes at the expense of others. The third reason is that this emerged as an important factor in the complexities experienced by novice teachers in locating oneself in a class or identifying with class as a meaningful concept.

This chapter now turns to explore how the arguments presented here as to the demise of class have led to the need for a more nuanced and culturally responsive approach to understanding class in contemporary Britain.

Cultural understandings of class

Savage (2000: 34) argues that although people identify with class when asked to do so, contemporary Britain is no longer (if it ever was) characterised by strong class awareness or class identities. As such, he argues:

> …the starting point for studies of class and culture should be the weakness of class consciousness.

In the above quote, Savage uses 'consciousness' to mean a coherent and consistent social outlook organised in class terms. He goes on to argue that the key to understanding social change:

> …lies in the restructuring of social class relations, rather than in grand narratives of 'globalization' 'individualization' and so forth.

(Savage, 2000: 151)

As a result of highly complex economic, social and political relations, there are strong arguments that for class to remain a meaningful concept in Britain, it needs to take seriously the cultural processes that help illuminate how class works (Devine and Savage, 2005).

Crompton (1998: 43) argues that this cultural approach to class involves trying to understand class as being about the way in which people 'resist and reproduce' their class situations, values and meanings. Furthermore, Crompton argues that this requires some moving away from class as being entirely economic and structural towards the way in which this is reproduced through culture and social interaction.

As the social and cultural aspects of class are foregrounded, the formation of people's identities, attitudes and their social practices in relation to class become central (Devine, 1997). This is especially pertinent since social differences and social inequality, often based on 'deeply-rooted cultural assumptions' (Reid, 1998: 4), are a crucial mechanism through which people make sense of themselves and others (Mackintosh and Mooney, 2000).

Culture, however, should not be seen as a replacement for economic, work and power relations in the study of class. Therefore, within cultural understandings of class, the influence of Pierre Bourdieu has been fundamental in understanding the links between economic and cultural aspects of class (Crompton, 1998). This study does not use Bourdieu's framework directly. However, through some of his concepts and ideas, writers on class identity have been equipped with a discourse that enables them to

examine the active processes of class at work and therefore it is relevant to discuss some of his influence on these writers here.

For Bourdieu, 'culture' has a particular meaning in that it is viewed as an asset. In westernised societies, the culture that is valorised is worth more and this is generally the cultures associated with the more powerful social classes (Bennett et al., 2009). In essence, Bourdieu's take on social class is that it is through aspects of 'taste' and preference that social distinctions and divisions, and thus classes, are (at least partly) made and maintained (Bourdieu, 1984). To fully understand the influence of Bourdieu on writers that focus on the cultural aspects of class, his concepts of 'capital' (Bourdieu, 1986) and 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1984; Thompson, 1984) must be discussed more fully.

The influence of habitus on understanding class processes

Habitus, according to Reay (2004a: 432), was Bourdieu's attempt to 'transcend dualisms of agency-structure, objective-subjective and the micro-macro' in understanding human values, attitudes and behaviours. Nash (1999: 177) suggests that:

> …habitus is conceived as a generative schema in which the forms of elemental social structures come, through the process of socialisation, to be embodied in individuals, with the result that people necessarily act in such a way that the underlying structures are reproduced and given effect.

Bourdieu's use of habitus then is seen as deeply tied to one's class position (Bennett et al. 2009) and is an attempt at articulating how the structures of class impact on the actions of individuals by shaping their values and attitudes. In essence, habitus, according to Reay (2004a), may also be seen as involving a complex interplay between structure and agency in that it allows for individual agency whilst simultaneously predisposing people towards behaving in certain ways. In addition, Reay suggests habitus is not only made up of an individual's history but also that of their family and their entire social class. She adds that it also involves a complex relationship between past and present in that early childhood experiences are paramount in developing a habitus but that it is 'continually re-structured by individual's encounters with the outside world' (Reay, 2004a: 434).

Bourdieu's habitus has been critiqued in relation to how far it has transcended the duality of structure and agency with some suggesting it is still largely deterministic and leans heavily towards social structures as producing culture (Jenkins, 1982; 2002; LiPuma, 1993).

However, what Bourdieu's habitus has enabled writers using class to do is to consider the ways in which structure is a shaping force but how everyday interactions and experiences can impact on that. In this study, the balance between structure and agency in Bourdieu's work for understanding the way in which class works seems broadly appropriate given that Bourdieu was very clear that habitus is dynamic and permeable. Therefore, this fits into the framework offered earlier with regard to exploring how teacher identities are made up of a complex interplay between structure and agency, and the relationship between early life experiences and everyday interactions as fusing together to make a complex habitus, or rather, for this study, identity.

What Bourdieu's concept of habitus also offers writers on class identity is the notion that having a classed identity (or habitus in Bourdieu's case) is embodied. This is a key part of a classed identity and will be explored in more detail shortly.

Finally, the concept of habitus is also useful in understanding the ways in which class operates relationally. In particular, it helps illuminate the dynamic relationships of domination and subordination and the 'cultural superiority and inferiority ingrained in the habitus in daily interactions' (Reay, 2004a: 436). Bourdieu's habitus has been criticised for marginalising gender and ethnicity. However, in understanding the power of habitus as illuminating domination and subordination, feminist work (McCall, 1992; McLeod, 2005) and work on ethnicity (Connolly, 2003; Ahmed and Jones, 2008; and ethnicity and class Archer and Francis, 2006) have been able to use the concept to show how classed (as well as gendered and ethnicity-orientated) processes work.

The influence of 'capital' in understanding class processes

Bourdieu's notion of 'capital' is also extremely useful in relation to class because it highlights how individuals and groups may actively both exercise and resist

domination in society. Put simply, 'capital' in all its forms (economic, cultural, social and symbolic) can be seen as the currency through which people are able to occupy and maintain their social positions and status in the social hierarchy and thus are important considerations in the study of identity. As Skeggs (1997: 94) suggests, identities (including classed identities) are:

> …continually reproduced as a response to social positions through access to representational systems and in the conversion of forms of capital.

In Bourdieu's view, the greater the access to and possession of the different types of capitals an individual has, the more likely they are to be part of or closer to the dominant group/s in society. According to Bourdieuian thought, cultural capital helps to produce and reproduce class because having high levels of cultural capital makes access to economic and social capital easier. Thus, the closer one's culture and identity is to the dominant culture and identity, then the more likely they are to 'succeed' in aspects of society such as wealth accumulation, occupational and social status, education and so forth.

Bourdieu's concepts then help to understand the way in which social and cultural (and class) reproduction function in society, notions that have found particular applicability in the arena of education (Bourdieu, 1973). It is through understandings of habitus and capital that many people have sought to understand the differential classed practices of education, particularly in relation to policy developments in English education. This is because it is argued that they have acted to 'valorises middle class rather than working class cultural capital' (Reay, 2006: 294), parenting skills as related to this (Ball, 2003a; Reay, 1998a.) as well as advantaging some whilst disadvantaging other children in the classroom (Thomson, 2002).

Therefore Bourdieu's concepts have been central in moving forward with understandings of how class may work in relation to identities, values and social action both more broadly and within this study.

So far this chapter has explored teacher identity and has explored the chequered past of the concept of class. It has sought to demonstrate that the demise of class thesis is central to this study because it raises important issues with more traditional views of

class. The main issue this raises is that ideas of classlessness are based on real social, political and economic changes. In addition, there is a strong argument that the discourse of classlessness is a class discourse in itself, seeking to disguise social advantage and inequality.

The chapter then went on to demonstrate a strong body of literature that states class is still salient in Britain. This was followed by the argument that as society has changed, the way class must be viewed and how it may work has become more complex, with more nuanced and cultural understandings of class being required. The work of Bourdieu, particularly around habitus and capital was then discussed as a major influence on the thinking around these cultural understandings.

This chapter now turns to explore the notion of class identities in more detail and how we might begin to understand both how the concept has been used previously and how thinking around it might prove useful to help understand the novice teachers within this study.

Classed Identities – ideas and concepts

The decision to focus on classed identities within this study emanates from the view that class is more than an abstract concept or a set of categories that people simply place themselves or others in. Instead, class is something that is lived and experienced, produced and reproduced in the social as well as the economic and is about social advantage and disadvantage.

As discussed, classed identities are complex and multifaceted, open to wide interpretation and supported by little empirical research (Savage et al., 2001). As Savage (2000) noted, the starting point of any discussion of class in contemporary Britain should be the weakness of class consciousness. Savage says that a potential reason why social science has failed both empirically and conceptually to show the importance of class as having cultural currency is that all too often, class has been theorised in ways that suggest class consciousness is about shared values (Savage, 2000). As demonstrated earlier, the weakness of class consciousness in Britain is argued to be linked to the dissolution of a respectable and shared working-class consciousness in a post-industrial society (Savage, 2000). In addition, ideas of class

(particularly working class) consciousness have arguably been weakened by successful strategising implemented by powerful and dominant groups (Reay, 1998b). Though some argue there is an active middle class collective consciousness around maintaining social advantage, particularly in relation to schooling (Ball, 2003a).

This raises two important and interrelated aspects to classed identities. The first is that self-identification as belonging to a social class is only one aspect of a classed identity. The second is that a classed identity, because of the way in which class is produced and reproduced in the social, must also include the ways in which class (whether explicit or implicit) plays a role shaping people's attitudes, values and actions. Or, in other words, a classed identity is not simply about what you say you (or others) are, but how you act and the practices you engage in. A classed identity then is a multilayered idea that requires some unpicking. It also has a number of concepts within it that need to be explored to further understand the ways in which it may work. The different aspects of a classed identity will now be discussed, starting with self-identification of class.

Self-identification of class

An important feature of classed identities then is how people relate explicitly to the idea of class as part of their own identity and that of others. As Reid (1998) notes from exploring various studies of class, over 90 per cent of the British public see themselves as belonging to a social class. But, as Argyle (1994) notes, the 'groups' or 'classes' that people identify with are often dependent on labels available to them in surveys/research or in popular discourse. This leads Savage (2000: 36) to argue that whilst people may be willing to identify themselves in class terms, they do so ambiguously and in defensive and hesitant ways such as 'I suppose I'm….' or 'probably…'. In an empirical study of classed identities in the North West of England, Savage et al. (2001: 875) argued that although classed identities are generally 'ambivalent and defensive' they are still 'structured and coherent in their own terms'.

Writing in response to Savage et al. (2001) Payne and Grew (2005) suggest a different reading of classed identities drawing on the data provided by Savage et al. alongside their own research. They argue that understandings of classed identities as ambivalent and defensive could actually be misunderstood by social scientists who approach

studies of class from their highly focused, 'intellectually rigorous training in sociological class analysis', not fully appreciating that the general public may approach class with a 'different frame of reference from sociologists' (Payne & Grew, 2005: 894). They go on to suggest that once this is considered, 'class cultures and identities are more prevalent and important than Savage et al. allow' (ibid).

Payne and Grew also express the importance of realising that many people talk about class without ever mentioning the 'c-word' itself (ibid: 902). They suggest 'class' may actually be signalled through the use of various terms such as: money, income and financial inequalities; inter-personal attitudes expressing class superiority/inferiority; aristocracy/upper-class people; housing; educational qualifications; aspirations, getting on and personal achievement; acceptance of social standards and respect for other people; human nature; lifestyle; local/incomer differences; justified rewards for personal worth; job types/manual or dirty work/the professions; influence/power over class inferiors; capitalism/class system (ibid: 901).

In addition, Payne and Grew also question some of the methodology used by Savage et al. namely the ordering of questions, alongside some of the analysis and understandings of the data. They argue that Savage et al. asked questions about whether the respondents felt they now lived in a classless society followed by questions as to whether they saw themselves as belonging to a social class. They suggest the complexity of the first question inevitably caused them anxiety of placing themselves into something complex they had just been trying to articulate. Payne and Grew suggest that if they'd asked the question of whether they felt they belonged to a social class first, they may have got different responses. They argued:

> It is unreasonable to expect every respondent to share sociologists' sophisticated theoretical perspectives. It follows that interviewees normally express their views about social class in a somewhat confused way, because they are being asked to handle a genuinely multi-faceted concept at short notice. Indeed, what is striking is that they are able to answer so well, as this implies that class (in whatever form) is impinging on their understandings of their own lives. In using … other types of differentiation, they may think they are talking about class even when sociologists coding respondents' answers, with a narrower definition of social class, do not necessarily agree. The rejection of a simple label, therefore, is not necessarily a rejection of a class self-identification.

(Payne & Grew, 2005: 903)

Although Savage et al. (2001) argued that most people seemed reluctant to place themselves into a social class, they did argue that the idea of class as a means to explain wider social and political issues was still an important tool that people accessed. In this way, the views of Savage et al. and Payne and Grew are not mutually exclusive. As a means to linking these together, the argument of Morley (1997) becomes useful when she argues that 'class' per se acts at a fairly hidden level of consciousness in most people's identity. She argues that knowledge of class tends to develop at a level of 'disembodied knowledge' that is distanced from our own experiences. Morley argues that as a result, many people have little concept of their own 'position' in wider 'class struggle'. She suggests that people often find it difficult to relate the 'macro political' to the 'micro political' (Morley, 1997: 110) meaning that what people often find difficult is reconciling their agency in wider social structures.

It is now important to consider some of the observations Savage et al. (2001) and others make in more detail that will help understand how class has been used within this study. The starting point is to explore the relationship between social class and the notion of 'ordinariness'.

Normalising discourses: 'ordinary' and 'respectable'

Savage (2000) and Savage et al. (2001) suggest that for many, the reluctance to use class terminology to describe themselves is in order to establish themselves as 'ordinary' or normal. How this works varies amongst individuals depending on their views on social class. This results in some choosing to identify themselves as outside of class boundaries whilst others use class labels but in varying ways. Therefore for some, 'middle class' denotes 'ordinariness' whereas for others 'working class' means 'ordinary' (Savage et al., 2001).

What ordinariness means in class terms is both historically, socially and culturally defined. For instance, the label of 'working class' has historically been received more positively in Britain than in the US and Japan by way of suggesting being 'normal' or mainstream' (Savage, 2000). However, the extent to which 'working class' is accepted as a positive (Skeggs, 1997) or the 'archetypal' (Savage, 2000) identity in Britain has

arguably changed in recent decades. This latter point is important given the strong debates around the breakdown of collective working class identities (Kirk, 1999).

'Ordinary' is an interesting choice of term because far from being neutral, it implies a strong moral code that is tied to notions of 'respectability' (Skeggs, 1997). In her study of the classed identities of white working class women and their relationship to higher education, Skeggs found those women interviewed did not have what could be called 'coherent identities'. The category of white working class women was, according to Skeggs, imposed on them by her but not related to by the women themselves. She says:

> I identify their positioning in economic, social and discursive relations *not* their subjectivity.

(Skeggs, 1997: 165)

Skeggs states that the women in her study refused to identify with the concept of class but like Savage et al. (2001), she argued that this refusal did not signify class as unimportant. Rather, Skeggs argues that it warrants explanations as to why these women disassociate themselves from this label and the consequences of this. In discussing why the women disassociated with the label of working class, Skeggs suggests there was a concern with being viewed as 'other' or an outsider to the mainstream and respectable 'middle class'. She further argued that being regarded as working class was perceived to lack legitimacy and thus, in order to be seen as 'respectable', the women actively disengaged and rejected the label of working class.

Interestingly, Savage (2000) argues that the idea of the 'professional' has had significant relevance to class fragmentation. In particular, he suggests notions of the professional have replaced ideas around the manual working-class as the key to respectability in post-industrial Britain. Furthermore, he argues:

> Class is effaced in new modes of individualization by the very people – mainly in professional and managerial occupations – whose actions help reproduce class inequality more intensely.

(Savage, 2000: 156)

The idea of the 'professional identity', according to Savage, is 'the most salient of any contemporary class-like identification' in contemporary Britain. The idea of the 'professional' has arguably become a beacon for 'ordinariness'.

Implicit in the concept of the 'professional' is an understanding that by expressing the 'right outlook or perspective', anybody can achieve this status. However, the likelihood of having the 'right outlook or perspective' is distributed very unequally (ibid: 158). Due to the unequal distribution of the skills needed to be a 'professional' (and thus 'respectable') social inequality is produced and reproduced.

Therefore the idea of 'ordinariness' is far from neutral as it enables some of the inequalities of class in a post-industrial society to pass by unnoticed. This means people have less opportunity to challenge inequalities (Savage, 2000). The emergence of the 'professional' identity as the dominant normalised 'class' identity in Britain has led Savage (2000: 159) to argue that 'brute social inequalities' are:

> …constantly effaced by a middle class, individualised culture that fails to register the social implications of its routine actions.

The view that middle class cultures both 'invisibly' reproduce social inequalities and have become the normalised culture in British society, especially in relation to education, are well supported (Ball, 1993; 2003a; Ball et al., 1996; Ball et al., 2004; Reay & Ball, 1997; Gewirtz, 2001; Gewirtz et al., 1994; 1995; Reay, 2001). This is an important development in understanding the ways in which class works in societies such as ours. It also an integral part of this study, both in terms of its rationale (to help illuminate the ways in which education is classed) and the way in which class identity is as much about what we do as what we say we are.

Following on from this, Savage et al. (2001) express caution in relation to the assumption that identifying or not with any given social class transfers into class-based views of the world. This may be especially pertinent given Morley's (1997: 114) suggestion that there are 'advantages and disadvantages to being perceived as working-class by some and middle class by others' depending on the context and what cultural capital is valued within that setting.

In viewing a classed identity in this dynamic way, it becomes apparent that class labels are far from neutral. Thus, when people are asked about their class, as Savage et al. (2001: 889) argue:

> ...they know that class is not an innocent descriptive term but is a loaded moral signifier.

In such a context, 'defensiveness' about one's class becomes a rational exercise for many in attempting to present themselves as 'ordinary'. But, what constitutes 'ordinary' is always socially and culturally constructed, and has implications for one's sense of moral worth. Therefore, Savage et al. argue that the discourse of ordinariness is crucial in understanding the way in which class is used. Payne and Grew however, view this slightly differently when they say:

> …whereas Savage et al. conclude that "ambivalent references to working-class or middle-class identities should be understood as rhetorical attempts to establish 'normalness'" (p. 888), we would reverse the emphasis. *References to 'normalness' or 'ordinariness' should be interpreted as rhetorical attempts to establish working or middle-class identities.*
>
> (Payne & Grew, 2005: 903, emphasis in original)

Thus, despite slightly differing interpretations of the relationship between ambivalence to class labels and ordinariness, there is, nevertheless, an agreement that the two are linked into contemporary understandings of class identities in Britain. The complexities of a post-industrial society have, arguably, contributed to the complexity of class identity. In particular, the success of individualism as a concept has been argued to have led to an internalisation of those values espoused within it leading to new forms of individualised identities (Savage et al. 2001). However:

> …in sustaining and articulating the kinds of individualised identities that do matter to people, reference is made to external benchmarks of class as a means of 'telling their story'. In this respect, individualised cultures articulate an awareness of class, and it is wrong to see cultures of individualisation displacing, rather than existing alongside, class recognition. If we leave behind the romantic baggage which portrays class cultures as collective, then it becomes possible to talk about class cultures as forms of individualised awareness. Class does not determine identity, but it is not irrelevant either. It is a resource, a device, with which to construct identity.
>
> (Savage et al., 2001: 888)

Therefore, far from supporting ideas expressed by Giddens and Beck that individualised cultures have replaced class cultures, the ambivalence of class is deeply tied to the contemporary importance of individualised cultures (Savage, 2000). The way people see divisions in society and how they see both themselves and others, are still deeply 'classed' (Savage, 2000; Kirk, 2002) even if not entirely dependent on it. Class cultures in contemporary Britain then can usefully be viewed as: '… contingently embodying forms of individualised identities which operate relationally' and that 'class structures are [still] instantiated in people's lives' (Savage, 2000: 150).

Class identities should therefore be viewed as 'individualistic and consensual' rather than 'collective and conflictual' (Cannadine, 1998: 167). Within this, 'defensiveness' about class and the desire to appear 'ordinary' become the method through which individuals attempt to conform and situate themselves in a changing social world. Classed identities can and should therefore be understood as located around the 'evolving relationship between social perceptions and social structures' (Cannadine, 1998: 23), or in other words, as located at interface between structure and agency (Rees, 1985).

Reflexivity and defensiveness

Questions of what class means to individuals is a fundamental part of any discussion of class identities. Though as we have seen, this is often fraught with difficulty due to the non-neutral terrain that class occupies. Classed identities are also subject to 'confusion' (Morley, 1997: 110) especially given the changing nature of British society since the late 1970s.

Arguably, this complexity and confusion can lead to high levels of ambiguity amongst individuals when asked to place themselves in a class or in trying to identify whether class has any meaning to them in their lives. Following on from the view that the ways in which people discuss their own subjective stories are deeply classed (Savage 2000; Kirk, 2002) is the view that being able to be reflexive in these accounts is also connected to unequal (classed) distribution of cultural capital and resources (Savage et al., 2001). In particular, Savage et al. noted that the main differences they found in their respondents related to those that had sufficient levels of cultural capital to be able

to explore ideas of class in reflexive ways compared to those who felt threatened by placing themselves in class categories. Though reflexivity to discuss class was not emphasised as a purely middle class trait, implicitly it was inferred that the necessary cultural capital required to discuss class reflexively was more abundant amongst middle class individuals.

The work of Skeggs (1997) discussed earlier helps us to understand one explanation as to why working class individuals in contemporary Britain may feel 'threatened' when the label being applied to them is perceived to lack 'respectability' and bring about feelings of 'inferiority' (Reay, 1997.; Plummer, 2000) and 'shame' (Reay, 1997.; 2001; Lucey et al., 2003). Thus, rather than simply lacking reflexivity, this explanation helps us see that the non-identification of class may be a mechanism through which to legitimise one's self. Importantly, accounts that illustrate the extent to which middle class individuals are able to articulate their own identities as being 'middle class' per se, as opposed to simply being 'ordinary' are seemingly missing from the literature.

The importance of class boundary crossing

The work of Kirk (2004), Maguire (2005a; 2005b) and Burn (2001) help to take thinking about class identities further with their conceptualisations of 'class-crossing'. Class-crossing, put simply, refers to the movement from one class into another. Most discussions around class crossing have emerged specifically in relation to education and schooling, since it is widely regarded as one of, if not the main vehicle through which social mobility occurs in Britain.

In his exploration of class crossing, Kirk (2004) interestingly starts his paper with a quote from Hoggart (1966: 292) about the experience of working-class boys attending a further education establishment where they find themselves 'chafing against his environment' because they are at 'the friction point of two cultures'. Kirk's first line is to ask:

> What does it mean to be 'at the friction point of two cultures' and how is this liminal space negotiated?

> (Kirk, 2004: 135)

The starting point for Kirk then is the way in which through educational mobility one finds oneself as 'decamped out of the class into which he or she was born?' (ibid). Thus, the 'friction points of two cultures' that Kirk is discussing may be understood as the 'borders', or the 'cultural cusp' (Kirk, 2004: 4) between two opposing classes, that of the middle and working class. Kirk's adoption of Hoggart's 'friction points' succinctly details that this 'border' or 'class-crossing' is rarely without problem. Feelings of exclusion and displacement are not uncommon for individuals who experience this 'friction' and it is exactly at this point that many individuals attempt to make sense of their new 'hybrid' identities (Maguire, 2001; Lucey et al. 2003) by engaging reflexively with class discourses.

An example of the type of reflexivity mentioned above comes from Mahony & Zmrocek (1997) who compiled an edited collection of accounts by female academics in Britain who came from working class backgrounds. This collection focused on the contributors reflexively engaging with their social class (and gender) having crossed the 'cultural cusp' into the middle class realm of academia (Morley 1997; Hey, 1997; Holloway, 1997b; Parr 1997; Temple 1997; Maguire 1997; Reay, 1997; see Tokarczyk & Fay, 1993 for a similar edited book based on American female academics). What arises from such personal accounts of class-crossing is that having experienced the boundaries of class first-hand, one becomes distinctly aware of the brute realities and 'hidden injuries' of class (Sennett and Cobb, 1977).

Kirk suggests that ideas of class-crossing in popular discourse are presented as 'social mobility' or 'transition' (Kirk, 2008) which infer economically and socially bettering oneself, having aspiration and leaving behind one's old life. But, Kirk (2004: 2) argues, it also 'legitimates one mode of existence as it maligns another'. In particular, Kirk says that middle class cultures are normalised as something to aspire to and be achieved, whilst working class cultures are 'othered' as inferior and something to be escaped from. Linking in with earlier discussions, 'becoming' middle class is becoming 'respectable' (Skeggs, 1997), 'normal' and desirable.

Viewing class boundaries in this way suggests that people who have crossed classes (most often 'educated' working class people):

...are positioned in such a way that class becomes very visible to them, when it often remains invisible to those who are firmly placed, and remain, in one class or another.

(Christopher, 2004)

Bottero (2004) argues that this may be because social class is often obscured by the way in which our lives are fundamentally hierarchally ordered. By this, it is meant that people tend to associate socially and personally with people similar to themselves. Therefore it tends to be rare that individuals come into contact with others vastly different to themselves in their social and personal spheres. Bottero suggests that this social distancing along hierarchal lines is likely to obscure people's understandings of class differences as most of what they experience around them, is 'just like them' (Bottero, 2004: 998).

Writings around this idea of class-crossing (whether explicitly named as such or not) are more common in literature surrounding education than in other literatures due to education' s perceived importance in the process of social mobility. For instance, a large body of work exists that explores 'border-crossing' students (Bhatti, 2003) from working class backgrounds attending university and the anxiety and uncertainty this can and often does cause (Reay, 2001; Archer et al., 2003; Archer and Hutchings, 2000). Importantly, Maguire (2005a; 2005b) and Burn (2001) discuss class-crossing specifically in relation to teacher identity and their work will be returned to shortly when social class and a classed identity is discussed directly in relation to teaching.

However, what is noticeably absent is any work that explores the way in which the 'cultural cusp' is experienced by middle class individuals moving into working class cultures. This is arguably because it happens much less frequently (Collins, 2002; Wilby 2008) mainly due to the socially reproductive nature of advantage and disadvantage in society (though see Newman, 1988 for an account of downward social mobility in the US).

Constructing a culturally-shaped class identity

The explanations above help us to understand the ways in which some people may disassociate with class and why there is ambiguity towards it as a concept. What these

explanations do not offer is an understanding of the ways in which those people who do identify class construct their classed identities.

There are various approaches to understanding the ways in which culturally orientated class identities may be formed in contemporary Britain (see Bennett et al., 2009 for instance). However, in her investigation of the classed identities of a group of experienced teachers from working class backgrounds, Maguire (2001) identified three major elements of a culturally-shaped class identity. The first of these was an 'embodied identity'. This refers to the way in which one's classed identity is evident based on the way one speaks, looks, dresses and so forth. This is based on both the perception of themselves through their own eyes and how they feel they are seen by others.

The second element of a classed identity that Maguire identified was a 'cultural-experiential identity'. In summary, this involved the drawing out of aspects of one's biography that differentiates people from those seen to be from a different social class. So for instance, the teachers in Maguire's sample were all from what they deemed to be working class backgrounds. Therefore, cultural-experiential examples from Maguire's sample included coming from a background characterised by poverty. This could equally include cultural tastes and experiences that are seen to signify class associations.

The third and final element of a classed identity that Maguire found within her sample is an 'educationally-constructed identity' whereby her sample drew on their own educational experiences to culturally situate their classed identities.

Though Maguire's work focused on teachers from one particular class background, the elements of a culturally-shaped class identity that she identifies can be applied very easily across the classes and to non-teachers also. Therefore, the work of Maguire around identifying the elements of a classed identity, have been extremely useful within this study to help understand the way novice teachers constructed their own identities.

Before this chapter moves on to its final section which explores teaching and a classed identity in more detail, it is important to consider one final aspect of classed identity in more detail, that of 'othering'.

'Othering' in classed identities

If class is about social differences and identity is about questions of who we are, then Morley's (1997) suggestion that we find it very difficult to speak about class without 'othering' ourselves and others becomes central. She argues:

> …and so the story of social class unfurls, with the polarisations and boundaries continually requiring definition by self and others, and yet constantly existing to make one feel 'other'.

> (Morley, 1997: 110)

As discussed already, classed identities are often defined relationally. As Epstein (1993: 18 cited in Morley, 1997) argues:

> …the development of subjective identities is both complex and important and identities themselves are multifaceted and contradictory. They are formed through a combination of qualitative discourses, personal experience and material existence… It is by drawing boundaries and placing others outside those boundaries that we establish our identities.

The concept of the 'other' then may be seen as a natural part of identity formation. For instance, Hall (1996) suggests identity is almost always about constructing who one is in relation to others, often via binary descriptors and labels. In this respect, notions of 'other' may often be constructed on an arbitrary basis as a means of making sense of the social world. In defining what we are in relation to what we are not, we aim to make ourselves recognisable not only to other people, but also to the self (MacNaughton and Davis 2001).

There is however, another important interpretation of 'other'. This interpretation involves exclusionary processes that often seek to conceal issues of power, domination and subordination by normalising some cultures, groups, identities and practices, whilst positioning as 'Other' those that do not hold power. In this view, a positive identity is achieved through the stereotyping and stigmatisation of 'Other' identities as inferior, pathological, deviant and/or lacking legitimacy.

Powerful literature on the process of 'Othering' is found in a variety of disciplines and used to describe the ways in which various groups of people have been 'Othered' by more dominant groups across society (for instance in relation to colonialism see MacNaughton and Davis, 2001; health care see Johnson et al., 2004; sexuality see Epstein et al., 2000; racism see Hall, 1991; and gender see de Beauvoir, 1952). In relation to social class, more often than not, it is working class identities that have been 'othered' (Skeggs, 1997; Reay 2001). In studies of education, othering has offered some valuable insights into how differential educational attainment may be explained and explored. In particular, such work has focused around the ways in which educational policy and schooling normalise middle classes practices whilst othering the working classes (Reay, 2008b; Gewirtz, 2001).

However, there is little by way of explicit theorising about the concept of othering in relation to either social class and or education. As such, in order to explore what othering may involve, it has been necessary to borrow from the range of disciplines highlighted above.

Notions of superiority defined in relation to the other's inferiority alongside ideas of the 'normal' or 'natural' verses 'abnormal'/'deviant' are central to understanding othering (Jaworski & Coupland, 2005). In order to produce and reproduce these relations, 'othering' often relies on a range of cultural stereotypes to construct the 'Other' as 'inferior' (Kumaravadivelu, 2008: 17). Othering, either intentionally or unintentionally, can:

> …serve to reinforce and reproduce positions of domination and subordination. Consequently persons who are treated as other often experience marginalisation, decreased opportunities and exclusion.

> (Johnson et al., 2004: 254)

Johnson et al. (2004: 254) draw attention to the way in which discourse is the main mechanism through which social distance is (re)produced between groups. Supporting this view, Jaworski & Coupland, (2005: 675) draw on Coupland (1999) to cites five general discursive manifestations of 'othering':

- Homogenisation (stereotyping),

- Pejoration (typically represented by terms of verbal abuse, slurs etc.)

- Suppression and silencing (omission, selective representation)

- Displaying 'liberalism' (hedging racist remarks for example by claiming non-prejudicial intent)

- Subverting tolerance (e.g., ridiculing 'political correctness', parodic mockery of minorities).

Similarly, Johnson et al. (2004: 260) talked of 'othering practices' in relation to health care. They suggest:

> Essentializing involves making overgeneralizations about things such as culture, race, location, social background… These overgeneralizations tend to be ahistorical and abstracted from the broader social, economic, and political issues influencing culture, health care practices and ways of life.

In addition, Johnson et al. describe the way that superficial distinctions may be used that tend to eliminate all appreciation of diversity and hardships in the everyday lives of those groups being essentialised. They also argue that the process of 'othering' often involves attributing negative social behaviours such as lack of responsibility, motivation and participation to particular cultures, further marginalising and pathologising them as 'Other'. In order to understand the impact of this representation, Trevithick's (1988) notion of 'internalised oppression' or the Bourdieuian notion of 'symbolic violence' (Skeggs, 1997: 95) helps to name the aggressive nature of representation on those whose identity is regarded as 'Other'.

The concept of 'othering' is therefore a useful tool in helping to understand the dynamic way in which classed identities may work. This is especially true given the discussion around the way in which middle class practices are constructed as normal with working class identities and practices situated as 'Other'. What is most interesting about class in this respect is its often invisible nature (Reay, 1998a). All too often, the processes of class are not named as such but instead are euphemised. This seeming 'invisibility' of class, aided by popularised discourses of classlessness, makes the process of othering around social class all the more pertinent.

So far, this chapter has attempted to illustrate the ways in which existing understandings of teacher identity, social class and class identity have been useful in

informing this study. In particular, it has pulled out specific concepts that will be referred to later in this thesis to discuss the data.

This chapter will now turn to focus on social class and classed identities as they relate specifically to being or becoming a teacher. Similarly, it will draw out particular themes and ideas that have been useful in taking the thinking forward in this examination of novice teachers and the influence of class on their emerging professional identities.

Teachers, social class and classed identities

Historically, the literature relating to teachers and social class can be seen as falling into three broad but interrelated categories: firstly the social class location of teachers, secondly the socially reproductive role that teachers play in relation to class inequalities and finally the impact that an individual teacher's social class identity has on them being a teacher.

The first category then can be understood as the attempt to locate teachers through the work they do into social classes. Goodson (1992) argues that teachers have been largely invisible as workers from most studies and thus relatively speaking, this area is under-theorised. Within this category, there has been a focus on how teaching as an occupation has changed in relation to those wider social and economic changes discussed earlier in this chapter. In light of this, as an occupation, teaching is subject to continual change because it is particularly responsive to broader social and economic changes (Ball and Goodson, 1985). There has, for instance, been much debate about 'proletarianisation' (Braverman, 1974) and the extent to which teaching as an occupation has undergone this process (White, 1983; Lawn, 1988; Lawn and Ozga 1981, 1986, Ozga and Lawn, 1988). It is not the remit of this thesis to add further to this debate but rather to acknowledge that teaching in class terms can be viewed as both an occupation (or as 'work' per se) or a 'profession' of the kind Savage (2000) outlined as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Within these discussions, there has been concern with how educational reforms have impacted on the work of teachers, including their de-politicisation (Grace, 1987). Discussions have also focused on the increasingly centralised control of teaching and

the removal of much of the professionalism and autonomy historically attached to the profession. Having said this, some argue that despite the removal of such autonomy, teachers are still held accountable for educational 'failures' and 'problems' (Maguire and Ball, 1994) and 'social inequalities have come to be defined primarily as pedagogical problems' (Van Galen, 2008).

Within this study, the second and third categories identified above are intimately linked and therefore it is not appropriate to set out the literature as two separate bodies of work within this review. Instead, it is important to start by saying that there is a body of literature that links in to the wider view of education as reproducing social inequalities (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) whereby as agents of capital, teachers are implicated in the process of helping to perform social reproductive functions for capitalism (Apple, 1976; Althusser, 1971, Harris, 1982). It is with this concern in mind that this study has focused on the classed identities of novice teachers.

As explored in the introductory chapter, in an unequal society and an inequitable education system, teachers are more than merely passive 'workers' in this dynamic process. Maguire (2001), drawing on the work of Wright (1980), suggests teachers may actually be seen as occupying a complex and contradictory class position as they are often situated in between the bourgeois and the working class and:

> ….involved in the distribution and dissemination of dominant ideologies but these are ideologies over which they have no control.

(Maguire, 2001: 317)

However, this is not to suggest that teaching does not yield opportunity to resist power. As Robertson (2000: 299-300) argues:

> Our understandings and explanations of teachers and class matter precisely because as a social collectivity, teachers are engaged in social action and social reproduction and they do have an impact on social change. [By further exploring teachers and class] We would then be able to see the effects of class in teachers' work through the way in which teachers produce and reproduce the social relations of capitalist production while at the same time record the ways in which teachers as agents and therefore social actors resist, transform or create discourses, practices and structures to mediate these antagonistic and exploitative relations.

Therefore, as referred to in the introductory chapter, this study locates teaching as 'class work' (Van Galen, 2004; 2008; Reay, 1998a). In support of this, Giroux (1992), in his discussion of teachers working with children from often very different social and cultural backgrounds to their own, develops the notion that teaching is work that occurs at the 'border' of socio-cultural differences. With this in mind, Giroux argues that teachers should therefore engage in what he calls 'border pedagogy' which he describes as:

> …a process that is intent on challenging existing boundaries of knowledge and creating new ones, border pedagogy offers the opportunity for students to engage the multiple references that constitute different cultural codes, experiences and languages. This means educating students to both read these codes historically and critically while simultaneously learning the limits of such codes, including the ones they use to construct their own narratives and histories… Students should engage knowledge as border-crossers, as people moving in and out of borders constructed around coordinates of difference and power.

(Giroux, 1992: 29)

Here Giroux is arguing that teachers are often positioned at the interface between different social worlds. Thus, Giroux is suggesting that part of their role should involve helping their students to understand the ways in which these borders work.

Arguing along similar lines, Bartolome (2002: 180-1) suggests that teachers who teach children who do not share society's normative values, culture and class often have to act as 'cultural brokers' to navigate them through the mainstream cultures, including schooling. In addition, Bartolome adds that teaching is a political activity and seeks to construct teachers as occupying a distinct location at the borders of class, with teachers often engaging in social, cultural and class border crossing activities through teaching children often very different to themselves. Similarly, specific to social class, Van Galen (2004) suggests that teachers are 'mediators of class' acting as the bridge between different (and often competing) social, cultural and 'classed' worlds. However, expressed within these arguments is that teaching is often not articulated in this way, not least, by teachers themselves.

Writing in an Australian context, Allard and Santoro (2006) note that class (alongside race and gender) is often explored by teachers and new teachers under the guise of understanding learners' identities. They go on to say rarely is the focus shifted on to

how teachers' identities are shaped by these factors. Writing about ethnicity in relation to new teachers' identities in the US, Ladson-Billings (2001: 96) says about teachers who are often teaching children from different ethnic backgrounds to themselves that:

> Typically, white middle class perspective teachers have little or no understanding of their own culture. Notions of whiteness are taken-for-granted. They are rarely interrogated.

What Ladson-Billings is arguing is that individuals' identities are so deeply embedded, they are rarely even visible, never mind questioned or problematised. Furthermore, Allard and Santoro (2006) suggest it is extremely rare that teachers initially express the desire to teach children who are fundamentally different to them in terms of identity. Bartolome (2002), also writing from a US perspective, explicitly suggests that all too often teachers come from a small section of the wider population, namely white, middle class and female. Worryingly, Bartolome also argues that where attempts are made to subject teachers and new teachers to explore their own identities and ideologies in terms of class and race, these have often been met with resistance. This is in spite of evidence that suggests understanding the 'self' enables and equips teachers to empathise more fully with the students they teach (Santoro, 2007).

There is also strong support for the view that both new and established teachers tend to have an uncritical acceptance of the existing social order with its ingrained notions of individualism and deficit notions of children from poor, working class and ethnic minority families (Bartolome, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Whitfield et al., 2007). Writing from a UK perspective, Gazeley and Dunne (2007) seek to explore similar factors in relation to training teachers. They argue that often there is 'both silence and resistance surrounding social class in educational contexts' and that:

> …theoretical perspectives that understand social class as a contextually located social process in which the teacher and teacher-pupil relations become central to the complex production of both social class and learner identities.

(Gazeley and Dunne, 2007: 409; 411)

Furthermore, they suggest that unlike gender and ethnicity, there is no statutory duty to consider issues around social class in teaching and in ITET. They therefore argue it is often missing from official discourses and training around teaching. As a result,

they argue many teachers enter into teaching 'unaware of the effects of their classed identities on their professional practice' (ibid: 413).

Gazeley and Dunne further argue that when social class is discussed by teachers from middle class backgrounds, it is often done through their available class discourses which often rely on stereotypes and can commonly be deficit in nature. Within this, 'problems' of classed educational underachievement are firmly located to be the 'problem' of working class students' home lives, values and culture.

However, in their own study, where Gazeley and Dunne asked trainee teachers to conduct research into social class in the classroom, they argued this equipped many of them to deal more reflexively with class and start to see some of the barriers facing working class children in the school process. This led them to conclude that more needed to be done by ITET (and therefore education more broadly) to equip students to address class in the classroom and thus to deal more reflexively with social class gaps in attainment. These arguments are especially pertinent given:

> Teaching in the UK is a post-graduate occupation and carries a measure of professional status. Thus, even if (some) teachers originally came from working-class backgrounds, it could be argued that their mobility, levered up through education, has repositioned them as members of the middle class – not least in the eyes of their students – depending on who these students are.

> (Maguire, 2001: 316)

Class-crossing teachers

There also exists a body of UK literature that has sought to investigate the classed identities of class aware teachers and how this impacts on their work. These studies have largely focused on teachers who have come from working class backgrounds and have chosen to work in inner city, 'working class' schools. Writing about an English context, Maguire's (2001) work is particularly useful in that it starts to explore the way in which social class identities can be linked explicitly to the types of contexts in which teachers choose to work. In exploring 'working class' teachers teaching in 'working class' schools, Maguire is examining a particular set of teachers who explicitly see their work as 'classed' work. These teachers are driven to teach in the schools they do due to the injustices of class that they have observed both first and second hand. Though the teachers in Maguire's study talked of the way in which

increased centralisation and bureaucratisation of teaching tended to get in the way of being politically active, they discussed their political (class) motives to work with working class children. Maguire argues these teachers often worked: 'in the classed interests of those they taught, rather than (some of) those they taught with', adding:

> The point is that (these) teachers do what they do *because* of their classed identities and subjectivities.
>
> (Maguire, 2001: 328-9 *emphasis* in original)

Within this study, Maguire concludes by arguing that '…classed identities play an active part in teachers' constructions of self and of their work' (ibid: 330).

Following on from this, Maguire (2005b) explored the classed identity of one particular teacher who came from a working class background and who worked in an inner city school. What is particularly pertinent in this work is that Maguire explicitly names the teacher in focus as having engaged in the process of 'class-crossing'. In doing so, Maguire argues that this teacher has crossed classes in terms of both her own education (i.e., being from a working class background but having 'succeeded' educationally) and her occupation (working in the 'profession' of teaching). Interestingly, Maguire explores the way in which classed practices within the school impacted on the teacher's working life and her relationships with both staff and students and how these classed practices could work to exclude teachers like this as 'Other'. The work of Burn (2001) documents the similar experiences of a 'class-crossing' teacher.

The work of Maguire (2001, 2005a, 2005b), Burn (2001) and Van Galen (2004; 2008) then situate teachers in the UK education system as being in classed territory. In particular, Maguire and Burn offer valuable insights into the ways in which classed identities impact on experienced teachers who have made conscious decisions to teach children from working class backgrounds, backgrounds similar to their own. They discuss how their working class identities impact on their work and in particular, how this class identity often marks them out as different to many other teachers working in such contexts.

However, as Maguire's and Burn's work explores experienced teachers, relatively little is known about how these class processes and practices impact on novice teachers. What is also much harder to find in the literature is the way in which classed processes and practices operate and impact on teachers from middle class backgrounds (especially in a UK context). This latter point is particularly important given that teaching in this study is positioned as being about working at the borders of class. This means that for many teachers from middle class backgrounds working with working class children may well be the first time they have come into sustained contact with different class cultures to their own, or at the very least, experienced them so intensely.

In this way, middle class teachers may also need to be understood as class-crossers in light of the prolonged contact they may have with children from class backgrounds different to their own. Within this, there is potential to sensitise them to class inequalities they have not necessarily experienced first hand (in the way that Kirk, 2002 described earlier or the types of teachers Maguire and Burn describe above).

Concluding remarks

This study seeks to address the ways in which classed identities operate and influence the developing professional identities of a small group of novice teachers. This chapter has attempted to address the main bodies of literature and the existing relevant theories and concepts that begin to help unpick this task.

In the introductory chapter, education was positioned as being highly inequitable in relation to class. In this chapter, teaching has been positioned as 'class work' (Van Galen, 2004), a site through which class border crossing occurs frequently and as such, it represents an invaluable lens through which to explore the 'psycho-social and emotional aspects of classed identities' (Reay, 2005: 914). Referring back to Bottero's (2004) view that class is likely to be obscured for many people because they rarely come into contact with others who are *not* 'just like them', teaching becomes a fascinating lens because by its very nature, it has the potential to make class visible.

Chapter Three

Research Design, Methods and Methodology

The primary focus of this piece of research is to explore the ways in which social class and a classed identity influences the developing professional identities of novice teachers. This chapter sets out how the data collected to address this focus was gathered and analysed. It is intended to offer both a reflective and transparent account of the process incorporating the rationale and strengths as well as the issues encountered along the way.

In summary, this is a longitudinal study based on eleven novice secondary school teachers as they progress through their one-year PGCE year and then into their NQT year and beyond. Semi-structured interviews were the main method of data collection. Ten of the novice teachers were interviewed three times each during the PGCE year with the remaining novice teacher interviewed twice. Towards the end of and beyond the NQT year, further semi-structured (mainly telephone) interviews were held with nine of the eleven individuals, losing two due to attrition.

The choice to follow individual novice teachers over time emanated from a desire to gain a detailed and in-depth insight (Denscombe, 1998) of the process of becoming a teacher. Each novice teacher acted as a 'case study' (Yin, 2003; Bassey, 1999) because each was a 'bounded case' or 'system' rather than a process (Stake, 1995: 2). The use of a longitudinal approach originated from the desire to observe what happens to novice teachers as they move from being a new 'trainee' to a teacher with a year's worth of experience in schools.

Conducting research is a process that goes beyond simply collecting data and writing about it. Therefore writing up research is also more complex and complicated than simply outlining what methods were used and why, though of course this is an important starting point. Many writers have discussed the research process and approaches to presenting it in a systematic and logical way (Silverman, 2010; Babbie, 2009; Denscombe, 2007; Schutt, 2006). As Crotty (1998) explains, the broader process of methods and methodology are often presented in a confused manner, using

terms and labels interchangeably and without clarity of what was actually done and why. In response to this critique, Crotty attempts to simplify and unpick this process by identifying four key elements. Crotty positions these as four core questions that need to be justified so that readers of the research may have faith in research findings. These are:

- 'What methods do we propose to use?
- 'What methodology governs our choices and use of methods?
- 'What theoretical perspective lies behind the methodology in question?
- 'What epistemology informs this theoretical perspective?'

(Crotty, 1998: 2)

For clarity, Crotty defines the key terms of reference as follows:

- *Methods* – the 'techniques and procedures used to gather and analyse data' that relate to the particular research questions being explored
- M*ethodology* - the 'strategy or plan of action' that governs what methods are used and links the methods to the 'desired outcomes'
- *Theoretical perspective* - 'the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria'
- *Epistemology* - the 'theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology'.

(ibid: 3)

For Crotty, an outline of the methods used is the first place to start in writing up research. However, although the 'four areas' are logical to be set out in this order, it must be remembered that they are all inter-related, as outlined above. Therefore, in choosing particular methods to address particular research questions, the other three areas have already featured strongly in these decisions though these often remain unexplored, hidden and taken for granted. Crotty suggests writing up first the methods and then the methodology. However, in this chapter these two areas are integrated. This is because the methods that were chosen are intimately linked with the research strategy (or methodology) and the anticipated outcomes. As Clough and Nutbrown (2002: 22) suggest, the methods should be seen as 'some of the ingredients of research' whilst the methodology is akin to 'the reasons for using a particular research recipe'. In this study then, 'methods' is used to denote a description of the actual methods used, for example, 'interviews', whilst 'methodology' concerns questions around 'why use interviews?'.

Methods and Methodology

As Chapter One outlines, the aim of this study is to explore the shaping influence of a class identity on the emerging professional identity of teachers. This involves finding out how novice teachers describe themselves in class terms and how the notion of social class informs their thinking about teaching, schools and the children and communities they serve.

As Strauss and Corbin (1998) propose, choosing an appropriate methodology and methods to respond to the research problem is central in any study. As argued in Chapter Two, social class and a classed identity are complex, multifaceted and contested terrains and thus the methods and the methodology needed to be responsive to this complexity.

Thus qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were selected to help best address the research focus. This was because the aim was not to establish 'cause' and 'effect' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and findings were unlikely to be quantifiable. Qualitative research then refers to 'any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 10-11).

Given the focus of the research aims, interviews were felt to be the most appropriate qualitative method of data collection because they enable data to be collected on phenomena that is difficult to observe directly (Powney and Watts, 1987). Opting to use only one method is arguably open to critique on the grounds that bias may result from a limited viewpoint (Patton, 1990). However, given the nature of classed identities as something intrinsically complex, containing a mixture of subjective and objective positioning, other methods would have added little further in terms of both content and richness. For instance, observing the novice teachers in the university setting or in classrooms would not have provided direct access to understanding how they described themselves in class terms, their views on children and schools or how their classed identities were impacting on their developing professional identities. Attempting to gather data about classed identities requires a plethora of detailed information concerning 'emotions, experiences and feelings' and as such, may be viewed as 'sensitive' (Denscombe, 1998: 111). In light of this, interviews were regarded as the most appropriate method to obtain such data (ibid).

Furthermore, given that this research is interested in the ways in which a classed identity may influence the developing professional identities of novice teachers, it was felt that a 'longitudinal study' (Ruspini, 2002) would assist the collection of the appropriate level and scale of data. The rationale for this included an anticipation that the views and intentions of novice teachers may be subject to 'change' as they progressed through their teacher education course and gained more real life experience in schools. This is because the PGCE course is supposed to expose novice teachers to a range of school/education-related experiences. The PGCE in question consists of three seven week placements in schools and all novice teachers on the course can expect to experience a minimum of two different educational institutions. In addition, each novice secondary teacher completes a two-week experience at a primary school whilst on the course as well as a two-week enhancement placement (which is often, though not always, at another different institution).

During this time, novice teachers also begin applying for jobs and may attend multiple interviews before eventually ending up finding employment. Thus, these different experiences are also likely to impact on the views of novice teachers and the decisions they make. Therefore building in an appropriate measure that could capture and document change was crucial in this study and this is cited as an important strength of longitudinal studies (Saldaña, 2003).

A longitudinal approach also has a range of other benefits, though two in particular were important for addressing the research aims within this study. First of all, a longitudinal approach enables a relationship to develop between the interviewer and interviewee. This goes some way to remedying concerns that interviewees inevitably only disclose what they want to (Powney and Watts, 1987), especially when intentions and purposes of the research and/or researcher may not always be clear initially. Secondly, a longitudinal approach allows particular issues to be returned to and checked which acts as a form of researcher and participant validation. For instance, something stated or asked in a previous interview can be returned to and then comparisons can be drawn to ensure the interviewer has recorded and interpreted participants' thoughts as they intended them.

In total, a maximum of four interviews were planned to take place with each of the eleven novice teachers in this study. Three of these interviews were scheduled to happen at three different points during the PGCE year, namely as close to the start as was possible (once the sample had been selected), one approximately mid-way through the PGCE year after the second placement had finished and one toward the end of the PGCE year. The remaining interview was scheduled towards the end of/after the NQT year, when it was anticipated that most of the novice teachers would have been teaching for at least one full academic year.

Interviewing

Given the research focus and the nature of the concept of 'social class', semi-structured interviews were considered to be the most appropriate type of interview to use. According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994: 79), 'an interview is a conversation with a purpose'. Highly structured interviews were not deemed an appropriate method because they are inflexible and would not allow for the type of conversation needed to discuss a novice teacher's experiences of and feelings about becoming a teacher and/or an area like social class.

In planning the semi-structured interviews, the first step was to identify a number of broad topics that would enable the conversation to develop around the identified themes in the research questions. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher normally constructs a schedule of mostly open-ended questions generally referred to as either 'interview guides' (Patton, 1990) or 'aide memoires' (Holloway, 1997a). This study therefore developed an aide memoire for each of the four scheduled interviews and copies of these are included in Appendix A.

In opting to use semi-structured interviews, it was considered important to avoid the imposition of any views or values on the interviewees with my own role taking on that of a facilitator. Semi-structured interviews then, according to Denscombe (1998: 113) still have 'a clear list of issues to be addressed and questions to be answered' but they tend:

> …to be flexible in terms of the order in which topics are considered, and
> perhaps more significantly, to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak

more widely on the issues raised by the researcher.

(ibid)

In conducting semi-structured interviews, the researcher needs to be ready to probe and prompt enabling the interviews to go into more depth and detail where required. According to Patton (1990), prompts tend to fall into one of three categories: detail orientated, elaboration and clarification which aid the researcher get a fuller picture. The prompts in this study all fell into these three types.

It is important to note that, despite best attempts to ensure that semi-structured interviews allow respondents to dictate the direction of interviews: 'the agenda for the discussion is set by the researcher' (Patton, 1990: 110).

Even though semi-structured interviews were used as the main method of data collection, where appropriate, additional 'official' documentary sources were consulted. In particular, ACORN data on postcodes were accessed and governmental documentary evidence such as Ofsted reports and DCSF school performance data were accessed. The rationale for this was that it enabled the novice teachers' perspectives about school and area characteristics to be triangulated and validated from another source. Thus, a qualitative approach to methods was used as this was the most appropriate for collecting the type of data needed to address the research problem.

The details of the longitudinal, semi-structured interviews conducted and the actual process of conducting these interviews will be discussed later in this chapter as will the approach to analysis. However, prior to the interviews commencing, an appropriate sample of novice teachers needed to be selected. The next section discusses this and starts with issues around access to the sample of novice teachers featured within this thesis.

Fieldwork

Access and ethics

In order to explore the research problem, a small sample of novice teachers needed to be identified. Access was a relatively simple process due to my employment as a Research Assistant attached to a PGCE programme at a university. The first step was to ensure access was gained legitimately and therefore the PGCE Course Director was approached. On gaining permission (subject to work being carried out ethically), the support of teaching staff on the PGCE was also sought. This was important because in order to meet novice teachers on the course, access to the classroom was needed. In this way, the research was able to avoid some of the problems faced by many researchers in gaining access to a chosen research site where there may be no existing internal support. However, as Walford (2001: 34) notes, access is never 'total' and thus:

> …might be seen as an incremental continuum, where the researcher is gradually able to move from the initial permission to enter the buildings to a series of developed and trusting relationships.

By this Walford is highlighting that gaining access is merely the first step, whereas getting those involved in research to move towards feeling they can be open and honest is a continuing process.

In many respects, this study could be seen as 'insider' research because as the researcher, I am directly involved with the research context (Bell, 1999; Robson, 2002). This has both advantages and disadvantages (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010; Hockey, 1993). As Sikes and Potts (2008: 7) suggest:

> A criticism often levelled at inside or insider research concerns the extent to which it can be considered to be 'objective' and hence 'reliable' and 'valid'.

Additionally, it is also argued there may be a power imbalance when interviewees and interviewer are attached to the same organisation or institution and their positions within it have differing levels of power and influence (e.g., manager/employee, teacher/student) (Merriam et al., 2001).

In terms of advantages, inside researchers could have access to a range of supporting information that helps the research process. For instance, interviewees may actually feel more comfortable and at ease knowing they share a mutual connection to the environment in which they meet (Hockey, 1993). In this way, the inside status of this research was useful as there was an existing awareness of the processes and protocols of the PGCE and NQT years meaning there was a common language during the discussions. Efforts were also made to reduce the risk of existing knowledge adversely affecting the responses of interviewees. For example, the teachers' opinions of processes were sought as opposed to descriptions of those processes.

In response to the perceived disadvantages of the inside status of this research, as will be explored more fully later in this chapter, this study starts from the premise that no research can be entirely 'objective'. Moreover, it might even be suggested that social research of this kind should not be aiming for 'objectivity' with notions of transparency, reflexivity and trustworthiness being more appropriate than 'objectivity'.

With regard to 'power differentials' (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), though employed as a researcher attached to the PGCE, my role had very little direct contact with novice teachers. Furthermore, not only was direct contact limited, my role also had no direct input into their outcomes on the course. Therefore, there were less power issues than if say a tutor or an assessor had been interviewing the novice teachers in a tutor/student capacity. Having said this, of course there are no guarantees that those novice teachers selected did not have such concerns. Undertaking a postgraduate qualification at a university and being interviewed by a university employee attached to their course of study could potentially have made them feel vulnerable and concerned that what they said could have implications for their course of study. As Powney and Watts (1985: 9) argue:

> …anyone who agrees to be interviewed takes risks. For example, they may expose their ignorance, prejudice, apathy or intolerance.

Given this, it was crucial to provide a setting for the interviews that reassured all of those taking part that it was not the intention to judge or hold them accountable in any formal way for the views expressed. Therefore, all of the novice teachers involved in

this research were given a full explanation of the research as being entirely separate from anything they were doing as part of their PGCE and were reassured of anonymity. In addition, developing relationships with the novice teachers was paramount to building a trusting and open relationship in a non-threatening environment to reassure them that the inside status of this research would not adversely impact on them (or the research).

This research can also be seen to have another variant of 'insider status' related to the actual topic area of social class. As I will argue towards the latter part of this chapter, as the researcher, it is clear that to many, I have a perceived and defined classed identity (see also Jones, 2004). In this way, I am not merely an observer outside of class. In light of this, ensuring tolerance and being non-judgemental became even more crucial to enable the interviewees to feel at ease and comfortable enough to be open during interviews. Aware of this concern from the outset, this was given much due care and attention in developing the questions to be used in the interviews and will be explained more fully later in this chapter.

Ethical considerations such as those above are a key part of any piece of social research (Walford 2001). All research should (and must) adhere to being non-judgemental (Silverman, 2005) and treating those who participate with respect. All the novice teachers taking part in this research did so on a voluntary basis. All were reassured that they were free to leave the study at any point should they so wish. Each individual was given as much relevant information as they needed to enable them to give 'informed consent' (Wiles et al., 2005). This research was carried out in accordance with the British Educational Research Association's Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2004) as well as The University of Manchester, School of Education guidelines as appropriate at the time of the fieldwork. The names of all individuals, schools and colleges have been changed to protect the identity of those involved.

Choosing a sample

The fieldwork for this research began in September/October 2004. The small sample of novice teachers in this study were selected from the 2004/5 full-time PGCE secondary cohort at the university in question. In order to select a sample, a

questionnaire was designed and distributed to the entire cohort that would enable a purposive sample (see below for details of this sample) to be selected. A copy of this questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

The questionnaire was a double-sided single sheet that asked a range of questions that would be useful in selecting a sample. The questionnaire asked for a range of biographical details such as age, gender, subject area, ethnicity, place of birth, place name (and postcode if known) of city/town/village/area where they spent the majority of their life between the ages of 5-18 (i.e., their compulsory schooling and post-16 education years). A number of questions were included that asked about the type of area they grew up in, the type of school they attended, where it was located and what population it served. The questionnaire also featured a range of questions aiming to explore what the intentions of those on the PGCE cohort were in relation to where they would like to teach and where not and again multiple choice options were offered (e.g., school types and geographic locations). These questions gave multiple choice options characterised in terms of school types (e.g., 'comprehensive', 'grammar', 'independent' and so on) where appropriate and in terms of simple geographic locations (e.g., 'inner city', 'general urban', 'suburban', 'rural' and 'semi rural'). Alongside multiple choice options, there was sometimes a space included for respondents to explain answers with regard to preferences and places they would not like to work to help further understand their reasoning. The questionnaire also asked whether they saw themselves/their families as belonging to a social class and if so, which one, with a multiple-choice selection of 'working', 'middle' and 'upper class' plus 'other (please state)'.

This questionnaire was piloted on a small group of five novice teachers. This highlighted no obvious problems and so it was then distributed to the entire cohort. The decision was made to hand out the questionnaires on a face-to-face basis whilst the novice teachers were at the university for taught PGCE sessions. Permission was sought from all the tutors and an appropriate time arranged to gain access to the classrooms. In each subject group, I was introduced by the tutor to the whole class. I then introduced myself and the research to the novice teachers. This included informing them that the questionnaire would be used to select a small sample from and that any of those not willing to participate further should mark the appropriate tick

box to opt out of further contact. It was also explained that completion of the questionnaire was voluntary.

In total, 164 novice teachers completed a questionnaire which was a good return rate of 74% of the 221 full-time trainees registered at the time (those not completing a form included non-attendees that day as well as the limited number of abstainers). Of these 164 who completed the form, 108 (66 per cent) of them indicated that they were willing to participate further in the research.

The next stage was to select a purposive sample from the 108 individuals who said they would be willing to participate. A purposive sample is where 'the sample is hand picked for the research' (Denscombe, 1998:15). The use of both multiple-choice questions and the space provided to explain answers more fully in the questionnaire were used to help facilitate this process of selection. It was also important to select a range of early thoughts on future intentions with regard to teaching within this sample.

As social class is central to this thesis, those novice teachers wishing to teach children from socio-economically disadvantaged areas was considered to be an interesting starting point in selecting the sample. This was especially pertinent given that the introductory chapter of this thesis set out that schooling can be seen as classed. However, class was not specifically mentioned in these particular questions on the survey. Instead, a range of geographical labels that are often took to signify and/or euphemise classed contexts and schools such as 'inner city' and 'urban' (Maguire and Dillon, 1997; Reay, 2004b), as well as 'suburban' and 'rural' were used instead.

As this was considered important, the sample needed to include novice teachers both wanting to work in such schools and contexts as well as those not wanting to do this. In addition, it was also important to feature novice teachers who were undecided about the types of school contexts they would like to work in. These assumptions therefore informed the questionnaire design and the inclusion of questions that aimed to get at this information. It must however be noted that, as with any short questionnaire with (researcher imposed) multiple choice options, such approaches are only likely to offer limited and general insights of any particular group of individuals (Babbie, 2007).

The next stage was to have a thorough and detailed read through the completed questionnaires. On the basis of the above criteria, the 108 questionnaires were divided up into three groups:

- Those stating they wanted to teach in inner city/urban/working class schools
- Those explicitly stating they did not want to teach in such schools
- Those saying they were unsure, uncertain about or didn't mind where they taught

It was important to ensure that the sample included an appropriate range of demographic characteristics such as gender, subject area, age and ethnicity. As the study's main focus is social class, it was also important to select a range of responses to the social class question. Though this was the only direct social class question, as above, inherent in the multiple-choice options were a number of assumptions that helped add to the range of social background information one could draw from the questionnaires. So, information about the type of school attended, the geographical area/social context of the school and the geographical area/social context they grew up in added to (an admittedly simplified) picture of the novice teachers' social background.

In total, eleven individual novice teachers were selected. These included:

- Four novice teachers who wanted to teach in an inner city/urban setting who expressed a clear interest in wanting to teach children from or in schools located in socio-economically disadvantaged areas
- Four novice teachers who seemed very explicit that this was not what they wanted
- Three individuals who were undecided about where to teach or really did not mind what type of setting they taught in

The choice to select eleven novice teachers in total came from trying to represent a diverse range of backgrounds in each of the three categories identified above. This was also manageable in terms of scale and allowed for possible attrition. Importantly, the main reason for choosing the final eleven came from the opportunity they offered

to engage with a range of very different insights into how class may or may not impact on a developing professional identity.

The sample contained six females and five males and the ages of those selected ranged from twenty-one to an individual in their fifties. The tables below show in more detail the individual characteristics for each novice teacher taken from the questionnaires. In addition to this, each novice teacher had also explained some of their answers and this also helped select them as part of the sample. The names given are pseudonyms and have been changed to protect the identities of all those involved.

Table 1: Novice teachers wanting inner city/urban ('working class') setting

Name & Subject Area	Sex	Age (Oct 04)	Type of school like to teach in	(Self-identified) Social class Background	Own education
Kelly *MFL*[5]	F	23	Comp 11-18	Working class	11-16 inner city comp; sixth form of different 11-18 comp
Clare *Science*	F	30	Comp 11-16	No social class	11-16 inner city comp; sixth form college
Simon *MFL*	M	23	Comp 11-18	Did not answer this question	11-18 boys' independent boarding school
Joe *Science*	M	38	Comp 11-16	Working class	11-16 inner city comp, FE college

Table 2: Novice teachers not wanting an inner city/urban setting

Name & Subject Area	Sex	Age (Oct 04)	Type of school like to teach in	(Self-identified) Social class background	Own education
Ben *Maths*	M	50s	Type not sig factor	Working class	11-16 secondary modern; sixth form at grammar school
Sarah *MFL*	F	24	Comp 11-18	Middle class	11-16 suburban comp and sixth form college
Jen *Bus Ed*	F	24	Not sure	Middle class	11-18 suburban comp
Daniel *Maths*	M	21	Comp 11-16	No social class	11-18 suburban comp

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[5] MFL = Modern Foreign Languages

Table 3: Novice Teachers undecided on /did not mind which type of setting

Name & Subject Area	Sex	Age (Oct 04)	Type of school like to teach in	(Self-identified) Social class background	Own education
Lucy *Eng*	F	22	Comp 11-18	Middle class	11-18 girls' independent school
Matt *Bus Ed*	M	29	Comp 11-18 Open to type	No social class	11-18 rural comp
Katie *Science*	F	21	Comp 11-18	Working class	11-18 suburban comp

Interview setting

As stated earlier, the particular PGCE programme the novice teachers were enrolled on requires novice teachers to spend three seven week placements in schools, one in each of the autumn, spring and summer school terms. In between these placements, the novice teachers return to the university base for a range of subject-specific and educational/professional studies sessions. All the interviews conducted during the PGCE year were conducted during these times the novice teachers were in the university on a face-to-face basis. This was decided not only in terms of accessibility from the researcher viewpoint but also in terms of reducing the burden on those participating, removing the expectation on them to give up their free time outside of this.

During the PGCE year (2004/5 academic year), ten of the novice teachers were interviewed three times in total. One novice teacher (Sarah) was ill for a significant amount of time meaning she was unable to complete the second interview carried out midway through the PGCE year.

As the PGCE ended, all of the individuals agreed in principle to continue participating in the research by completing a further interview towards the end of their NQT year. This was discussed with each individual and the general consensus was that the telephone would probably be the most convenient way to chat with them since many had jobs in different locations across England.

The PGCE year finished in June 2005. From July 2006, I contacted each of the eleven novice teachers featured in this study via telephone and or email (depending on which method of initial contact each had requested). Unfortunately, two of the novice teachers in this study did not respond (attrition: Kelly and Katie) and thus final interviews were only held with nine of the novice teachers. Telephone interviews were then held with eight of the nine novice teachers. Only one final interview was conducted face-to-face (with Ben as this was his preference).

As with any method or type of interview, telephone interviews have both their advantages and disadvantages (Gilbert, 2001). Convenience is cited as a major benefit of telephone interviews and a mutual decision was reached between the eight respondents who preferred to do it this way and myself. In particular, as many were living in different cities across England and/or had busy lives, the convenience to simply set aside one hour of time at a time of their choosing, from the comforts of their own homes, was both manageable and unobtrusive.

The disadvantages of telephone interviews often originate when it is being conducted between people who have never met. This often is the case because there may be a struggle to build a rapport when face-to-face contact is missing. In this research, I had already met each of the novice teachers on more than one occasion and thus had already built up a rapport.

Interestingly, after conducting all interviews face-to-face during the PGCE year, when many of the novice teachers were re-interviewed by telephone, they appeared noticeably more open (i.e., more willing to chat and relaxed - only in one case did the individual concerned seem to struggle more on the telephone). There are a number of reasons why this may have been the case. It could have been because they all knew what to expect from the interviews and as a result, being more relaxed in general. It may have been that by this time, all of them had completed their course and most had been teaching for at least a year making them generally more confident about their views on teaching. It may also have been as a result of them being in their own homes.

It is not completely clear what the reason or reasons were for this increased openness but this does draw us back to an interesting point about 'power differential' (Maykut

and Morehouse, 1994) discussed earlier. Perhaps it was the case that the interviews held at the university, despite assurances, were viewed with uncertainty in terms of the extent to which they could impact on their course of study.

Recording the data and anonymity

The intention was to audio-record all interviews and transcribe fully thereafter. Ten of the novice teachers agreed to be audio-recorded from the outset. One novice teacher, Joe, initially requested not to be recorded during the interviews expressing concern about his views being kept on tape although he did consent to notes being taken during the interviews. No recording was therefore made of Joe's initial and second interview. At the start of the third interview, Joe said (unprompted) that he had actually changed his mind and consented to being recorded. He said this was because he had carried out some research himself during his PGCE and that he now felt he understood the process and the need to record interviews to capture everything that was said accurately.

Persistent assurances were offered to the novice teacher at the start of each interview to remind them this research was unrelated to their studies, was anonymous and that there would be no come back in any way from any view expressed in the interview.

Each interview was planned for approximately half an hour to one hour in length. The actual length of each interview varied from twenty five minutes to an hour and a quarter. All of the interviews that were audio-recorded were then transcribed and notes were written up shortly after interviews where necessary. This enabled easier scanning of the data as it is much easier when this is in written form. One issue that arises in transcription is that meaning can be lost such as pauses and tone of voice may not be accurately captured. Therefore, interviews were also listened to again on a number of occasions to ensure 'meaning' was not lost in the process of transcribing.

Interviewer effect and researcher bias

Another issue that arises from the use of interviews to collect data is that, although where possible the researcher must try to avoid influencing what is said, neutrality is not something that can just be transmitted. The way questions are asked, the way one

responds and so forth can all indicate underlying values and beliefs. Denscombe (1998: 116) notes that:

> Research on interviewing has demonstrated fairly conclusively that people respond differently depending on how they perceive the person asking the questions.

In interviews, features like ethnicity, age and gender all play a crucial role as does social class, the central focus of this study. Given that class was something being explored in relation to interviewees' identities, it is interesting to consider the potential 'interviewer effect' (Denscombe, 1998: 116) given my own classed identity (this will also be returned to later in this chapter).

Where possible, interviews of this kind need a professional balance where the interviewer's personal opinions or 'preferences and prejudices' are not aired in the interview (Denscombe, 1998). However, as with any interview situation, there are a range of 'clues' such as accent and types of questions asked (Freebody, 2003) that can lead interviewees to make up their own minds about what these 'preferences and prejudices' may be. Maxwell (1996) terms this as 'researcher bias'.

Just because a researcher is aware of this potential for bias and attempts to minimise it, there are no guarantees that this does not impact on what an interviewee deems to be your motives and what information they decide to allow you access to in terms of their own views and perspectives. Thus, as Freebody (2003: 132) reminds us, 'all interviews are jointly constructed by all parties'. It is hoped that in drawing attention to this, readers of this study are equipped with the information they require to determine whether data collected and presented are trustworthy. A particular issue here, for instance, is that as the researcher, I have a strong (Northern) regional accent that is likely to be perceived by many as 'working class'.

Reducing interviewer bias – question design

The actual questions used in the research were mostly open-ended and asked the novice teachers to reflect on their experiences in schools (placement and employment). This included being asked to describe pupils, schools and the geographical areas/social contexts they were located in. In addition, the questions also

asked the novice teachers to reflect on their own decisions to become teachers, their own schooling, their own social class and so forth.

The questions were kept quite general to enable interviewees to answer as appropriate and the three types of prompts described by Patton (1990) earlier were used to probe for more detail, elaboration and/or clarification.

Though social class is a fundamental component of this study, the decision was made not to introduce the term 'class' directly too early in the process for fear of pushing them to talk of class in situations where they would not normally have used the term or the concept directly. In addition, as Chapter Two explored more fully, a classed identity consists of more than simply how people directly talk about themselves and includes not only what people say they are, but what they do and what they think (class practices). Importantly therefore, the vast majority of questions asked in the interviews made no direct mention of social class.

Thus to overuse the term 'class' directly in questions early in the research might have orientated interviewees towards class, whether or not this was a useful, meaningful or important term of reference to the novice teachers. Also, as discussed in Chapter Two, Payne and Grew (2005) suggest that the concept of 'class' is not something that all people explicitly use either in language or as a means by which to understand themselves. In addition, they add that many people talk of class without ever mentioning the 'c' word directly and this is an important aspect of this study.

Payne and Grew (2005) also talk of the need for careful consideration of timing in questions when discussing class for reasons mentioned above and therefore the decision was made to approach class directly once the initial rapport had been built between the novice teachers and myself (again the full aide memoires can be found in Appendix A). 'Class' was not therefore directly raised until the end of the second interview.

Analysis

There are any number of ways that a set of interview data may be analysed in order to transform the raw data to a set of developed understandings that address the research

focus. As Silverman (2000: 36) claims, any understanding of data constitutes just 'one way of "slicing the cake"'.

In terms of the type of data collected in interviews, this may be viewed in two main ways. The first is that a researcher may take as given the subjective meaning that interviewees attach to their words as 'straightforward reports on another reality' (Silverman, 2001: 111). The second is that responses can be seen as constructed rather than as describing an external reality or 'fact' (Silverman, 2004: 154). Silverman (2001) suggests that these two approaches to interview data are often positioned as incompatible. However, in this study, interviewee responses were seen as comprising aspects of both of these two views. To suggest that responses fall into either one of the two categories completely, ignores the situatedness of interviewees in the former, and ignores and marginalises the views of interviewees in the latter. Given the subject matter and that interviewees are being asked to express their views and feelings, both ways of viewing the data offer insights into how and why those perspectives have come to exist.

Thematic analysis

Though contemplated, the use of a formalised version of systematic analysis and coding such as that outlined by Radnor (2001) was rejected. However, aspects of a more systematic approach to analysis were useful in considering how best to transform data from 'raw' transcriptions, into meaningful understandings. An abbreviated version of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) applied only in relation to analysis instead of both data collection and analysis was considered. Given that this study had a starting focus and a range of areas of interest, the research already brought to bear a set of values and influences that ultimately underpinned it (as discussed later). Thus, grounded theory, whilst good in helping illuminate useful insights, was not entirely appropriate.

Instead, a thematic analysis was employed, whereby 'themes' or 'interconnections' (Denscombe, 1998: 211) were sought in the data. This involved thoroughly reading transcriptions and scanning them for emergent themes. For each novice teacher, a longitudinal account was constructed of their journey to becoming a teacher. Themes were then identified relationally across the sample to draw out commonalities and

differences. In addition, the tapes of the original interview were also re-listened to, ensuring 'meaning' emanating from the tone and expression was not lost.

Balancing an inductive and deductive approach

In relation to how themes and issues emerged from the data, there was a mixture of allowing these to come directly from the data itself and from exploring themes that had been illuminated through reading the literature available on social class and identity. This was a dynamic process in that before the interviews were even carried out, there was already a strong knowledge of the concept and theories of class. Inevitably this existing knowledge was present throughout the research process from the planning stages and is embedded in the research focus.

Once themes started to emerge, the literature was re-consulted and used to make further sense of the themes. In turn, the data was then re-examined to explore emerging theories and once again, this process was ongoing. It might therefore be useful to see the relationship between the data and the literature as two-fold. Firstly, the literature acted as a set of analytical tools with which the data was interrogated. Secondly, the data drove which literature was examined and which concepts and theories were appropriate in further understanding it. Thus the approach to analysis is neither purely inductive nor deductive. Instead, the approach to analysis is cyclical moving between top-down theory testing and bottom-up theory generating.

Moving backwards and forwards between the data and the literature makes way for what grounded theorists call 'theoretical sensitivity' (Glaser and Strauss,1967; Glaser, 1978; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). This argues that as new concepts emerge, data needs to be re-analysed whilst ensuring theory generation remains as grounded in the data as is possible. It also needs to be acknowledged that immersion in the literature, as is always the case in social science research of this kind, rarely means that findings are grounded solely in the data. Equally, all research needs to avoid the pitfall of applying existing theories and preconceptions only (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Thus the approach to analysis in this study had to carefully straddle the line between theory generation direct from the data and a form of hypothesis testing, drawing on existing conceptualisations and theories.

Before moving on to explore what this means in relation to interpreting the data, it is important to note that once themes are identified, data needs to be re-consulted for content that exemplifies the themes (Radnor, 2001). This involved re-reading transcripts and identifying key information and quotes from each of the eleven novice teachers' transcripts. In this study, this stage was carried out both by hand (involving lots of copying out) as well as electronically (involving copying-and-pasting using Microsoft Word).

Interpreting data

Radnor (2001: 88) suggests that the next stage involves moving beyond analysis of data to 'interpretation' where: '…the interpretive process takes over from the descriptive'. In this stage, Radnor argues the data is continually worked until it is able to 'offer theoretical explanation of the phenomena under study'. As I started to explore above, theorising cannot be separated from analysis and the relationship between data and theory needs to be responsive and dynamic. Though 'theory' may be defined in many different ways (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992), Strauss and Corbin (1998:15) usefully suggest:

> Theory [is] a set of well-developed concepts related through statements of relationship, which together constitute an integrated framework that can be used to explain or predict phenomena.

The role of theory in this study therefore acts as a 'framework' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) to help both analyse and interpret the data. As a means of reassuring the reader that the theories used in this study are reasonably applied to the data, the use of 'low-inference descriptors' (Silverman, 2005: 221) have been employed in Section Two of this study. This means the data is presented via mainly verbatim accounts to highlight the novice teachers' experiences in their own words as much as possible rather than through reconstructed case studies. This hopefully will enable readers to see for themselves where interpretations have come from.

However, interpretation is always strongly tied to the 'self' of the researcher (Denscombe, 1998: 221) and there is always a danger that the researcher's own framework of understanding is projected on to those featured in such studies (Maxwell, 1996). To avoid the imposition of one's own values, transcripts must be

continually read to enable multiple interpretations to be considered. In addition, 'theoretical sensitivity' (as discussed above) must be employed. But, according to Crotty (1998) these considerations are those that often stay hidden in accounts of the research process. On this note, it is both timely and important to return to Crotty's remaining two 'questions', those associated with theoretical perspective and epistemology.

Theoretical perspective and epistemology

Crotty (1998: 7) defines theoretical perspective as being about the 'philosophical stance that lies behind our chosen methodology'. In other words, it is about unpicking some of those assumptions that underpin both our research in general and our methodological approach. In particular, Crotty believes that in elaborating our theoretical perspective, we are unpicking our: '…view of the human world and social life within that world wherein assumptions are grounded' (Crotty, 1998: 7).

As the discussion in Chapter Two demonstrated, social class and class identity are complex concepts that are highly contestable (Marshall et al., 1993; Crompton, 2008). Researchers and academics alike find it difficult to agree on what social class means and what impact it has on the various areas of social life. In its most simplified form, there are broadly two approaches to understanding and viewing the operation of class. The first is to see class as something 'out there' which exists independent of whether people have consciousness of it or not. In this view, class is something that can be measured and classified. Writers such as Goldthorpe (1987; Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1985) are key exponents of this interpretation of social class. Secondly, there is an understanding of class which is deeply rooted in cultural analyses whereby class is much more about the meaning people attach to it, the influence it has on their everyday lives (see Skeggs, 1997; Savage et al., 2001; Payne and Grew, 2005) and the everyday practices associated with social class (Ball, 2003a).

These arguments have been covered more fully in the previous chapter but these are important points to re-surface when it comes to unpicking the theoretical perspective underpinning this study. Theoretically, those approaching class as 'out there' (such as Goldthorpe, 1987) been described as in keeping with a more positivist tradition (Bryant, 1994). Inherent in positivism is the view that the social world is real and

observable and that it exists independent of consciousness. According to this view, research on social phenomenon should be more objectively-focused. Many proponents of positivism also argue that social research should be subject to the rigorousness of science and that it is able to produce objective knowledge by uncovering objective truths (Crotty 1998). Also implied in this is the view that researchers must try to remain objective (Hammersley 2000).

By comparison, understandings of class (and other areas of social research) that are concerned with meaning, are considered to be in keeping with a more interpretivist tradition. This is because many advocates of this approach believe that 'social reality is socially constructed' (Schutt, 2006: 43) and that all 'reality' needs to be interpreted.

As Chapter Two illustrates, this study takes seriously cultural understandings of class. As such, the main methods and methodology used in this study represent this and are more in keeping with the interpretivist tradition since it relies on more qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. However, this is not without complexity. As Chih Lin (1998) argues, all too often, quantitative and qualitative methods and positivist and interpretivist traditions are positioned as juxtapositions when in reality, a combination of both often makes more sense. Thus in relation to class, seeing it as purely an objective 'out there' reality to be objectively studied, or as an entirely subjective phenomenon open only to our interpretations is unlikely to lead to any rich understanding.

Chih Lin further suggests that much qualitative research actually comprises of both positivist and interpretivist traditions because the areas of interest in qualitative research have often been identified through the more positivist traditions, class here being an example of this. This study therefore works from the assumption that class is both out there objective to consciousness and as a dynamic process impacting on our everyday lives and holding meaning. Furthermore, whilst this study uses a mainly qualitative approach to methods, it employs more quantitative methods to both select those people to interview and to elaborate, verify and check the disclosures of interviewees.

Although this study employs aspects of both positivist and interpretivist traditions, it draws more strongly from the interpretivist tradition because the focus is to find out

the influence class (however measured and viewed – as both objectively 'out there' and in terms of meaningfulness) has on the developing professional identities of novice teachers. Therefore, finding out about the everyday operations of class would be extremely difficult using a positivistic approach alone (Crossley and Vulliamy, 1997).

In addition, given the complexities of class, the benefit of a mainly interpretative approach is that it starts from the understanding that there is not only one way to interpret things.

In empirical studies of social class, 'ambiguity' has been argued to be a central feature (Savage et al., 2001). The debate between structure and agency is also a central argument in conceptualising and theorising social class and a classed identity. At the heart of discussing class, this ontological concern requires any researcher to unpick the assumptions that underpin their own work. This study sees class as being both a structural force that shapes people's lives but also sees the ways in which people act with agency. The structure/agency debate is therefore important in this study.

Validity and Trustworthiness

This research study makes no claims to be generalisable to *all* novice teachers. Often, qualitative research using case studies perpetuate what Flyvbjerg (2006) has deemed a 'myth', that their findings cannot produce theories because the findings are not generalisable. The work of Yin (2003) helps qualify this when arguing that instead of generalising to whole populations (which, should always be regarded somewhat sceptically), case studies can and do help contribute towards theory that can be applied to wider populations to increase our understanding. Thus, this study sets out to generate theory that helps understand the ways in which class influences the developing professional identities of novice teachers. Earlier in this chapter I discussed the balancing act between an inductive and deductive approach in analysing the data. This should also be seen as the process of theory building when using case studies (Johnson and Christensen, 2004).

Generally, in discussions around generalisability, issues of reliability and replicability, or in other words, trying to illustrate that the same or similar conclusions will be reached regardless of the researcher, are often positioned as central. These concepts are, however, found more frequently in predominantly positivist and objectivist studies. This study, concerned with theory building, would argue that in any research, including in more qualitative and interpretive studies, the 'data' is both collected and analysed by a/some researcher(s). As such, findings never simply appear but instead, the researcher(s) makes judgements and interprets the data. Readers of research studies very rarely have access to the 'data' and are therefore unable to make their own decisions as to 'meanings'. In light of this, readers must be persuaded that what they are reading is trustworthy. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985: 290):

> The basic issue in relation to trustworthiness is simple: How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of? What arguments can be mounted, what criterion invoked, what questions asked, that would be persuasive of this issue.

The main strategy that a piece of research needs to employ to demonstrate it is trustworthy is that of transparency about the processes of data collection and analysis. This enables readers of research to see for themselves how and why certain conclusions were reached. As demonstrated above, this study argues that absolute truth is not the aim of most qualitative, interpretative research. As Silverman (2001: 25) suggests, many qualitative researchers see that: 'value freedom in social science is either undesirable or impossible'.

Therefore, presenting 'an honest' picture is not a straightforward event as there is not one truth to present honestly, but rather multiple versions of 'truth' (Scott, 2000; Hodkinson, 2004). Obtaining trustworthiness in this study relies on presenting the reader with an accurate reflection of what was done, how and why to equip them with the information they require to make their own quality judgements. It therefore becomes my own task to convince readers that the interpretation of the data presented here are believable and honest.

As Silverman (2000) points out, Max Weber argued that all research is contaminated to some degree by the values and beliefs of the researcher. Education in westernised

societies such as ours is also a highly philosophical endeavour underpinned by many competing ideas and ideologies. As such, educational research is likely to be value-laden and never value-neutral (Carr, 1995). As demonstrated in the previous chapter and throughout, the concept of social class is complex and is open to interpretation and as such, also likely to be value-laden. This study agrees with Carr (1995) when he argued that inquiry into education which claims neutrality is simply not recognising its own inherent values and ideologies.

To repeat this point, Silverman (2001: 83) argues: 'research topics never arise "out of the blue"'. Researchers and research students very rarely have their topic of investigation imposed on them. Therefore, at least to some degree, researchers are instrumental in choosing what they study and how they intend to study it (Scott, 2000). Temple (1997: 79) notes that:

> All researchers pick out slices of other people's lives which are of interest to them. They select what is important and what is to be left out and arrange the results from their own perspective.

Choosing to explore a concept like social class in an educational context makes the above points especially pertinent. This is especially the case given the complexities around 'identities' and the extent to which they are structurally ordered (Bourdieu, 1984) or socially constructed/situated (Gee, 1999; Edwards & Potter, 1992).

Hodkinson (2004) explicitly makes the point that researchers of at least equal intelligence and reading cannot make all others agree with all of their arguments. To this end, he suggests that differences amongst researchers are: '…rooted in deeply held personal values, partly drawn out of our own experiences' (Hodkinson, 2004:18). What this tells us is that we need to better understand the personal and emotional investment researchers place in their work. Hodkinson suggests understanding the investment researchers place in their work should be regarded as a strength of research and enables readers to ascertain the quality of interpretation. He further argues: 'the pre-judgments that are part of our individual and collective habitus inevitably, and often helpfully, feed into that [research] process' (ibid: 23). Researcher reflexivity (Walford, 1991) is therefore essential in increasing transparency in the research process.

So far this chapter has focused on outlining the research process and unpicking some of the assumptions that underpin the decisions made within the study. Given the epistemological and ontological issues discussed above, the final piece of this chapter turns to a focus on my own researcher identity given that ultimately the interpretations in this study are my own. What follows is an account of my own class journey and class identity to illustrate that I do not claim to come to this research from a position of value-neutrality and objectivity. The purpose of this is to enhance openness and reflexivity and it is hoped that readers of this study will be aided to assess the quality of interpretation featured later in this thesis.

Researcher Identity

From my perspective, social class has played an important role in shaping my life to date and my experiences of education. I grew up on a council estate[6] in Kingston-upon-Hull, a city with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage (DCLG, 2004; 2007)[7] and limited employment opportunities, hit like other northern cities by the decline in manufacturing industries from the 1970s onwards. My father worked full-time at BP Chemicals as a process chemical operative for approximately 17 years up to 2001 when he retired due to ill-health. Prior to this, my father had held a number of jobs including driving buses, working as a bus conductor, a milkman and several manual roles in various factories. My mother was a full-time housewife up until I was eight years old (not long after my younger brother reached school age) when she started to work part-time for a large supermarket chain as checkout operator where she works to this day. I lived with my mother and father, brother and sister in a three-bedroom house on a council estate. My parents bought their council home in the mid-1980s under the right-to-buy scheme when rising rent charges for working people meant buying your council home became a cheaper option.

My father was a trade union steward in his workplace and my parents were amongst the small numbers of people who turned out to vote in local and general elections in an area of very low turnout. We were, what we would all call, a 'working class'

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[6] The 2007 IMD ranked the LSOA our address fell in at 1302 (out of 32482) most deprived.
[7] In the 2004 IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation), Hull ranked the 9th most deprived local authority area and in the 2007 IMD, Hull ranked as the 10th most deprived local authority area.

family. Both of my parents came from working class backgrounds characterised by male manual, largely unskilled work and female domestic/ancillary service work.

Economically, we never regarded ourselves as poor and relative to those around us on the council estate where we lived, we weren't. My parents always worked and we owned our home. We had a car from me being young and we regularly holidayed (in the UK that is, never abroad).

Class was always a structuring influence on the employment opportunities of both my extended and immediate family. Culturally and socially, we were also a working class family with class structuring where we lived, what we watched on TV, what food we ate and who our friends were. Importantly, class was also a structuring force in terms of our educational aspirations and outcomes.

Educationally, nobody on either my maternal or paternal side of the family had ever attended university. Both of my parents left school aged 15 with no formal qualifications and until I was around 15 years old, I had never even considered that I may stay in education beyond the school leaving age.

Hull's schools have received a lot of negative attention for over a decade now for continually falling at or near the bottom of national league tables. This of course is intimately connected to the high levels of socio-economic disadvantage across the city though this is rarely acknowledged nationally.

I first attended secondary school in 1988, the year education was reorganised nationally with the creation of secondary schools where children started at age eleven. Though 'catchment areas' were to be phased out shortly after this, they were still in place when we were allocated our secondary schools. I was allocated my local secondary school situated on the council estate where we lived. I had, however, according to my parents and school teachers, got in with a 'bad crowd' and had began engaging in unacceptable behaviour both at school and on the estate where I lived. My parents categorically refused to send me to my local school on the grounds that I would either end up 'knocked up or locked up'. Instead my parents fought to send me to a different school located some three/four miles away from our home. The local education authority eventually agreed to this after a formal interview process at the

council offices on the basis that my father made it very clear he would keep me at home rather than send me to my allocated local school.

In terms of attainment and reputation, both my allocated 'catchment' school and the school I eventually attended were very similar. The decision to send me to that particular school was because it was the next nearest school to my home. It was not on the grounds of it being in any way classed as a 'better' school. The decision was taken by my parents purely on the basis of improving my general social welfare.

With regard to the secondary school I eventually attended, I left school in 1993 and that year, only seven per cent of children gained their five or more A-C grades (this was prior to the A* grade). I was amongst the seven per cent and obtained a total of ten GCSEs at grade C or above. My experience of school was generally positive though the academic side of schooling often came second to 'having a laugh' with friends. These years were not problem free and I was often in minor trouble at school for such things as being cheeky to teachers, the occasional bit of truancy, being over talkative/disruptive and so on. Some teachers took it upon themselves to make it very explicit to some of my friends and me that they felt we would 'never amount to anything' despite my being one of the few children who managed to do reasonably well in tests and exams.

The school I attended went into Ofsted 'special measures' the year after I left. It has spent the last seventeen years or so in and out of special measures and the school is now earmarked for closure in the next few years when it amalgamates with another school and becomes an Academy.

Attending college or university was the furthest thing from my mind whilst I was at school. I had never had any contact with or examples from my own family of anybody who had ever gone university. It is probably fair to say I did not even know that university was an option until I was almost fifteen and in the latter stages of Year 10 at school. At this stage, I started to go out with a boy from school whose brother was awaiting his A Level results to attend university. Initially I recall being somewhat shocked that anybody would actually choose to stay at school but on having the benefits of university explained to me (not least the social benefits) I seriously started to consider this as an option. I decided I would make an extra effort in my studies so

that I may attend college to do A Levels (and possibly university) as the idea seemed much more appealing than the prospect of getting a job. Therefore, my experiences of compulsory schooling were classed in terms of both the school I attended and my understanding of it and what it could do for me.

After leaving school, I attended a local sixth form college to complete four A Levels including sociology. It was here that I first encountered 'social class' as an area of study. I enjoyed studying at this higher level and the independence of choosing my own subjects. In particular, I developed a real love of sociology. Importantly for me at this stage, this experience of studying sociology equipped me with the start of the language through which I began to make sense of the city in which I lived and my own experiences of growing up on a council estate and attending a 'failing' school. Therefore, studying sociology helped me start to actually make sense of all the classed experiences I had had thus far in my life.

Having loved sociology so much, I decided to pursue it at university. Initially I attended a post-1992 university to do a BSc Sociology course having got my first choice university with the required grades for this course being a B and C at A Level. This was my first choice because I liked the look of the city where it was located. The decision to apply to this course and this university was never 'academic'. On reflection, it is clear that I actually lacked the confidence to expect to get higher grades than my first choice university requested, despite having higher predicted grades and finally obtaining much higher actual grades. This lack of confidence in my abilities may also be said to have been classed given I lacked both the social and cultural capital to make 'academic' choices. I attended this university for one year but on enrolling on the course, I found it was not the course for me due to the actual content and arranged to transfer directly onto the second year of a BA Sociology course at a pre-1992 university in another city.

Whilst at university, I decided I would like to become a secondary school teacher and I volunteered on a student tutoring programme where I had a fulfilling placement at a school for boys aged 5-18 who had been excluded from mainstream schooling. I was very clear I wanted to work in a school not unlike the one I had attended myself, working with working class children. On leaving university, I applied for PGCE

courses at several institutions but unfortunately was rejected on the basis of my degree in Sociology and the National Curriculum-related degree requirements.

On being unsuccessful in my attempts to become a teacher, I moved back to Hull on graduation where the only employment I could find was working part-time in a department store for six months. I eventually found a full time clerical post processing student grants and loans for the local authority. Whilst working here, I decided I wanted to return to education to study for a Masters degree and self-funded a full-time Masters course in Social Policy and Welfare via a Career Development Loan. Straight from this, I decided to train to be a teacher in the post-compulsory further, higher and adult education sector. I managed to arrange my placement in the same department at the same university I had attended to complete my Masters degree. On completing my PGCE, I obtained some part-time work teaching within this department and then saw and applied for the post of research assistant with a PhD studentship attached to it.

Throughout my time in post-compulsory education settings, my class was always there, something that I was acutely aware of. This was especially the case when I continually came into contact with people from seemingly very different backgrounds than myself. In addition, studying sociology and related subjects equipped me with the discourse to make sense of my classed experiences. In many ways, the social distance that I felt from many others, particularly during my three years of being an undergraduate, meant that I was reluctant to mix with most other students. This stemmed from feeling I had no shared sense of background, purpose, likes, dislikes and so forth. In terms of friendships, I almost always gravitated towards people 'like me'. I tended to try to make myself 'invisible' in classes, reluctant to speak for fear of sounding stupid and being out of my depth. All of this was in spite of starting to understand some of the dynamic 'classed' processes I was going through.

Even now, after eight years working in academia, I constantly worry about not sounding 'academic' enough. I'm often still burdened with feelings of insecurity (and inferiority), dashing off to consult dictionaries when I hear words I feel it is assumed I should know but do not, an experience apparently shared with other working class 'academics' (see Clancy, 1997).

Having had an extensive post-compulsory education, I have experienced what many call 'social mobility'. That is, through education, I have supposedly risen up the class system, now a 'professional', or on some 'objective' class measures, 'middle class'. However, this interpretation has little meaning for me (again a feeling shared by other working class, mostly female 'academics' – see Morley, 1997; Reay, 1997).

I still feel a strong connection with my working class past but little connection to my supposed middle class present and future. I still talk with my strong local accent and dialect and am fiercely proud of my heritage and background. This has not been without its tensions for me however. For example, I often feel I have a 'hybrid identity' of the kind Lucey et al. (2003) and Hey (1997) describe, not fitting comfortably into the 'working class' I have supposedly left behind but not feeling affiliation to the 'professional' middle class (Savage, 2000) I have arguably joined. In addition, culturally I feel I may also appear something of a hybrid. I feel I am often viewed suspiciously by the working class I claim to belong to based on my cultural 'consumption' (Bennett et al., 2009; Edgell et al., 2006) via the films and TV I watch, the music I listen to, and the food I eat but yet I constantly feel I am active in resisting and rejecting that this means I am in some way 'middle class'.

Though only a glimpse into my own classed and researcher identity, this attempts to demonstrate the way in which a classed identity and the impact of it on my life is highly complex and open to debate. My own account here may, in the eyes of others, overplay some aspects or experiences whilst significantly underplaying others though my own researcher identity has been dealt with in greater detail elsewhere (Jones, 2004). Opening up my own identity to scrutiny is difficult. It makes me feel both vulnerable and at the same time 'unacademic'. As Morley (1997: 109) writes, about subjecting her own working class identity to analysis like this:

> As I write these words, my deeply embedded psychic narratives begin to play loudly and clearly. Does this already sound too emotive, too rhetorical, too cathartic? Should I rapidly inject some references to research studies and critical social theories? How might I interrogate the subject in a disembodied, sanitized way?

However, addressing this here in the methodology chapter has been my attempt at being transparent about the motivations for choosing this area of study. Having explicitly identified possible sources of influence on the research, actions can be taken

to minimise implicit and covert bias. In addition, they also alert the reader who is then able to take this into account when making quality judgements as to the trustworthiness of this research overall.

Section Two

Introduction to Section Two

The purpose of this section is to present the data collected in this study. In total, eleven novice teachers participated in this research and Chapter Three outlines the demographic and social characteristics of this sample along with a rationale for how they were selected and why.

The following two chapters set out to present a smaller sample of these eleven novice teachers. In total, six of these case studies will be presented in case study format within this section. The nature and focus of this research relied on rich and detailed accounts collected over a two-year period. As a result, a huge amount of data was generated. The findings of this thesis stem from an analysis of all eleven novice teachers. Detailed case studies for each of the novice teachers were then written up. However it is simply not possible to present them all in the detail they require within this thesis given the permitted scope and scale. To include all eleven cases would have meant drastically reducing each case study leading to lost meaning and richness.

Importantly, the six cases presented exemplify the data and the findings, particularly around complexities and tensions around class for novice teachers. In choosing the six case studies presented here, the aim was to represent the range of diversity and complexity of class as a mediating factor on the early professional identities of the wider sample of novice teachers in this study.

In addition to the six case studies featured, Appendix C features short pen portraits of each of the remaining five novice teachers not presented within this section.

The six case studies presented here are contained in two chapters. As social class is the main focus of this study, these chapters are arranged on the basis of the two main class differences found in the sample (and British society more broadly); middle and working class. Of course, as Chapter Two outlines, social class is complex. Although these chapters are organised around 'working' and 'middle' class groupings, only

three of the six novice teachers who are presented here identified as belonging to a social class. However, in drawing on the work of Skeggs (1997: 165), to understand the ways in which social class impacted on the novice teachers in this research, it was necessary to suggest classes based on their 'economic, social and discursive relations' not *ONLY* on their subjective positioning. Appendix D outlines in more detail how each of the eleven novice teachers subjectively described their class as well as how they were positioned in classes based on their 'economic, social and discursive relations'.

Therefore, Chapter Four presents three 'middle class' novice teachers: Simon, Matt and Lucy. Chapter Five then presents three 'working class' novice teachers: Joe, Kelly and Clare.

Chapter Four

'Middle Class' Novice Teachers

Simon

Background

Simon is a white male from a semi-rural area in the south-west of England who was 23 at the start of his MFL PGCE. Simon spent a large part of the 1980s living abroad where both his parents worked as senior civil servants, and he attended an 11-18 independent boarding school for boys. Simon attended a northern pre-1992 university to complete a four-year degree in languages and European studies obtaining a 2:1. Simon then went to work for a governmental agency for one year but decided this was not for him and enrolled on the PGCE.

Classed identity

Initially, Simon left the question about his social class blank on the questionnaire. When asked why he did this, he said:

> Simon: Well, I'm probably about as middle class as they come. I don't know, I just felt a bit weird, I don't feel particularly affiliated as social class, but I can see a lot people probably do. In terms of accent and playing rugby or whatever, people sort, make kind of, you know, but like I don't feel particularly affiliated… [I] wouldn't like to put anything down without any context.
>
> Lisa: So for mainly that reason do you see class as something that is there and relevant but that you don't particularly affiliate to those definitions or…
>
> Simon: Yes, I just like, there's load of middle class kids in Willow [one of his PGCE placement schools] and you can probably see the parents fashioning them to be lawyers or whatever it is what you want to be. But, less so with more traditionally working class families whose aspirations, it must be harder to push aspirations on a child that you've not experienced yourself.

Here, Simon explains that from an outsider's perspective, he would look 'as middle class as they come' but then talks of his lack of affiliation to this label and that he would not wish to be identified as this without context. He identifies this understanding of class as being about accent and cultural interests but it becomes clear that for Simon, being labeled as middle class is not something he feels comfortable

with (e.g., '...people sort, make kind of, you know…'). In this way, Simon is distancing himself from the class location that others would place him in but it becomes clear that Simon does recognise that class labels are taken to mean something. When this is put back to him, he responds by trying to articulate what the middle class label means to him by giving an example of parents at one of his placement schools where he talks of 'parents fashioning them to be lawyers or whatever…' and gives a strong sense that this is what he is distancing himself from. Given Simon's own privileged educational background, this is very interesting as a shaping factor in Simon's developing professional identity (see below). Later, Simon was asked if there were any situations he actually felt middle class, he said:

> In some situations. I think the spur for success that I had at my school and from my family, you know my family wouldn't accept less than, as in my exams and stuff, and equally my school wouldn't accept anything less than 100% success. I don't think it was ever really an option not doing that and doing something that was less challenging or yeah, like working in a job which you know which required the minimum GCSEs. I think, the spur to success I think is something that is quite middle middle class, does that make sense? And materially, part of what I do is teach languages and you know one of my kind of hobbies is traveling so I think sort of getting the money to go on holiday and to travel was something that is quite middle class.

Here Simon starts to explore those aspects of his background that identify him as having come from a middle class background and begins to align his class and educational background to those children and parents at one of his placement schools that he distanced himself from earlier. Importantly, education and the drive for success is a middle class trait for Simon. However, to understand this further, it is important to consider this in relation to Simon's motivation to teach and his views about the school settings in which he wants to work.

Social class and Simon's developing professional identity

For Simon, becoming a teacher is tied to becoming a particular type of teacher, one who works in an inner city comprehensive, a setting very different to his own education. Simon said he had always considered teaching and his half-brother, a teacher, was an influence:

…my half brother is, was educated in a similar way to me, he went to Oxford, but I didn't, and he made a conscious decision to be a teacher in a comprehensive school…

Simon also positions his brother as de-aligning himself with his privileged background and actively choosing to teach in the state sector. Simon again distances himself from his 'class' and educational background when he talks of his peers from school and whether any of them had also gone into teaching:

…they might be a little bit too money driven to go for it themselves but erm, they've been very encouraging but it was something they hadn't considered themselves and I'm, knowing them as I do, probably never would.

Simon again is hinting that he sees a set of values attached to the middle classes that he feels no affiliation to and that he wishes to distance himself from and becoming a teacher is tied to this. In addition, Simon is suggesting that teaching is much lower paid than the occupations his peers have chosen and thus may have a lower status ascribed to it.

In terms of why Simon wanted to work in an inner city context, his questionnaire, said because of 'the problems that you hear a lot about in cities' and that he would like to be able to contribute to resolving them. When asked to explain further, he said:

I think that in terms of education, issues that are played out, a lot of the challenging things around socio-economic issues, these are the sort of issues I would like to work with. Comprehensive because I feel that I have been what you would say quite privileged in my personal education and I would like to give a bit back as it were …. I'm in danger of sounding a bit clichéd but y'know the problems of drug abuse, real poverty, violence, underachievement in education, and it's something I would like to contribute to.

For Simon, teaching was about much more than imparting his love of his subject or replicating his own positive education, he confirmed this when he said: 'I think probably I see my subject as a vehicle for teaching rather than teaching as, vice versa basically'.

In this way, it also starts to become clear that Simon's distancing of himself from some of the educational values of the middle class may be strongly linked into his own ideas about his developing professional identity as a teacher. Simon wants to

teach in a working class setting, addressing educational and social disadvantage, a setting very different from his own 'privileged' education. Simon is also clear that for him, this is the only setting in which he wants to work, completely rejecting the independent sector (and thus replicating his own education) and instead, wanting to make a social contribution:

> …I wouldn't want to work in the independent sector … I would like to make a difference and I think if you take kids at an independent school, they have a lot provided for them anyway so whether it's me teaching them or anybody else teaching them it won't be making a substantial difference in my opinion…

Simon also felt the same about going to work in higher attaining and more middle class state schools saying 'I would have similar issues with those as I do independent schools because I wouldn't be able to make the same difference…' Here we see some evidence that for Simon, notions of 'making a difference' are strongly tied to working in schools perceived to be in difficultly and those that others may shy away from. Importantly though, for Simon there is a sense of pride in choosing to move away from his 'comfort zone':

> My sister, she sells pensions, and she is very different to me … she operates solely in her comfort zone and the second she steps out of it she's likely to cry. I think something like, perhaps, oddly enough, coming from public school … I was sent off to boarding school when I was eight and I lived away from home from the age 8-18. I think Lord Of The Flies was written about school when I was eight and I think they can be pretty vicious places and you learn how to look after yourself, whereas she stayed at home and went to a local independent school and went home to a cooked meal every night … one of the aspects I'm proud of, my sister came to [city] and she couldn't walk down the street without you know, she was a bit panicky about the whole urban thing and I think if you put her in any sort of school, or particularly an urban one, she wouldn't feel comfortable. But I'm relatively proud to put myself in those situations if you know what I mean.

Again Simon distances himself from his background by setting himself against his sister who sticks within her more middle class 'comfort zone'. Interestingly, he positions this ability to step outside of his comfort zone as having come from being 'sent off' to boarding school when he was eight, an experience he suggests could be 'vicious' and akin to 'Lord of the Flies'. Moreover, this sense of pride to step away from his privileged class background and go into a classed world that he is not part of and which his own sister fears is an achievement for Simon. In this way, Simon's

decision to teach and to teach in working class urban contexts is located around understandings of crossing boundaries and venturing into the 'Other' and in particular, the classed other.

During the PGCE year, Simon attended Nollington Catholic High School as his main placement, spending his first and third seven week placements here. Nollington was a mixed sex, 11-18 comprehensive with just under 1100 pupils on roll (including approximately 150 in the sixth form). In 2005, the percentage of pupils gaining five or more grade A*-C GCSE passes including English and Maths was 43 per cent, around the national average and the number of pupils with SEN in the school was just under 12 per cent (with 2.1 per cent with statements) whilst the percentage of those receiving FSM in the school was also broadly around national average. Simon then attended Willow Drive High, an 11-18 comprehensive serving a relatively affluent community for his contrasting seven week placement. This school was outside of the English education jurisdiction but was believed to have above average numbers of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grade passes (including English and Maths) with relatively low numbers of SEN and FSM.

Simon enjoyed his time at both schools. However, although Nollington more closely matched the type of school he said he had wanted from the outset, he preferred his placement at Willow Drive because: '...I think I found it easier … but I found Nollington more rewarding…' So, neither school fitted his views about where he wanted to teach but Nollington fitted it more closely with Simon saying it had its 'challenging aspects' and that: 'some of the kids … were going through adolescence the hard way'. Simon's time here also brought home to him the issues he may encounter later in his teaching career about the sustainability of working in a 'tough' school when he said: '…I suppose you could say it was quite emotionally draining but it's not put me off'.

Simon began looking for a job during the PGCE year. He talked about feeling under pressure to get a job before July to ensure some of his student debt acquired would be

repaid[8] and there was concern that it would be 'disappointing' if he ended up taking a job where:

> …ideologically it wasn't what I got into teaching to do. To teach kids that are going to do well whether I'm there or not. I'd be disappointed if I had to go into something like an independent rural school.

By the of end of PGCE, Simon obtained a teaching post in London at Standsbury School, a school that mirrored the type of school that Simon had maintained that he wanted to teach in. Standsbury was a large 11-18 mixed sex comprehensive school with approximately 1300 pupils aged 11-16. In 2005, 44 per cent of students gained five or more GCSE passes at grade A*-C (including English and Maths) and 21.9 per cent of pupils had SEN (1.8 per cent with statements). Ofsted suggested the school was fully comprehensive with a full range of ability though overall, attainment on entry is a little below average. The school is very diverse culturally and a high number of students have English as an additional language. FSM is also slightly above the national average. Simon talked of the school having an 'improving reputation' after 'it was deemed to be relatively rough and struggling' previously.

Simon also felt the school was socially mixed in terms of socio-economic factors describing its catchment area as spanning 'from like very white middle class areas … it includes some quite affluent areas and some quite rough ones as well'. Here, Simon explicitly draws on class to make sense of the pupils' backgrounds. Simon uses 'rough' to refer to more working class areas and this is repeated throughout his interview when defining the areas in which the school draws its pupils from. As well as using 'rough' as a euphemism for working class areas, he also uses 'nice' as the opposite of these, to refer to middle class areas. Though Simon is aware of class and differentials in wealth, his understandings of disadvantage are arguably naive:

> ...some [pupils] are hugely, I think materially they are quite wealthy, there are very few who I think are on the breadline, despite the fact there must be, there are large numbers of kids on free school meals, but you know they've all got the latest mobile phones and what have you.

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[8] As Simon was classified as training to teach in a shortage subject area, there was an additional form of financial incentive to gain work before the end of July in this particular year as some of his debt acquired in the process of training to teach via the Student Loans Company would be repaid.

Here we see that for Simon, his understanding of poverty does not comfortably incorporate those children from poorer backgrounds who have access to the latest mobile phones. In this way, Simon appears to lack understanding about the nature of the society in which we live whereby goods (e.g., clothing and mobile phones) are often relatively easy to come by via credit and so forth. Simon's social distance from the children he teaches may therefore be distorting Simon's understanding of the way in which such families are able to come by such material goods and services. However, on reflecting whether his own very different upbringing had any impact on him as a teacher at this school, he said:

> In terms of how I am received, I've had no real problems in London because everybody has a southern accent, you know what I mean. In [northern city] I had this sense of perception that if I had a southern accent, then I was posh whereby here, because there's so many different accents I've not had that suggestion at all. In terms of what my schooling ... I do have sort of relatively high expectations of how things should be in a classroom ... but I think I'm still battling away to get it to be exactly the way it was at my school ... there are inevitably differences between me and the children that I teach but I don't really think, I wouldn't like to think that's something which is demonstrated through their behaviour, or like because I think you can come from any group and turn out to be or do a successful job and be very comfortable and to be polite and respectful which I don't think that's anything necessarily to do with a social class, but I think there are elements of my upbringing which make me different from the kids in that regard.

Here Simon demonstrates that in a northern city, he felt his accent marked him out to others as being 'posh' (or middle class) but he felt in London, this was much less of an issue due to more diversity in general and in his school. Simon is also reflexive enough to understand there is social distance between him and many of the children he teaches although he does not feel this affects their behaviour towards him. He adds:

> ...but I do think there are sort of differences between any teachers and students and whether you'd identify those differences with social class or not is I suppose a matter of personal choice.

Simon is again distancing himself from social class as a useful explicit label through which to make sense of differences in education. However, it would appear that for Simon, working at a socially mixed school complicated class as did the very culturally diverse nature of the pupil intake. On being asked whether he felt the school could be described as having a predominantly middle or working class identity, or whether any

other type of label would more appropriately describe the identity of the school, he said:

> ...I'd say it was very mixed... I don't think, excluding the upper class which you know I'd say doesn't exist in the school, but I'd say middle and working class would be roughly the identity, I'd say lower middle to, I don't think it fits neatly into a category between the two of them ... again, I'd probably put like multicultural or something like that because just the way the school is made up is obviously very very different [groups] ... I'd say more in terms of ethnic groups than in terms of economic sort of classes…I mean you get people from a sort of like huge area of London some who have just sort of parked the beamer outside and came out in their suits and working, you know office jobs in the city and then equally you get people who obviously have not been working during the day who you could phone at sort of 3 o clock or anytime during the day and there will be somebody there.

Here, Simon attempts to make sense of class through the pupils' parents making observations of middle class parents' cars and occupations and contrasting this to those working class parents at home all day, short-hand possibly for the unemployed. Simon was then asked directly whether he felt social class mattered in relation to schooling, he said:

> Simon: [long pause and erms] I think for, if, it came, in my case no I don't think it's been a driving factor, I mean I think what people are, and if social class is a useful way of categorising that, I think that inevitably has an effect on how they teach and why they teach, erm, but I don't think it's an area, certainly less so than other areas of work, I don't think education is one which is very sort of socially divisive or sort of class dominated.
>
> Lisa: You don't think it is?
>
> Simon: I wouldn't say so no.
>
> Lisa: Where else would you say it matters more then?
>
> Simon: Again, this is within a London context, again things to do with you know, banking or these management training programmes, all these sorts of areas of work, I'd say they're very sort of middle class, upper middle routes to go down but I think education, I mean the sort of nature, you know, if it's comprehensives then you know it's going to appeal to people of all sort of backgrounds.

Here the ambiguity of class for Simon comes through. He starts by stating that for him, class was not a driving force. He illustrates that his choices to become a teacher in the state sector, and in particular, in a 'challenging' inner city London school

appear to show this and that teaching, particularly in a state comprehensive school is not an area that is 'classed' in the same way as other areas such as banking and management. It would appear that Simon is thus linking his decision to teach and to teach in an inner city area as evidence that class has not impacted on his choices, or in other words, he is not simply reproducing class advantage by going into a more typically middle/upper middle class profession. However what Simon feels is evidence that class has not impacted on him, may be interpreted as evidence of how class often plays out in complex and interesting ways that are not always straightforwardly reproductive in nature.

It is also interesting that to Simon, this perspective translates into the view that education is not therefore 'socially divisive' or 'class dominated' because education is open to all and teaching is open to all. It is not exclusive and thus it is not, for Simon, heavily classed. Simon was then asked if social class mattered for pupils, he said:

> I think pupils' backgrounds are going to affect their attitude to education and there are a number of factors that come into that and I think you know, I think class might be one of them, yeah if the sort of class, if you want to sort of get that middle class sort of ethos, you're going to be doing skilled labour which requires in most cases a good sort of range of grades at GCSE and if you've not got that, if that's what you're aspiring to then the value of you actually being in education is more obvious but for some people they don't necessarily have that aspiration or that connection... I've seen you know pupils whose parents have been claiming the dole for years and years, and they can't see quite how it would be useful to not do the same.

Here Simon links class to differential aspirations and inclinations towards education, plus he is attempting to be reflexive about how education may not be a logical choice for those who are not going to use the skills and qualifications they get from it. In this way, Simon is attempting to go beyond a purely 'deficit' notion of the cultural mismatch between the normalised view that education is beneficial for all. However, Simon stops short of actually problematising the education system itself. Simon was also hostile to the label of 'schools facing challenging circumstances' (SfCC) saying: 'to be honest I hate the word, it's a little bit political and little bit loaded really'. He also talked of being anti-league tables (below) and thus is aware of issues schools face despite coming from a very different social and educational background:

I'm not really pro-league tables because it enables schools that are performing well to blow their own trumpet and it influences parents' decisions to send a child to a school or not and if, what it tends to mean is that a school has a bad reputation it's not going to assist improvement in any way in my mind unless you have a teaching team and a management team who are firmly committed to improving it but even then it is going to be more difficult to do that if the perception of the people in the area [is] that it is a rough school … [Standsbury] has very good value-added which is essentially what appeals to me in teaching really. I think that helping people that won't necessarily do well and helping add to their achievement is more important than helping people at an advantaged school who are likely to do well no matter what happens.

Matt

Background

Matt is a white male from the north-east of England, aged 29 years at the start of his Business Education PGCE. He had been working in recruitment for seven years prior to this and lived in what he described as a semi-rural area whilst growing up, attending an 11-18 comprehensive school. Matt attended a post-1992 Midlands university for his BA in Business where he obtained a 2:2.

Classed identity

Matt's father worked at a fruit importing firm when Matt was growing up but more recently was working as part of a legal services team advising people about their legal position though he is not qualified in the area of law. In terms of his mother, Matt said:

> Well what it was is that she was working … [in a] department store erm and then she decided to have a change of heart and then she wanted to run a pub so she ran this pub and didn't do a very good job at it and then she didn't work for around five or six years and she got bored, erm and she decided that she would drive a bus [for a public transport company], I've no idea where it came from, coz she liked driving so she kind of said I'll just drive a bus. But she does it for pin money, she doesn't necessarily have to work so she just decided she would drive … she's a bit eccentric you see, she's a bit nuts … just pottering about the countryside … picking up old biddies and get paid about seven quid an hour or summat…

On the initial questionnaire, Matt said he did not see himself as belonging to social class. When asked why, he said:

> Matt: It's a bit of a mixture because my fathers side were working class but my mothers side were very much kind of like, upper class, so the mixtures come from both, so my dad's side of the family were very, you know, constantly working seven days a week, and my mum's side of the family my grandfather was erm a managing director of a company … that had a lot of money on my mothers side, my mothers kind of like gone off that. But now my mother inherited all the money off my grandfather and she doesn't have to work, but she's a bus driver. She's had plastic surgery done as well. Bus driver and plastic surgery, it baffles me. So you've got my mother's side who are quite rich and my dad's side who aren't. So that's why I can't class myself as either, or. Just a bit of both really.

> Lisa: Right. So, you do sort of see social class as being something that actually exists? But you don't see yourself as being able to put yourself in?

> Matt: I don't tag myself, no. Probably someone else will tag me with something but I don't know what it will be. I'm not particularly bothered. [pause] Are people hung up on social classes are they?

> Lisa: Some people are.

> Matt: Why?

> Lisa: I don't…

> Matt: Is that what you're trying to find out?

> Lisa: It is one of the things I'm going to look at yes. So you think it's something not a concern of yours, an irrelevant concern or…

> Matt: No significance to me whatsoever. I mean someone said when you become, you move up a social class, don't you or something, if you become a teacher or something… I'm not bothered at all.

Here Matt expresses ambivalence towards class (I'm not particularly bothered' and 'no significance whatsoever') but also discusses the complexity around positioning his social class based on his parents differing class backgrounds. Later in the research process, the issue of class was returned to and Matt was asked again why he did not see himself as belonging to a social class, he said:

> Matt: I don't like to put like round pegs in square holes like, I just don't see you can tell somebody's middle, working, upper just coz of what they do as a living or what their parents do for a living, I don't see what relevance it's got, I mean my parents could both be upper class which theoretically would mean

I'd be upper class but I could just like clean the streets, don't mean to say I'm upper class does it, or middle class.

Lisa: But do you think it exists?

Matt: Yeah, I agree people are pegged into society in certain class[es], I think it's more the upper class who like to see themselves as upper class rather than the lower working want to call themselves working class, I mean my wife always goes on about she's from a working class background and both her bloody parents were teachers so that theoretically means she's middle class but she doesn't like to admit it. But I'm not, it doesn't really, nothing, I don't think anyone's even asked me what class I'm considered from, I wouldn't have a clue, probably middle'ish, maybe working, lower, dunno.

Lisa: What would you base that on, what you're doing now or…

Matt: No what my parents did, I think that's how you classify it isn't it? If I was doing it now I'd classify as middle coz of being a professional but, I think ultimately I would consider myself middley-working classy, upper class background – is that possible? [laughs] I'm just calling all of em.

Social class then is something that Matt says he does not feel is relevant or important in explaining any of his experiences. He reveals that he has never been asked (and therefore considered) what class he belongs to and this is supported, despite expressing humour by laughing, when he says: 'I would consider myself middley-working classy, upper class background – is that possible?' Matt turning the issue around and actually wanting to know whether this was the focus of the research was also interesting in that it raised some methodological tensions (i.e., honesty whilst not inadvertently prejudicing the data to make interviewees answer in defensive ways, as discussed Chapter Three). As well as the complexity of his class background (due in large part to his mother's background) what also emerges is the sense of Matt's refusal to be labelled as any particular class. His ambivalence is further illustrated by reference to his wife's refusal to classify herself as a middle class, despite Matt's view that she was. It is also surfaces that for Matt, understanding class is tied to occupational status.

Social class and Matt's developing professional identity

Matt decided to teach because he said he wanted a change from recruitment that was rewarding and challenging and said: 'I've always fancied being a teacher from quite an early age'. His wife was a teacher and Matt talked of her encouragement plus he had lots of friends who were teachers. His grandfather had also been a head teacher,

though presumably this was his father's father given his mother's father was a managing director and extremely wealthy though this problematises Matt's assertion that his father's family were working class. Matt was therefore exposed to teaching and the potential rewards it could bring him and talked of his grandfather's influence saying:

> …my grandfather was trying to lean me towards going into a professional qualification to do a professional job so teaching was probably, I mean I couldn't be a doctor could I so.

From the outset, Matt talked of being open about the context of the school he would eventually like to find work in but had a preference towards an 11-18 school. When pushed, Matt said he would prefer not to go somewhere like a grammar or independent school and said:

> …to be honest with you, I think I'd get bored pretty quick when all the kids are just sitting there. I mean initially because my mam went to private school, and I was kind of inclined to say it's easy in a private school you get more money working a private school but I bet it's boring, really boring and the pressure is on you to get straight As all the time …I think I'd rather go for the kind of poorer area school … I've not been in a private school, but my image is that they just sit there like drones and they're just like little robots. I'd rather have the diversity…

In terms of Matt's own schooling, he attended a school that was relatively high attaining (in 2005, the school Matt attended had 63 per cent of pupils gaining five or A*-C grades at GCSE including English and Maths and had much lower than average SEN and eligibility for FSM). In terms of describing his schooling, he said:

> …we had like quite nice big estates which were part of the catchment area where they were all four or five bedroom detached houses but then you had some really rough kids there from a really poor background…

On whether he felt his own schooling had been influential on his decision to teach, Matt said:

> No not really, I mean personally I was very much an average kid at school and my theory is that the average kids don't get any attention whatsoever. They're average, they're always going to average, just have average jobs … So my focus is mainly going to be on the average kids … the bad kids that got all the attention and the high ability kids got all the attention because they were the

clever ones and you were just kind of stuck in the middle and you weren't really going to be a high achiever so you have to self-motivate from a very early age … My school was very, well average, it was average, just got on with it, went to school everyday just did what I needed to do, did the assignments on time … I just turned up and did what I needed to do. Didn't really like any of the teachers, didn't really hate any of the teachers it was just pretty boringly average. Which is why I want to concentrate on the average kids to try and make them a bit more motivated to come in and stuff.

Therefore, although Matt did not necessarily feel his own schooling had been important, it had shaped his sense of feeling that 'average' kids are overlooked and thus developed an image of the type of teacher he wanted to become. Matt's experience of schooling therefore did not seem to have been an overly enjoyable one but rather, a forgettable experience, something he wanted to address. Here Matt is attempting to represent himself as 'average' and thus as a 'normal' (ordinary) student and person.

During the PGCE year, Matt attended Bessingbrook School for his first and third seven week placement and attended Dalby Sixth Form College for his second seven week placement. Bessingbrook is an 11-18 comprehensive with around 925 pupils (including the sixth form). Located in a small town, the majority of students who attended came from white British backgrounds. However the school catered for pupils from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, some of whom were on low incomes, though FSM was below the national average. In 2005, over eight per cent of pupils had SEN (less than two per cent with statements) and 45 per cent of students achieved their five or A*-C grades GCSEs including English and Maths. Though Bessingbrook was socially mixed, it appears from such indicators as those above that it was skewed towards the less disadvantaged end of the spectrum. Although Matt acknowledges this from time-to-time, when for example he talks of some very wealthy sixth formers, mostly, Matt implies that the school is skewed towards the more disadvantaged pupils for instance saying it was located in 'quite a poor area' and referring to lack of parental support:

I think it's just a place they palm off their kids to be honest with you, I mean on parents evening, there isn't a high turnout of parents…

Matt said the school was:

Very very strange. The opening conversation I had with the head master was that the kids are very very low self-esteem because of the [name of] factory they all just presume they are going to work there so from a very early age they've been conditioned that they will just be factory workers so try to get their esteem just a little bit above that because they've been conditioned but generally I enjoyed the school … There was very contrasting pupils there, there were some who were absolutely out of it, erm just came into class, didn't want to know, didn't listen to a word you were saying, they were the most challenging ones. Erm and you got some strange characters there as well they were just strange, I just couldn't understand them at all coming in with like decapitated toys with pins in and stuff…

Thus Matt is acknowledging that the children came from a range of social backgrounds but throughout the interviews, Matt's focus tended to be on those children from poorer or working class backgrounds in this school. On being asked to reflect about differences and similarities between Bessingbrook and his own schooling, Matt said:

Bessingbrook is what I'd classify as a little bit rougher than our school, erm, we didn't have that many bad kids at our school … so discipline wise, there wasn't that many issues at our school … Erm, I mean there was some girls at our school who had very rich parents erm and some had really poor but you didn't really notice it at school so I didn't really take a lot of notice.

Therefore, Matt's concentration on the poorer children at Bessingbrook is evidence that for Matt, this may well have been his first contact with children who are socially very different to his own past educational and classed experiences.

Matt did not enjoy his time at the college and said: 'I think I didn't get much out of the college placement because they were just like little drones to be honest with you'. Matt had therefore decided a college was not the environment for him. Matt also had some reservations about the Education Maintenance Awards (EMAs) that students at the college got thus distancing himself from notions of social and educational disadvantage saying:

…[they] like get paid to go there like 40 quid a week to go to college and stuff and I just find it quite bizarre, I mean the whole point of college I thought was that it was your choice to be there…

Matt did not start applying for jobs until two-thirds of the way through his PGCE and had no job by end of the course. Matt had decided to focus on 'bog-standard

comprehensives' but with a skewed interest towards working with 'average' to 'bottom' kids saying: '…I just think that they are more interesting …' Matt was not in a rush to get a job as his wife was expecting a baby and was due to give birth around the start of the approaching academic year. However, a short time after completing the PGCE, Matt was employed by Bessingbrook, his placement school for his NQT year to cover maternity leave. During this year, Matt decided he wanted to work part-time, four days per week, to spend some time looking after his new baby. He then obtained a post at Gordesly School for Girls, an 11-18 independent school located in an affluent village. Matt explained his move to the independent sector arose due to the scarcity of part-time jobs in schools generally. Matt talked in depth about the affluence of the pupils and their families as a way of describing the school, for instance:

> …oh it's ridiculous, one of my sixth formers gets £200 a week pocket money … One [pupil] had her 18th birthday in Milan and her dad paid for six of them to fly over and stay in a posh hotel …Oh it's unbelievable. They're all just like directors and they all own loads of companies all over the place, they've got a few celebrities' kids go there … I went to France with em and we went for four days erm and the question was asked the week before can you bring your passports in you know just so we can keep em and bring em to the airport … half of them said they couldn't as they were going away at the weekend, I mean we took 24 kids and at least half of them were going away that weekend to their like various apartments all over Europe … Most of em are going to Africa for some reason this half term, Kenya and places like that and god knows where and Australia, it's a different world, how the other half live … I mean there's a trip to Kenya erm and half the parents are going with their kids, it's like 1500 quid a pupil and the parents have to pay about three grand …

Matt here is distancing himself from this very wealthy class 'Other'. It appears that coming into contact with classed experiences that he saw as being much more privileged than his own, sensitised Matt to issues of wealth and class. Asked directly about the classed identities of both Bessingbrook and Gordesly, Matt said:

> …[at Bessingbrook] there was a bit of a non-split, there didn't seem to be many middle of the road kids there you know, from a moderately wealthy background, it was either like really poor or quite well off…there just seemed a bigger class divide, not that you can talk of class divides anymore but there seemed to be a bigger class divide at Bessingbrook but Gordesly they're all just upper class or they think they are. Nouveau riche some of them … they can be quite materialistic, that's the only thing I can tell is they're obsessed with money and how much things cost … well that's what nouveau riche people are like aren't they?

Here Matt distances himself again from both schools in class terms by his talk of neither school having the 'middle of the road' kids. He also talks of Bessingbrook as having a 'class divide' though remarks 'not that you can talk of class divides anymore' and as seen earlier, class is something that Matt continues to distance himself from though he uses it to make sense of the school. He also makes observations about the 'nouveau riche' as being 'materialistic' and thinking of themselves as upper class. So whilst Matt denies class is useful for him in explaining his own background, he draws upon this to describe others. Similarly, Matt again draws on class to make sense of teachers he works alongside at Gordesly:

> Matt: …some of them [teachers] kind of like got into Gordesly mode, so their accents have gone and they've started talking you know posh but erm there's a couple of Scousers there who you can't even tell they're Scousers because they've gone into the Gordesly way of you know talking posh like, you know what I mean, erm so they feel they have to fit in, I mean they buy BMWs and stuff, I mean I don't know how they can afford to do that but some of them are from near the area, they live in Fursborough [affluent area school located in]… which is quite an affluent area but they like try and fit in with the kids really, which is a bit strange really … I don't understand why people drop their accents when they start getting older, you know, who's that Geordie actor who is in … Wire in the Blood? … God he's gone all like posh … I can't stand it when people lose their accents. It's almost like they're ashamed of their identity isn't it? … it's like they're ashamed…
>
> Lisa: So do you think your accent could end up changing? [Laughs]
>
> Matt: No is it heck [laughs] hasn't done for ten years so, they all take the piss out of us like.

Again, Matt is distancing himself from the class 'Other' and those who appear to align themselves to a class they are not from, focusing in on accent as a means to illustrate this and position himself as different from those who choose to lose/change their accent. Matt does speak with a regional accent associated with the part of the country he comes from. But what is interesting is how strong his association with and use of local dialect and colloquialisms became during this extract, to demonstrate further and apply his point. For Matt then, accent is linked to an identity and by default, those choosing to 'drop' their accent are aligning themselves with the upper classes. By contrast, Matt is choosing to align himself with a different class and regional identity.

With regard to social disadvantage in schools, Matt said the notion of 'SfCC': '…leads me down the path of behavioural issues and issues with the kids…' and there

was very little further or reflexive understanding of this, for instance, with regard to FSM figures, Matt had no understanding of the relevance of this in relation to official discourses on SfCC:

> It's a load of rubbish isn't it really? If you say it's a challenging school because there's loads of kids getting free school meals, is that a challenge is it?

Thus there was no correspondence between FSM as being an indicator of poverty and poverty as being linked into educational difficulties/barriers. Matt also felt that Bessingbrook may fit the SfCC label, he said:

> …I would say Bessingbrook is moderately, if you did challenging from 0-10, pushing onto about a seven, the most extreme where they have cameras all over the place at 10. It's probably challenging but mainly due to certain individuals…

Thus Matt appears to think Bessingbrook is a quite challenging school, despite little evidence of this. On whether schools or children in SfCC could be seen as 'disadvantaged' (see below), Matt further distances himself from the working class 'Other' and notions of poverty and disadvantage and as he has also distanced himself from the upper classes, it would appear that for Matt, that 'middle' section, that Matt seems reluctant to name as 'middle class', is where Matt's comfort appears to sit:

> No, it's quite a negative, horrible word, disadvantaged, as opposed to not being advantaged kids. You see though at schools what they class as disadvantaged, but they have opportunities not to be disadvantaged just don't want to take them because they don't know how to … The thing with disadvantaged kids, I mean you get some kids who are disadvantaged who do extremely well, whose parents abuse them at home but they still come to school and do well. I'm a big believer in this blame culture that is being generated – it does my head in – it's quite easy for the kids to blame that they don't have the new t-shirt once a year at home so they can misbehave at school I'd rather believe in that I think it's their own choice. I mean there are certain influences that will impede what they are thinking at school, I mean there are influences in parentage, but ultimately it's their own choice if they misbehave. Is that quite extreme? I think that's quite extreme isn't it really?

Here in the last sentence, Matt seems to become aware that his views may come across as 'extreme' given the context of talking about children who some would regard as 'disadvantaged'.

Lucy

Background

Lucy is a white female from a small town and was aged 22 at the start of her English PGCE. Lucy attended an 11-18 independent school that both her parents taught at and her fees were waived as a result. Lucy completed an English degree at an Oxbridge university where she obtained a 2:1. After completing her degree, Lucy worked in retail for one year.

Classed identity

Lucy's father had been a teacher for many years though her mother was relatively new to teaching. Lucy self-identified as middle class on the initial questionnaire, when asked why, she said:

> I suppose it's a cultural thing isn't it? Partly, my parents' professions with them both being teachers, I see my dad as being middle class from a middle class family, his, as in being relatively comfortable in money terms, whereas my mother comes from a working class Liverpool family, her dad was an engineer and I see my mum as being middle class because of education in a way … I don't know, I do sometimes feel I've had a very, almost embarrassingly middle class archetype and lots of my parents' family are artists, or there has always been lots of talk of art and literature, and my mum's really into theatre, and they've kind of thrown culture at me all the way through in that kind of way. So, although when I was younger my parents earnings were very low, it's only relatively recently we've been a lot more affluent as a family, and being an only child I spent a lot of time with adults and was always talking about stuff. So, I think it's that, a cultural thing…

In some senses, Lucy, has the cultural capital to enable her to be more reflexive about social class. Lucy has a strong sense of class as linked to culture with economic aspects and in particular, occupation coming secondary but still important. She talks of her own class as been an 'almost embarrassingly middle class archetype' with arts and culture as a central defining aspect. For Lucy there is the contradiction of on the one hand, her family income when growing up which she says was not very high and on the other, the cultural tastes, interests and preferences (in a Bourdieuian sense) that shaped her sense of who she was. Added to this, Lucy says her mother came from a working class background but was 'transformed' through education into being middle

class. However, despite possible tensions, Lucy feels some ease in articulating herself as middle class.

Later in the research process, class was revisited and Lucy was asked to reflect on the term 'class' and asked whether she always felt middle class, she said:

> I mean it is something I do think about a lot and I do find it all quite problematic because I certainly agree that it feels outdated and it sort of feels just like a kind of pointless way of describing somebody as well as it doesn't actually say very much except that I do still feel that this country does seem to, class distinctions do seem to persist in the way that people are defined in society and I don't know, I feel uncomfortable about that but then I mean, I don't know whether it would be kind of better to kind of try not to give things labels and names and things but I feel as if there's a sort of, like I've said before, it's not, it doesn't feel so much a kind of financial distinction when I'm thinking about it, it feels more like a, I don't know, a sort of [pauses] yeah, an attitude to certain things but I don't know, I do feel awkward about it and it's more just an easy label when you're talking I think but [pauses] I suppose I'm just conscious sort of at school as well students from different families have quite different interests and different experiences with things and it does generally seem to work in accordance with professions I suppose, what their parents tend to do and how that affects their attitudes or the things that they've experienced or whatever. So, in that sense, I do feel as if there's still, those things are apparent but erm, I mean in that sense, I suppose I do still describe myself, I would still describe myself as being middle class but it's not something I would necessarily feel that comfortable saying, I don't know, I don't know.

Here Lucy begins to express some of her discomfort around class and the labeling of others. Lucy is engaging with the debate around class and the battle between whether it is purely a label or whether it actually has meaning. On the one hand, Lucy fears the label is just a label but then on the other, she is acutely aware that in her experiences, the attitudes people have towards certain aspects of life do appear to be shaped around this thing called class. Lucy is therefore engaging reflexively with class and trying to work through the issues it throws up for her. On whether there were any situations she did not feel middle class, she said:

> ...maybe one of the things about describing yourself as middle class means that you can kind of imagine that you're just sort of fairly, maybe it's just more non-descript or something... I define myself I suppose in terms of where I grew up, the fact that I grew up in [Midlands city area] and the fact that my mum particularly is from a very working class Liverpool background and that's always been very important I suppose in my view of myself but, I'm also aware that, and when I was little, I'd certainly, in terms of say financial

background, my parents didn't have very much money but, I'm always conscious that I've been very privileged and I think maybe that's the issue. It's like I feel that I've had access to lots and lots of things, I've had access to educational, lots of educational benefits, and things, and haven't wanted for anything and maybe a sort of, I don't know, maybe that's what kind of makes me describe myself as middle class is because, but that doesn't quite apply. I think, I think probably, I always feel like this but what I'm conscious of is that I've got quite, I've got friends who have grown up in quite wealthy households whose parents earn an awful lot of money, a lot more than my parents have ever earnt, and I've also got friends who've come from very working class backgrounds and haven't and didn't go to the school I went to and things like that and usually, I feel very comfortable in all of those situations. I suppose I don't feel any different I don't think in any of them and I don't feel as if those differences actually make any difference if you know, ultimately in terms of friendships and things but I don't think I feel personally any different in any of those situations either, I don't think I feel more one or the other. I think mostly I just feel I would define myself if asked, as from a middle class family regardless yeah.

Here Lucy says on the whole, there are very few, if any, situations where she would not define herself as middle class. For Lucy, being middle class 'means that you can kind of imagine that you're just sort of fairly, maybe it's just more non-descript or something', or in other words quite 'ordinary'. However, Lucy also recognises that she has been very 'privileged' educationally and socially. Lucy says she feels equally at ease with both middle and working class friends and does not feel the need to represent herself as anything other than she is though Lucy says she would say she was middle class 'if asked' suggesting it is not a label she would use herself unprompted.

What makes Lucy particularly interesting is that she also described herself as a 'socialist'. When asked to articulate what she meant, she said:

> Just the sort of belief that, I don't know, I think really [I] do feel that I've had a privileged upbringing and … I've always had everything I've wanted or needed, I don't feel like I've ever wanted for anything …But I think I sort of feel that it is something that everyone should ought to have … I know it's an ideal and I know it's kind of bonkers … I feel like I've been privileged but I don't want to earn loads and loads of money with that, and I know I could probably, I could with the education I've had ... I'm not very clear about this but I have a fundamental feeling that people should have access to basic human rights.

This illustrates that Lucy is aware of her privileged educational background but it also illustrates some of the complexity she encounters in reconciling this with her image of

herself as a socialist. Lucy's view of socialism is not particularly well-developed and appears to be based around notions of basic human rights and people not being denied access to those things they require and need that are not unrealistic or excessive. However, the notion of seeing herself as a socialist is arguably further fragmented when it comes to her early decisions about where she would like to teach.

Social class and Lucy's developing professional identity

Lucy said growing up with parents who taught meant she had access to a strong social network of teachers where education was discussed frequently though she had not necessarily wanted to teach herself. Lucy says she only decided to teach after her year in retail when she realised how important personal fulfilment and job satisfaction were to her. Lucy had actually always wanted to work in the theatre (either performance or theatre management) though she said she changed her mind as she was 'quite homely' and these jobs would involve lots of travel. Lucy also had a very positive school experience which had influenced her decision to teach though this created some tensions about whether to work in the state or independent sector:

> I mean it's a really difficult decision for me that the question of independent verses comprehensive coz politically I want to teach in a comprehensive school and I feel committed to that but I also had a fantastic time in independent education and loved the school I was at.

Lucy said her father had also faced this tension and it was a 'big decision …politically' for him to move to the independent sector and for her parents to send Lucy to be privately educated. Initially Lucy was leaning towards the state sector, especially early in her teaching career to ensure she gained experience of the national curriculum. Considering where to work within the state sector also created tensions for Lucy:

> I think it's really difficult because there's the kind of, there's a real pull between the idealist in me and the kind of crusading teacher which is horrible as well and you're kind of thinking you've got to be realistic but you know, part of you thinks yeah I want to go make a difference and be constructively useful somewhere … that would be far more challenging for me as a person than going in somewhere where I found things much easier … but there is of course the other side that makes you feel well I don't wanna, and I'm a worrier as well so I'm aware that wherever I am, I will worry and I will sort of want to

do my best and want to be effective and there's a balance between driving myself mad and actually being comfortable…

The tension between the 'idealist' and 'realist' in Lucy was evident expressing the image she has of the 'crusading' teacher as being something that simultaneously was both appealing and distasteful. She also talked of having to reconcile this with her understanding of herself as a 'worrier' inferring she felt the stresses of teaching in more challenging contexts within the state sector would outshine any positives.

During the PGCE, Lucy attended Redbrow Catholic School for her first and third seven week placements. In 2005 at Redbrow there were approximately 1150 pupils on roll (including the sixth form) with FSM and SEN both below the national average, with 54 per cent of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C including English and Maths. Most pupils were from white British backgrounds and attainment on entry was well above average. For her contrasting placement, Lucy attended Southall High, a 13-18 comprehensive school with approximately 900 pupils on roll (including the sixth form). In 2005, FSM was well below the national average as is SEN at 6.1 per cent (2.3 per cent with statements and 47 per cent of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C including English and Maths. Very few pupils were from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Lucy initially enjoyed Redbrow but her placement was marred by tensions in the school around increasing behaviour problems with Lucy saying the school was 'really struggling' (it actually went into special measures not long after she left). Lucy's time at Southall was very positive and she talked of this having resolved some of her earlier tensions about which sector to work in, deciding the state sector was where she initially wanted to be. Though Redbrow and Southall may have looked quite similar on paper, Lucy talked of the differences in pupils, saying:

> Just things like culturally, the trends and stuff, the kids at Southall were into very different kinds of music, they were into different kinds of erm, very different look to them as well … I think in a funny way, I found the sort of trends at Redbrow to feel more aggressive, they seemed to be a more kind of, erm, a quite a townie attitude amongst the kids. There was a lot of quite, sort of probably not as interested in cultural sort of talking about music or whatever, a lot of it was like, they seemed quite disaffected the kids or not really interested in school, there was quite a tendency to be anti-school almost … whereas at Southall, a lot of the kids were, there was quite a trend for kids

to be quite, a lot of Goth kids, a lot of kind of slightly grungy, loads of, everyone was listening to Walkman's all the time … I think music is a really important thing … loads and loads of bands all the time they were organising little rock concerts here and there, break times/lunch times … Lots of boys with long hair and very into it, and they'd have badges of their favourite groups and stuff on…

What Lucy is describing here sounds distinctly classed but is not named or possibly recognised as such with the differences in clothing, musical tastes and attitude representing differences in the youth cultures of working and middle class youths, the 'townies' v the 'grungy'/'goth' kids, the 'aggressive'/ 'anti-social' kids v the 'musicians'.

By the end of the PGCE year, Lucy had only applied to one school and had been offered the post at Jeswell School, an 11-18 comprehensive school serving a small town and the surrounding rural area. In 2005, approximately 1450 pupils were on roll (including the sixth form) and 10.8 per cent had SEN (3.1 per cent with statements). 66 per cent of pupils gained five or more GCSE grades A*-C including English and Maths in 2005 and on the whole, the socio-economic backgrounds of pupils were favourable, although the school does serve pockets of deprivation which had grown in recent years, however FSM eligibility was well below the national average.

After one year at Jeswell, Lucy was very happy teaching though she could not say she would teach forever as there were still other things she wanted to try. When asked to describe Jeswell, Lucy felt the school was very similar to Southall in terms of its location, intake and 'mentality', adding it had an 'incredibly good reputation' and said: '...parents will move to get their kids in, the perception of the school is pretty good ...' Having grown up close to Jeswell herself, Lucy was aware of the school saying it had always had a 'posh' reputation amongst her peers. However, Lucy felt the school was comprehensive (ability wise and socially) though she recognised the contradiction of this due to the suggestion above that some parents would move to get their children into the school:

> …I think oddly I think the area that's situated in kind of makes it strangely selective in a way just because we've got a very high proportion of kids coming in from quite wealthy backgrounds but, but I do feel we do have a complete range ... from incredibly wealthy families and then kids from very very rural, quite poor backgrounds…

Moreover, Lucy felt keen to defend Jeswell's 'comprehensive' label:

> … [it] is possible that some people would resent the school or would feel that as a school it's easy for it to be a good school because of where it is situated or whatever and I think I have heard people express that kind of view you know 'oh how can a school be truly comprehensive if it is this kind of area?' Well personally I don't sort of agree with that because I think you can't know what kind of lives these kids have just because there are always going to be issues...

Here Lucy is both defending the school's comprehensive nature but this follows talking of how the area has a kind of selective effect (also referring to it as 'a covetable catchment'). These are arguably classed processes but are not named as class by Lucy. Lucy also found it difficult to label Jeswell as having a predominantly middle (or other) classed identity when asked if it had a classed identity or any other type of identity that more aptly described it. She said:

> I don't know really, I think I probably would feel a little uncomfortable about it just because it is quite an exclusive description and I think its rural quality is really the thing that defines it, I think its sort of situation is the thing that really links all of the students in a particular way rather than a class thing because I would say that even the students who have had quite different backgrounds economically have had quite similar experiences because of the fact that they are in a rural situation ... so in that sense, they've had quite similar upbringings socially I suppose so I think yeah but so I don't know in terms of class description whether I'd want to define it as a predominantly middle class school coz that does kind of cut out quite a significant proportion of the kids.

Again, Lucy is trying to be reflexive about class but will not directly name the school as having a predominantly middle class identity despite identifying a number of features and processes that are distinctly more commonly associated with the middle classes (i.e., moving into an area for schooling and the semi-selective effect, and what she describes as some 'pushy' parents). Rather, she actually unites the experiences of all children (middle and working class) in the school as tied together by their rural upbringing. However, Lucy does also illustrate how her eyes have been opened to class processes *within* the school:

> I think with the kind of middle middle sets it's fairly mixed but I would say that in terms of top sets and bottom sets I think it is noticeable how the students in the bottom set do seem to be from generally much more local backgrounds but probably economically, much poorer backgrounds I would

say whereas the top sets we've got a lot the very middle class kids, middle and sort of lower upper class kids…

In this way, it makes sense that for Lucy, the school cannot be predominantly middle class if she is noticing top and bottom sets to have noticeable class differences within them. What this also demonstrates is that for Lucy, there are observable features amongst the students that help her recognise class. On being asked whether she felt social class mattered in relation to education and teaching, Lucy answered:

> I don't know really, I think it all kind of depends on our society and how it is changing, I mean, I don't know, I think it is noticeable that things like you know the destruction of mining communities in recent years and the changes in lots of different sorts of northern working class communities particularly is sort of, having quite an impact on small communities ... I think what's important for young people and for education is that young people grow up kind of feeling confident and comfortable about who they are and also learning about who other people are and I don't think the labels are that helpful really but on the other hand [pauses] I think as things stand they are a way that people kind of learn to understand themselves. I don't know, I mean I think I sort of feel as if in Britain, the class system has been so entrenched for such a long time that I don't know whether that's going to just start to change and will eventually feel very different about it but I suppose from my point of view, what matters to me is that the kids have access to as much different stuff as they possibly can, and that regardless of background, that that should be possible erm so in that sense I think it shouldn't matter what background a child comes from, they should be able to have an experience of what other people's lives are like as well and feel confident about their own within those but I don't really know whether class actually is a help or a hindrance to be honest.

This again highlights Lucy's attempts to explore class fully and deeply rather than give simplistic, unreflective answers. The tensions between the usefulness of class and the view that it may actually be a hindrance emerge again. This is also the case when Lucy was asked whether she felt class impacted on a child's educational outcomes, she said:

> I feel as though it does but then I feel uncomfortable saying that because I don't want it to be true but I sort of feel as though ... some of the students at school kind of do end up being very much grouped together perhaps because of the setting like we talked about whatever and seem to have quite similar experiences of background and education and that it does seem to kind of pan out that way but I don't, having said that, I mean obviously it's not true across the board. I mean, my mum's experience was that no one in her family has been to university but she went to university and got a degree and all the rest of it and so it's not the case that it kind of makes some things possible and

other things not possible but I feel as though there are still these trends within school ... lower sets are predominantly ... from a working class background ... but I don't really know, I don't know whether that's more just to do with sort of other similarities in educational ability or what and that there's just a trend there, I don't know, I don't know really... I suppose as well I feel kind of, I feel it's very difficult to talk about it without kind of saying things that feel unacceptable or you know what I mean like I sort of end up saying things and then feeling that they don't quite sound how I mean them to sound or they sound very judgmental or whatever, but I do think there is still kind of quite noticeable differences there.

This excerpt illustrates Lucy's discomfort around class and the tensions she feels. She appears to be aware of class differences in education but struggles to feel able to talk about them openly and freely without fear of being 'judgemental' (or deterministic). Talking about class is uncomfortable territory for Lucy, especially talking about class in relation to those groups and individuals less fortunate than her. She talks of knowing class does seem to matter but then says: 'I feel uncomfortable saying that because I don't want it to be true'. Lucy says 'I don't know' repeatedly when trying to work through this question illustrating that it is a subject she does not have a well rehearsed or clearly defined answers to. Similarly, Lucy illustrates disdain around the official discourse of 'challenging' schools:

I think you hear it used a lot in terms of 'challenging' kids I think you hear that referred to a lot as kind of politically correct way of saying they are poorly behaved. I think people use that a lot. But I would probably use the term [challenging] myself as a thing that I would want to be a part of my teaching that in the classroom it should be a challenge…

Lucy also felt that schools classed as this were likely to face some barriers which may disadvantage them:

…I think the problem is, there are so many social problems the school cannot address all of them just by teaching kids. I don't know how I feel about this because it does trouble me that and I think you almost reinforce that pattern if they then go to the school, where there's a lot of kids from disadvantaged backgrounds who are then going through the same system and not achieving and then coming out without the qualifications that society sees as being what they need to get by in life and you [as a teacher] are kind of reinforcing it. But I don't know how you change that because the problems are at home, or with money, there is so many rounds to it.

Here Lucy is again engaging reflexively with the issues and processes of class and in particular, she starts to explore the way in which schools define a curriculum and a set

of qualifications 'that society sees as being what they need to get by in life and you [as a teacher] are kind of reinforcing it'. Lucy does not, stray into pathological and deficit descriptions of working class children and families and instead begins to suggest how the system itself may be a problem albeit, a system that has worked very well for Lucy. However, despite this, Lucy's future intentions are linked into personal fulfilment enjoyment and it seems that whilst 'class' may worry Lucy, it may well have very little impact on her future in teaching.

Chapter Five

'Working Class' Novice Teachers

Joe

Background

Joe, an Afro-Caribbean male from an inner city area of a large northern city was in his late thirties at the start of his Science PGCE. With regard to his own schooling, Joe said he attended a 'challenging' 11-16 comprehensive school in an inner city area. Joe left school and took an FE electronics course but said that he did not do so well and afterwards went to work in a supermarket as a sales assistant. Joe worked here for several years before spending some time on state benefits and working in other short-term jobs. Joe then decided to study for a BSc in science as a mature student at a northern pre-1992 university where he obtained a 2:2. After completing his degree, Joe then spent a few years working in a support role at the secondary school he attended as a pupil.

Classed identity

For Joe, social class was a very important shaping aspect of his identity and he self-identified as working class on the initial questionnaire that he filled in. When asked why he self-identified as working class, he said:

> I am that, from what I understand. Upper class people own factories and working class people work in them. I see myself as working class because I was brought up on benefits. Middle class have professions like doctors and lawyers, middle class people are well educated and working class not so, do manual jobs….I wouldn't class myself as middle class, some of what I've been through could not even be called working class but benefits class … this is my own label, I'm not working class, I'm benefit class because my father never worked [laughs], he never worked, I never saw him work a day in his life, we were brought up, dragged up, on benefits, my mother died when we were 12 so life was really hard, even our friends had parents that worked, but my dad never worked … so I don't consider myself as working class … I was benefits class, that's all we had, benefit money.

Here Joe is attempting to explain his classed identity by drawing upon existing class discourses. However, Joe is struggling to describe his 'working class' background as 'working' class due to his father's unemployment whilst growing up. Thus, whilst he is struggling to identify as completely working class, he is certainly identifying as not being middle class. It is also apparent from this that Joe feels his upbringing was one in which hardship was a major factor and this is something that has shaped Joe and will stay with him, he said:

> If I became a millionaire, I won't class myself as middle class as you know I come from hardship so I'll never be middle class or see myself as middle class.

Thus for Joe, having experienced hardship means that he will never see himself as middle class, a class which Joe sees as having had a range of advantages that he did not have. For Joe, class was also about much more than a category into which to be placed, but instead was about a set of values and a way of life. In this way, Joe felt that having come from a disadvantaged background meant that he could never share the outlook of those who have never experienced this, i.e., the middle classes, he said:

> Joe: I never will [be/feel middle class]. You see there's a definition, middle class is essentially about how much income you're getting in, so if I became a biology teacher and I teach for a few years, I would be in the category of middle class because of the income … For me middle class, it's about a view of life that I will never possess [laughs] you know, it's about, middle class is something that I will never be because of my perspective in life, I think my mind transcends all classes there is no class for me because I can see what they're all about and I don't want to be part of any of them, I know it sounds strange doesn't it but, yes I guess I would be, I am now working class because I'm unemployed, if I was to be a teacher I'd be middle class, if I was to afford a certain income, I could be upper class, however there are social connotations to that, obviously you would understand, you've got old money, new money, you've got being accepted, not being accepted, you know, you could live that upper class life but you'd never be accepted as upper class, you could live a middle class life but you'd never be accepted as middle class by others, but the framework essentially is how much income you're getting.

> Lisa: So … you'd never see yourself as middle class?

> Joe: Never, never no because I wouldn't conduct myself as a middle class person, I don't have to have the house, I don't have to have the big car, do you follow, I could have a middle class income and not have a big house, not have a big car because for me, it's about personal development, it's about being in touch with your humanity, being compassionate, being understanding, being humble, those are the values that help you to learn and improve yourself and move forward as an individual. It's not about how much money you get …

Here Joe hints at a rejection of 'class' labels when he says his mind 'transcends all classes'. But for Joe, his arguments around class are particularly orientated to a rejection of middle class values. Thus for Joe, class is about a set of values, the way you conduct yourself, who you accept and who you are accepting of. Joe is therefore arguing that he will never be middle class because he rejects their values and ways of conducting themselves and feels that he would be rejected and 'othered' by the middle classes. Joe was then asked what it was about being middle class that he felt was at odds with the way in which he viewed his own values (i.e., 'humanity', 'humility' and 'compassion'), he said:

> If you've had a middle class life, it's very narrow-minded in my opinion, it's a very, middle class, upper class it's a very narrow-minded view of life, you don't have the experiences that really could develop you as a human being. It's only coming from hardship, in my opinion, that gives you a real view, you see, if you're poor, you can have a view of how the rich live, but if you're rich, you can't really understand how it is to be poor and how they live, do you follow? It's easy to see how they live because you can see their wealth, opulence etc., but unless you sit in a poor man's shoes and sweat when the electricity bill comes [laughs] you can't see it. So to be poor is the best position that I, I think it's better for me, I wouldn't change anything in my life. I'm grateful that I grew up on benefits coz it's allowed me to move up and see life for what it really is and you can't see that as a middle class or upper class person, you just can't, you can't feel it, you can go to a deprived area and have a look around … but you don't really understand or feel or know what they're going through … there's a difference between knowing something and understanding it isn't there? … It's very easy when you're well educated and you come from that background to look down on people that are poor and ignorant … I see it through society almost every single day … I can see that people look down on you just because they are earning more money and they've got a better position, and I guess that's human nature as well, you know it's human nature, people are petty and weak and small-minded and they want to validate themselves by thinking they are superior to others you know but it's so unfair, it's so unfair.

This is a powerful account of Joe's feelings that having come from hardship has given him a valuable insight into the way in which society works. Within this, Joe makes explicit his stance on the injustice of class and how, without having lived through hardship, one cannot truly understand it. Moreover, Joe is highly critical of the middle classes when it comes to such issues and for Joe, this means that the middle classes lack access to experiences which 'develop' them as a 'human being'. So, for Joe, rather than feeling that he has to 'prove himself' to the middle classes, Joe actually

feels that it is his own experience of poverty and hardship that has made him the 'superior' one, he said:

> …you see what I feel now, I feel superior and it's wrong to say so but I do because coming from such a pathetic background, I'm now fitting in, for instance, on the PGCE sitting with middle class people, you know that have had it good all their lives, with parents that have had it good all their lives, for me to come from the dirt, so to speak, and to sit in with people that have come from those backgrounds and I feel quietly superior, and it's wrong isn't it [laughs] it's wrong coz humility is the basis of my life, it really is and I fight it but I do coz I think well I've come from the dirt and I'm sat here next to you through pure force of will, through pure effort, hard work, so if anything, I feel superior, and it sounds wrong but it's just the distance I've had to travel, they've only travelled a small distance because they've had it given to them…

It would appear that Joe felt a sense of pride from his feeling that, despite his relatively disadvantaged start in life, he was still able to sit alongside many more advantaged middle class novice teachers. Joe's belief that he had still managed to obtain what they had, despite their unequal starts to life, made him 'quietly superior'. This was on the basis that his place was obtained through 'pure effort and hard work' rather than from a situation of advantage where 'success' is both normalised and simply reproduced. He felt this made people who have done well, despite struggling against the odds, 'special':

> …somebody is better if they've had to work harder to overcome the odds, they are 'special people'. Whereas people who have had it easy tend to look down on rather than be far-minded and see they're actually better.

Here Joe highlights the way in which class identities are fraught with complexities and contradictions in that he simultaneously positions himself as 'superior'/'special' and yet as 'humble'. However, Joe clearly felt at ease in the interview context and felt able to speak his mind in a non-judgemental environment at the university where he explains he normally feels the class 'Other'.

Social class and Joe's developing professional identity

Joe was clear he entered into teaching with a view to becoming a particular kind of teacher, teaching children from a similar background to himself. He described at length the way in which children from middle class backgrounds are set good examples and have role models in ways that working class children often do not. He

stressed the importance of education and the way teachers can be viewed as role models in a context where children may not have these outside of school. He argued teaching for him was not just a career but about showing he cared and doing his best for the children he would teach. Joe described his family background as one which did not value education though Joe said his own education had been very influential in his decision to enter into teaching and where he wanted to teach. He described one teacher who told him: 'Joe, you're going to struggle in life' explaining that as a young black man, he would have to work harder so as not to allow it to hold him back. This had stuck with Joe because he said it showed she cared and he now wanted to help stress the importance of education to children from similar backgrounds.

Initially, Joe said that he wanted to teach in an 11-16 inner city comprehensive school saying: 'it's what I know, the background I've always had, I can identify with those kids'. Thus acting as a positive role model for working class children was central. For Joe, becoming a teacher and the type/location of the school he wanted to teach in were inextricably linked and his class identity was paramount. However, as the research progressed, Joe became clear that he did not want to teach in the school he attended (and worked in) or a school just like it, as he talked of witnessing the sheer 'emotional drain' of teaching in such a school and the need for some work/life balance and enjoyment from his work. This meant seeking a 'middle of the road challenging school' rather than the most challenging type. He was also clear he did not want to teach in grammar schools or suburban schools:

> …teaching in a grammar school and the kids are excellent, really polite, gracious, courteous etc. They have got it on a plate. Ok I'm teaching and it's really rewarding teaching pupils that learn and so on but that is only half the benefit of working in a less privileged school or [with] less privileged children that need more encouragement. It's almost like social work, half of it's social work.

Joe also felt many teachers lacked some of the experience to become the type of teacher he felt was essential to help youngsters from a similar background to his own arguing:

> …a lot of middle class teachers that have a low expectation for working class kids and have failed to inspire them … class is perspective, and the teachers involved from a middle class background in teaching, I feel, often label working class, they limit, and I can give you examples of this in my placement

but I won't because it's very personal but I have come across it in my placements, issues where teachers have labelled these kids, and I'm talking about my PGCE placements, labelled these kids as no-marks and I've had to say to a particular teacher, well I'm from this background [laughs]... so class has a bearing on education because your past defines your perspective, how you look at people and it affects your expectations of how children can achieve and this is the problem. I'm not blaming teachers, far from it, but you need people from working class backgrounds who have struggled in order to help those kids identify with what's possible for them in the future with an education…

Here Joe demonstrates that classed identities are an emotive topic for him and again, some contradictions appear whilst he is talking openly and freely about class – e.g., objecting to middle class teachers being deterministic with young people but simultaneously being somewhat deterministic about the middle class teachers. Furthermore, he said:

…if you're middle class, you can't really intimate to a child what education can do for him or her when all they've seen in their life is nothing to do with education, just hardship, it takes someone from my background to say look I know X,Y and Z, isn't that true? They'll say yes, they know straight away, they know that I've been through what they've been through and so they'll listen … because I can see things the way they can see things. It's as though me and that pupil are looking through the same window, shoulder to shoulder as opposed to someone else speaking to them from a different direction … I have a deeper insight into what they've been through, and we need more teachers from working class backgrounds, regardless of colour, poverty's poverty. But we need more because the middle class and upper class perspective is not reaching the inner city kid, it will reach the suburban kids, coz they can look through the same window together but don't get me wrong, if you've got a middle class teacher that's white, that's talking to a black child from a poor background, they can still inspire that child, certainly … that is still possible, it's about care … you tend to care more when you understand more what a child has been through … coz they don't have the perspective, they've been growing up knowing that there'll be certain working class people that are meant to be working class and doing those working class, menial jobs, their perspective is those jobs that have to be done, they're the group that does it, we're the group that does the lawyers, the doctors etc. etc. and that's their perspective… I can't talk about every middle class teacher in the country coz that's wrong…

Joe is explaining his decision to teach as a response to his perceived need for more teachers from his background to enter into what he sees as a predominantly middle class profession, as a means to address class inequities. Furthermore, Joe is suggesting that empathy and a full understanding of the social context that working class children find themselves in is essential if teachers are going to succeed with working class

children. Joe aligns this understanding as being able to: 'look through the same window' as the pupils you are going to teach. For Joe, there is a clear tension between the social and cultural outlooks of middle class teachers and working class children. This may result in middle class teachers being less able to communicate effectively with working class children and be less inclined to 'care' about the difficulties working class children face. However, given that Joe had already said that he was not looking for a school at the most 'challenging' end of the spectrum, this illustrates a further tension or contradiction in Joe's own story.

Strongly tied to Joe's rejection of middle class values and the predominantly middle class teaching profession, Joe identifies the PGCE course as full of people who came from very different backgrounds to his own. Joe said: 'I didn't really connect to any of them' and called into question some of their motivations for teaching as being embedded in very different motivations from those of his own. In summary, this middle class motivation and perspective was seen as getting themselves a 'profession' and getting a job quickly to 'avoid' repaying some student debts. On being asked if he felt many other students expressed a desire to work in the type of school he wanted, he said:

> I doubt it very much, they're all very nice, I'll give you an example again. We had a tutorial where we were talking about children disadvantaged … I remember one trainee saying specifically you get children being abused in middle class families just as much … now I was talking about working class families, and this was like a formal presentation and it was just a question that was being asked and she made that remark and I thought straight away, to answer your question, she's gearing herself towards a middle class school, she's gearing herself towards the suburbs [laughs]. She is trying to validate that her job or working in that school is equally as important because she's saying well children in that school are abused and violated just as working class, and she's right, there's a valid point but I could see she was gearing towards validating her position working in a middle class school, she had no intention of working in a rough school and she had that middle class accent, and that middle class outlook from my judgment…

Joe is therefore positioning such middle class teachers 'gearing themselves towards the suburbs' as trying to seek validation for their decisions by downplaying the class disadvantages experienced by working class children. Joe is de-valuing those teachers and positioning them as holding the values that Joe sees as being typical of the 'narrow-minded' middle class perspectives he earlier discussed. It may also be that for

Joe, talking about 'Other' middle class teachers, he is seeking to refine/define his own position on these matters.

During the PGCE year, Joe attended two schools, Cravenscroft High School for Girls and Mountsbridge High. Joe spent his main placement (first and third term) at Cravenscroft, a large 11-18 girls comprehensive school located in an inner city area, with approximately 1700 pupils in total on roll (with around 1400 aged 11-16). In 2005, the percentage of pupils gaining five or more grade A*-C GCSE passes including English and Maths was 36 per cent, and the number of pupils with SEN in the school was just under seven per cent (with just under two per cent with statements) whilst the percentage of those on FSM in the school was substantially higher than the picture nationally. The school population is extremely diverse in terms of ethnicity with pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds estimated to be over 70 per cent of pupils, with high numbers of refugees. The school is very popular with many Asian and Muslim families in the city due to its single sex nature.

Mountsbridge, where Joe spent his contrasting placement, is a larger than average 11-16 secondary modern school in an area where approximately one third of children are selected for grammar school education. In 2005 there were almost 1300 pupils on roll. The school's population is largely white British with a small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the number of pupils claiming FSM is below the national average. The number of pupils with SEN in 2005 was eleven per cent (statements 1.8 per cent) whilst pupils gaining five or more grade A*-C GCSE passes including English and Maths was 48 per cent which was above the national average for that year.

Joe really enjoyed both of his placements though he preferred his time at Mountsbridge due to fantastic resources and what he called: 'very inspirational mentoring'. Joe said he felt that there was very little difference between the children at both schools and felt that both schools were predominantly 'working class' schools but that Mountsbridge seemed more at ease with its place in the league tables than Cravenscroft which he felt seemed under constant pressure to improve. Yet, despite this, Joe at times also inferred that Cravenscroft was higher attaining with more parental support even though external indicators (see above) would challenge some of these assumptions. Some of this interpretation came from Joe's perception that as

Mountsbridge was a secondary modern in a selective borough, it must mean it would perform less well than the comprehensive without taking into consideration the socio-economic context of each school more directly.

Joe did not apply for any jobs during the PGCE year. He said this was because he wanted to ensure he met all of the requirements of the PGCE first as he was worried about letting any schools down on account of not fully completing his course/QTS skills tests, which he was struggling to find time to complete. A job had actually come up at one of his placement schools but Joe said he did not feel ready to apply for a teaching post. Joe had also been told a job was there if he wanted one at the school he attended himself and worked in prior to doing the PGCE but again he said that he did not want to work there due to the very challenging nature of it. Joe also talked of having had his confidence increase dramatically as a result of completing the PGCE and said that he now felt confident enough to go and teach in any school:

> …I will have a look at their position in the league tables and make sure they're at least middle of the road, I don't want to be wrestling with classroom management all the time. But, no I have got no real cast iron ideas about where I want to teach. I feel confident enough to be in any school … my confidence has grown, especially at Mountsbridge and it's come through working with children that have a high ability as well as a lower ability. So, erm, I can work anywhere … my classroom management skills according to my mentors has always been good … My shortcomings have been round the area of subject matter because it's been 10 years since I've done any Science … I'm looking for the best school that I can teach in where I can go and enjoy teaching. That is my objective, to go and enjoy teaching not to choose a school. Maybe it was before, maybe I'm becoming judgemental even more now I've got more confidence … I'll probably choose the highest school that I can apply for, but not a grammar school, not something in the suburbs where I can't relate to those children or their backgrounds.

One year after completing the PGCE, Joe had not been teaching and was unemployed and in receipt of benefits. At the time of this final interview however, Joe had applied for a 'supply-style' teaching post (a permanent post within a school to cover all staff absences when the need arose). This was at an 11-18 CoE school located in an inner city area but drawing pupils from city-wide, with below the national average figures for FSM and above average in terms of the five or more A*-C grade GCSEs. Joe felt this school fitted his ideas about where he would like to work but he understood it to be a: 'middle of the road' inner city school, because of its location, despite the

school's higher than average attainment, below average FSM below and its very good reputation locally.

Throughout, Joe argued that a lot of educational differences were to do with class. Joe argued he could not believe in an affluent society like ours that such pockets of deprivation existed alongside such wealth and that the middle classes did not help, showing reluctance to redistribute resources to poor areas to remedy some of the deeper problems. Joe argued that league tables were often a reflection of poverty and class. He also said unless wider society changed, he could not foresee how schools alone could change this. Class therefore mattered for Joe and was not about a set of deficit views on pupils and their backgrounds. Instead, it was about an unequal education system that reproduced inequalities, a system he felt teachers were a part of:

> …coz it's an unfair system isn't it? I mean I honestly believe that the system is, you've got the best teachers working in the best schools to give the best classes, middle and upper, the best jobs, and you've got the worst teachers working in the worse schools and the kids are getting a deficient education and just doing the menial work. But that's the system in place to hold the working class man down and that is the truth, why aren't the best teachers from the suburbs coming to the inner city schools and coping with the difficult kids, that's where it should be at, those teachers should be driven to those schools.

Kelly

Background

Kelly, a white female from a large northern city, was 23 at the start of her MFL PGCE. Kelly grew up in what she described as an 'inner city' area, attending a local 11-16 comprehensive followed by a sixth form at an 11-18 CoE comprehensive to complete her A Levels. Kelly then attended the pre-1992 university in her home city to complete a four year BA degree in French where she obtained a 2:1.

Classed identity

Whilst growing up, Kelly's father was a fireman and her mother a cleaner. Kelly identified as 'working class' on her initial questionnaire, when asked why in the interview, she said:

Because I do [laughs] just, I've just been, what, how I thought [of] myself, it is what I am and it's working class and I think people say that social classes don't exist or effect people's opinion but I think they do, and they definitely still do exist ... I mean, I think about it when I meet people, I think about what social class they come from. Well, I don't go through it in my head what social class they come from but it does, it is there, and I think at interviews it is taken into account. For example, applications for schools for PGCE, I might have mentioned that erm, when they take people [on the] PGCE course, they do look at where [their] degrees [are] from – the university – fair enough because some places have better reputations than others, normally, people from higher social classes will go to the best universities and then she [PGCE tutor] said something about we do try and match personalities with mentors … I'm trying to figure out how they are matched up and I was placed in the two schools similar, well, the first school was similar my own school. Erm, I noticed that people from, who had gone to independent schools themselves were placed in those type of schools … because they wanted to work in one, so, I think that is related to social class as well because a working class child doesn't normally go to an independent school, generally and a middle class child doesn't normally go to an inner city comprehensive, so, linking them with similarities to what they have is looking at what social class they are and I was, I am very similar to my two mentors. They are, what I consider, working class people … But, I'm having to use the word 'personality', 'matching personalities', but when you think about exactly what that means, it does come back to social class as well.

For Kelly, social class was about something much deeper than a category others may place her in. Rather, Kelly had a strong sense of class as being something that shaped not only her own and other people's experiences, but also their values and aspirations and how people are judged and valued. Class, according to Kelly, is fundamental to her in understanding the world around her and making sense of herself and others. For Kelly, being working class: 'is what I am'. In terms of what 'class' actually meant to Kelly, she said:

Kelly: My friend who was at university … we talked about this, her lecturer had said: 'when you leave university you will then be middle class because you had a higher education and you will have professional jobs'. I totally disagree with that, I don't think it's something you will achieve. I think it's something you have from birth and even when I'm a teacher and I go onto other things I won't suddenly think of myself as middle class or my children as middle class. It will still be just a working class thing. I think it's a heritage thing not something that is earned throughout your life.

Lisa: Do you think it's something more like an outlook, a culture then, as opposed to you do this job you are this, you do this job you are this?

Kelly: I think it's got a lot to do with background and money I think as well, money must play a big part.

Here, Kelly expands on this idea that being working class is what she 'is' and that class is about 'heritage'. For Kelly, class is not something that people 'achieve', it is fundamental to who they are. Having come from a working class background and gone through higher education, Kelly is acutely aware, as her friend's lecturer said, that some may think this indicates a change of social class. But Kelly explicitly rejects this understanding of the way in which class works. Kelly is highlighting the complexity of understanding class identities for those said to have class-crossed having been 'successful' educationally. Furthermore, Kelly not only refutes that she will ever become middle class, she is also adamant that her own children will not be middle class. This strongly suggests that heritage is much more central to class for Kelly than one's occupation, however, Kelly then links class directly to money and thus contradicts her projections for her own children, who will definitely not be middle class in her eyes.

Social class and Kelly's developing professional identity

Kelly said she had always wanted to teach having taught the majorette troupe she joined aged eleven since she was just fifteen after she had realised the possibility of getting paid for doing something she enjoyed. Kelly's own education was also central to her decision to become a teacher and the type of teacher she initially wanted to become. Kelly attended an inner city school in what she defined as a 'deprived area', she said:

> …I was probably one of the only people who wanted to do well so, the teachers used to give extra school classes … so their support was absolutely unbelievable … There was a maths teacher … the class was really difficult and a few of the boys in there have now been in jail because I still live in that area and so I know what they've grown up into, and er they responded really well to her … whereas in other lessons, you could see it was basically come in the classroom, try to get it over with as quickly as possible and then back out again and I think from seeing it from the children's point of view, how that teacher's attitude, how transparent it is, you can see whether they care or don't care within five minutes I think, that's going to make me think about that more now that I'm starting to teach.

Thus for Kelly, her own education was positive in that she did well and was well supported, but in particular, it inspired her to be like one of the teachers that helped her and worked well with some children that she felt other teachers could not engage.

Kelly then attended a different school's sixth form to do her A Levels. This also made her more aware of both her classed identity and the classed nature of education. She said:

> …I really didn't like people's attitude towards people who came from more deprived areas, it was really, some of them had just sort of been closed off to the world and you know their parents had bought them a car for their seventeenth birthday and the ones that had been brought up into money and just, I'm just generalising here coz everybody wasn't like this, they just didn't appreciate things as much and expected it to be like, I think it's definitely a social thing and I thought for them to be so ignorant about other people because coming from a deprived area linked in their eyes automatically with being stupid. So from the outset I felt like I had something to prove and it was more, after a few months it was 'oh she's not actually stupid she's quite bright' and I felt that quite harshly when I went to sixth form because the teachers in the first school did warn me you know you come from [area of city Kelly was from] and when you get to the school in [area attended sixth form in], people from [area Kelly from] aren't thought of very highly but the head teacher was very inspirational … and tried to motivate the pupils by telling them what they had to offer and motivational talks, never let anybody ever tell you any different just because they've got more money and things like that…

Here, Kelly explicitly links her own educational experiences and the perceptions others had about her and those she had of others to social class. In particular, Kelly talks of being aware of the class prejudices she encountered. For instance, Kelly articulates the views that middle class others were often 'ignorant', choosing to associate class with intelligence, seeing people from where Kelly grew up as 'stupid'. Kelly talks of feeling that she had to 'prove' herself worthy of the educational establishments in which she found herself:

> ….it's sort of gone a step further each time so I go from a comprehensive in a rough part of [city from] to a sixth form in a better area, and with the, I wouldn't call it discrimination, it's not that harsh, but coz I'm from a rougher area, then from there I went to [a pre-1992, 'red brick'] University which is in my home city but all the people on my course, none of them were from [home city] and I felt that a lot of them, I mean I had to prove, it took a while for me to prove that you know I was entitled to be there, I am as intelligent as other people, erm mostly because of the accent because the connotations that go with that, and then erm from university to PGCE … and I just felt that sometimes people would be slightly you know, look down their nose until, now everyone is fine with me but initially it was, erm when I say something to prove, it's not quite as harsh as that but it took people a while to realise that I wasn't stupid, they sort of assume that you're stupid straight away … I think

because I do the Fast Track[9] as well erm and most of the people on that, I know accents aren't everything but most of them are very well spoken and I didn't think I'd get on the Fast Track because of, I've got a [city from] accent, a strong accent. So I was thinking that might stop me. When I go to interviews and things, I think that that will be a negative against it … it's always in my mind when I go to things like that. Whereas I think now, just now, these last few months, that's gradually gone away and I don't know whether when I start a new job it will come back, but when I've gone to my two placements, I haven't thought about it so I think I might have, it might have gone away in my mind … but it must be a confidence thing I think because when a few years ago I would think that somebody who spoke better than I did, was more intelligent and a better person whereas now I don't think that at all, I consider myself to be equal, on equal terms … I think I must have proved something to myself by now and got more confidence yeah I think it must be that.

Class for Kelly had been an active agent in her life and had shaped her perceptions of how she felt viewed by others, often resulting in her feeling second-rate, having to negotiate barriers and having to prove herself. However, Kelly then talked of recently having started to experience this differently having spent time in her placement schools. She talks of feeling she may actually have 'proved something' to herself as she now felt 'on equal terms' and more confident, after initially believing that she was less 'intelligent' than others. Kelly's main contact with class as such an active agent emerged whilst Kelly was going through the education system and finding herself amongst mostly middle class people, those different to her. The sense of class injustice that Kelly felt she experienced was directly influential on the type of teacher Kelly wanted to become. On why she felt drawn to inner city contexts, Kelly said:

…I think I feel I could make more of a difference and get stuck in and feel like I was doing something to help them and because I think a lot of teachers give up hope on them and say oh well they're never going to go anywhere because both their parents are in prison and you know things like that and sort of I've tried to keep an open mind and even if you can make slight differences to their life, probably, I know that sounds really clichéd but that's the reason why.

For Kelly, teaching initially represented an opportunity to address some class inequalities in that she felt she could appreciate the issues faced by children like those she went to school with and had seen the inspirational role teachers could have. Similarly, Kelly was very clear from the outset on her questionnaire that she did not

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[9] Fast Track was an enhancement to the PGCE programme which aimed to 'fast track' new teachers into school leaders. The programme meant a range of additional requirements and each member of the Fast Track programme had a five-year development programme to enable them to progress to leadership roles. Entrants needed to have at least a 2.1 degree or its equivalent.

want to teach in independent or grammar schools because she felt she would not 'fit in' due to her 'social class and place of birth' and not wanting to further feel like the class outsider, as she had done at college and university. Kelly also said she was not interested in: 'the pressure to get people through exams' but rather: 'helping people morally and socially in more difficult schools…' was her motivation.

Despite Kelly self-identifying as working class and her desire to teach in a school predominantly serving working class children, Kelly was reflexive about challenges she had faced but also why she had managed to do so well in the education system when many of her peers had not:

> …because I was probably, certainly on my mum's side, the first person to go to university and stuff, they've always given that support you know, but never without sounding patronising, they've never understood it to the extent that they've never been through it … they just supported whatever I decided to do …my dad was quite strict you know about homework and stuff and … mum was sort of you know as mums are, just let her do what she wants to do … and it just, that makes a difference to pupils whose mum and dad weren't there when they got home, either out doing work or out at work and stuff … it wasn't easy for me to slip into what everyone else was doing whereas those pupils that didn't have that parental support, they just got caught up in what was going on … it would have been so easy … like smoking cannabis and stuff you know behind the school and things like that … I don't really speak to any of them now but my friends at school would often, it would be fun to them to bring alcohol into the school but most of them were [from] one parent families and I remember one girl, her mum worked in a betting shop which was really long hours and her dad wasn't there and so she was going home to an empty house … I think I probably wouldn't have gone on with further education if maybe my parents weren't giving me that support … and there was never 'go out and get a job' whereas I know a lot of pupils in that area, when they got to 16, their mum and dad would say to them 'you need to go out and get a job because I want rent from you' erm and it was harder for the boys I think in that social scenario where if they went onto to further education, that was a big blow to their image so there was much more pressure on the boys…

Here Kelly is expressing that she felt she lacked the social capital to draw on to help her understand the education system. However, she also recognises herself as having levels of parental support that enabled her to get on well at school. Then Kelly starts to explore the types of issues that she feels act as a barrier for working class children to achieve and attain in schools, such as parental support, the need to obtain an income and peer pressure as to what is expected of young men in the community in which she grew up. In this way, Kelly is also referring to class relations as being gendered. For

Kelly then, her supportive parents and in particular, her strict father made it difficult for her to fall into this though she says: 'it would have been so easy' to go down this path had it not been for her strict upbringing.

Kelly therefore can be seen as viewing education and schooling as a classed phenomenon due to her own experiences and class injustices she feels she has encountered. Her decisions to teach and where to teach were also strongly shaped by this perspective and as such, Kelly's emerging professional identity as she started the PGCE were strongly shaped by class.

During the PGCE year, Kelly attended Drypool High as her first placement school, an 11-16 mixed sex comprehensive school with approximately 700 pupils on roll. According to Ofsted, a large number of the students come from areas of high deprivation and approximately one third are entitled to FSM. Only 15 per cent of pupils gained five or more GCSE passes at grade A*-C including English and Maths in 2005 and around 23 per cent of pupils had SEN (just under seven per cent with statements). For her second and third seven week placements, Kelly attended Daisywood Community School, also an 11-16 comprehensive with around 1200 pupils on roll at the time. In 2005, 38 per cent of pupils obtained five or more GCSE passes at grade A*-C including English and Maths and SEN was at just under 17 per cent of the total school population (with 2.5 per cent having a statement). The proportion of pupils eligible for FSM was below the national average and very few children came from ethnic minorities.

Drypool for Kelly was an enjoyable placement as it represented the type of school she wanted to work in and she said it was similar in context to her own school. However, Kelly's placement was marred by conflict within the school between staff and management and for Kelly, this highlighted that finding a well run and supportive school where she would feel enabled to do her job also had to be an important factor in feeling happy at work.

After initial concerns about going to Daisywood for fear of it being more 'academic', Kelly went on to really enjoy it, so much so, that it actually started to make her rethink her views about her ideal school type, saying: 'It was brilliant, really good, definitely

the type of school I'd like to work in'. Kelly described Daisywood as being 'one step up from Drypool' and said:

> …it's not as poor as the first school I was in but it's not in a really affluent area, it's just middle of the road, some from all types of social areas … [it] really attracts, I was going to say better children then but that wouldn't be right, erm more wealthy families…

In terms of differences between the pupils at each school, Kelly said:

> I see just a slight sort of change in the, sounds sort of strange, the honesty of the children. They're sort of a middle of the road type of school [Daisywood] and the kids there when they are being naughty they are aware of it and are a bit more intelligent about it whereas, they might be a bit more off-the-wall at Drypool but they are honest and down to earth and just feel that they are more open … I don't know if [that] sounds bad, but I just like it when they are open and honest and down to earth…

Here Kelly is drawing on the class differences within the schools talking of the background of the children who go and the differences in terms of the way in which the children go about being 'naughty'. In particular, she appears to attribute 'openness' to the more working class children as opposed to the 'intelligence' and 'awareness' of the middle class children. This was echoed elsewhere in Kelly's description of differences across the schools. In terms of which school she preferred, Kelly said:

> I think I felt like I made more difference at Drypool … so in that way, enjoyment wise erm, how rewarding it was, I would say Drypool but if I had to choose which place I would work in, it would probably be Daisywood because there's only so much difference you can make without support from the whole ethos of the school, you know the senior management…

Here we see Kelly's changing concerns about choosing a place to work, where feeling supported to be enabled to do her job replaced her strong desire to teach children only from a similar background to her own.

Kelly began to look for work around March time during her PGCE year, saying she was looking for: '...ones [schools] like Drypool or Daisywood'. She was invited for an interview for one post in a school not too dissimilar from Drypool in what Kelly described as a 'rough' area. Kelly did not get the job on account of being told she

would: 'be suited to a more academic school'. Kelly said this had: 'really surprised me …. because it was the total opposite to what everybody else had said since I've started training…' However, the week following her unsuccessful interview, Kelly was offered a post at Daisywood which she accepted, she said:

> …as soon as I started the training there, that was the one place I would love to work there because the department are really nice, supportive and friendly, and the school is a better school than I thought I'd start out in … it's got a nice mixture it's not middle to bottom it's top middle and bottom … I didn't want to be teaching in a school that was all top … so it's perfect for what I wanted to do.

On whether longer term, she still wanted to teach in an inner city context, she said:

> …less than what did because I didn't think I'd enjoy so much teaching. It sounds strange but I didn't think I'd enjoy as much as I do, students who are able to get top grades, I thought I'd find it a bit boring. But they just provide a challenge in different way which I didn't expect so I'm glad now that I had that opportunity to see because it has affected the schools I would have applied for. But I still have that thing of wanting to work with challenging pupils but I just enjoy more than I would those who are quite intelligent.

What is really interesting about Kelly then was that at the start of her journey towards becoming a teacher, she talked of her own experiences of education as equipping her with her desire to become a teacher and the type of teacher she wanted to become. However, by having such a positive placement at a more socially mixed school, Kelly re-evaluated her stance and was opened up to seeing how she liked the challenges other school contexts brought. For Kelly, Daisywood enabled her to also enjoy a positive staff atmosphere, conducive to her accepting the post. After obtaining this post, Kelly was asked to reflect back to her own educational experiences and how they had impacted on her views about teaching, she said:

> Probably a confidence thing. It didn't make me feel as confident when I started teaching and I didn't think I'd be able to go in a high achieving school and do well. I thought, I didn't think I'd be able to develop people's learning but I've learned how to do that and I'm quite confident in that now. It's helped, my education, in terms of behaviour, understanding exactly what backgrounds people might come from and that's definitely been a positive, and I'd prefer it that way around to as in if would have gone to a very high achieving school and not understood people's backgrounds and not understood how to speak to children who have behavioural difficulties…

Here, Kelly has reached a conclusion that her own 'classed' education had been very limiting on her confidence about choosing the types of schools she thought she could teach in. In this way, Kelly is once again addressing some of the 'injuries of class' she has suffered as a result of being working class, linking back to feelings of having to 'prove' herself worthy. Having had a positive placement at Daisywood, Kelly had gained that confidence and with this new confidence, had been opened up to new horizons, those she had initially feared had been too academic for her, the more 'middle class' settings.

Clare

Background

Clare, a white female, was 30 at the start of her Science PGCE. Clare is from an inner city area of a large northern city and prior to starting the PGCE, had worked in a pharmacy for seven years. Clare attended an 11-16 inner city comprehensive school followed by a sixth form college to do A Levels in languages, though according to Clare, she did not do so well. Around her mid-20s, Clare decided she would like to go to university to study Science so she completed an access course then attended a pre-1992 Northern university to complete her degree in Science, obtaining a 2:1. Clare became pregnant with her second child whilst studying for her degree which meant that it took four years to complete.

Classed identity

When Clare was growing up, she explained her mother worked in office administration and her father was, a 'jack of all trades' whom she had not seen since she was 17. On the initial questionnaire, Clare said she did not see herself as fitting into a class category, when asked why, she said:

> Hmm, no I think I'm lucky in that I can adapt to most people. I've got friends that are posh and friends that equally have never worked a day in their life. I just take people as people I don't really like the class thing … I don't like defining people, I mean, some of my friends do it, you know, 'I don't like her – she's full of her herself', they're talking about one particular friend who is very posh, very confident, very sure of herself but they see that as 'snobby' but I don't, I see it as she is very confident and sure of herself.

Clare therefore expresses a dislike for and rejection of the term class due to the negative connotations it holds saying:

> … I just see people really. One of my friends, erm one of my recent friends, she's a typical working class mum, she hasn't really held a job down, she's been living off benefits most of her life and a lot of my friends really hate that because they have had to work and they have struggled to get where they want to be and they hate people who can't be bothered to do anything. But, in the time I've met her, I see more than that, I see yes, she is doing that but she is quite intelligent. You can have a conversation with her about anything and she understands and because I've been through university as a mature student – she has now just started. So I've helped her to develop and now she is doing really well … You can see it's there and everybody generalises, you know people that live in that area are posh and people who live in that area are rough because it's a council estate or it is known to be rough. But, I don't see myself as in either of those classes.

Clare is expressing the way in which class labels infer prejudicial attitudes about those people labelled, with middle class meaning 'posh', 'snobby' and 'full of themselves' and working class meaning 'rough', not being intelligent and 'living off benefits'. Clare appears to understand the way class is used to shape people's perceptions of others and it is because of this that she rejects labeling people herself. Additionally, Clare also says she struggles to actually see herself as fitting into either middle or working class categories:

> My mum is very middle class minded. She was brought up on a council estate but she couldn't wait to escape and she saw herself as better than that. Whereas I choose, I bought my own house, but it's on the end of a council estate. I've no problems, my kids play with the kids from the estate and they equally play with the kids that live in the posh private houses that live down the road. I think it's, I don't see myself as belonging to either of the two groups, so yeah, I guess in the middle really … [I] don't class myself as middle class because I wasn't brought up with people like that so although I probably lived in a nicer area than a lot of people I went to school with, I didn't see myself as any different … I mean we never had any more money it was just the area we lived in, I mean my mum was actually quite poor because she'd been through a divorce so if anything, I had probably less than they did [laughs]… I don't really know where I fit really because I was brought up with people that were definitely working class and I was never any different to them but then I think I've always known that there's got to be more to life than that and I think that's because of the way I was brought up, probably more than anything, my mum she was, always worked hard to get where she was and I've done the same really.

Here, Clare expresses some of the complexity of her class upbringing. Attending an inner city school with children whom she described as 'working class' but having lived in a 'nicer' area meaning that although she never saw herself as different, she felt some others did, though Clare felt she may possibly have been even worse off financially. Therefore Clare does have a distinct set of ideas about class around access to money, where one lives, where one attends school but also, about different outlooks on life.

Social class and Clare's developing professional identity

From the outset, Clare had a definite idea of the type of school she wanted to go into, that of an 11-16 comprehensive in an inner city area because:

> I think because I came through the system and I mean I failed it first time around totally you know, it was never really pushed and you know I think it is different now, I think it is, people are expected more of these days but I mean er nobody I know went to university, that's how uncommon it was er in the area where I am [from] … So I sort of feel that you know, from coming from that sort of background, if I could say to them you know what, I came from here and I did alright that hopefully it can give them a bit of incentive too … I have been really passionate about education for years, I've done summer schools for about four years now with kids … it's definitely the inner city kids, I think you know I think they need it more, they need to see people coming from that background … they think teachers are posh [laughs]. I don't know, I think I'd get more rewards doing that than working in a school where the kids are going to succeed anyway coz they've got that sort of family background.

Therefore, although Clare does not explicitly tie herself to a class label or identity, her motivation to become a teacher and the type of school she wanted to work in, are tied to her own experiences of education/growing up that appear to be classed. This ties Clare to a very specific understanding of the type of teacher she wants to become and the type of school she wants to work in, a working class school, with working class kids.

However, Clare's decision to want to work in such contexts was also mirrored by a fear of stepping into educational contexts she was unfamiliar with. Clare said she 'nearly cried' and talked of being 'devastated' when there was some talk during the PGCE of her going into a selective grammar school. Below, Clare reflects on this:

> …I think in some schools, I mean probably maybe I'm a bit scared too because I'm not used to them and I'd probably be like urghh, if I were sent to a private school I'd be like oh what do I do here [laughs] and I'd probably be worried about dealing with parents and things, so I think maybe, some of it's me too ... I mean the sort of parents I'm going to come across in an inner city school I know what to expect, I know how to deal with them coz they're the people I live with, the people I've been brought up with, the people who are my friends … and it's my culture really whereas if I was to go to a private school then I think maybe I'd feel that I wasn't good enough to be teaching their children coz I've not got the right accent, I've not got the right background…

Here, Clare is explaining that due to her classed experiences (though she does not name them as such), she only feels confident in certain classed educational settings (the inner city school), that she is familiar with (and is her 'culture'). She also stresses that she is fearful of the 'Other' (the middle class independent/ grammar schools) with a sense of feeling that she 'wasn't good enough' and did not have the 'right accent' or the 'right background'. This topic was returned to later in the research where she linked this dislocation to independent schools directly to class differences, she said:

> It's probably a class thing, I'm not part of that class and I think I probably would have done really badly in a place like that and I don't think that my personality would have fitted in quite the same …looking at people who work at [placement schools and where got job] I get on well with each and every one of them, they are all from the local area … my mentor at Parkfield lives across the road from my mum…

Clare is therefore also directly linking the class of teachers to the type of context in which they work suggesting that independent schools are the domain of middle class teachers and inner city schools the domain of working class teachers, people like her. Thus, though Clare does not like the labels of class, they help her understand the differences she observes within schools and across teachers. They also help her to implicitly locate herself as working class.

During the PGCE year, Clare attended Parkfield School for her first and third seven week placements. Parkfield is a large 11-16 mixed sex comprehensive with over 1500 pupils. The school has a much higher than average number of pupils with EAL (approximately one-third) and in 2005, approximately 22 per cent of pupils had SEN (around three per cent with statements). The percentage of pupils gaining five or more GCSEs in 2005 at grade C or above (including English and Maths) was 27%. The attainment of students on entry is well below average and the overall social-economic

circumstance of the students is well below average with eligibility for FSM also being above the national average.

For her contrasting placement, Clare attended Riverston High, an 11-16 mixed sex comprehensive which again is a larger than average school with over 1250 pupils. In 2005, the percentage of pupils gaining their five or more GCSEs at grade C or above including English and Maths stood at 24 per cent with SEN at 55 per cent (with almost four per cent with statements). The school is made up of approximately one third of pupils from white backgrounds with roughly two-thirds from ethnic minorities. The number of pupils eligible for FSM was almost 40 per cent, well above the national average.

Both Parkfield and Riverston fitted directly into the type of school context that Clare wanted to teach in. She explained that she had directly requested 'inner city' school placements on the PGCE because she knew this was where she was wanted to be and said she did not see the point in being placed elsewhere. Clare 'loved' both placements though she slightly preferred Riverston as it brought her into contact with different cultures (with a largely Muslim school population), something never previously experienced growing up and attending school in a predominantly white area, she said:

> I always assumed I'd never have something in common with someone from a different religion, or someone who was quite religious … I'm not religious. I don't believe in it so I didn't think I'd have anything in common with someone who was very religious, and yet, I found that there is a lot more in common I'd thought and I've made some really good friends, so it's been a positive experience that way.

Clare felt that the two schools were very similar though she felt the higher proportion of Asian Muslim children and the Muslim community at Riverston impacted positively on behaviour (suggesting the close-knit, Muslim community and some Muslim teachers meant many children were frightened their parents would find out if they were naughty). She also said:

> … I did find the pupils that we tended to have more problems with were of white origin. Which, I was really surprised, I didn't expect there to be a racial difference but from the evidence you saw the ones you had more trouble with were with the white British kids.

Thus for Clare, her non-religious identity had created the impression that that she would not have anything in common with 'others' that did not share her own outlook or culture (despite Clare's own claims earlier that she did not recognise class labels for instance, that she could get on with anybody and only saw 'people'). In addition, having only experienced white working class pupils (from her own schooling and experiences in schools prior to starting the PGCE), Clare was surprised that there were observable differences in behaviour between white British and Asian Muslim working class children. This tells us that for Clare, her eyes have been opened up to understanding that class and ethnicity intersect in complex ways in producing pupil identities at the school. It also demonstrates that the experiences novice teachers have whilst on the PGCE have the ability to disrupt pre-existing understandings of both education and of class (as well as ethnicity).

Half way through the PGCE year, Clare obtained a teaching post at Bamford School, an 11-16 mixed sex comprehensive for around 950 pupils serving a community with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage with approximately 35 per cent of pupils eligible for FSM. The school is predominantly made up of white British pupils though ethnic minority numbers were rising. In 2005, the number of pupils with SEN was around 33 per cent (just under four per cent with statements) and 19 per cent of pupils gained five or more A*-C grade GCSEs including English and Maths. The school had only come out of special measures twelve months prior to Clare starting to work there though Clare said the official view of the school was as 'improving'. She said of the school:

> It's in an area where, free school meals are quite high so it's got a lot of poverty there and erm there's well, a lot of low achievement basically from previous years… It's the sort of place I really really wanted to work in and I totally landed on my feet because they've been at rock bottom really I guess, I've come in and the staff are striving so hard to improve it … it's everything I said I wanted...

Once again, Bamford directly fitted Clare's 'ideal' school type. Clare did not formally apply for the position at Bamford but rather, Bamford's Head of Science had been at a meeting with Clare's mentors from her two placement schools when her mentor from Riverston expressed regret that she had no vacancy to offer Clare. After this, her mentor from Parkfield also highlighted how capable Clare was, prompting Bamford's

Head of Science to ask whether the other schools would mind if they approached Clare from which they offered her a job after an interview. Clare had only formally applied for one other post at a slightly more socially mixed school but had left straight after interview as she knew it was not for her.

Clare loved working at Bamford and after only a year of working there, she was applying for an assistant head of department position. Clare talked of the way in which she liked to make learning fun and was often 'told off' by other staff for rowdy class responses to the games she incorporated into her classes to help the children learn such as 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' or 'Play your Card Right' when the kids were:

> …shouting out 'higher' or 'lower' and you know I'm like encouraging them [laughs].

Clare said the area Bamford was located in was 'disadvantaged' and widely regarded as a 'rough'. Clare also talked of caring deeply about the children she taught:

> …when I first got there I thought oh my god coz a lot of them do look quite unkempt and they look like, a lot of them do look very uncared for, you know their clothes are not fitting properly and their hair and the cleanliness of some of them, they just don't look well looked after but they come from big families a lot of them where there's like eight or ten siblings living in the same house … That's something I really noticed when I first started there but I don't seem to notice that as much now because I've got used to them but I think there are kids like that that have got no relationship with their parents at all and they can be quite difficult to deal with because there's no repercussions you know if you do make a phone call home … so they tend to be the harder ones but the majority are lovely and they are quite helpful, they'll do anything for you, they are, they're really sweet…

Clare explained that the school had a significant issue with attendance and that she had gone out on visits with the school social worker, often finding kids sat at home 'watching telly' with their parents though Clare said that on the whole '90 per cent' of parents were supportive. Clare said there were many parallels with the school she attended though often at Bamford, the children's behaviour was slightly worse and the children at Bamford were more open, for instance, Year 7s telling staff they were 'going for a smoke'. However, though Clare loved working at Bamford, she had some reservations about the longevity and sustainability of this:

...at the moment I'm enjoying it and I've got loads of enthusiasm and loads of energy for the job and I think that's great but ... you see it with a lot where they're getting a bit fed up with it of battling with the students all the time coz it is hard work you know because the planning that you have to do to keep the lessons interesting and to keep everybody on track and to chase up poor behaviour, to chase up attendance and everything ... I think, the time to move will be when I start getting like 'oh I can't be bothered with this, why am I doing this again?'...

Clare also expressed reluctance to talk deterministically about the way in which many working class children often did not do so well in education and said parents were crucial but she also expressed regret about the reproductive nature of disadvantage for those who do not engage with education.

With regard to the 'official' discourse on working class schools, that of 'SfCC', Clare said both of her placement schools 'classed themselves as challenging'. When asked what this term actually meant to Clare, she said:

I would say, probably think behavioural wise. I think when someone says a challenging school it means behaviour ... Watch them like a hawk basically, making sure they are not turning the gas taps on. That's what I'd see as being a challenging school, but for me, it would mean doing quite the opposite...

Clare is saying that 'challenging' is generally seen as a euphemism for poor behaviour but for her personally, this is not the most 'challenging' aspect of teaching. For Clare, her main concern was about sufficient subject knowledge, one of the things making Clare steer away from private, grammar, sixth form and high achieving state schools:

...I'm still a bit concerned about subject knowledge because I think that in the schools I've worked in subject knowledge hasn't been a problem because you're lucky if you can get them sat down long enough to teach them anything sometimes. Erm, but I don't know. I think it would have been more of a test [to go to more 'academic' school]...

Again, this may be perceived as evidence of Clare's classed sense of self as not being able to fit in, perform, or be good enough in middle class educational settings. Thus for Clare, 'challenging' would mean a middle rather than working class setting. Interestingly, Clare (like both Joe and Kelly to a lesser extent) also positions the PGCE as being the class 'Other' when she says:

…I talk to people but I haven't made very many life long friends and that is not like me because usually wherever I go, I usually pick up a few people along the way, so I think a lot people on the course have a very different background, from the ones I've spoken to. I'm not saying I dislike them and I am older as well so that doesn't help.

Once again, Clare talks of the perception of herself as not fitting in because of the difference between her own background and many of those on the PGCE course which is particularly interesting since Clare did not recognise herself as classed. However, her experiences and the way in which she details her sense of belonging to particular educational contexts and her dislocation from others infer that class was in fact an important shaping factor in her motivations in and around teaching.

Section Three

Introduction to Section Three

The final section of thesis has three main purposes. The first is to draw out the common themes that emerged from the data presented in Section Two. Chapter Six therefore pulls these together and presents them on a theme-by-theme basis. However, some of these themes require further discussion and explanation in order to fully understand the dynamic nature of class on the emerging professional identities of novice teachers. Thus, the second purpose of this section is to explore some of the explanations we might begin to offer. Chapter Seven therefore attempts to put forward some possible explanations which seek to theorise what may be happening.

The final purpose of this section is to explore what this study means and what we might consider its contribution towards understanding novice teachers and the influence that their social class identity has on them as they become secondary school teachers. Chapter Eight aims to do this by summarising the key findings and then exploring what the wider implications of these may be. In particular, these implications are considered in light of ITET in England since this is where novice teachers start out on the journey towards becoming a teacher.

Chapter Six

Common Themes

The overarching aim of this piece of research was to explore the influence of a social class identity on the emerging professional identity of novice teachers. The main challenge within this was to examine whether or not a classed identity had any important shaping influence on the process of becoming a teacher and if so, in what ways.

In the previous two chapters, six of the eleven case studies from this study were presented. A rich account for each of the six was offered to enable readers to see the diversity of experience and the subjective stories as told by each novice teacher. This chapter looks at the common themes that emerged from the stories of all eleven novice teachers though the discussion of these themes below will once again use the six case studies presented in Chapters Four and Five to exemplify these.

Class matters

Based on an analysis of all the novice teachers in this study, it became clear that social class *matters* in the process of becoming a teacher. Not only did class matter, it appeared to play a central role in helping the novice teachers to make sense of teaching and the type of teacher they were hoping to become. However, how this worked in practice plays out differently for different individuals and is characterised by both complexity and contradiction.

As you will recall, this study sought to situate teaching as a form of 'class work'. The data collected reinforced this view, with almost all the novice teachers positioning teaching, at least implicitly, as 'class work'. However, the practical workings of this played out in some interesting though complicated ways. How novice teachers approached this was crucial and of key importance in this was the role their classed identities played, both in terms of being disrupted by and disruptive of becoming a teacher.

This was a key theme and will be discussed more fully in Chapter Seven. However, in brief, the central tenet of this argument relates to the way in which becoming a teacher and a novice teachers' class identity creates troubled territory. There are different ways to handle this and what emerged from the data is that some novice teachers seem better able to handle their classed identities in light of their realisation that teaching can be positioned as classed and may involve the crossing of class boundaries.

The complexities of constructing a classed identity

The novice teachers in this study defined their class identities (including a disassociation with class) in a variety of ways. As noted in Chapter Two, the idea of a classed identity is multifaceted and as a result, is highly complex. This was evident across the sample of novice teachers in this study. As the discussion of methods in Chapter Three demonstrated, all the novice teachers were asked directly about whether they felt they (or their family) belonged to a social class, initially via a questionnaire and then later discussed in more detail face-to-face. The sample was of course handpicked and included a range of responses to this question to ensure the sample included both those who identified with class (as middle or working class) as well as those who did not. In order to discuss the complexities involved, it is necessary to consider those who identified with having a class identity and those who did not separately.

Self-identifiers' constructions of a classed identity

In terms of all of those across the sample who self identified as having a social class identity, Maguire's (2001) three aspects of a classed identity, i.e., an 'embodied', 'cultural-experiential' and 'educationally-constructed' identity were all drawn upon in describing their class association. Therefore, Kelly, Joe and Lucy featured here all could be seen to draw on these understandings. These three aspects were not mutually exclusive as often, the novice teachers drew on more than one of these. For instance, both Kelly and Joe strongly identified as working class and drew on discourses which cut across all three aspects of a classed identity that Maguire identified. For Kelly and Joe, 'being' working class was deeply embodied, was based on their experiences and culture as well as being brought home to them through their own educational experiences. However, what Kelly and Joe also articulate is that 'being' working class

is about having a particular value system, a way of viewing the world. This value system is tied to a discourse about the social inequalities in society and their perception of the subordination of the working classes.

Maguire's aspects of a classed identity also applied to those who self-identified as middle class. However, what was interesting is that a cultural-experiential and an educationally-constructed identity were clearly evident but there was less drawing upon notions of being middle class as 'embodied'. For instance, rarely did the middle class novice teachers who self-identified this way refer to their accent as a sign of their 'middle classness' in the way working class self-identifiers did. Indirectly, those who identified as middle class also alluded to a value system and outlook on life that is attached to notions of middle classness. This often focused on the notion of working hard and aspirations (in life and in education for example).

Interestingly, the three aspects of class identity that Maguire identified sometimes brought to the surface tensions about classed identity, particularly when it came to describing how others may choose to position them in class terms. In particular, the main tension for Joe and Kelly, as self-defined working class individuals, came from how others might construct them as middle class via an educationally-constructed identity. This came out of the perception that they both felt others might now deem them as middle class because they had attended university and were becoming teachers. Both Kelly and Joe felt this did not negate their sense of class as embodied (including accent for both and ethnicity for Joe), cultural-experiential (e.g., poverty and/or where they grew up) or their value system. In addition, both Kelly and Joe resisted notions of social mobility and having become middle class with their own versions of their educationally-constructed selves that they had done well in education but that they had had to fight harder to get there.

Such tensions were not so present for those who self-identified as middle class, having mostly identified their parents as also being middle class based on the three types of identity Maguire described above (except for Lucy who drew on her mother's working class background but this was not regarded as problematic in defining herself as middle class given Lucy's own self proclaimed 'almost embarrassingly middle class' upbringing).

It is also important to add that there was active resistance from both Kelly and Joe about the negative stereotypes in the representation (Skeggs, 1997) of working-classness. In particular, both Kelly and Joe perceived they had been looked down upon by people from middle class backgrounds (e.g., the association of being working class to mean 'inferior' and 'stupid'). This was then associated with forms of 'in-verse othering' of middle class cultures by Kelly and Joe, for instance as being 'small-minded', 'ignorant' and having had it 'easy'.

Non-identifiers – ambivalence, confusion and resistance

What further discussions of class with these novice teachers who initially said they did not see themselves as belonging to a social class revealed was that, the discourses and the complexities of this self-placement were linked tightly into available class discourses. For some non-identifiers in the sample, it was linked to tensions between the three aspects of class described by Maguire. For example, some of the novice teachers across the sample talked about tensions between their family background including parents' education, work and/or their own education versus living in a predominantly working class area and/or liking what they felt were 'working class' cultural activities (described as watching TV and football for instance) versus 'middle class activities' (like going to the theatre).

Therefore, non-identification with or ambivalence towards class (as discussed in Chapter Two) within this sample was also broadly attributable to the types of confusion resulting from social change that Savage et al. (2001) discussed. The complexity around knowing exactly where one would fit was a key factor in a disassociation from class, particularly for novice teachers who felt they had something of a 'hybrid' (Maguire, 2001; Lucey et al. 2003) class identity. What is also important to add to the work of Savage et al. around this theme, is the influence of the discourse of classlessness on the public psyche about social class. For instance, Matt several times touches on this discourse as a way to explain his ambivalence to the concept of class. In addition, many of the self-identifiers described above (and in Appendix C) also drew on discourses of classlessness to position their own thoughts about class.

However, there were often deeper reasons that led some people to distance themselves from the explicit language of class which need to be understood more broadly. The

work of Skeggs (1997) around the representation of class helps to articulate this. Both Simon and Clare were reluctant to use labels of class to describe themselves. This was because of the perceived images that class labels had for them. For instance, Clare struggled to place herself neatly into class because of complexity around knowing where she would fit. However, the main reason for her rejection of class, as we saw in her case study, was due to the negative connotations associated with class labels. A reminder of what Clare said is:

> …I think I'm lucky in that I can adapt to most people. I've got friends that are posh and friends that equally have never worked a day in their life. I just take people as people I don't really like the class thing … I don't like defining people, I mean, some of my friends do it, you know, 'I don't like her – she's full of her herself', they're talking about one particular friend who is very posh, very confident, very sure of herself but they see that as 'snobby' but I don't, I see it as she is very confident and sure of herself … one of my recent friends, she's a typical working class mum, she hasn't really held a job down, she's been living off the benefits most of her life and a lot of my friends really hate that because they have had to work and they have struggled to get where they want to be and they hate people who can't be bothered to do anything … You can see it's there and everybody generalises, you know people that live in that area are posh and people who live in that area are rough because it's a council estate or it is known to be rough. But, I don't see myself as in either of those classes.
>
> (Clare)

Here, Clare is rejecting using class herself due to the stereotypes in representations of being working and middle class and she draws out what these stereotypes are. Simon similarly does not like to place himself in a social class category because of what he feels the label of 'middle class' might imply:

> Well, I'm probably about as middle class as they come. I don't know, I just felt a bit weird, I don't feel particularly affiliated as social class, but I can see a lot people probably do. In terms of accent and playing rugby or whatever, people sort, make kind of, you know … but like I don't feel particularly affiliated …[I] wouldn't like to put anything down without any context.
>
> (Simon)

Therefore Simon felt that others would be likely to perceive him as middle class because of his 'embodied' and 'cultural-experiential' identity. However, he rejected this based on a lack of affiliation to a particular set of middle class values. He reinforced this view below when he explained he was rejecting this based on a particular view of the middle class:

> I just like, there's load of middle class kids in Willow [one of his PGCE placement schools] and you can probably see the parents fashioning them to be lawyers or whatever it is what you want to be…
>
> (Simon)

Thus, ambivalence to class in this study could seemingly be interpreted in a number of ways. For instance, Skeggs' understanding of representation in particular helps to see how and why both working and middle class individuals may reject class labels. Therefore, ambivalence to class may also be seen through the lens of being an active resistance to class labeling and class stereotypes as well as a resistance to being labeled more generally in terms of 'whatever you say I am, that's what I'm not' (see Matt for instance). This type of rejection of class may be seen as indicative of wider assertions of individuality (highlighted by Savage et al. (2001) as a major reason why many disassociate with applying class labels to themselves) and an unwillingness to be described in relation (or feel connected) to groups and communities in wider society. As Chapter Two argued, the power of such arguments may also been seen as intimately tied to the discourse of classlessness discussed earlier.

The above section has talked about a classed identity as abstracted from the process of becoming a teacher. The dynamic relationship between a classed identity (and the construction of that) and an emerging professional identity will be returned to later in this chapter before being discussed at length in Chapter Seven.

Being ordinary/normal and the 'Other'

There was evidence within the sample of social class being used in association with understandings of ordinariness (as per debates between Payne and Grew (2005) and Savage et al. (2001) discussed in Chapter Two). Across the sample, there was an agreed understanding that what was ordinary, and therefore 'normal' in relation to values, social/moral outlook and education, was middle class. Lucy, a highly reflexive novice teacher, demonstrated this when she said:

> ...maybe one of the things about describing yourself as middle class means that you can kind of imagine that you're just sort of fairly, maybe it's just more non-descript or something...
>
> (Lucy)

Interestingly the working class novice teachers did not present their own working class backgrounds as 'ordinary' in the sense that most drew on discourses of having felt 'othered' in terms of their class backgrounds. As discussed elsewhere in this chapter, this often resulted in forms of what can be termed 'inverse-othering' of middle class cultures as being morally lacking. This understanding of middle class cultures, as seen above, was also offered by Simon to explain his lack of affiliation to what he perceived to be a form of self-interested, pushy middle class values.

Contradictions

Constructing a class identity then is territory fraught with contradictions that often emanate from the complexities of defining classes and knowing exactly where one fits neatly in class terms (due to mixed class parentage, the contradictions between where one lives and their cultural interests etc.). Contradictions also emerged as a common theme within this study and often originated from the confusion about when somebody who has been 'successful', or in other words, socially mobile, ceases being working class and *becomes* middle class.

Kelly demonstrates this point when she talked of the way social class was about a way of being and that it was not something to be 'earned' and was instead about 'heritage'. However Kelly then went on to talk about money as being an important feature of class but refused to believe that becoming a teacher would mean her own children would ever be considered as middle class. Thus Kelly's use of both money and heritage highlighted some contradictions in that if class is about heritage, then her children maybe will never be middle class. However, if it is about money, occupation and status, then her children may well be viewed, at least by outsiders, as middle class. This raises an interesting question at the heart of the debates around class – at what stage do people 'lose' their working class heritage, if they do at all? Of course, this thesis is certainly not implying there is an answer to this question but if Kelly's views are accurate and that heritage alone matters, then surely, as we saw earlier, Lucy's mother's working class background would mean her heritage could also be viewed as working class. This demonstrates further the complexities of class and how these complexities are interpreted differently by different people.

Explicit discourses around class are also often an emotive and heightened area. As a result, sometimes class can be raw to discuss, especially when feelings of social disadvantage and advantage form the basis of an individual's sense of who they are. For instance, Joe drew on contradictory notions when he simultaneously positioned his own (working class) value set as being concerned with 'humanity', 'humility' and 'compassion' whilst feeling 'quietly superior' and 'special' compared to his middle class counterparts.

In addition, there were also contradictions in Joe's account of wanting to become the type of teacher that can help address educational disadvantage through having a shared background but yet not wanting to teach in the type of school he himself attended due to the tough daily work this involves.

Another important contradiction seems to be the way in which the middle class non-identifiers may often know and/or accept that they are middle class (or certainly would be perceived as middle class by others) but simultaneously reject that label, as is clearly the case with Simon.

Subjectivity v economic, social and discursive positioning

Before moving on to explore the other themes and findings that emerged out of this study, it is important to return to the work of Skeggs (1997). In her study of working class women, Skeggs said:

> I identify their positioning in economic, social and discursive relations *not* their subjectivity (Skeggs, 1997: 165 *emphasis* in original).

In this study, it also became necessary to consider the social class of the eleven novice teachers in terms of 'economic, social and discursive relations' as well as their subjectivity. This is because even though explicit class labels were rejected by some novice teachers to describe themselves, like Savage (2000) and Kirk (2002) suggested, all of the novice teachers told subjective stories that were deeply classed.

Four of the novice teachers featured in this study indicated that they did not feel they belonged to a social class, as discussed above. However, it was possible to position all

eleven in class terms via understanding their economic, social and discursive relations (although this was not always straightforward). As the above has indicated, there were a number of inter-related reasons why the novice teachers in this study chose not to identify with class. Appendix D features a summary of all eleven novice teachers which includes both their self-identified position on class and their position based on social, economic and discursive relations.

In terms of the six novice teachers featured in Chapters Four and Five, Kelly and Joe self-identified as working class and Lucy self-identified as middle class. In terms of their disclosures during the interviews, their economic, social and discursive positioning within this research would confirm these subjective positions.

Matt, Simon and Clare did not indicate they felt they belonged to a social class but based on their economic, social and discursive disclosures, it was possible to position Simon and Matt as middle class and Clare as working class. Not only did their disclosures make it possible to position them economically, socially and discursively, as above, it became possible to understand why they disassociated themselves with class. This will be further explored in Chapter Seven.

Class identity as cross-cut by other social identities

As argued in the introductory chapter, the remit of this study was to focus on class identity. In addition, it made clear that other aspects of social identity would not be explicitly explored despite recognition that class was always cross-cut by other social identity features (Bennett et al., 2009; Reay, 2008a; Gillborn and Mizra, 2000). However, it must be stressed here that gender and ethnicity were key aspects of the novice teachers' identities within this study. For instance, Joe's working class identity was heavily shaped by his Afro-Caribbean background. Clare similarly refers to the way in which her experiences growing up in a predominantly white 'working class' community, in a secular family, shaped her perceptions of who she felt she would be able to have something in common with. Kelly also talked of the way in which her class identity, played out differently for her as a female than it did for young working class men from the area she was from, where the gendered nature of class pressures were evident. Thus, whilst the detail of these intersections cannot be done justice to here, it nevertheless sensitises us to understanding they do cross-cut class.

The importance of class in describing the social world

Class discourses were drawn on by all of the novice teachers within this sample to describe the social world around them, the schools they had their placements and found employment in, the pupils attending those schools and the communities they were located in.

Class discourses fell into two main types, the first being where class was referred to explicitly and the second being where the 'c' word was not mentioned and instead a whole range of other factors were drawn upon which can be seen as euphemising class. This was in support of the findings of Payne and Grew (2005) and their detailed outline about the ways in which class can be referred to without ever mentioning the 'c' word (see Chapter Two).

Interestingly, most of the novice teachers used explicit class discourses (i.e., named as class), including those who were reluctant to place themselves in class categories. This supports the views of Savage et al. (2001) and in addition Morley's (1997) argument that people find it difficult to understand their own position in 'class struggles' or their own agency in wider social (class) structures.

For instance, Clare did not like the labels of class and refused to place herself in a class for this reason, yet in describing the world around her, she used phrases like 'she's a typical working class mum' and 'I was brought up with people that were definitely working class'. Matt, also used explicit class discourses even though he generally refuted the label and was ambivalent towards class for instance saying:

> ….there just seemed a bigger class divide, not that you can talk of class divides anymore but there seemed to be a bigger class divide at Bessingbrook but Gordesly they're all just upper class…
>
> (Matt)

Social class and becoming a teacher

All the novice teachers positioned as middle class (either subjectively and/or via economic, social and discursive relations) talked of having close family members who were teachers. However, though many of these novice teachers talked of being

actively warned off teaching by the teachers/past teachers they knew, this social capital helped them to make decisions about becoming a teacher. In particular, seeing people they knew well and respected, having enjoyable and rewarding careers in teaching, had opened up this as a possible career option for themselves.

By contrast, none of the novice teachers in this study positioned as working class (either subjectively and/or via economic, social and discursive relations) had any relatives or close friends who were or had been teachers. However, in the majority of these cases, the motivation to become teachers appeared tied to understandings of their classed experiences both more broadly and in relation to their own schooling. This will be discussed in more detail below.

In addition, another classed discourse that emerged amongst some of the middle class novice teachers was the idea of going into teaching to 'give something back' to society. This idea is strongly situated around the perception of having been privileged in some way. For instance, both Simon and Lucy talk about feeling that they have been privileged socially and educationally and therefore feel entering into teaching (particularly in the state sector), was about giving something back.

The desire to replicate one's own positive school experience (or to aim to be like a particular teacher) was also common across the sample.

In summary, there were six main (though certainly not mutually exclusive) reasons offered to explain the decision to become a teacher. These were:

1. To find a rewarding career/job
2. To replicate one's own positive education (including inspiration from a particular teacher/s)
3. To remedy perceptions of a negative educational experience
4. To build on existing personality/skills base (e.g., previous experiences of helping people, good at explaining things)
5. To address inequities either experienced first hand or aware of in the education system/society
6. 'To give something back' having had a 'privileged' education

Therefore, as discussed in Chapter Two around teacher identity, there was a sense that becoming a teacher was intricately tied into their biographies and identities. As such, the teaching 'self' is more than merely a 'situated' self but draws on the very essence of the novice teachers' 'core' identity. Moreover, not only do these reasons draw on their core identities, the classed nature of these is ever present in several of the motivations to teach listed above.

Kelchtermans & Vanderberghe's (1994: 52-4) discussion of 'critical incidents', 'critical persons' and 'critical phases' also comes in useful to understand the motivation of becoming a teacher. Implicated in these are also many classed aspects. For instance, Kelly, Joe and Clare who had a working class schooling and wanted to work in the same classed contexts, could have their own schooling described as a 'critical phases'. For Simon, the influence of his half-brother, also having had a privileged education and teaching in an inner city state school could thus be seen as a 'critical person'. Each of the novice teachers across the sample can be seen as having a 'critical' point of some kind which helps to understand their motivations to teach and many of these, whether directly or indirectly, are linked to class. This is because many draw on past life experiences and are classed in relation to the types of contexts they want to work in and their reasoning behind this.

Social class and the type of school novice teachers wanted to teach in
The novice teachers' own schooling was an important shaping influence on discussions about the type of teacher they wanted to become and the type of school (with the type of children) they wanted to teach in. However, this was not straightforwardly working class backgrounds meant working class schools and vice versa with middle class teachers. But, many of the novice teachers did talk about wanting to work in schools just like the one they attended themselves as pupils. Mostly, this was represented via a discussion of their own enjoyable experiences at school and the desire to work as teachers in these enjoyable contexts.

However, for Joe, Kelly and Clare, those positioned as working class here, this was tied to a conscious decision to teach children who were similar to them and for whom education was not a natural or taken-for-granted venture. In this way, the discourses they drew on inferred a sense of class injustice, or class inequalities, that they were

hoping to address, despite some contradictions in the case of Joe as discussed above. As such, their motivations to teach in particular schools were classed. This is not to say that this meant they had not had enjoyable educational experiences themselves. On the contrary, Kelly and Joe both talked about having experienced first hand teachers who were extremely positive and inspirational. Joe for example had explained about an inspirational teacher who told him: 'Joe, you're going to struggle in life' explaining that as a young black man, he would have to work harder so as not to allow this to hold him back. Kelly also said:

> …because the teachers in the first school did warn me you know you come from [area of city Kelly was from] and when you get to the school in [area attended sixth form in], people from [area Kelly from] aren't thought of very highly but the head teacher was very inspirational … and tried to motivate the pupils by telling them what they had to offer and motivational talks never let anybody ever tell you any different just because they've got more money and things like that…
>
> (Kelly)

Interestingly, in referring to the positive teachers who influenced them to become teachers, both gave examples of teachers who had brought home to them that the world was an unfair place and as working class young people (and a young black working class male in Joe's case), life would be in some ways harder for them.

Simon also had a sense of class injustice, though not expressed in such an explicit way as Kelly, Joe and Clare. As a reminder, in being asked why he wanted to teach in an inner city comprehensive school, Simon said:

> I think that in terms of education, issues that are played out, a lot of the challenging things around socio-economic issues, these are the sort of issues I would like to work with. Comprehensive because I feel that I have been what you would say quite privileged in my personal education and I would like to give a bit back as it were … I'm in danger of sounding a bit clichéd but y'know the problems of drug abuse, real poverty, violence, underachievement in education, and it's something I would like to contribute to…
>
> (Simon)

Therefore, Simon is choosing to work in a classed context vastly different to the one he grew up and was educated in. Though class is not named, Simon talks about poverty, social problems and educational 'underachievement' which can be

specifically linked to issues of urban, working class communities and schools. Simon's motivation to teach in this context in part came from having a half-brother who had chosen to do this. Thus, Simon was able to draw on available social capital of a teacher who he knew very well who had actively sought out work in a social context distinctly different to his own.

Unlike Clare, Joe and Kelly, for Simon there was a sense of stepping outside of his own class world rather than being committed to teach within it. Simon also recognised the privileges inherent within his own social and educational experiences. There was, however, a sense of pride attached to this stepping outside of his own class background to teach in the most challenging types of schools. In some ways, this enabled Simon to gain a certain amount of status as a result of not taking the 'easy option' and reproducing his class privilege.

By way of contrast to the others discussed above, Matt talked about being open to teaching context throughout, despite saying if pushed to choose between schools at the two ends of the spectrum in terms of behaviour, he would choose the more challenging schools but expressing this as about personal fulfilment and avoiding boredom. In class terms, Matt's non-identification with a classed identity can be seen as trying to maintain a sense of openness to match his being 'not bothered' about where he taught. This will be returned to in Chapter Seven as it demonstrates an important point about the way in which class identities interact with becoming a teacher.

From the outset, Lucy talked of tensions generated from her privileged though highly enjoyable educational experiences with regard to thinking about where she would like to teach. Specifically, Lucy talks of feeling she ought to give something back (by entering the state sector) because she feels she is guided by what she terms 'socialist principles'. However she also felt her own education in the independent sector was fulfilling and that being a teacher in these contexts would be highly enjoyable and this creates tensions for Lucy. There is a sense of class guilt attached to Lucy's reasoning although she was reflexive throughout about these tensions as being real to her. As a reminder, she said:

I think it's really difficult because there's the kind of, there's a real pull between the idealist in me and the kind of crusading teacher which is horrible as well and you're kind of thinking you've got to be realistic but you know, part of you thinks yeah I want to go make a difference and be constructively useful somewhere … that would be far more challenging for me as a person than going in somewhere where I found things much easier … but there is of course the other side that makes you feel well I don't wanna, and I'm a worrier as well so I'm aware that wherever I am, I will worry and I will sort of want to do my best and want to be effective and there's a balance between driving myself mad and actually being comfortable…

(Lucy)

Lucy talked about the tension between the 'idealist' and the 'realist' in her. The idealist for Lucy would want to work in the 'challenging' inner city school but the realist in her fears she would be less effective in such contexts and that actually, she wants to work where it is enjoyable. Interestingly, Lucy also problematises the idea of the 'crusading teacher', the (middle class?) teacher who goes in to the working class setting and is able to right all wrongs. It would appear that Lucy's fears about going into working class contexts originate out of a sense of social (class) distance that would make her less effective teaching children she was not able to fully understand.

Efficacy and social distance

That novice teachers (such as Lucy above) often felt drawn to particular teaching contexts based on their own perceptions about where they felt they would be most effective was a strong theme. Though not the case for every novice teacher in the sample, there was a strong relationship between where one felt they would have most efficacy and their own class background. Therefore Kelly, Joe and Clare all felt they would be best placed and be good at teaching in working class schools, like those they attended themselves. It goes therefore without saying that the types of context novice teachers were apprehensive about going into (at least initially) were those characterised by high levels of social distance from their own background (including their class).

Thus, what novice teachers often mean when they talked about what they would regard as a 'challenge', was crossing over the class boundaries into unfamiliar class territory where there is anticipated social and cultural distance. This is because there was a sense of feeling that they might lack vital skills, knowledge and understanding

having not experienced this educational context first hand themselves. This probably translated as not being equipped with the right skills set to enable them to do well by pupils from different class backgrounds to themselves. As a reminder of what Clare, a working class novice teacher and Lucy, a middle class novice teacher said:

> I'm aware that wherever I am, I will worry and I will sort of want to do my best and want to be effective and there's a balance between driving myself mad and actually being comfortable…
>
> (Lucy)

> It's probably a class thing, I'm not part of that class [middle class] and I think I probably would have done really badly in a place like that [independent/grammar schools] and I don't think that my personality would have fitted in quite the same…
>
> (Clare)

The above concerns about perceived efficacy are also further heightened in a performative regime such as the one that characterises schooling in England (Ball, 2003b). In a standards and result driven school culture, there may be real concerns amongst novice teachers that they would not be able to meet the expectations placed upon them.

Class identity and finding a teaching post

What this study demonstrated was that what novice teachers initially talked about wanting in terms of teaching context, was not always consistent with what actually happened in terms of looking for and accepting employment as teachers. There were two main reasons for this: the first being serendipity and the second being the way in which the placements they had during the PGCE course had the power to challenge existing views. These are discussed below.

Serendipity

Serendipity or happenstance in this context relates to the employment market and what jobs were actually available at the time of applying for teaching posts as well as how the interviews went. The process of applying for teaching posts often works differently than applying for jobs in almost every other sector. Successful teaching applicants are almost always offered teaching posts on the day of their successful

interviews. Therefore, the perceived need to get **a** job rather than **the** job of choice often meant novice teachers were more likely to accept the first post offered to them. This was because most novice teachers were of course dependent on finding a job as their main source of income on completing the PGCE and thus the initial priority was nearly always getting any job to start with.

In addition, some novice teachers who were in shortage subject areas had the additional time constraint of finding a post by the end of July if they were to qualify from having some of their student debt paid off on their behalf. The desire (or need) to get a teaching post as quickly as possible therefore acted as a possible barrier for some novice teachers to hold out for their 'ideal' post.

However, this is not to say that novice teachers simply apply for any teaching posts they see. Often, the novice teachers in this study had a range of criteria they had decided upon which helped them to know which jobs to apply for and these often fitted in broadly with their early views on teaching. When discussed during the interviews, geographical factors relating to where they wanted to live were obviously high up in terms of importance but other factors such as school attainment and type of area school was located in were also often part of this criteria.

So, although many talked about wanting to work in particular contexts, sometimes what jobs were available dictated what jobs they applied for and the first job offered was often accepted as a means to avoid being without work. It thus did not always follow that novice teachers' first post was matched to the types of contexts they had clear ideas about wanting to work in.

Challenging perceptions: exposure to class boundaries

The second reason that novice teachers did not always end up finding employment in the contexts they initially talked about was that the views they had were opened to challenges based on their PGCE placements. In particular, their sense of efficacy was often transformed by experiencing contexts where they might have initially been put off from entering based on their perception of social distance. This is an important point given the discussion about teacher identity in Chapter Two. This is because it supports the view that although teacher identities are heavily shaped by existing ideas

including their identity, they are also subject to change and challenge as well as shifting identities.

Kelly and Joe demonstrate this point clearly. Although they both talked of wanting a working class school and talked of their own schooling and social position as being key in this, both ultimately did not end up teaching in or wanting solely to teach in the most challenging of such schools. It would seem that the experiences they had in different types of schools whilst on the PGCE helped to challenge these notions of the class 'Other' and of themselves. Other examples of this existed across the sample (see Appendix C) and happened in cases where middle class novice teachers also reluctant to cross the class boundaries had their initial perceptions challenged after exposure to a positive experience in a different class setting. Clare also fit into this view in that her perceptions changed about teaching in schools with high numbers of pupils and staff from religious (Muslim) backgrounds despite her being an atheist.

What this tells us about a classed identity will be explored in more detail in Chapter Seven including the ways in which these experiences challenged their classed perceptions of self as the key to understanding this change in focus rather than simply changing their views about where they want to teach. But, what this also tells us is that a range of experiences in different educational contexts has the ability to change existing perceptions about schools and impact on initial (sometimes very firm) ideas about the types of teachers novice teachers want to become. Therefore, one effect of the PGCE (and other routes into teaching) is that it can have an enormous influence on not only where novice teachers believe they want to teach, but also in relation to their very sense of self.

Classed understandings of teaching contexts

Across the sample, there was a real sense that novice teachers had classed understandings of school contexts. A strong theme was the ways in which working class and middle class schools and areas were euphemised with frequent usage across the sample of 'rough' to denote working class schools and 'nice' to describe middle class settings.

Virtually all the novice teachers understood current discourses around 'schools facing challenging circumstances' to represent working class schools but interestingly, most identified this as relating to behavioural problems as opposed to socio-economic indicators (either at all or alone). Whilst some novice teachers drew on 'othering' discourses of working class children in such contexts, a significant amount were empathetic to many of these issues thus concurring with the views of Lupton (2009). However, also like Lupton (2009: 7), there was a clear sense that novice teachers relied on 'individualised rather than structural accounts' of the issues faced by such schools and their pupils.

Similarly, there was a general view across the sample (though resisted by Joe and Kelly for instance) which compared the issues faced by working class schools against an idea of a middle class norm in education (Lupton, 2009). This was often the underlying foundation of 'othering' discourses although there was also a sense of naivety about the way in which relative social and economic disadvantage work in countries such as England (such as Simon's apparent misunderstanding of the way in which via credit, poorer members of society can obtain higher priced consumer items). Most often, such 'othering' happened in situations where there was a considerable amount of social distance between the novice teachers and the class context they were othering. Othering of this kind was encountered from middle class novice teachers about working class children, schools and communities. But also, forms of othering in relation to schooling occurred from working class novice teachers in formulating their views of middle class 'Others' (for instance talk of middle class children as being naive about the world, or having had it easy or being passive in classrooms and not having personalities).

Class awareness and consciousness

As above, all the novice teachers used class to make sense of school settings and their own identities, whether implicitly or explicitly. However, the idea of class as being something that operated in unfair ways, often advantaging some whilst disadvantaging others, was not as widely referred to or understood. Those who seemed most aware of social class inequalities were those who had crossed class boundaries in their previous life experiences (for instance Kelly and Joe) which gave them a language to talk about class directly. This study would therefore suggest support for the view that it is when

individuals experience class that it becomes visible, and as such, more meaningful. Or, in other words, it is at the point when social class boundaries are crossed that individuals become more aware of the way in which social class actively works.

However, what seemed missing was any sense of politicisation within the sample. Even Kelly and Joe who talked initially about their intentions towards teaching as a form of 'class action' (Maguire, 2001: 329), this was challenged once their classed understandings of their own abilities were reformulated after having positive experiences in more middle class settings. Similarly, as above under the last theme, whilst many novice teachers in the sample demonstrated empathy towards working class children, the explanations and understandings were often situated as cultural, rather than structural or at least heavily shaped by structures.

Concluding remark

This chapter has attempted to draw out the common themes from this study. These themes have attempted to demonstrate the ways in which a classed identity is linked into the process of learning to teach and becoming a teacher. These are the early foundations of a teacher's professional identity and are therefore important in illuminating the ways in which being a teacher is intricately and intimately tied up with social class. The following chapter will seek to offer some explanations about the way in which a class identity features heavily in novice teachers' constructions of their emerging professional identities and will re-visit some of the themes discussed here that require further discussion to enable possible explanations.

Chapter Seven

Teaching as Boundary-Crossing: Troubling Class Identities

In the previous chapter, the common themes from this study were identified. In this chapter, some of the important themes raised in the previous chapter are discussed in more detail. In addition, some possible explanations are offered that may help to illuminate the dynamic relationship between a classed identity and a developing professional teacher identity.

Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to discuss the way in which teaching, when positioned as 'class work', interacts with the classed identities of novice teachers. In particular, it will seek to explore the some of the differences encountered amongst novice teachers from middle and working class backgrounds since these were of significance. However, before moving on to explore how this worked in practice, it is necessary to consider the way in which teaching can be positioned as very often involving forms of class boundary crossing.

### Positioning teaching as class work: boundary crossing

As the introductory chapter set out, this study positions the process of schooling in England as 'classed'. This is due to the dynamic (and systematic) relationship between educational processes and wider social (or class) inequalities. Or, in other words, due to the way in which inequities in education can be seen to simultaneously impact on (by (re)production), and be impacted upon, by class inequities.

Following on from Van Galen (2004), I therefore sought to situate teaching as 'class work'. This was because teachers (by default at the very least) not only play a fundamental part in the processes outlined above, but also frequently operate as 'mediators of class' for many of the children they teach (ibid). What therefore happens when novice teachers begin their journey to becoming teachers is that they are often confronted with social class. Not only are novice teachers confronted with social class, but they are unable to avoid it. This is because social class is implicated in different

171

types of school contexts as well as the novice teachers' existing motivations, preferences and values about teaching.

When social class becomes most pertinent to novice teachers however is when, through teaching, they either experience or anticipate experiencing social class boundaries in their work as teachers. In Figure 1 below, I attempt to conceptualise how teaching can be viewed as working at the boundaries of social class, or, as 'class work' in order to help further understand the intimate relationship between class and teaching.

Figure 1: Teaching as Boundary Crossing
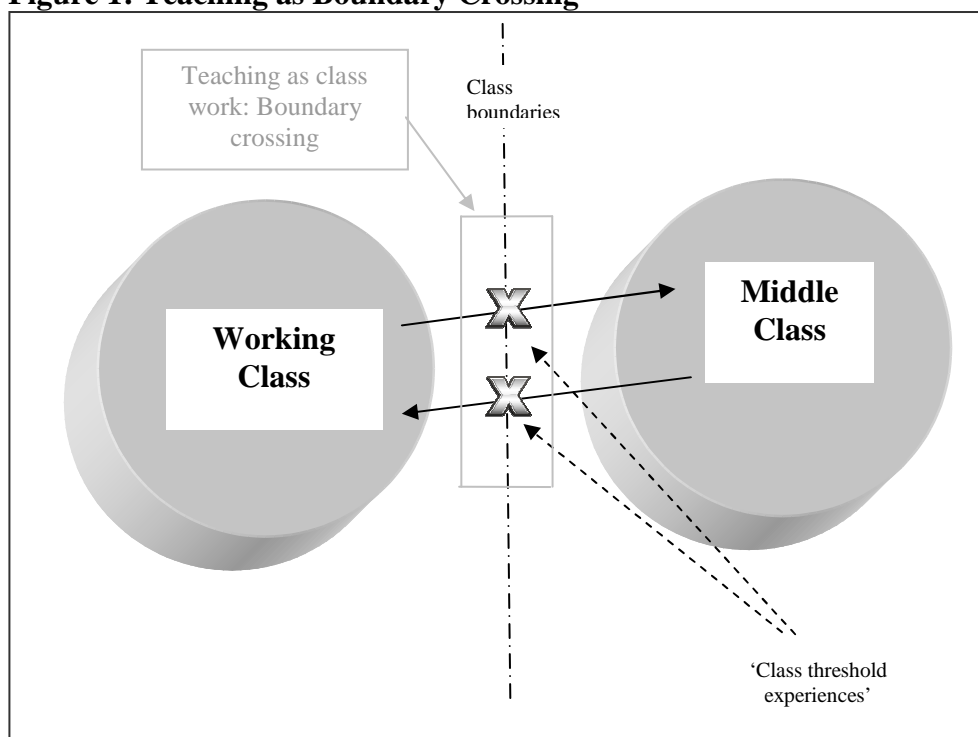
The above diagram attempts to illustrate three things. The first is that between social classes, there are boundaries that are fluid, permeable and dynamic. The foundation for this is set in Chapter Two when social class and class identity are described more fully and where social class is situated around a complex interplay between structure and agency. Class boundaries, as this diagram illustrates, are there but can and often are crossed, this is represented with a dashed line. The most obvious example of the permeability of these boundaries arises in cases of social mobility when (usually) working class individuals cross the class boundaries as a result of education, employment and 'improved' life styles and chances.

The second point the above diagram attempts to demonstrate is the way in which teaching as a profession can be seen to often involve the crossing of these boundaries in its everyday practices. Crossing the class boundaries in this study involves any situation where a novice teacher is exposed to professional contexts where it is a different class setting to their own biographical and life experiences prior to teaching. The types of movements across class boundaries are demonstrated using solid arrows to show that movement can occur in both directions. This is therefore likely to happen when middle class teachers find themselves working in (or 'choose' to work in) working class school settings or vice versa with novice teachers from working class backgrounds going into or choosing middle class educational settings. In this way, teaching can be seen as a valuable lens through which to explore the way in which a classed identity can shape and impact on other aspects of an individual's identity. This is because the chances of class-crossing are increased[10] in teaching due to the classed nature of schooling.

The third aim of this diagram is that at the point in which class boundaries are crossed (or are anticipated), individuals have what I have termed as a 'class threshold experience'. This is an important stage in understanding the way in which class is experienced because it is often at these points that individuals encounter class more intensely and thus are more likely to become acutely aware of class and its existence/operations. It is at this stage that individuals (and novice teachers in this case) are forced into considering their own class in relation to other classes, whether explicitly termed in class discourses or not. Therefore, as teaching is potentially able to generate wide possibilities of class crossing, class identities in relation to becoming a teacher can yield some interesting understandings of the way in which class works both in relation to teaching and more broadly.

As this thesis has argued so far, each novice teacher has their own story to tell and class plays out in different ways for each individual. Importantly however, there appears to be some common differences between the ways in which the class identities play out for novice teachers in relation to the boundary crossing described above.

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[10] That is comparatively; taking into consideration Bottero's (2004) observation that class is often likely to be obscured because most people rarely come into contact with people from other social class backgrounds.

The concept of class boundary crossing in teaching needs to be taken as a broad concept that ultimately includes all novice teachers. This is because it would appear that where novice teachers do not cross class boundaries, decisions and choices shaped by class are often made not to cross those boundaries. In particular, it is their thoughts and feelings about class crossing that help make up their minds about different teaching contexts, even if this is simply wanting to teach in settings like those they experienced at school themselves, teaching children similar (as opposed to different) from them.

However, what this study demonstrated was that how those class boundaries are anticipated and experienced can be troublesome. In addition, there were differences in the ways these boundaries were handled across the sample of novice teachers with some noticeable differences between some of middle class novice teachers compared to their working class counterparts. The remainder of this chapter will therefore seek to discuss this by examining how novice teachers' classed identities are called into question as they attempt to negotiate these boundaries. In particular, it will consider how their class identities are both constructed by and constructed in relation to these anticipated boundaries and the influence this has on their emerging professional identities.

Restrictive working class identities

The findings relating to the working class novice teachers in this study, to a large extent, concurs with work conducted by Maguire (2001, 2005a, 2005b) and Burn (2001). On the face of it, Kelly, Joe and Clare in this study can be seen to have aligned their motivations to teach in particular school types and settings with their sense of their own class identity. As Chapter Six demonstrated, this is not without complexity or contradiction. In many ways therefore, a simple translation of the way in which a classed identity impacted on their choices with teaching and their emerging professional identities could be drawn, i.e., working class teachers wanting working class schools. However, what this study sought to do was to look beyond simple observations of this kind and sought to understand the way in which a class identity actually works in this process.

On further examination of Kelly, Joe and Clare, something remarkably similar across each of their stories emerged which starts to demonstrate the way in which their classed identities worked to push them towards certain trajectories in teaching in often constraining ways. Within each of their narratives, there was a strong explicit justification of their initial choices to work in working class schools as tied into their sense of class injustice, whether this was expressed explicitly or implicitly. Related to this was a sense of associated efficacy in that since they had experienced it first hand, they could better empathise with the issues working class students faced.

What this demonstrated is that they were recognising their past experiences equipped them with specific cultural capital that they felt would be positively valued in working class schools. In particular, Kelly, Joe and Clare all expressed feeling undaunted by the behavioural challenges associated with working in schools that other novice teachers in the sample actively argued they did not want. They had thus initially 'chosen' to work in and expressed positively their perceived efficacy to work in such environments. But, what also emerges is that behind each of their (positive) justifications for working in contexts such as these, is a sense that they feel restricted in their choices. Or, in other words, they were also recognising that they did not have the cultural capital that would be valued in middle class settings. For instance, on discussing her choices to teaching in a working class setting, Clare said:

> …I think in some schools, I mean probably maybe I'm a bit scared too because I'm not used to them and I'd probably be like urghh, if I were sent to a private school I'd be like oh what do I do here [laughs] and I'd probably be worried about dealing with parents and things, so I think maybe, some of it's me too ... I mean the sort of parents I'm going to come across in an inner city school I know what to expect, I know how to deal with them coz they're the people I live with, the people I've been brought up with, the people who are my friends … and it's my culture really whereas if I was to go to a private school then I think maybe I'd feel that I wasn't good enough to be teaching their children coz I've not got the right accent, I've not got the right background…

> (Clare)

Therefore Clare is explicitly talking about being drawn towards a working class context because she knows what to expect and there is a cultural (i.e., class) match. She is also directly stating that she would feel uncomfortable in a class 'Other' setting due to feeling she would not be 'good enough' to teach middle class children.

Kelly and Joe both started out similar to Clare and talked about wanting to teach in working class contexts and justified their reasoning as being about teaching children like them in settings they were familiar with and would be effective in. However, after both having placements whilst on the PGCE in schools that were more socially mixed (and therefore higher attaining in terms of GCSE results etc.) both began to address their initial motivations as being linked to lacking somewhat in confidence. Towards the end of her PGCE, after her placement in a more socially mixed school (and having been offered a job there), Kelly was asked to re-reflect on how her own schooling had impacted on her and her decisions in teaching. As a reminder, Kelly said:

> Probably a confidence thing. It didn't make me feel as confident when I started teaching and I didn't think I'd be able to go in a high achieving school and do well. I thought, I didn't think I'd be able to develop people's learning but I've learned how to do that and I'm quite confident in that now. It's helped, my education, in terms of behaviour, understanding exactly what backgrounds people might come from and that's definitely been a positive, and I'd prefer it that way around to as in if would have gone to a very high achieving school and not understood people's backgrounds and not understood how to speak to children who have behavioural difficulties…
>
> (Kelly)

The above quote shows Kelly's developing understanding that her classed identity and background had both pros and cons in relation to becoming a teacher. On the positive side, it had equipped her with knowledge of those for whom education is not a given. But on the other hand, her own classed education had in some ways limited her horizons and equipped her with a sense of low confidence in her own abilities. Joe expressed a similar sentiment to Kelly when towards the end of his PGCE year he was asked about the type of schools he was now interested in working in and whether this had changed. He said:

> … I will have a look at their position in the league tables and make sure they're at least middle of the road; I don't want to be wrestling with classroom management all the time. But, no I have got no real cast iron ideas about where I want to teach. I feel confident enough to be in any school … my confidence has grown, especially at Mountsbridge and it's come through working with children that have a high ability as well as a lower ability. So, erm, I can work anywhere …. my classroom management skills according to my mentors has always been good … My shortcomings have been round the area of subject matter because it's been 10 years since I've done any Science … I'm looking for the best school that I can teach in where I can go and enjoy teaching. That is my objective, to go and enjoy teaching not to choose a school. Maybe it was before, maybe I'm becoming judgemental even more now I've got more

confidence … I'll probably choose the highest school that I can apply for, but not a grammar school, not something in the suburbs where I can't relate to those children or their backgrounds.

(Joe)

Therefore, what is inescapable from the comments of Joe, Kelly and Clare is that their intentions in teaching had (at least initially) been tightly bound to their working class backgrounds and identities. As well as in relation to their perceived strengths, this had also been caused by anxiety about their academic abilities and their capacity to cope in non-working class settings. It would therefore appear that their perception of their strengths as being empathetic towards and being effective with children from working class backgrounds, although maybe true to a large extent, was also a strategy through which to draw out positive cultural capital from their classed identities. Thus there was a strong sense that they were inextricably bound by their classed identities in ways that were constraining and restrictive.

It therefore becomes clear to see the ways in which a working class identity both shapes positively, whilst simultaneously constraining the options open to Kelly, Joe and Clare. This also demonstrates the way in which existing aspects of a classed identity are deeply embedded in social structures that had shaped their past experiences, but that are still responsive to new experiences and personal agency. In the case of Kelly and Joe for instance, although both appeared highly committed to working class educational settings, this was opened up to challenge when their views of their 'classed' selves was re-evaluated.

The issues discussed here concerning the influence of a working class identity on an emerging teacher identity will be returned to later in this chapter but first of all, we need to consider how these processes operate for the middle class novice teachers in this study.

Restrictive and strategic middle class identities
The discussion above demonstrated the way in which a classed identity can be seen to have heavily shaped (in both enhancing though often constraining ways) the emerging professional identity of novice teachers from working class backgrounds. In many ways, the identities of working class individuals and the way in which their class

identities can constrain them more broadly is well documented (see Skeggs, 1997; Kirk, 2004). In addition, the work of Maguire (2001; 2005a; 2005b) and Burn (2001) has also previously sought to explore how the motivations and experiences of teachers from working class backgrounds are shaped by their classed identity. What is less understood however is the way in which these processes work for individuals from middle class backgrounds and therefore is of key importance in this study.

As illustrated in Chapter Two, this is not to suggest that there is a complete absence of work on the middle classes. On the contrary, particularly in relation to education, there exists some powerful arguments about the classed practices of middle class parents as consumers for instance (see Ball, 1993; 2003a; or Oría et al., 2007 and Crozier et al., 2008 for understanding some of the associated moral dilemmas) and the way in which these practices can dominate education policy (Gewirtz, 2001). But, what is striking is that there is little by way of understanding the class identities and class practices that result out of these processes for middle class teachers in England. This is despite international evidence that there appears to be a link between class backgrounds and teaching practices (see Hoadley and Ensor, 2009). Therefore an important motivation of this study is to contribute to these understandings of middle, as well as working class teachers.

Of the three middle class novice teachers presented here, only Lucy explicitly identified as being middle class. In many ways, like the working class novice teachers discussed above, Lucy appeared to have felt a sense that her classed identity had tied her into particular types of educational contexts whilst distancing her from others. This was also found amongst some of the other middle class novice teachers featured in Appendix C.

However, Lucy was certainly amongst the more reflexive novice teachers in this study and talked from the outset of a form of troubled identity. This, for Lucy, was initially focused around reconciling her 'privileged' educational past with her politics and with regard to a career in teaching. As a reminder, Lucy talked about being committed to 'socialist principles' and that she felt this was reinforced by her motivation to teach, particularly in the state sector. Within this, she also recognised the value of her own social and cultural capital (through her background and education) that could be transformed into economic capital when she said:

> I feel like I've been privileged but I don't want to earn loads and loads of money with that, and I know I could, probably I could with the education I've had…
>
> (Lucy)

Throughout, as demonstrated previously in Chapters Four and Six, Lucy battles with the tensions between the 'idealist' and the 'realist' in her. Though not explicitly named as such, this has real classed undertones. This is because the 'idealist' in Lucy is linked into teaching in tough inner city (working class) schools whereas the 'realist' in Lucy is tied to a tension more about whether to teach in an independent school or a semi-rural (middle class) comprehensive school. Ultimately it appears to be Lucy's sense of her classed identity as limiting the possibilities of her being 'effective' in an environment that is less 'comfortable' to her that pushes her towards what she knows:

> …but there is of course the other side that makes you feel well I don't wanna, and I'm a worrier as well so I'm aware that wherever I am, I will worry and I will sort of want to do my best and want to be effective and there's a balance between driving myself mad and actually being comfortable…
>
> (Lucy)

Lucy is not in denial of class and talks articulately throughout about her perceptions of social class and some of the inequalities around it. However, talking about class at times clearly creates discomfort for her, especially in relation to not representing herself as being judgmental and stereotypical. On talking about whether she felt social class mattered, she concluded her thoughts on the matter by saying:

> ...I suppose as well I feel kind of, I feel it's very difficult to talk about it without kind of saying things that feel unacceptable or you know what I mean like I sort of end up saying things and then feeling that they don't quite sound how I mean them to sound or they sound very judgmental or whatever but I do think there is still kind of quite noticeable differences there.
>
> (Lucy)

Therefore, for Lucy her class identity, whilst not closing her off from being reflexive about class, limited her perception of self-efficacy in class 'Other' settings. In this way, Lucy, like Joe, Clare and Kelly, understood the way in which teaching can be positioned as 'class work'.

In demonstrating how class works in the process of becoming a teacher for Lucy, it shows how, class identity may also be seen as potentially constraining for middle class individuals. Though ultimately, Lucy in particular has the cultural capital to make a well reasoned and rational decision from the outset, based not only what she feels she could do, but actually what she wants to do. This marks her out as somewhat different to Kelly, Joe and Clare because whilst recognising her middle class cultural capital may not help her or be as valued in working class schools, she is able to articulate this and ultimately makes a decision based on what she would prefer to do, rather than a sense of being limited. But, where Lucy also differs from Kelly and Joe in particular is that she does not have the opportunity to test out exactly how much she would enjoy or how effective she would be in such a setting as her placements on the PGCE did not significantly expose her to this. More will be said about this latter point later in this chapter.

Thus, as Lucy and some of the other individuals featured in Appendix C demonstrate, the notion that a class identity can be restrictive (at least initially) is not reserved for the working class novice teachers. But, in turning to look at Simon and Matt however, we see something quite different from what is described above. In particular, we begin to understand some of the ways in which this recognition that one's available cultural capital may not be valued, may be dealt with rather more strategically.

Both Simon and Matt did not identify with class labels when asked if they felt they belonged to a particular social class. Their case studies as presented in Chapter Four give their full responses to this question. As with individuals outside of the profession of teaching, there are many reasons why this may be the case and Chapter Six deals with some of these seen as relevant in this study. But, the non-identification with class labels in the context of learning to become a teacher offer us some potentially valuable insights into understanding the way in which teaching needs to be fundamentally understood as 'class work'. However, in order to understand how this process worked in this study, it is necessary to consider Simon and Matt separately first before drawing some important parallels.

From the outset, Simon had specified wanting to teach in an inner city comprehensive school and discussed his motivations as explicitly being about addressing low educational attainment and social problems. By Simon's own admissions, this was

very different from the social and educational context he had experienced himself. As explored previously, Simon's explanation for not describing himself as middle class originated from his perception that the label of middle class inferred a set of values that he did not feel any association with. As a reminder, Simon said:

> Well, I'm probably about as middle class as they come. I don't know, I just felt a bit weird, I don't feel particularly affiliated as social class, but I can see a lot people probably do. In terms of accent and playing rugby or whatever, people sort, make kind of, you know … but like I don't feel particularly affiliated…
>
> (Simon)

Simon reinforced this lack of affiliation was based on a set of middle class values that he was rejecting as somehow pushy and self-interested. He said:

> …there's load of middle class kids in Willow [one of his PGCE placement schools] and you can probably see the parents fashioning them to be lawyers or whatever it is what you want to be…
>
> (Simon)

He also talked of many of his friends from school as being 'a little bit too money driven' to go into teaching themselves and talked of his own sisters desire to operate solely within her (class?) 'comfort zone':

> My sister, she sells pensions, and she is very different to me … she operates solely in her comfort zone and the second she steps out of it she's likely to cry … one of the aspects I'm proud of, my sister came to [city] and she couldn't walk down the street without you know, she was a bit panicky about the whole urban thing and I think if you put her in any sort of school, or particularly an urban one, she wouldn't feel comfortable. But I'm relatively proud to put myself in those situations if you know what I mean.
>
> (Simon)

It would therefore appear that for Simon, becoming a teacher was explicitly about crossing over the class boundaries and situated as 'class work' but in more than one way. For Simon, having come from what can be viewed as a solidly middle class background, even the act of entering into teaching was viewed somewhat as a form of class crossing (given that he explicitly and implicitly talks of this as being outside of his class norms i.e., not what his friends or his own sister would do). In addition, not only was Simon entering into the teaching profession, he was also actively choosing to

go and work in the class 'Other' environment, that of a working class school and thus class crossing in a second sense.

It would seem that for Simon, having situated teaching as 'class work', he becomes aware that his own class identity in the context of education has a particular meaning that is at odds with the image of the type of teacher he wants to become. As discussed by Morley (1997: 114) in Chapter Two, there are: 'advantages and disadvantages to being perceived as working class by some and middle class by others' and that this is often dictated by context. Simon appears to feel that in the context of teaching in state schools per se, and specifically teaching in an inner city comprehensive, his own classed identity may be seen as a disadvantage. Moreover, there appears to be a sense that the cultural capital that he brings would not be highly valued within this context.

What is interesting about Simon is that unlike Kelly, Joe, Clare and Lucy, his motivation from the outset was to teach in a class context that was not his own. There was no hesitation on this front from Simon and he was clear throughout that his decision to teach was based on 'ideological' grounds. In this way, Simon had already constructed teaching as 'class work' and knew that there were class boundaries he would need to cross to teach in the context he had decided to teach in. But, unlike the others already discussed in this chapter, rather than let this class identity potentially constrain him, Simon engaged in what could be viewed as a form of playing around with his own social class in order to cope with this class boundary. Therefore, whilst it may be true that Simon may have genuinely felt no affiliation to his social class background and the values he saw as underpinning middle classness, he was able to play around with his class identity in (possibly strategic) ways that the others, and particularly the working class novice teachers, did not or could not.

It could therefore be argued that Simon not only played around with his class, he strategically disassociated himself with the perceived aspects of his social class that he saw to be most problematic in relation to teaching. This was namely the way in which he saw middle class parents as: 'fashioning' their children 'to be lawyers or whatever it is what you want to be'. More will follow on Simon shortly but it is now important to focus on Matt to see the way in which his class identity and the influence on his professional identity shares some central aspects to Simon.

Like Simon, Matt did not identify as belonging to a social class. In many ways, Matt was more ambivalent towards class per se than Simon but considered in the context of becoming a teacher, there are parallels. Matt was less sure about the type of teaching context he wanted than Simon. He initially talked about being open to context and school type though when pressed, he said he would prefer a school context that challenged him (namely a more working class setting where behaviour would keep him from being bored). In addition however, Matt did talk about wanting to work with the 'average kids' based on his perception that he had been an 'average' child at an 'average' school. As a reminder, in response to being asked if his own education was influential on his decision to teach, he said:

> No not really, I mean personally I was very much an average kid at school and my theory is that the average kids don't get any attention whatsoever. They're average, they're always going to average, just have average jobs … So my focus is mainly going to be on the average kids … the bad kids that got all the attention and the high ability kids got all the attention because they were the clever ones and you were just kind of stuck in the middle and you weren't really going to be a high achiever so you have to self-motivate from a very early age … My school was very, well average, it was average, just got on with it, went to school everyday just did what I needed to do, did the assignments on time … I just turned up and did what I needed to do. Didn't really like any of the teachers, didn't really hate any of the teachers it was just pretty boringly average. Which is why I want to concentrate on the average kids to try and make them a bit more motivated to come in and stuff.

<div align="right">(Matt)</div>

Matt's construction of himself as an 'average kid' at an 'average' school appears to be in line with his presentation of himself as classless. Matt's explanations for his non-identification with social class draw on a variety of reasons though four strong arguments come out. The first is an uncertainty about where he would fit: 'I think ultimately I would consider myself middley-working classy, upper class background – is that possible?' The second argument is around a resistance to being labelled and not liking 'to put like round pegs in square holes like'. The third argument he puts forward suggests he is also resisting other people's talk of class, particularly his wife's when he says: 'I mean my wife always goes on about she's from a working class background and both her bloody parents were teachers so that theoretically mean she's middle class but she doesn't like to admit it'. Finally, he also rejects the relevance of class: 'I don't see what relevance it's got'.

Based on this, Matt appears acutely aware of the way in which class may work. He also makes it clear he is aware of the way in which class labels are taken to signify important understandings of people and it would appear that Matt is systematically rejecting these. Though Matt does this distancing explicitly, nevertheless, his interviews contained very classed observations of schooling, such as his criticism of the 'blame culture' he perceived working class children to engage in to account for their behaviour and failures, plus his references and disdain towards the 'nouveau riche' element in his employment school. Thus, Matt implicitly positioned himself as middle class based on his economic, social and discursive relations but he rejects this label, instead choosing to situate himself as 'average' rather than as middle class.

Therefore Matt attempts to establish his classlessness in many ways, but mainly by arguing that the idea of social class is irrelevant, at times annoying (which he responds to by refusing to be labeled) and by defining himself as 'average' (which infers normal/ordinary). In this way, Matt's class advantages are rendered invisible which perfectly situates him as not burdened with any imposed class labels.

Matt's non-identification of class then needs to be understood strategically in the context of his thinking around his openness to teaching context. Thus because Kelly, Joe, Clare, Lucy and Simon all (more or less) had particular classed contexts in mind, their classed identities featured heavily in justifying their reasoning, including Simon who felt he needed to strategically distance himself from his class (or middle class values) to offer his justification. In the same way, Matt's desire to present and position himself as willing (and able) to go into any school context, required him to strategically distance himself from an affiliation to any class setting. It could therefore be argued that he does this by distancing his own identity from understandings based on social class.

What Matt's non-identification of class therefore tells us is that like all of the other novice teachers presented here, Matt implicitly situates teaching as 'class work'. This therefore requires Matt, like the others, to consider his own identity accordingly. Realising, like Simon, that his class identity may disadvantage him, he responds strategically by positioning himself as classless and disinterested by class as a concept.

However, what makes Matt really interesting is the way in which his classless positioning is seemingly untroubled until he finds employment in an independent school. It would appear that on entering into this school setting, one that is widely acknowledged to be a school where many very affluent families send their daughters, Matt suddenly becomes more troubled by social class. It is possibly no coincidence that the only time when Matt begins to engage more with the idea of social class is when he himself feels to be in some way, 'disadvantaged' in class terms. After talking previously about class having 'no significance whatsoever' to him, he suddenly engages with a discourse around the 'ridiculous' wealth and lifestyles of the 'upper' class and 'nouveau riche' pupils at the school and their families. Within this, Matt even includes some of his teaching colleagues who he argues are trying to pass themselves off as 'posh'.

At this stage, Matt begins to align his own identity with something resembling a working class identity, drawing on his accent to help locate him as different to the 'class' encountered within this school setting. By doing this, Matt is still able to avoid situating himself as middle class where the culture he is describing, by his own admissions, is not actually that different to his own. Matt is therefore distancing himself from what he infers is an implicit value system of materialism and thinking oneself better than others simply through material possessions and the way one speaks. What Matt might possibly be demonstrating is that as Christopher (2004) notes, it is only at the point in which people experience class intensely that they become more aware of its operations. It would appear that at this stage, Matt is again strategically distancing himself from class, but this time, he has a specific class (rather than all classes) to distance himself from.

Troubled identities

What the above discussion has demonstrated is that novice teachers in this study appear to, whether explicitly or implicitly, situate teaching as 'class work'. In particular, different schools situated in different social contexts were regarded as classed. What this means is that novice teachers are forced into considering how their own classed identities work in relation to this. This is because novice teachers are aware that many teaching contexts will require them to cross over class boundaries into often unfamiliar class territory.

There were, in essence, two broad responses in terms of the novice teachers' approach to dealing with these anticipated class boundaries. The first response was to avoid crossing these boundaries, setting their sights on a teaching context in a similar class setting to one with which they were familiar. In particular, both Kelly and Joe (initially at least), Clare and Lucy can be seen as engaging with this response to varying degrees. Of key importance within this is the notion of efficacy. All of these novice teachers demonstrating this response talked about wanting to enter into a teaching context where they felt they would be able to do a good job. However, efficacy in this context is strongly tied to their class identities because their views about where they would be able to be effective were strongly linked into what they already knew, i.e., their own biographies and life experiences. Thus, 'efficacy' in the context of the English education system needs to take account of social class given the importance placed upon it by novice teachers in this study.

In particular, Kelly, Joe and Clare, the working class novice teachers, not only seemed tied to their classed identities, they actually seemed bound by them, all expressing feelings of not being academic or bright enough to cross the class boundaries in teaching. In this way, the working class novice teachers appeared to be demonstrating a form of class conditioning that being working class meant they were only good for teaching other working class children. However, rarely were these views expressed throughout their interviews and instead what all of them engaged in, were what appeared to be a range of 'coping strategies' that positively linked them to working class settings. This was often guided by references to empathy as a justification for this but often accompanied by an 'othering' of (and having felt othered by) middle class settings. The structurally constraining nature of their classed identities was revealed further when Kelly and Joe, on realising they could actually be effective in more middle class settings, re-examined what they wanted out of their teaching career. This was because they were suddenly able to see they had a wider choice of teaching contexts from which to choose since they no longer felt as constrained by their class identities, having 'proven' their worth.

For Clare, the process was different because so adamant was she that she wanted (or was constrained to wanting) working class schools, she specifically went out of her way to ensure she was only placed in working class schools during her PGCE year.

Therefore, there were no exposures to class boundaries and no class threshold experiences to challenge, enforce or further complicate Clare's sense of self.

The process was different for Lucy because though her intentions were heavily shaped by her class identity, Lucy actively considered crossing the boundaries but rejected it. Lucy was equipped in ways that Clare, Joe and Kelly were not to engage reflexively with this tension and ultimately make an informed and rationale decision that actually, she did not want to cross the class boundaries. Though Lucy may have talked about reconciling her early concerns about the state versus the independent sector, the job Lucy ended up accepting in many respects, allowed her the perfect compromise, a high attaining, semi-rural comprehensive school. Nevertheless, Lucy did demonstrate that the way in which a class identity can be constraining is not reserved for working class novice teachers (see Appendix C for further evidence of this).

The second response to crossing the class boundaries was to actually cross them but this required some thinking about how they would need to construct their own identities in ways that allowed this boundary crossing to be less troublesome. This is what happened with both Matt and Simon. Though the strategies they used were different, both were able to understand that in order to cross the class boundaries, they would need to present their class identity in particular ways so that they were not put at a perceived disadvantage in contexts where they felt their cultural capital would not be so highly valued. Thus, like Savage et al. (2001), this highlights the way in which individuals may seek to use strategies to distance themselves from class when they feel threatened. However, what this study adds to this understanding is that teaching is an occupation which heightens this sense of threat. It also argues that understanding this threat in teaching actually requires cultural capital, not least to understand that their own cultural capital they bring in relation to schooling may not be valued. Savage et al. thus infer that 'defensiveness' is often exhibited by those missing cultural capital, when in fact this study argues that defensiveness can well involve strategising that requires significant levels of cultural capital.

Thus, the class 'Other' in the context of teaching was often perceived to be troubling to the novice teachers' sense of self. However, the middle class novice teachers in this study appeared more at ease with this and were able to draw on forms of cultural capital that enabled them to play around with their social class identities. This was to

ensure that on crossing the class threshold, they were not disadvantaged. The working class novice teachers on the other hand anticipated the potentially troubling nature of the boundary crossing and as a result, were reluctant to cross the boundaries. It would therefore appear we need to further consider the possible reasons for this apparent difference between the working class and the middle class novice teachers.

Whilst coming from a working class background then can be and was seen as a facilitator to being effective in working class schools, it would also appear that a working class identity appeared to be more inhibiting than a middle class identity per se. From exploring Kelly, Joe, and Clare's stories, it would seem that their previous classed experiences had heavily shaped their perceptions of what to expect in crossing the class boundaries. All three had experienced crossing class boundaries previously in terms of them having completed an undergraduate degree and of course being on a postgraduate teacher training programme. In turn, all of them express sentiments that Sennett and Cobb (1977) refer to as the 'hidden injuries of class'. In particular, there is a strong sense of not having felt good enough and having had to have worked hard to get to where they are. In turn, this awareness of the injustices of class seemed to trap the working class novice teachers into limited understandings of their capabilities, only seemingly challenged once they have 'proven' this to be wrong (for Kelly and Joe particularly). The middle class novice teachers in this thesis express none of these concerns with both Lucy and Simon reflecting that if anything, they have had relatively privileged social and educational backgrounds.

Importantly though, the middle class novice teachers appear to have at their disposal a range of resources, affordances and cultural capital that they can draw on to help understand that these boundaries may be tricky and thus may require forms of strategising on their part to avoid these problems. They are seemingly less constrained by their identities than the working class novice teachers appear to be.

But what does this tell us about social class identities in the context of teaching? It tells us that it is potentially easier for middle class individuals to 'play' with their class. This is because a middle class identity appears to be much less fixed than what is associated with being working class. Theoretically, if the discourse of social mobility is to be believed, then through hard work, one can become middle class, though it is seemingly more difficult to simply become working class. Their class was

something that the working class novice teachers felt they just were, something they were born into that was embedded and embodied. Thus, on having their thoughts about their own efficacy in middle class contexts transformed, Kelly and Joe did not seek to abandon their class identities. This would be akin to a form of class treachery given their deeply embodied understandings of themselves as classed. Instead, their understandings of this meant they had finally 'proven' they had a right to do whatever they wanted, and in Joe's case, that he was 'special' because he had done this in spite of his hard start in life. This is not however to suggest that the middle class novice teachers abandon their class identities. Rather, it is to suggest that they know how to play at appearing 'less middle class' so that they are not disadvantaged in the 'class work' of teaching.

Therefore, this chapter, like Maguire (2001: 330), offers strong support that '…classed identities play an active part in teachers' constructions of self and of their work'. Moreover, not only does it suggest class plays an active part, it argues that this may operate in powerful ways that can be potentially constraining for all. But what it also says is that it is middle class novice teachers that are more equipped to minimise these potential problems than working class novice teachers.

Exposure to class boundaries and the class 'Other'

Also of importance to discuss in this chapter is the way in which the classed perceptions that novice teachers had of themselves, as well as the teaching contexts they wanted or felt able to teach in, have the power to be disrupted by exposure to class boundaries. Earlier in this chapter in Figure 1, I talked about what I called 'class threshold experiences'. This was the point in which class boundaries were crossed and as such, class became visible in much more intense ways. For instance, both Kelly and Joe talked extensively as having felt they had crossed these borders during their own schooling and university experiences. This had sensitised them to class and, after having a relatively negative experience of these boundaries, had pushed them towards particular types of educational settings as they entered into the teaching profession.

What this study then went to illustrate however was that once Kelly and Joe re-crossed class boundaries in their teaching placements on the PGCE and they had new, more positive 'class threshold experiences'. What this did was to re-sensitise them to class

and made them re-evaluate their own perspectives not only about where they wanted to teach, but also about their own class identities.

In addition, though on a somewhat smaller scale, this also happened to Matt. Matt was very clear that class was not something meaningful to him. But, on having a class threshold experience, i.e., his time working at the wealthy independent school, he became more sensitised to class. In this way, Matt's experiences closely resemble those of Kelly and Joe's exposure to class through their own education. By this I mean these transitions were not particularly comfortable because they all involved facing up to social inequality, albeit on different scales and tapping into different emotions.

Crossing class boundaries and the impact that a class threshold experience can have in challenging both one's sense of class identity and understandings about teaching contexts, was evident across the sample. As well as happening to both Kelly and Joe for instance, this also happened in relation to middle class novice teachers being exposed to class through a class threshold experience in a working class context (see Appendix C) and some changes in perspective about where one would like to teach.

What this tells us is that although the process of becoming a teacher is classed, this is not fixed or resistant to change, but instead is open to challenge. However, what this also suggests is that this does not necessarily happen on its own. Within this study, such challenges were only brought about by exposure to class boundaries via class threshold experiences. Thus in the journey to becoming a teacher, this involves novice teachers experiencing class 'Other' educational settings. A class threshold experience can therefore be seen to act as a form of 'critical incident' of the kind that Kelchtermans & Vanderberghe (1994) described in demonstrating how the views of teachers can be shaped, challenged and influenced. What we can learn from this will be discussed in the following chapter when the implications of this study are considered, particularly in relation to ITET.

Chapter Eight

Summary, Contribution and Implications

This final chapter has two main purposes. The first is to present a summary of the main findings from this research. The second is to reflect on the research process and to draw out what contribution to knowledge this study may make. As this research focused on better understanding novice teachers' emerging professional identities, some practical implications, particularly about ITET are outlined as well as some suggestions made for future research.

Summary of key findings

This study set out to investigate the shaping influence that a class identity had on the emerging professional identities of novice teachers. It did so by following a group of eleven novice teachers for over two years as they trained to become teachers and then began their teaching careers in schools. Up to four semi-structured interviews were held with each novice teacher which provided rich data through which to explore the process of becoming a teacher.

As Chapters Six and Seven demonstrated, social class and a class identity did appear to matter in a range of interesting though often complex ways for the novice teachers in this research. As Maguire (2001: 329) notes, this is because:

> Their perceptions, emotions and material experiences profoundly influence the ways in which they see and do their work.

In Chapter One I argued that this study saw teaching as a form of 'class work' (Van Galen, 2004). After presenting the case studies, I then argued that though they rarely explicitly recognised it as such, the novice teachers in this research could also be seen to have positioned it as a form of 'class work' (ibid). This was because as novice teachers approach their career in teaching, they are unable to ignore social class because it is evident all around them, especially given the classed nature of education as discussed in the introductory chapter. In particular, novice teachers are able to

recognise that class boundaries exist and that schools are often positioned at different sides of or around these boundaries.

In light of this, at least to some extent, novice teachers have to make decisions about whether class boundaries will be crossed in their own teaching careers. This boundary crossing can be seen to happen each time a teacher works in a school context that is different in class terms to their own life and educational experiences. Often, these boundaries are also crossed during the PGCE year. This happens each time a novice teacher has a placement in a school that differs from their own classed social and educational backgrounds. The idea of crossing this class boundary creates all sorts of tensions for novice teachers as they are forced into contemplating their own identities in relation to these boundaries. From this study, it would appear that a class identity can be seen to matter in relation to their emerging professional identities in three interconnected ways. These were: what they *wanted* to do; what they *could* do; and what they *should* do. These will be discussed in more detail shortly but the most significant finding that emerged from this study was that a class identity, as related to these three points, created all sorts of tensions for novice teachers and resulted in forms of troubled (class) identities.

It is important to note that all novice teachers in the interviews approached the subject of their intentions in teaching based upon what they *wanted* to do. They were ultimately demonstrating their agency in this decision. For instance, all of them were asked about their intentions and most had clear ideas about the types of contexts they wanted whilst some were still unsure about context. Most were also able to talk about what they did not want to do in terms of type and context of school. However, what emerged was that this '*wanting*' to work in particular settings was often constrained by what they felt they both *could* and/or *should* do, and that this was often related to their classed identities and the classed nature of teaching.

For instance, Joe, Kelly and Clare the working class novice teachers featured here, all appeared to be pushed towards teaching in school contexts that resembled their own education. When discussed early on in the research, this was explained with regard to their class identities (whether explicitly described as class or not) as being something they wanted to do but also felt positively able to do having experienced this themselves and being equipped with appropriate cultural capital that is valued in these

settings. In addition, it could also be interpreted that these three in particular appeared to see teaching as not only 'class work' but as a form of 'class action' (as used by Maguire, 2001 to describe such teachers). This was because they each recognised both implicitly and explicitly the unfairness of class in wider society and education as playing an important role. But, as the research went on, the stories of Kelly, Joe and Clare revealed that their identities had been particularly restraining in that rather than it simply being that they felt they could do a good job in working class schools, they also felt they would not be able to teach in the class 'Other' setting. Thus as the story of their class identity unfolded, it became evident that this was, at least to some degree, holding them back. This appeared to result from a lack of confidence in their own abilities, possible evidence of the 'hidden injuries of class' that Sennett and Cobb (1977) described.

A class identity then, for the working class novice teachers in this study, propelled them (and possibly limited them) towards engaging in teaching as a form of 'class action'. This is because not taking this direction (at least initially) was perceived as something they either *could not* or *should not* do. The 'could not' in this instance refers to the way in which the working class novice teachers perceived part of their working classness as being lacking in academic abilities and fear of feeling 'Other'. However, the 'should not' also troubled the working class novice teachers because to openly want to cross the class boundaries, within the available discourses of their constraining identities, could be seen as akin to class treachery.

The 'could' and 'should' questions therefore illustrate the role that structure plays in the fusion of novice teachers' personal and professional identities in teaching and how agency, as in the 'want' question, is often shaped in subtle and covert ways.

As Lucy illustrated, a class identity as pushing novice teachers towards particular teaching contexts was not limited to the working class individuals in this study. The pen portraits of the other five novice teachers from the sample in Appendix C also demonstrate how a class identity can, at least initially, push middle class novice teachers towards middle class educational settings. Thus, what Lucy also demonstrated is that like the working class novice teachers, her identity shaped what she felt able to do, or would be effective in doing. In addition, her class identity also created tensions based around what she 'should' be doing. This was also related to

seeing particular types of teaching as a form of 'class action' in that she described the tensions between the 'idealist' and 'realist' in her, with the idealist representing 'class action' types of teaching.

What happened with Matt and Simon however demonstrated that there are different ways of handling these tensions. How this worked was that whilst both recognised the potentially limiting nature of their classed identities, both employed strategies to overcome the '*could*' question. This involved the strategic distancing of themselves from either their own social class, or class per se. Thus rather than challenge the perception that somebody from a middle class background could easily go into a working class setting (Simon) or go into any class setting (Matt), both found it easier to play down their own class backgrounds rather than confront these perceptions. They were able to apply more agency in ensuring structure did not play out in deterministic ways and channel them towards what others might feel they could/should be doing.

What this suggests is that a middle class identity appears to be less fixed and with less emotional investment placed in it than a working class identity. As a result, it appears it may be somewhat easier to consider crossing the boundaries for middle class individuals as their class identities are seemingly less tied to underpinning notions of the self. It also suggests that as far as cultural capital is concerned, middle class novice teachers may be more equipped with the appropriate skills to transfer cultural capital they feel will not be valued in the context of teaching into a form of it that will.

Reflections on the research study

My aim within this research was to explore the influence of a class identity on the emerging professional identity of novice teachers but not just for its own sake. Rather, it was to help understand the ways in which we can begin to think about addressing some of the classed aspects of education and teaching. Shortly, I will return to this when I consider what can be learnt from this study. However, before I move on to reflect in this way, it is important to reflect more broadly on the research process.

As argued in Chapter Three, I was fully aware that I did not come to this piece of research as a neutral bystander. Based on my own personal, educational and work experiences to date, class was something that I saw as important in education and

something I felt was under explored in relation to teaching. As I have discussed elsewhere, every attempt was made to avoid influencing the research findings with my own ideas and views. However, in spite of this, I was still the doing the research and I was the person responsible for talking to the novice teachers and gathering their views in interviews in which I formulated the questions and set the agenda. The remit of this study was never to pose challenges to, argue with or attempt to influence/change the mind of novice teachers but rather to examine class as it mattered to them. Given this, there were of course times when views offered did not necessarily assimilate to wider evidence on the classed nature of teaching. In addition, there were also times when the views offered drew on essentialising or negative stereotypes about the different classes. But what this research revealed was that the conversations I had with the novice teachers were for many of them, the only such types of conversations they would have where they were asked to explain and justify their views on teaching and the influence of their own background. If this was the only time these novice teachers were asked about such issues, the question needs to be asked, to what extent are the views of novice teachers challenged in this area?

What this means to the study has two important implications. The first is that, regardless of my efforts, I was nevertheless an active part of this research process. My own role was never merely a passive interviewer but somebody who specifically raised these issues to the novice teachers and asked them lots of 'what, how and why' questions. Thus all disclosures inevitably have to be taken in the context that they were offered, as responses to somebody who was likely to have been perceived as a white, working class female.

In this respect, the conversations held with Kelly, Joe and Clare can be seen to have possibly enabled them to feel 'safer' to disclose their feelings in an open and 'safe' environment. Class mattered to these novice teachers and though we never explicitly discussed my own class, it is reasonable to infer they were able to make judgements about my own background based on the all the arguments I presented in Chapter Two and their own views on class. An important implication of this, for this study at least, is that we must also consider the way in which my researcher presence was interpreted by those novice teachers who I have positioned as middle class, even if they rejected this explicit positioning themselves (see Matt and Simon). Could it be that in their strategic positioning of themselves as either distanced from the class that other people

(myself included) would place them in, or class as a broader concept, that I was seen as part of a teaching-related culture that they felt would not value their middle class cultural capital?

Of course, given the nature and scope of this research it is not possible to directly respond to these concerns, but it does add further complexity to any research study that investigates an incendiary, heightened and emotive subject area such as class. This is especially the case given the way in which they appeared to feel their own class was something that could potentially disadvantage them. I would therefore argue that, as with any such research of this kind, the interviewer must always be considered as an active part of the research process and judgements made from any study should keep this in mind.

The second point that is important to consider in reflecting on this research is that this study actually 'forced' the novice teachers to discuss things they had not necessarily been asked before and therefore could also have been active in shaping their future thinking. In this way, all research studies must be considered as a form of intervention especially when participants are being asked to explain themselves, disclose sometimes personal information and often justify their choices. For instance, at least three of the novice teachers expressed a sense of gratitude after taking part in the research. In particular, they spoke of having enjoyed the opportunity to talk. The interview process thus acted as a form of catharsis for them. It is probably important to add that those expressing this were working class novice teachers and therefore it goes back to the point made earlier that my own presence enabled them the space and opportunity to discuss their own thoughts and feelings in a 'safe' environment (given my likely perceived working class embodiment). Having said this, how are other novice teachers from all class backgrounds (including middle class individuals) offered this 'safe' environment to discuss their choices and feelings? For instance, would the middle class novice teachers have enjoyed the research process more if I had been perceived to be from the same background as them? Would all eleven novice teachers have felt any differently had they not expressed their views out loud to me?

This study lends weight to the argument that issues of social class and identity should be central to the formal process of learning to become a teacher. In addition, it also suggests that efforts to prepare teachers for their work in schools in England need to

be conducted within a learning environment that takes account of the social contexts of learning and of the relationship of novice teachers to these contexts. Such learning opportunities have in recent years largely been off the ITET agenda (Reay, 2004c; Gazeley and Dunne, 2007) and this study would concur with international evidence (Allard and Santoro, 2006) that novice teachers' own identities and the complexities and tensions this can create in relation to teaching, are the absent present in ITET in England.

In the process of becoming a teacher however, novice teachers are inevitably concerned to present themselves in the best possible light, especially in a performative school system such as England (Ball, 2003b). The tutors involved with teaching them on their ITET courses and the mentors they have on their placements in schools are likely to be perceived as those exact people novice teachers need to 'impress' in order to 'prove' they are capable teachers and to meet the performance standards of a competence based programme. Thus, even if novice teachers felt they wanted to discuss these issues (and I am not implying this research is suggesting they are all either willing or even able to), then the current way ITET is configured may not allow for this.

These reflections will be considered in more detail below as the implications from this are drawn out.

Contribution, implications and agenda for future research

This study can be seen as making a contribution to two bodies of literature. The first is the more general literature on class identities and the second is more specific to understanding the personal views and emotional investments of teachers and novice teachers as they make decisions about teaching.

As Chapter One sets out, like Van Galen (2004), this study situates teaching as a form of 'class work'. This study has demonstrated that although novice teachers may not necessarily explicitly verbalise this, their approach to becoming a teacher suggests that implicitly they also see it as 'class work'. In addition, this study also foregrounds the importance of class boundaries in understanding class more generally as well as locating teaching as specifically about boundary crossing. There have been valuable

and illuminative studies exploring the way in which teaching as 'class work' in England impacts upon teachers from mainly working class backgrounds as they teach in working class schools (Maguire, 2001; 2005a; 2005b; Burn, 2001). What was missing from the broader literature (with the exception of Gazeley and Dunne, 2007) was any understanding of the way in which class identities impact on novice teachers in England. More specifically, there was little understanding of how the process of teaching as 'class work' and 'boundary crossing' impacted upon middle class individuals. Whilst this study is of course small in scale and remit, it is hoped it can contribute to a broader literature that I would argue is needed to enable us to further understand the processes of class at work in learning to teach and becoming a teacher.

More broadly, the argument presented above can also help understand how classed identities work in general and the importance of class boundaries in helping people confront class and how this results in varying coping mechanisms to handle such disruptions.

Furthermore, a major contribution of this study is that it offers additional support for arguments that social class needs to be on the agenda for all novice teachers as they learn to teach. This is because I would argue that a class identity is potentially troubling territory for *all* new teachers, including those from both working and middle class backgrounds. But, as social class remains off the formal ITET agenda, novice teachers, in particular those from working class backgrounds, may find their classed identities constraining and shaping them in ways that might not always enable them to make informed choices about their futures in teaching. In addition, teachers may act in covert and strategic ways to handle the potentially constraining nature of their class identities.

Implicit in previous arguments about inequities in education and teaching is a view that middle class teachers are part of the problem. One reading of this study about the ability that middle class individuals have to be strategic about their class to avoid being disadvantaged in ways that working class individuals are not supports this view. However, an important question that this study revealed was, what exactly should middle class novice teachers (and middle class teachers more broadly) do about their class identity?

It would therefore appear that there are a range of class tensions for middle class novice teachers as well as those from working class backgrounds. These range from what could be seen as forms of 'class guilt' (for instance having had a privileged education they feel they 'should' give something back) to wanting to work in the class 'Other' but worrying that they will be disadvantaged in some way by not having forms of cultural capital they feel will be most valued.

To help think about this in more detail, it is useful to consider the thoughts of Reay (2004c: 7) in response to the perceived lack of focus on social class in ITET:

> With no access to sociological and historical understanding of social class and in particular the positioning of the working classes within education initial teacher training students are left ill informed and I would argue ill equipped to broach let alone tackle the greatest problem the educational system faces that of working class educational underachievement, alienation and disaffection … This is not to say that there are not many initial teacher students/trainees who are aware and sensitive to social class differences and understand that impact class has on learner identities. But we cannot rely on serendipity - the fortuitous chance that teachers will educate themselves about the importance of social class in schooling - that they will have knowledge and understanding of the different class cultures of the children in their classes. Inevitably not all of them will … and this is where ITE has a crucial role.

This study would support this argument not least because situating class on the ITET agenda would be a start. In addition, as highlighted in Chapter Six, even where novice teachers are sensitive to class, their understandings often draw on personal and purely cultural understandings of class, as is the tendency in policy circles (Francis and Hey, 2009) which leads this study to conclude with Lupton (2009: 18) when she argues:

> Nevertheless, if we are expecting teachers to change anything, it is essential that they have access to a more structural view of the problems of disadvantaged neighbourhoods than they currently do: to a new politics of place.

But more than this, this study also presents evidence that not only should social class in relation to learner identities be on the agenda in ITET, social class in relation to novice teacher identities should also be there. In this way, the types of tensions that arise as a result of boundary crossing in teaching could be foregrounded and discussed out in the open, rather than novice teachers feeling they have to be limited by their

class or forced into accepting the only way to avoid these limitations, is to be strategic and deny or disassociate with class.

In arguing for this, we should recall the arguments of Ladson-Billings (2001: 96) who stated that often, teachers in the US 'have little or no understanding of their own culture' and that this is often 'taken-for-granted' and 'rarely interrogated'. As a consequence, we are reminded that many novice teachers are thus likely to be 'unaware of the effects of their classed identities on their professional practice' (Gazeley and Dunne, 2007: 413). But what this study adds to these arguments is that even when novice teachers do have some (often) vague understanding of this, there is no legitimate place to discuss this out in the open.

Therefore, this study would suggest ITET needs to at least begin to address this problem. I would argue that a first step would be to overtly name teaching as akin to 'class work'. Within this, teachers could be explicitly positioned as 'mediators of class' (Van Galen, 2004) or 'cultural brokers' (Bartolome, 2002). This would enable the introduction of a language that enables class to be out in the open so that teaching could be positively valued as being, at least partly, about addressing class inequities. ITET should therefore turn to the likes of Giroux (1992) who argues that teachers should engage in what he calls 'border pedagogy' (see Chapter Two).

In addition, and to support these arguments, this study has demonstrated that ITET has the ability to introduce new class settings (the class 'Other') by placing novice teachers in class contexts they have not previously experienced. Moreover, this study has illustrated that this can lead to changed perceptions of both education and the types of teachers new teachers want to become. We also saw that exposure to different class settings, by the crossing of class boundaries, was able to transform the views of more than a minority of the novice teachers in this sample. Thus, if ITET was to incorporate a new explicitly classed language, alongside of this practical exposure to class 'Other' settings, it could well be powerful in changing existing preconceptions within education and begin to confront issues of inequity.

However, a word of caution would be that if class is to be substantially incorporated into ITET, this must be done in both a supportive and reflexive manner. Given the incendiary nature of the concept of social class and the high stakes with regard to the

highly inequitable class processes at work in schooling, it might not be possible or even desirable for ITET tutors to be those responsible for these discussions with novice teachers. This is because handled badly, such discussions may do more harm than good and do little to challenge some of the stereotypical (and often harmful) views that exist already in relation to class and schooling. Instead, I would suggest that the responsibility for this need to fall to those within the ITET community, academics and members of the teaching profession with a commitment to fundamentally addressing class inequities and who are equipped with an appropriate discourse and set of skills to handle this in the sensitive way it deserves.

There are of course likely to be many issues with this, not least the reports that attempting to introduce class into ITET can be met with resistance from both novice teachers themselves (Bartolome, 2002) as well as from colleagues in schools (Gazeley and Dunne, 2007). In addition, this research demonstrated that novice teachers from working class backgrounds, on realising they could be effective as well as enjoy the more academic teaching in middle class settings, seemingly abandoned the commitment to working in working class schools. However to focus on this would be to miss the point somewhat, especially given arguments elsewhere that matching characteristics of teachers and learners is certainly not a necessity, especially since these are often based on stereotypical assumptions (Francis, 2008). Moreover, the possibility that their commitment was only fuelled by a lack of self belief as a result of their classed identities is inequitable in its own right. Furthermore, surely the real challenge of creating a more equitable system through teachers is that via a more reflexive understanding of social class, the barriers facing all novice teachers will be less covert and the idea of social justice can become seen as a key attribute of the profession of teaching for *all* teachers.

Above I have teased out the important implications that I feel this study points towards. However, realising these in both the wider education community and ITET is potentially a long way off given stubborn resistance to the inclusion of class despite overwhelming evidence about the classed nature of education. Therefore, it would seem that a stronger evidence base from which to push for a greater inclusion of class in ITET in England is required. The work of Gazeley and Dunne (2007) for instance, as reported in Chapter Two, made a clear case that asking novice teachers to research issues of social class made them more empathetic towards troubling and systemic

class inequities and the role of education within this. Similarly, international literature highlights the importance of sensitising new teachers to their own culture and identity, including their social class and therefore I would argue more of this kind of work needs to be done in a UK context so that social justice becomes central to the process of becoming a teacher.

Appendix A

Aide Memoires

Notes on completing the interviews (present on each aide memoire):

- o Interviews to last between 30 minutes and one hour
- o Refer to previously completed copies of their questionnaires and amend each aide memoire accordingly
- o The following questions will form the basic structure for the interviews with follow-ups and probes as appropriate
- o Audio record interviews if consent attained
- o Assure all interviewees of confidentiality in relation to responses on course and anonymity in final PhD.

Aide Memoire for 1st round of interviews (Dec 04/Jan 05)

Questions

1. Introduction to research. Thank participants for agreeing to take part in the research and giving up some of their valuable time during this very busy PGCE year. The research is investigating trainee teachers desires about where they would/wouldn't like to teach and your experiences whilst on the PGCE year and possibly into your NQT year etc

2. Check biographical details:
   - Age
   - Gender
   - Occupation of parents/carers. Main income earner
   - Occupations previous to PGCE year (those with one year gap or more after degree)
   - Type of secondary school and where appropriate college etc.
   - Type and name of school attending for first period of teaching experience

3. You reported in the questionnaire you filled in that you would like to teach in XXXX type of school. Can you please tell me why you responded in this way? Do you still feel the same about this or have your views changed/developed since completing the questionnaire?

4. Have any particular experiences/individuals/groups been especially influential in helping you to form this view about where you would like to teach?

5. In what ways if any did your own experience of schooling influence your views about where you would like to teach?

6. Do you have friends/family members or any other people you know who are already teachers? If so, what views have they expressed

about the type and nature of school at which you might eventually like to teach/gain employment?

7. Although you reported that you intend to work in XXXX type of school, are there any worries/issues which you currently have in relation to this aspiration?

8. Are there any types of schools you have concerns/issues about working in? If so, can you tell me a little bit more about these?

9. You said you were currently doing your teaching experience in XXXX school which you said is XXtypeXX. How have you found this experience? Can you describe school? What do you think about the school?

10. Thanks for answering my questions. Explain will be contacting again later in the academic year to arrange another interview. Collect contact details and preferred method to stay in touch.

Aide Memoire for 2nd round of interviews (March 05)

Questions

1. Introduction: Again thank for continuing to participate in the research. Explain the interview will follow a similar format to the last interview and I will be drawing on information provided in the questionnaire and the last interview.

2. You've just completed your second school/college experience, where have you done that? Can you describe the school/college to me? (prompts: intake, area, ethos, behaviour, ability etc)

3. How does that compare to XXXX where you completed your first school/college experience? (differences/similarities)

4. Which one did you prefer? Can you tell me a little about that?

5. In your original questionnaire you said you were interested in working in XXXX type of school. Do you still feel that way? Why/why not? Do you have any new concerns about going into that type of school?

6. Do you currently have any schools/colleges that you still would not be interested in?

7. How would you describe the two schools/colleges?

8. On the original questionnaire, you were asked if you thought you belonged to a particular social class and you put YES/NO, XXXX class, can you just tell me why you answered that way?

Aide Memoire for 3rd round of interviews (May/June 05)

Questions

1. Introduction, thank again for continued participation. Reminder of format and that will be drawing on information provided in the questionnaire and the last interview/s.

2. Have you managed to obtain a teaching post? If so, can you describe the school (Prompts: intake, behaviour, attainment, area, ethos, ability, kids on the whole). What made you apply for that job? What made you accept that job?

3. Describe the jobs you had/have you been applying for? (Prompts: intake, behaviour, attainment, area, ethos, ability, kids on the whole)

4. What are your hopes and fears for your job/once you find a job?

5. Back in October, you said you had wanted to find work in a type of school in an XXXX area. Would you say your job search and/or job obtained fulfils that criteria? Did your criteria change over the year? If so in what ways and why?

6. In terms of your experiences whilst on the course, describe the schools you went into? (Prompts: intake, behaviour, attainment, area, ethos, ability kids on the whole). How did they differ? How were they similar?

7. In what ways, if any, did your own experiences of schooling influence your choices either positively or negatively? In what ways? Why do you think that?

8. Would you say, looking back, anything was particularly important in helping you make decisions about where you would like to teach?

9. When you hear the term 'challenge' applied to schools, what does this term conjure up to you?

10. Would you say the schools you went to were challenging in terms of the way the pupils/students were? What do you mean by challenge here? If not, what types of things would you regard as a challenge in that way?

11. According to the DfES criteria, your placement is/is not classed as challenging (FSM, A-C% etc) what are your thoughts? Would you understand why 'challenging' is formulated this way? Would you agree? Do you think these schools are 'disadvantaged' in any way? Please explain.

12. Would you ever want to work in a school that posed these types of challenges? Explain your answer.

13. How do you think the job you have obtained would be classed according to this criteria?

14. Do you think you would feel any different if you had/hadn't had an experience in a 'challenging type of school? Please explain.

15. Do you think teachers once trained can walk into any school and teach? Why? Do you think they need different qualities/skills etc? Do you think the schools you taught in during your experience would enable you to teach anywhere? Why/why not?

Aide Memoire for 4th round of interviews (July/August 06)

Version 1: For those who had been teaching

Questions

1. Introduction: Offer sincere thanks for staying in touch and agreeing to carry on research. Reminder about format of interviews and that will refer back to things mentioned during PGCE year and reflect on some of that as well as what has happened in the last year.

2. Find out any missing biographical data from previous interviews

3. Can you describe the school you are teaching at to me? (Prompts: features size, no. of pupils, location, ethos?) How is the school viewed by the parents of the children that attend? How is the school viewed by people other than parents in the community it serves? How is the school viewed by others outside of that community? Where do you draw these understandings/impressions from?

4. [for those who didn't have job at end of PGCE] what other jobs did you apply for? Can you describe schools? (Prompt as above).

5. Can you describe the pupils who attend the school? What type of backgrounds do they come from? What impact if any do you think this has on the school? What impact do you think this has on your teaching and general teaching within the school? How similar/different are the children to you when you attended school and the children you went to school with? How would you describe the parents of the children you teach?

6. Would you ever describe the school as having a predominantly middle class or a predominantly working class identity? How have you come to that view? Is that based on teachers or pupils? Is that predominantly, entirely, partly middle/working class? If don't think either, what type of identity would you say the school has?

7. Can you describe the area/community the school is located in? (prompts: type of tenure, size of houses, facilities for the community, affluence/poverty etc).   Is this the area the school draws its pupils from? Does the school reflect the general area it is located in? How is the area viewed by local people? How is the area viewed by the teachers within the school? How is the community viewed by others from outside of the locality?

8. How similar/different is the area you grew up and attended school in? How has this affected you as a teacher?

9. Can you see yourself teaching at that type of school long-term? Can you see yourself wanting to teach those type of children long-term? Why/why not?

9. How does it compare in the terms described above to the schools you experienced during your PGCE year? (Prompts: what were those locations/communities like? What about the pupils? The parents? How viewed by locals and others not from the area?

10. How different/similar were these to the type of school you attended, the pupils you went to school with? The parents of the children you went to school with? The area you went to school in?

11. How similar/different do you think the school you are teaching at is to the type of school you thought you would like to teach in when you started on the PGCE? Has your idea of your 'ideal' sort of job changed? If so, how and why? If not, why not?

12. In the second interview, we talked about social class and I'd just like to revisit that. When we discussed it, you said you felt XXXX, can I just ask you in what ways (if any) do you feel middle and/or working class? How do you think this has affected you as a teacher?

13. Do you think social class matters in relation to education and teaching? Why/why not?

14. If you were to hear the terms 'a typical working class school/a typical middle class school' what would that conjure up to you? Would you associate with these terms? Would you feel comfortable using these terms?

Version 2: For those who had not been teaching

1. Introduction: Offer sincere thanks for staying in touch and agreeing to carry on research. Reminder about format of interviews and that will refer back to things mentioned during PGCE year and reflect on some of that as well as what has happened in the last year.

2. Find out any missing biographical data from previous interviews

3. What have you been doing since last time we spoke? (employment – why that type of employment?)

4. Why did you not go straight into teaching?

5. Have you still got intentions to teach? If not, why not?

6. Have you got a teaching post lined up? (Can you describe the school? Do you have any idea about the location/area/community the school is in? Any idea about pupils, backgrounds, parents? Any idea how the school viewed by local people/community it serves, how viewed by others outside of that locality? Where have you drawn these views from?

7. (if have a job) Would you ever describe the school as having a middle or a working class identity? Is this partly, predominantly or entirely? Is this in terms of the pupils and/or teachers? How have you arrived at this view?

8. How do you think it compares in these terms to the schools you experienced on your PGCE?

9. Have you been applying for (other) teaching posts? What type of schools have you been applying to? (location/area/community? Pupils backgrounds/parents etc?)

10. In the second interview, we talked about social class and I'd just like to revisit that. When we discussed it, you said you felt XXXX, can I just ask you in what ways (if any) do you feel middle and/or working class? How do you think this has affected you as a teacher?

11. Do you think social class matters in relation to education and teaching? Why/why not?

12. If you were to hear the terms 'a typical working class school/a typical middle class school' what would that conjure up to you? Would you associate with these terms? Would you feel comfortable using these terms?

Appendix B

Sample Questionnaire

NB: This survey was a one sheet, two-side questionnaire but it has been re-sized for inclusion here

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TRAINEE TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire has been designed to find out about your existing intentions with regard to your career in teaching. I will use the information to help me with my research into the early stages of teachers' careers. It would be helpful if you could complete all questions although please feel free to omit any you feel inappropriate. Your answers are completely confidential. There is an option at the end if you do not wish to participate any further in this research project.

Part 1 – Your Background

1.1 Age: ☐

1.2 Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

1.3 Name of Specialist Subject: _____

1.4 Which of the following categories best describes your ethnicity:

Black (including UK born and settled) ☐

Asian (including UK born and settled) ☐

White (including UK born and settled) ☐

Other*: ☐
*Please specify:_____

1.5 Place of Birth: _____

1.6 What is the name, area and postcode of the place you lived the majority of your childhood/adolescent years (age 5-18):
Place:_____ Area: _____
Postcode: _____

1.7 Which term best characterises the area where you lived the majority of your childhood/adolescent years (age 5-18):

Inner city ☐ Suburban ☐ General urban ☐

Rural ☐ Semi rural ☐ Other* ☐
*Please Specify: _____

1.8 Was/are either one or more of your parents/carers a teacher?

Yes ☐ No ☐

1.9 Which type of school most closely characterises the *majority* of your education from the ages 11-16?

Comprehensive (11-16) ☐ Specialist School ☐

Comprehensive (11-18) ☐ Grammar school ☐

Independent School ☐ Secondary Modern ☐

Other* ☐
* Please specify_____

1.10 Please select the area which best describes where the school was *located*:

Inner city ☐   Suburban ☐   General urban ☐

Rural ☐   Semi rural ☐   Other* ☐

*Please Specify: _____

1.11 Please select the area which best characterises where most of the pupils attending the school *lived*?

Inner city ☐   Suburban ☐   General urban ☐

Rural ☐   Semi rural ☐   Other* ☐

*Please Specify: _____

1.12 Which type of school/college most closely characterises the *majority* of your education from the ages of 16-18?

Comprehensive VI Form ☐   Sixth Form College ☐

Independent VI Form ☐   FE College ☐

Grammar VI Form ☐   Specialist College ☐

Other* ☐

*Please specify: _____

1.13 Please select the area which best describes where the school/college was *located*:

Inner city ☐   Suburban ☐   General urban ☐

Rural ☐   Semi rural ☐   Other* ☐

*Please Specify: _____

1.14 Please select the area which best characterises where most of the pupils attending the school/college *lived*?

Inner city ☐   Suburban ☐   General urban ☐

Rural ☐   Semi rural ☐   Other* ☐

*Please Specify: _____

1.15 Do you see your family as belonging to a particular social class?

Yes ☐   No ☐

1.16 If yes, which of the following would you be most likely to use?

Working class ☐   Middle Class ☐   Upper class ☐   Other* ☐

*Please Specify:_____

Part 2 – Your Intentions

2.1 In which type of school/college are you currently most interested in finding a teaching post?

Comprehensive (11-16) ☐   Sixth Form College ☐

Comprehensive (11-18) ☐   FE College ☐

Independent School ☐   Grammar School ☐

Specialist School ☐   Please state_____

Other ☐   Please state_____

Type of school/college ☐   Not sure ☐
not a significant choice factor

2.2 Please explain the reasons why you have selected the above:

2.3 In which *location* are you currently interested in finding a teaching post?

Inner city ☐   Suburban ☐   General urban ☐

Rural ☐   Semi rural ☐   Other* ☐

Location of school/college ☐   Not sure ☐
not a significant choice factor

*Please Specify: _____

2.4 Please explain the reasons why you have selected the above:

2.5 Do you have any preferences on what type of area you would like the school/college you work in to *draw its pupils/students* from?

Inner city ☐   Suburban ☐   General urban ☐

Rural ☐   Semi rural ☐   Other* ☐

Location of school/college ☐   Not sure ☐
not a significant choice factor

*Please Specify: _____

2.6 Please explain the reasons why you have selected the above:

2.7 Are there any schools/colleges listed in question 2.1 that you would definitely not consider working in?

Yes ☐   No ☐

2.8 If yes, please tell me about these and explain the reasons why below:

2.9 Are there any *locations* listed in question 2.3 that you would definitely not consider working in?

Yes ☐   No ☐

2.10 If yes, please tell me about this and explain the reasons why below:

2.11 Are there any areas listed in question 2.5 where the pupils/students may draw from that would mean you would definitely not consider taking a job at a particular school/college?

Yes ☐   No ☐

2.12 If yes, please tell me about this and explain the reasons why below:

Please provide your name below. Again, this information is completely confidential and will not be used for the purposes of your PGCE course

Name: _____

E-mail Address:_____

Telephone Number: _____

Please tick this box if you **do not** want to participate in
this research project any further   ☐

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

I APPRECIATE THE VIEWS YOU HAVE SHARED WITH ME

IF YOU WOULD LIKE FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THIS RESEARCH AT ANY TIME, PLEASE CONTACT:

Lisa Jones, School of Education, The University**********

Appendix C

Pen Portraits of Novice Teachers

Katie
Background
Katie is a mixed heritage female from a small city in the North of England. Katie was 21 at the start of her Science PGCE year, starting the course directly after graduating with a 2:1 in Science and Maths from a pre-1992 Northern university in the North of England.

Classed identity
In terms of her class background, Katie grew up in a single parent family and her mother worked as a police officer. Katie self-identified as working class and when asked to explain why, she said:

> Erm, I was brought up in a council estate … single mum, …erm, yes I just know I'm definitely not middle class, erm [Lisa: What things do you use to define sort of like class? What markers do you use?] I suppose, I think I find it hard to define what I mean by working class but middle class to me was: big house, nice car, erm, I don't know, erm parents with good jobs, erm, so yes. So my parents were the opposite to that so.

Therefore Katie defines herself as working class by describing two traits she sees as being 'working class' though finds it easier to define her class by what she feels she is not. Thus for Katie, being working class appears to mean she is definitely not 'middle class'.

Katie attended an 11-18, mixed sex, ethnically diverse CoE comprehensive school in a suburban area in her home city. The school was the only CoE school in the area and she said it drew its pupils from across the city resulting in a socially-mixed intake. It took Katie 45 minutes to get to school and she said the school was in a 'more middle class area but it didn't just take people from that area because I used to go there'.

Therefore, although Katie self-identifies as working class through her social background, educationally speaking, Katie's schooling was more socially mixed and she mixed with children from all social backgrounds from a young age.

Social class and Katie's developing professional identity
At the start of her PGCE, Katie specified she had wanted to eventually find work in a 'nice' 11-18 comprehensive. Katie was very quietly spoken, describing herself as 'quite a laid back person'. She felt the school she taught in needed to reflect this, and was therefore reluctant to teach in a school with 'behavioural problems' because she felt she was not 'confident enough' to do this.

Katie said her desire to teach came from her realisation she was good at explaining things to people. Katie had no family or friends who had previously been teachers and

remarked that: '… [I'm] finding it quite strange a lot of the people on the course I've spoke to …like their dad, or their aunty, [or] have got lots of people in their family who are teachers…'. Katie's own very positive experience of schooling had also been influential. She said she had attended a 'nice' school and wanted a 'nice' school to ensure she would be happy in her job. Thus it would appear that Katie was looking to find a school not too dissimilar from her own, one that is socially mixed but skewed towards the more advantaged end of the spectrum.

During the PGCE year, Katie had placements in two schools. The first was Stopford Grammar, a mixed sex selective school with below average levels of pupils receiving FSM and with SEN where 95 per cent of pupils gained five or more A*-C grades including English and Maths in 2005. The second was Hemsby School, an 11-18 school for boys with again below average numbers of children with SEN and on FSM.

Katie enjoyed both placements but preferred her time at Stopford. She said this had changed her mind about selective schools saying it was not as 'contentious' as she thought. When asked to explain what she meant, she said the children:

> …were normal, I expected them to be more stuck up and obviously because I went to a really normal school it was, although it was in a middle class area there were a lot of kids from all different areas, different backgrounds so to me that's normal and I don't know many people who could afford to send their kids to private school so it was always I don't know a misconception I guess I'd had that they were very posh and could be very formal.

Katie also equated her 'socially mixed' school as being very similar to this school, a school that by her definition, serves '…quite a middle-class or even upper class section of people'. It is therefore potentially the case that Katie's own educational experiences were not too dissimilar to those encountered at the selective grammar school. As such, this would suggest Katie's schooling was not a 'typical' working class education. It would seem that Katie appears to have crossed class boundaries early in her own education and being around people from all classes is what she felt was normal.

Both schools, in principle, suited what Katie wanted and matched her own educational experiences to some extent. Katie almost applied for a job that was in an inner city comprehensive in what she described a 'really rough' area but said: 'my mum wouldn't let me' saying it would be 'really really quite horrendous'.

Katie managed to find work at an 11-16 mixed sex Catholic comprehensive school, located in an area Katie referred to as 'nice'. However, the area the school is located in offers a misleading idea of context because the school draws pupils from a much wider area than the areas surrounding the school, many of which have much higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage. Thus the school had 50 per cent of pupils receiving FSM and only 13 per cent pupils gaining five or more GCSE grade A*-C including English and Maths in 2005. It would have been very interesting to revisit Katie but unfortunately she was lost to the research and only found this post after the PGCE finished and therefore her views were unable to be collected.

Jen

Background

Jen is a white female aged 24 at the start of her Business Education PGCE. Jen said she came from a small town/suburban area bordering a Midlands city and she attended a post-1992 Northern university to complete her four year business degree, obtaining a 2:2. After completing her degree, she spent some time doing temp work in a call centre and transport depot.

Classed identity

Jen self-identified as middle class and when asked why, she said:

> Erm because I think well, my parents are both teachers, live in a kind of suburban area, they were brought up, always kind of knowing not that it was, well it kinda was expected that I'd go to university and do something that I wouldn't just do my GCSEs and leave.

She said class was not something she had thought about much but rather 'it's just kind of there I think' and this had been throughout her life. She said:

> I think I've always thought of myself as middle class even right down to when at GCSEs you talk about class systems and what your parents do, I already kind of put myself in that box … I don't think anyone ever said to me 'you are middle class' I think I just kind of, I dunno, just kind of see yourself a certain way, I heard it in conversations what somebody classed as middle class is, what somebody classed as working class is.

Social class and Jen's developing professional identity

Although both of Jen's parents worked as secondary teachers, each worked in very different contexts, her father at a suburban comprehensive (the one Jen attended herself), and her mother at an 'inner city' comprehensive. Jen explained that initially both parents had advised her not to enter the profession due to it being 'hard work'. However, Jen had friends who were teachers and who 'were getting loads out of what they were doing' and Jen was not getting this satisfaction in her job. Thus, Jen's decision to enter into teaching focused around finding a rewarding career and she had been able to draw on available social capital to make this decision.

Initially Jen had talked of not really knowing what type of school to find work in but had some very strong ideas about the settings she would not like. In particular, she had strong reservations about working in the independent sector which she saw as 'unfair' and was also quite clear from the outset that she wanted to work in a suburban area as this was the type of area she was familiar with and that she could relate to suburban kids. In particular, she stressed that she wanted to teach in 'a good area', by this she meant: 'like not council estate … a more middle class area'. Jen was very clear that she did not want to teach in an inner city area due to 'too many problems' and explained that this was largely down to observing her mother's experiences working in such a setting because '…she spends most of her time in the classroom on behaviour '. Her reticence to work in such contexts directly linked the children's behaviour and attitude to learning with having come from a disadvantaged background, she said:

> ...Just the attitude, a lot of them, I know it's not all of them … I just think that they are kids with, from less of a privileged background, not saying that they

are all daft or anything but I think there are more problems and behaviour issues which I personally wouldn't want to deal with…

During the PGCE year, Jen went to Timperwell Community School for her first placement. This was an 11-16 mixed sex comprehensive with broadly average numbers of children receiving FSM and with SEN and described by Ofsted as 'fully comprehensive'. In 2005, 35 per cent of pupils gained five or more A*-C grades including English and Maths. For her second and third placements, Jen attended a further education college.

Jen had a reasonable experience at Timperwell but it started to make her re-think whether she wanted to be a secondary teacher. Jen then had a really enjoyable placement at the college. Having experienced both the secondary school and the college, Jen had a change of heart and decided she no longer wanted to become a secondary school teacher and had switched her focus to primary school teaching. She explained this had been something she had been torn about for some time and her experiences in both the school and the college confirmed secondary (and post-16) teaching was not for her. Given she was already a substantial way through the PGCE, she decided to complete the course and hope to transfer into the primary sector later.

Interestingly, Jen's enjoyable time at the college confirmed that her real desire in teaching focused on working with smaller groups than those experienced in the secondary school. Working at the college had enabled the opportunity to 'build relationships' with her students and she had preferred this, finding it more 'personal'. This, combined with her preference for teaching the younger children at the secondary helped her to decide that it was primary schools that would allow her to both build relationships and work with younger children.

Jen therefore focused on looking for primary school work but as primary teaching posts are highly competitive, she had no luck finding a post before the end of the PGCE. Despite her reservations about social context, Jen understood that in order to get into primary teaching, she would need to focus on getting any job as a starting point and this included looking in inner city areas as well as suburban ones.

Following the PGCE, Jen had managed to find work as a teaching assistant (TA) at an 'inner city' primary school which she did for one full term. For the next twelve months, she then split her time equally working as a part-time TA at the primary and part-time working as a TA in an autistic unit co-located with the primary. Jen was then employed full-time as a TA in the autistic unit and had decided that working with children with SEN was what she wanted to do. The autism unit only had one class but there were plans to extend that year which would require another teacher and she hoped to apply for this as she had found what she really wanted to do, glad that she had stumbled across it by chance.

Daniel
Background
Daniel is a white male aged 21 at the start of his Maths PGCE. He said he came from a semi-rural/suburban area near a small Northern city. Daniel started the PGCE directly after completing his BA Economics degree at a Northern pre-1992 university where he obtained a 2:1. Daniel attended an 11-18 Catholic comprehensive school in what he termed a suburban area for his own schooling.

Classed identity

Whilst growing up, Daniel's father worked as a microbiologist in a hospital laboratory and his mother worked as a hospital secretary. Daniel did not see himself as belonging to any particular social class, when asked why, he said:

> Yes, the thing is like, sort of the area that I live in, is old, sort of working class, that is still the thing people still went on about. But working class is the area where I was brought up. But my dad has got like a degree and it's a middle class trait, and I've got a degree, I went to university as well which is a middle class trait … my interests I'm into are all, actually I don't know if they are, I like different things … It is more because like, no, because I've got to have a foot in each camp. It would be pretty much impossible to class yourself as one thing or the other, they are certain indicators that you go on to classify someone, I'm sort of in between … I like reading and going to the theatre and things like that, and watching plays rather than musicals where as most working class people would prefer to see Grease to Othello … but then again I'd rather go and watch football on a summer day, and sit in the pub and watch football on Sunday.

Daniel tries to make sense of his class by drawing on available discourses of class, particularly those of education and cultural preferences and tastes (in a Bourdieuian sense). Daniel felt his class identity was not straightforward as he felt 'straddled' class borders, with education seen as crucial in this. For Daniel, his lack of fitting neatly into either class means he also struggles to feel a sense of belonging to either.

Social class and Daniel's developing professional identity

Daniel decided to teach because he wanted '…something that will be more rewarding, more enjoyable, a little less money driven …' than other occupations he considered (e.g., finance). He also had an aunt and uncle who taught. From the outset, Daniel wanted to teach in an 11-16 comprehensive school though was unsure of the context but he had reservations about the 'inner city' due to the extra challenges brought about by behaviour problems and his perception that such schools would be 'too rough'. He also expressed a preference to find work at a school similar to his own so he could relate to the children and for the strong sense of community. Daniel's desire to teach and his perceptions about where he wanted to teach were very much focused around his own experiences of schooling and the desire to find a school that he felt was similar to his own.

During the PGCE, Daniel's was placed at two different schools. The first, Northwood, was an 11-16 mixed sex comprehensive with much higher than average number of pupils on FSM and with SEN and only 24 per cent of pupils gaining their five or more GCSE A*-C grades including English and Maths in 2005. He was also placed at Updale, an 11-18 mixed sex comprehensive, with broadly average FSM and SEN but where 42 per cent of pupils gained their five or more GCSE A*-C grades including English and Maths in 2005.

Northwood, to all intents and purposes was defined as a 'SfCC', the type of school setting that Daniel did not want to teach in. On describing the school, Daniel said: 'it's in a working class area … it's quite challenging'. By contrast, prior to his placement at Updale, Daniel had heard the school was supposed to be: '…sort of average school, probably a bit nicer than the one I've been at but not in a fairly rich area'.

However, on completing the placements, Daniel said though on paper Updale appeared to be a 'good' school with a higher achievement culture than Northwood, in practice there was little difference. Though Updale was more closely aligned to the type of school Daniel wanted to work in, he preferred his time at Northwood, citing the more personal feel alongside feeling frustrated at Updale that he had not progressed as much as he would have liked to.

During the PGCE year, Daniel's views about the type of school he would like to obtain a teaching post in fluctuated between his initial views about not wanting an inner city school, preferring instead a school that more closely resembled his own schooling towards feeling that his time at Northwood had not been too bad and thus he would consider teaching in such a school after he '…really quite enjoyed it'. He said however that he would like to have experienced a 'slightly more middle class area' to see if he was better suited to this whilst on the PGCE.

Daniel also asserted that if pushed to choose between an independent/selective grammar school and a challenging inner city comprehensive, he would choose the former as he really did not want to focus on behaviour.

However, three weeks into his final placement, Daniel was offered a post at Northwood and accepted it. Daniel had already planned to go abroad for the summer after his PGCE and this trip would go into September when schools would expect him to start work. Northwood had been flexible about this and therefore Daniel felt unable to turn this down. He had not applied for any other posts. Daniel was positive saying Northwood had been better than he expected.

However, as his NQT year at Northwood drew to a close, Daniel had already handed in his notice and was looking for work elsewhere as he had found it really difficult and felt that teaching at the school felt like 'chasing his tail'. Daniel said he had even considered leaving during the year but decided to stick it out as he had started to enjoy it some more but he was now looking for work in a less challenging context.

Sarah
Background
Sarah is a white female from a suburban area of large Northern conurbation who was 24 at the start of her MFL PGCE. Sarah attended an 11-16 mixed sex comprehensive school and then attended a suburban sixth form college to complete her A Levels. Sarah then spent two years working for a publishing firm. She then attended a pre-1992 university and obtained a 2:2 in French.

Classed identity
Sarah said her father worked as a self-employed sheet metal worker and her mother worked as a housing assistant. From this limited information Sarah discloses, it is difficult to understand exactly what these involved though as she makes clear below, both parents received a higher education. Sarah self-identified as middle class and when asked why, she said:

> In the sense that my parents were educated and most, well all of my family, my immediate family have you know studied at a higher level, I come from, I mean I don't want this to sound snobby but it was just the way I was brought up, I think a lot of this answer is going to depend upon what you kind of mean by class exactly but I think it's got a lot to do with your social upbringing, not

just the materialistic things but I don't know, things like manners, your attitudes towards things I think defines your class as much as your economic background and I think the way that I was brought up is you know to treat people respectfully and that kind of thing, to respect authority, having good manners I think shows a lot about your background in terms of economic thingies, 'thingies' [laughs]. In terms of assets and wealth we were reasonably well off, not rich but we always had a new car, we had a nice house, we had a computer, we had two or three holidays every year, we both went to university, my sister and myself obviously and we've been successful, and we haven't struggled too hard to get there, and I think that's what makes a difference, I mean some people obviously scrape every single penny together to get to university, we didn't have to do that fortunately, thank goodness.

Social class and Sarah's developing professional identity
Teaching was something Sarah had considered since studying for her A Levels and there was a strong family influence with Sarah's grandparents and some aunts and uncles being teachers. However, Sarah's main motivation to teach was her own positive education which she said: 'I loved it, I really enjoyed my time at school and that's probably why…'

From the outset, Sarah was open about the type of school she would like to teach in with the only exception being inner city contexts which she specified on her questionnaire was to do with: 'social problems such as poverty'.

During the PGCE year, Sarah attended two schools. For her main placement, Sarah attended Brookshaw, an 11-16 mixed Catholic Comprehensive with broadly average SEN and FSM numbers though the most recent Ofsted report to the time Sarah was there remarked that the majority of pupils were from homes in below average socio-economic circumstances. For her contrasting placement, Sarah went to Oakhill, a small, mixed sex 3-18 independent school. Both schools were situated close to the area where Sarah grew up.

Sarah really enjoyed her placement at Brookshaw and preferred this out of the two. She described Brookshaw as a 'nice' school and was '…a mixed bag of everything' meaning it was socially, behaviourally and academic mixed. Though Sarah had initially been open to working in the independent sector, her experience at Oakhill changed her mind. Although she had liked the children at Oakhill, she decided that working in an independent school lacked the challenge that she had enjoyed so much at Brookshaw. After enjoying Brookshaw so much, we reflected back on Sarah's early thoughts about where she wanted to teach and her initial questionnaire response about not wanting an inner city area and her mention of 'poverty' as a reason, she said:

> Sarah: …poverty, I don't know why I wrote that [laughs] I don't know it could mean …Without making a generalisation you do associate poverty with bad behaviour, I certainly do. Erm but don't forget this questionnaire was done at the beginning of the course … I wouldn't write perhaps poverty now because I mean I've taught kids from really low income backgrounds and they're the sweetest little things ever and they are keen to learn erm but I'm still a bit iffy about how to deal with really disaffected pupils who are really, they're stuck in a rut you know where they come from a disadvantaged background you know and they can't really see the light at the end of the tunnel…

Here Sarah is reflecting back and saying that her preconceptions (largely from the media she said) had been challenged having gone to Brookshaw.

Sarah had not found work by the end of the PGCE year despite applying for several posts having experienced what she perceived to be the shortage of available teaching jobs. She had been quite selective initially in her job search deciding not to apply for some posts that arose in schools nearby to where she lived because she thought they might be 'too difficult' to start out in.

Sarah eventually found work at Stiplewood, a semi-rural school in the South of England. The school was an 11-18 mixed sex comprehensive with slightly above average SEN and 27 per cent of children gained their five or more GCSE grades at A*-C including English and Maths in 2005. With regard to FSM eligibility, this was below the national average though the school drew from a very socially mixed catchment area and included many children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds as well as many from more affluent backgrounds. The school is also a comprehensive in a selective school system with the closest secondary schools being selective. Sarah loved teaching at Stiplewood and could see herself staying at that school or a school like it for the foreseeable short to mid-term future. She loved its socially mixed nature and really enjoyed teaching both the more able children and those who struggled. Thus, over the course of her PGCE and NQT years, Sarah developed a perspective aligned to wanting to value children for their efforts, not just their results. This had found its foundations in working with less privileged children and her exposure to class in teaching.

Ben
Background
Ben is a white male from the North East of England who was in his fifties when he started his Maths PGCE. Ben attended a secondary modern school after failing his 11+ but then attended a local grammar school's sixth form to complete his A Levels. Ben completed a science degree at the age of 21 obtaining a first class honours and then went on complete a science PhD. Ben then spent 23 years in the electricity industry and also worked as a research scientist, as well as in the planning department for the privatisation of the electric industry and finally he became a business consultant. Ben retired in the late 1990s and embarked upon a second degree in Mathematics at another pre-1992 university saying this was to 'indulge' himself as he loved maths. Ben obtained another first class honours in 2004.

Classed identity
Ben talks of having a complex class identity. He self identified as coming from a working class background on his questionnaire and when asked why she responded this way, he said:

> I think that is untrue now. I think I must be seen as 'middle class', in fact, any one seeing me in a suit would say there's the typical white Anglo-Saxon male you see. The stereotype. Erm, but, both my family and my wife's family were very, limited in resources. I came from a family of miners that lived in a small village, and they were a very tightly knit community, lots of extended families … Erm, my parents had very little money. And my wife's family had even less, paupers. But education was the key to us, both me and my wife getting on. We were given an education in the 50s and then in the 60s and then we went off to university. Well, made us into professional people but we have

always had to work for what we had. And if I said I was working class, my roots were certainly working class, I went a secondary modern school that was rough as the rough end of Southall [placement school], with some lads who were, ordinary working-class. It is education that has given me some standing and allowed me to achieve... Education has given me the wisdom and understanding of the world, and the ability to meet people and hope get on with people. But I've had to work for things. I've not been middle-class in the sense that my parents were solicitors or doctors or whatever … I've not inherited money and I don't own land. We've had to graft for what we've got and I still hold to a lot of those values. But, we did send our kids to a private school because we believed that girls should go to same sex schools … they've gone on, and are professional young women now. So that is what I meant, it's not an easy story to tell but if anybody said, "What class are you?" I mean I'm not a blue collar worker. But, erm, I've never felt privileged except through the education I've had. Does that make sense?

Social class and Ben's developing professional identity

Ben did not plan to become a teacher until he was nearing the end of his Maths degree when he heard other students on the course discussing becoming teachers. Ben's motivations for becoming a teacher were also clear: 'I'm not going into it as a career [but] as a hobby really … I wouldn't say I want to put something back into society…' As a result, Ben was very clear that he wanted to teach in a context where he did not have to manage any behaviour as he was 'too old' for this type of challenge and so he was clear he did not want to teach in inner city schools. He therefore planned to be 'choosey' about making sure he got the right context for him, though he was initially open to independent, grammar, suburban schools, or colleges.

During the PGCE year, Ben, attended three different educational establishments, Southall High, a 13-18 mixed sex semi-rural comprehensive. This had below average FSM eligibility and SEN numbers and 47 per cent of pupils gained their five or GCSE A*-C grades at GCSE including English and Maths in 2005. Ben then attended Crestwell, a selective 11-19 grammar school for boys where virtually no SEN pupils and no pupils eligible for FSM. 97 per cent of pupils gained five or more A*-C grades at GCSE including English and Maths. He then attended Prestby Sixth Form College.

Ben had a mixed PGCE in terms of his placements and felt disillusioned with the PGCE itself saying it was 'slow', 'wishy-washy' and 'shallow' and that it had not equipped him with the things he needed to know to get on in his school placements. Though he enjoyed working with most of the children, he felt his placement at Southall revealed teaching in a comprehensive was not for him as he did not enjoy the stressful nature of having to deal with some of the challenging pupils. Ben described his time at Crestwell as 'mixed' saying on the whole, he found the teachers there 'quite snooty' and that the school was a little too over-confident in its achievements. Though these two placements broadly fitted what Ben originally felt he was open to, neither quite hit the mark in terms of where he wanted to teach (though his experience at Crestwell he put down to the school itself rather than as a result of it being a selective school).

Ben much preferred his time at Prestby College though he did talk about the downsides of having to teach some poorly motivated students who he felt were only there because they were receiving the £30 per week EMA.

By the end of the PGCE year, Ben explained that he had realised his age was going to act as a barrier to getting many jobs when he said he had effectively been told not to bother applying for a post at Crestwell due to his age and having applied for eight other posts but having been unsuccessful, despite how he saw it, his wealth of subject knowledge. In addition, he had also decided he only wanted a part time job because he realised the burden of a full time job would be too much to take on at his age. However, he found this really difficult given most teaching posts are full rather than part time.

Ben then managed to find part-time work in a high school in a relatively affluent small town, despite having earlier said he did not want to teach in comprehensive school. He then also was offered another part-time post in a sixth form college and he accepted both posts and 'jig-sawed' them together. However Ben felt the issue with part time work was that 'you get the sweepings', by which he meant getting classes and tasks nobody else wanted and thus Ben felt he got the most challenging pupils at the high school. As a result, Ben left after the first term going back to the view that he 'would not teach young people again…' Ben was left with a part-time job at the college and after his first year, his contract was extended for a further year. Ben was relatively happy here but was going to go with the flow and see what the future would bring.

Appendix D

Subjective v Economic, Social and Discursive Class Positioning[11]

As discussed in this thesis, the social class identity and background of the eleven novice teachers could be viewed in two ways. In this study, all the novice teachers were asked initially about their social class background on the questionnaire used to select the sample. Then, each novice teacher was asked to discuss their answer in the interview process. However, as explored throughout, subjectivity is just one way to explore a classed identity and some of the novice teachers did not feel they belonged to a social class. Therefore, the second way to view the social class of the novice teachers in this study was to consider their class based on their social, economic and discursive relations as disclosed during the interview process.

Below, each of the novice teachers' class is displayed in a tabular format. Inevitably, this is much simplified but their disclosures about their class can be cross-referenced to their verbatim comments featured in Chapters Four and Five as well as in Appendix C. These are displayed in two sections: A: 'Working Class' and B: 'Middle Class'. These section labels are those that result from my own positioning of them in class terms based on their social, economic and discursive relations. Each table includes their own subjective thoughts on class and the reasons they offered to justify this choice. These are displayed in the first column. The second column then outlines how and why they were positioned as being either middle or working class based on their disclosures.

A: 'Working Class' Novice Teachers

Kelly

Subjective Class	Reason for positioning as working class based on economic, social and discursive disclosures
Working class Based on: • Parental occupations • Where lived when growing up • Own education • Heritage and value system	Agreed with subjective class positioning for the reasons Kelly outlined

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[11] Adapted from Skeggs (1997: 165) discussion of the way she positioned the women in her study as 'working class' based on economic, social and discursive relations not their subjectivity.

Joe

Subjective Class	Reason for positioning as working class based on economic, social and discursive disclosures
Working class Based on: • Parental occupations • Where lived when growing up • Own education • Heritage and value system	Agreed with subjective class positioning for the reasons Joe outlined

Clare

Subjective Class	Reason for positioning as working class based on economic, social and discursive disclosures
Did not feel belonged to social class Based on: • Rejection of class labels as negative, stereotyping • Complexity of where lived v own education	Based on: • Where lived and grew up • Own education • Parental occupations

Ben

Subjective Class	Reason for positioning as working class based on economic, social and discursive disclosures
Working class (background) Though recognised tension with how would now be perceived Based on: • Parental occupations • Where lived when growing up • Own schooling (but complicated base don level and extent of education)	Agreed with subjective class positioning for the reasons Ben outlined. Also recognised Ben's discussion of complexity resulting out of his feeling that he would now be seen as middle class but his background was working class, though his view he might now well be seen as and regard himself as middle class

Katie

Subjective Class	Reason for positioning as working class based on economic, social and discursive disclosures
Working class Based on: • Parental occupation • Where lived when growing up • Did not feel fitted what is classed as middle class	Agreed with subjective class positioning for the reasons Katie outlined

B: 'Middle Class' Novice Teachers

Lucy

Subjective Class	Reason for positioning as middle class based on economic, social and discursive disclosures
Middle Class Based on: • Parental occupations/education • Where lived when growing up • Own education • Cultural activities/interests	Agreed with subjective class positioning for the reasons Lucy outlined

Simon

Subjective Class	Reason for positioning as middle class based on economic, social and discursive disclosures
Did not feel belonged to social class Based on: • Lack of affiliation to being 'middle class' (though recognised others would see him as middle class)	Based on: • Parental/family occupations • Own schooling • Cultural interests and aspirations for career etc. etc.

Matt

Subjective Class	Reason for positioning as middle class based on economic, social and discursive disclosures
Did not feel belonged to social class Based on: • Complexity of parental class background • Not wanting to be labeled	Based on: • Parental/family occupations and education • Own schooling • Where grew up

Sarah

Subjective Class	Reason for positioning as middle class based on economic, social and discursive disclosures
Middle Class Based on: • Parental education • Where lived when growing up • Own education • Access to resources/activities •	Agreed with subjective class positioning for the reasons Sarah outlined

Jen

Subjective Class	Reason for positioning as middle class based on economic, social and discursive disclosures
Middle Class Based on: • Parental occupations • Where lived when growing up • Own education • Cultural activities/interests	Agreed with subjective class positioning for the reasons Jen outlined

Daniel

Subjective Class	Reason for positioning as middle class based on economic, social and discursive disclosures
Did not feel belonged to social class Based on: • Complexity of where lived when growing up (described as old working class area) v parental occupations/education • Complexity around cultural activities ranging from what he saw as 'working class' interests like football to 'middle class' activities like theatre	Based on: • Parental occupations and education • Own schooling • Cultural interests and aspirations for career etc. etc.

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