

The Stories of Female Career-Changers
who retrain as primary school teachers in England:
their experiences of Early Career Teacher Induction.

Paula Jane Daines

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at The School of Childhood and Social Care, The University of East London, submitted in January, 2025.

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my supervisors Dr Chris Dalladay and Dr John Macklin, for their unwavering support and guidance. Chris, you have a meticulous eye for detail and have been resolutely positive; I have appreciated both attributes in equal measure. John, the man with ‘the big ideas’, who encouraged me to think more laterally about my research – thank you for always expanding my horizons. Special thanks to Professor Gerry Czerniawski who, six years ago, bounded into one of my Master’s seminars and infused me with the idea of completing a professional doctorate. You have been a constant supporter of mine and, in return, I have trusted the process Gerry! To my daughter, thank you for the endless encouragement, support and patience (when I have spent my weekends researching). You have always believed in me and I hope I have made you proud in return. To my two canine companions, always ready for a walk in the forest to clear my head, thank you for being ever present. Friends, family and dear colleagues over the years – thank you for asking me about my research. It has held me accountable more times than you may have realised! Finally, my biggest thank you, and deepest sense of gratitude, goes to the five amazing women who have allowed me to be part of their journey. You have trusted me to tell your stories and I hope, in some small way, that recording your experiences has helped you to reflect on your own achievements, and forge your way as female career-changers moving into the teaching profession.

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the induction experiences of five early career teachers (ECTs), in England, who retrained to become primary school teachers after a 'first career'. The participants self-identified as 'career changers' and are all female. This small-scale study took place during the mandatory two-year teacher induction and the aim was to explore their experiences as 'career-changing females', through an interpretivist methodology, framed as narrative inquiry. By adapting Lewin's (1948) Force Field Analysis model, the researcher constructed a conceptual framework called 'Early Career Teachers Force Field Analysis' to consider the possible driving and restraining forces during induction. By identifying these forces, the findings revealed the critical incidents that impacted participants and this was mapped chronologically, to produce a visual representation of their stories. The telling of these 'stories' was set against the policy context of the Early Career Framework (ECF, DfE, 2021) and the impact this had as they entered the profession. The research questions focused on what can be learned from their experiences, to gain a better understanding of how to support career-changing female ECTs during induction. The main findings revealed greater compliance of the ECF (DfE, 2021) and the importance of the mentoring role during the first year but, by the second year, participants chose not to complete the research-based continued professional development (CPD), nor did they all utilise their official mentor support. Instead, they all enjoyed greater levels of well-being after the 'perceived' reduction in CPD and some chose to obtain support from 'unofficial' mentors. Some participants also spoke of their doubts about remaining as full-time teachers, due to the pressures of workload, wanting to start a family or questioning the sustainability of the role for them. Whilst this study did not

directly consider the retention of ECTs, findings add further validation to the prior research of why teachers may leave the profession (House of Commons Library, 2019) and suggest that, despite the implementation of the ECF (DfE, 2021), the same issues continue to affect ECTs.

As the ECF (DfE, 2021) was only implemented in September 2021 and curtailed early, due to the Covid-19 global pandemic, there is no existing qualitative research following the consecutive journey of first *and* second year ECTs. Therefore, this research provides a nuanced look at their experiences and aims to contribute new knowledge to complement the field of career-changing primary school teachers, through a female lens.

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List of acronyms

CPD	continuing professional development
DfE	Department for Education (England)
ECF	Early Career Framework
ECT	Early Career Teacher
HEI	Higher Education Institute
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
SCITT	School Centred Initial Teacher Training
SDS	School Direct (salaried)
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status

Chapter 1 – Introduction to the Thesis

1.1 Introduction to the Thesis

This thesis focuses on the experiences of five female career-changers during their early career induction, in England, in order to better understand how they integrate into a new profession and the impact of their previous careers on their sense of belonging (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It considers what developmental requirements are needed to support them and how this might differ, to those for whom teaching is a first career. Although the study is located in England, it reflects the wider context internationally in regards to teacher shortage issues (UNESCO, 2024) and how retention (Ingersoll, 2015) became a policy problem for many countries to address. Within the policy reforms of the Early Career Framework (ECF, DfE, 2021) in England, to aide retention of Early Career Teachers (ECTs), the research also explores the efficacy of the two-year induction programme and the role that mentors play in supporting the development of these ECTs. The importance of this research is two-fold; first, due to a lack of literature on the journey of female career-changers who retrain as primary school teachers and, second, due to there being a limited amount of existing qualitative research available that considers the experiences of ECTs during the early stages of the ECF (DfE, 2021) reforms. Therefore, this research offers a nuanced insight into two areas of ECT induction; complementing the existing field of research on the development of ECTs entering the profession.

1.2 Thesis Overview

The chapters in this thesis have been arranged as follows; in this chapter an overview of the topic is provided, together with the rationale for the research and the background and positionality of the researcher. In chapter two, an

outline is provided for the policy context in which teacher induction is set, including a historic overview of the Government reforms to initial teacher training, and the support ECTs receive via the ECF (DfE, 2021). Chapter three reviews the existing literature to which this study will contribute knowledge, including how and why females may decide to change careers; the catalysts and life-stages that impact the decision to retrain to become a teacher and the reasons why teaching may have always been a career goal. In chapter four, the methodological considerations are discussed, including the importance of using data collection and analysis methods that enabled the stories of the participants to be heard and privileged, including self-recorded oral histories, semi-structured interviews and visual representations of the data. Later, in chapters five and six, the findings across both years of the study are presented, to establish the critical incidents and reveal the driving and restraining forces that have impacted on the two-year induction journey of the participants. Chapter seven provides the discussion and analysis, located within the existing literature and indicates that whilst compliance of the ECF (DfE, 2021) was a key part of the first year of induction, by year two some of the participants had started to relinquish the CPD elements of the ECF (DfE, 2021) and had sought out their own 'unofficial mentors' for support. Chapter eight provides a conclusion to the thesis, with responses to the research questions, consideration of the implications of the findings, study limitations and recommendations for future implementation.

The next section provides a professional overview of the researcher's background, as this may be deemed to affect their positionally, approach, and a rationale for carrying out the research. This section is written in the first person.

1.3 Professional Overview, Rationale and Positionality

1.3.1 Professional Overview

Following a decade-long 'first' career in advertising, my journey into teaching began organically seventeen years ago when I founded a children's 'edutainment' company. The catalyst for the decision to leave my first career was the birth of my daughter and the challenges of working full-time whilst being her primary carer. It soon became clear that it was untenable for me to continue to work twelve-to-fifteen-hour days and be the type of parent I wanted to be, so I made the decision to find an alternative career that would better suit my life stage. After running the 'edutainment' company for five years, my role broadened from being purely managerial, to one that was more involved. This initial passion for working alongside young children developed into something more vocational and, after volunteering at my daughter's school for a year, I considered teaching and the possible training routes available to me. After speaking with the Deputy Head teacher, I was advised to first gain experience of working in a school full-time. A year later, after working as a cover supervisor in a secondary school, I started my journey to become a primary school teacher. I entered Initial Teacher Training (ITT) via the School Direct salaried route (DfE, 2013), a school-based training programme which enabled me to gain qualified teacher status (QTS). After seven years as a teacher, and on completion of a Master's degree, I decided to leave the classroom and moved into a lecturing role within Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in England. First at the University of Cumbria, then at Coventry University, teaching on the primary Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course. In my current role at Anglia Ruskin University, in Cambridge, I am Course Director for the three-year Primary Education Studies degree.

1.3.2 Rationale and Positionality

My own teacher training journey was the most demanding and rewarding endeavour I have ever undertaken. As a career-changer, with a young daughter and financial responsibilities, the idea of training on the job (and being paid) was the only realistic route into teaching for me; which is why I chose the paid training route of School Direct salaried (SDS). During my training, I was working (on average) a nine-hour day at school. Then, after fulfilling my parental duties, I would continue to work late into the night; completing coursework, writing up my findings for my trainee evidence folder and preparing for in-school teaching. For the first three months I neglected my health and family, sleeping and socialising less, whilst spending most weekends either studying or preparing for lessons (Clandinin *et al*, 2015). In addition, whilst one of my mentors was extremely supportive and generous with their time and expertise, I felt, at times, that the other mentor did not seem as welcoming. The combination of internal and external pressures left me feeling that I was not managing my mental health or well-being needs very successfully. My initial enthusiasm had been erased by the intense demands of the training and parental responsibilities. Incidentally, of the fourteen trainees in my cohort, ten were female and also career-changers or parents. It occurred to me that I was possibly at more risk of withdrawing from the training, due to having additional responsibilities outside of teaching (Kelly, 2004). Furthermore, as a career-changer I had been successful in another industry and it seemed possible that I might be less likely to stay (DfE, 2017) in an unsatisfactory work situation.

Despite my training and newly qualified teacher (NQT) year being an immense challenge (Barrington, 2000), I found teaching extremely fulfilling and it enabled

me to spend time with my daughter during the school holidays. Three years later, whilst I was still enthralled with the day-to-day 'job' of teaching, I felt drained and exhausted, from the heavy workload and perceived lack of support (DfE, 2017) as an early career teacher. At this stage, I considered leaving the profession but decided to move into the independent school sector; as I believed it might remove some of the pressure that I had felt whilst working in a state-maintained school. In addition, I felt 'committed' to succeeding in the teaching profession; as I had made considerable changes and sacrifices in order to qualify, so felt 'invested' in my second career. However, my personal experience of teaching, thus far, had been a 'factory' type approach to learning. With an increased focus on standardised testing, a narrowing of the curriculum to core subjects and teacher accountability, which has been described as the global educational reform movement (Sahlberg, 2012). This, to me, seemed as if teaching and learning were secondary to results and it greatly impacted my enthusiasm, clashing with my personal philosophy and developing thinking around what the purpose of education is. Although I acknowledge the privatisation of education may compound the inequalities in education (Common Wealth, 2021), it was where I regained my agency. I was able to provide a more holistic experience for my pupils and had greater autonomy over the curriculum and learning goals. Whilst the business model of this particular independent school meant undue 'parent-power', there was much greater freedom to develop my practice. This motivated me to complete a Master's degree in 'Education', which I believed might fill the theoretical 'gaps' in my knowledge that I thought were missing (due to completing my teacher training in a SCITT rather than a university-led PGCE). Subsequently acting as the catalyst for my decision to leave classroom-based teaching, I decided to

continue my academic development by enrolling on a Professional Doctorate in Education. Due to wanting to devote more time to explore my research area, I decided to find more flexible teaching work within the sector that I was researching. Utilising the experience and qualifications I had gained in school, and having already been a mentor to another trainee, I found my first role as a lecturer within Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Higher Education (HE). I hoped that I would be able to support others as they began their own teaching journey, whilst continuing with my own research.

Consequently, I found myself both personally and professionally interested in the experiences of ECTs. Whilst an insider 'researcher', as someone who had completed the NQT induction, I also retained a more distanced perspective; as professionally I supported trainees, not ECTs, through their PGCE. The decision to explore the experiences of female career-changers was due to a belief that this was an under-researched area that needed to be addressed, both locally and nationally, to understand the uniqueness of their position and support future generations of female career-changers to fully integrate within the teaching profession. It would also provide an insight into the early stages of their careers, during their ECT induction. My own experiences may have impacted on my approach to conducting research, and the ways in which I have explored the data, but by ensuring that the participants were 'co-contributors' to their own stories, I have mitigated against my biases or personal narrative unduly influencing the thesis.

Now that I have outlined my personal and professional experience, and provided a rationale for undertaking the research, the next section turns to the

induction process for teachers and how it has evolved. The thesis will return to being written in the third person and the following acronyms 'NQT' and 'ECT' will be used from this point onwards. By way of an explanation, before the introduction of the ECF (DfE, 2021) newly qualified teachers were known as 'NQTs' and afterwards as early career teachers 'ECTs'.

1.4 How the Induction Process evolved for Teachers in England

1.4.1 Overview

This section provides an historic overview of how the induction process for teachers, in England, has evolved over the past twenty years and highlights relevant research to consider how this may have impacted NQTs. For clarity, chapter two will critique the existing national policies impacting the current ECT induction, in greater depth.

It had been suggested (DeAngelis *et al.*, 2013; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Kelly *et al.*, 2019) that the support teachers receive throughout their induction and mentoring, impacts on their intention to remain in the profession. One past study (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p.201), viewed mentoring as the provision of 'support, guidance and orientation programs' that schools provide when new teachers join. Whilst induction is just the entry point of the profession, a solid programme (Gavish & Friedman, 2010) may reduce the risk of attrition and burn-out, by easing new teachers in gradually. Over the past twenty-years, a considerable amount of research has been conducted on the subject of teacher induction, (Blake & Hanley, 1998; Kyriacou, 1993; Menter, 1995; Olson & Osbourne, 1991; Tickle, 2000; Turner, 1994; Waterhouse, 1993), however, until statutory induction came into force in England, in 1999, under the 'The

Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (England)

Regulations' (Legislation.gov.uk, 2024), it had been argued (Jones, 2002) that the process was haphazard and lacked consistency. Previously, Turner (1994) stated that the correct placement, the NQT's attitude to being successful during induction and the headteacher had the biggest impact on induction. The next section outlines how this statutory teacher induction in England was received by NQTs and how it was then developed to better meet their needs.

1.4.2 Impact of Statutory Teacher Induction in England

After the introduction of the statutory induction framework, a 'Statutory Induction for NQTs' guidance document was used by all maintained schools in England. Whilst it was not a requirement for teaching in further education colleges, free schools, independent schools or the nursery sector of education, 'All qualified teachers who are employed in a relevant school in England, must have, by law, completed an induction period satisfactorily' (DfE, 2018). The induction year was designed to be a personalised programme to support the development of trainees, through dialogue with their mentors, to ensure that they met the Teachers' Standards being assessed (DfE, 2018), and had to be completed in an appropriate post and required a number of processes to be implemented throughout the year. The headteacher was (and still is) responsible for and accountable to the governing body for the induction training. To achieve this, they had to ensure that an induction tutor with QTS was appointed, as well as providing the NQT with a reduced timetable and ensure that unreasonable demands were not made of them. However, it was not just the school or local education authority who was responsible for the provision of education, it also

relied on sufficient funding from the central government (Waterhouse, 1993), at that time, in order to be deployed effectively.

One previous study (Jones, 2002) suggested that the introduction of the statutory teacher induction was summarised as a mixed experience for NQTs; with some reporting that they felt supported, whilst others were left to their own devices. Whilst, in another study (Barrington, 2000) conducted at a similar time, NQTs reported excessive levels of pressure, greater workload and assessment demands, which impacted upon these participants negatively. As Turner (1994, p.338) stated 'Where induction is not well managed, the less resilient new teachers leave their school, LEA or even teaching altogether'. The previous induction programme was therefore in need of an overhaul, and the next section considers how induction policy was eventually reformed to address this.

1.4.3 Overhaul of the one-year NQT Induction

Over fifteen years after statutory induction was introduced, the Government in England recognised that NQTs were at risk of leaving (DfE, 2019; House of Commons Library, 2019). In part, this realisation came about as a result of the Carter Review (DfE, 2015) which acknowledged that thirty-eight weeks was not long enough to cover what is needed during initial teacher education and what followed did not provide the bridge to completing induction (Jones, 2002). The main issue was that exhausted NQTs, with insufficient support and unable to cope, were leaving in their droves (DfE, 2016). However, whilst the need for a more effective induction was recommended, there were no immediate policy changes as a result of the review and it took another four years before the seed of a new framework for the ECT induction was sown, so attrition rates continued to rise (DfE, 2017). Whilst a fuller critique of the implications of this will be

considered in the next chapter, the eventual reforms resulted in a repackaged statutory induction, from a one-year NQT period to a two-year ECT programme. This included other benefits, such as time off timetable for both years of the induction, provision of mentor release time and mandatory CPD (for both mentors and ECTs) as a way of trying to address the drawbacks of the previous induction process.

Now that an overview of the how the induction process evolved, in England, has been provided, the next section considers the rationale for the research methodology of this study and the researcher first states her values, written in the first person, once more, before the research questions are outlined.

1.5 Rationale for Research Methodology

1.5.1 Outline

A comprehensive presentation of the methodology and chosen data collection methods will be discussed in chapter four of this thesis, however, this section outlines the rationale for the research methodology, considering my personal beliefs and values. As a researcher, I believe that there are multiple realities (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) and that meaning is constructed by individuals and behaviour is socially situated, dependent upon context. As such, my positionality has impacted on the research framework and methodological approach. My underlying belief that research cannot be completely value-neutral (Hammersley, 1992), means that participants' perspectives are value-laden because knowledge is constructed by making sense of the world as an individual. In stating my own underlying values (Skeggs, 1994), I conducted the research through an interpretivist lens, using feminist data collection

methods (Oakley, 1991). As my research explores the ‘stories’ of my research participants, it is clear that a qualitative, interpretivist research design was the most appropriate fit for this study. Next, the research questions are stated, together with a brief explanation of how a gap exists in the existing research for this study.

1.6 Research Questions

Whilst previous studies (Cherrstrom, 2014; Newman, 2006; Priyadharshini & Robinson Pant, 2003; Troesch & Bauer, 2017) have provided valuable insights into the experiences of career-changers who have retrained as teachers, a gap existed in the knowledge of how female career-changing primary teachers experience induction, under the reformed Early Career Framework (DfE, 2021). The combination of the female specific focus, together with the impact of the ECF (DfE, 2021), presented an opportunity for a nuanced look at these participants’ experiences. Therefore the overarching research question (RQ) reflected this:

‘What are the experiences of female career-changers who become primary school teachers, in England, during their Early Career Teacher induction?’

The research methodology is designed with this in mind, but to also answer these subsidiary research questions (SRQ):

SRQ1) Do school induction programmes, and ECT mentors, fully support female career-changers to succeed as teachers?

SRQ2) What are the most important factors that support or hinder female career-changers in adapting successfully to teaching careers?

SRQ3) How does the Early Career Framework directly impact these ECTs, specifically during the transition from induction to early career?

The first subsidiary research question reflects on whether individual school induction programmes and ECT mentors support the participants, specifically as career-changers, to succeed as teachers. Whilst the second explores the factors that have the most impact on them as career-changers, identifying the forces that support or hinder them in adapting to a teaching career. The final question examines the impact the ECF (DfE, 2021) had on these career-changing ECTs, during the course of completing the two-year statutory induction, and how they feel about the profession afterwards.

Now that the research questions have been shared, the next section discusses representing the participants.

1.7 Representing Participants

As previously mentioned, whilst several similar research projects have been conducted over the past twenty years, (Cherrstrom, 2014; Coles, 2001; Jones, 2002; Newman, 2006; Troesch & Bauer, 2017; Turner & Zanker, 2012), none with the singular focus of representing female career-changers during their primary teacher ECT induction. Although, many did mention mature students or made career-changers either the sole focus, or an aspect of their research, which provided a platform for this study to draw from. In their investigation into the teacher training journey of career-changers, alongside those for whom teaching was their first career, Troesch & Bauer (2017) considered whether the

difference had an impact on the likelihood of remaining in the profession. The findings showed that the trainees (for whom teaching was a second career) were less likely to leave teaching, but acknowledged that comparable data was scarce and conflicting. Another study refuted these findings, stating that career-changers were more likely to switch careers again if working conditions did not meet their standards (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Similarly, Newman (2006) researched male and female career-changers with the aim of finding out how to retain career-changers in the profession. The main findings revealed that although being managed was a concern for the career-changers, as prior career experience was utilised in variable measures, life stage was important for retention and males may struggle more during the induction period. Furthermore, this research identified several interesting strands under the over-arching theme of belonging, Community of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and the satisfaction of career-changers as they settled into the profession. These, and other relevant studies, will be expanded upon in chapter three, within the literature review.

1.8 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has served as an introduction the thesis, by stating the focus and providing the researcher's background and rationale for completing this study; taking into consideration her own teacher training journey and professional involvement in delivering teacher education. In addition, a brief historical overview has been provided for how the induction process has evolved for teachers in England and resulted in an overhaul from the one-year NQT induction to the two-year ECF (DfE, 2021) framework, to set the context in which the study will be located. Finally, an outline of the research methodology

and research questions was provided, taking into account the aim of shining a light on the experiences of the five female career-changing ECTs. In the next chapter, the policy landscape for the study is explored, with the reforms that currently impact all ECTs during induction discussed in more detail.

Chapter 2 – Policy Landscape

2.1 Introduction to the Policy Landscape

Over the past decade, set against an ever-changing political landscape, England has had eleven Education Secretaries in post at the Department for Education (DfE, 2024). Some may have been viewed as being disparaging of teachers as a whole, with one, Michael Gove, accusing teachers of having low expectations (The Independent, 2017). Whilst another, Nicky Morgan, criticised teachers for going head-to-head with the Conservative Government when raising concerns about the state of education during the Covid-19 global pandemic (Tes, 2023). Government policies and personnel have undoubtedly had an impact on the wider issue of teacher recruitment and retention. Teacher educators (Ellis, 2023; Lofthouse, 2023; Teacher Education Exchange, 2017) have argued that morale appears to be suffering as a result of constant policy reform, and that it has made teaching an unattractive career prospect. In recent years, whilst applications to teacher training courses increased during the Covid-19 global pandemic, by January 2022 they were down twenty-four percent from the same time in the previous year (NFER, 2021). In addition, there is some contestation around the philosophical and policy implications regarding the terminology used; initial teacher training or initial teacher education. A useful comparison between ITE and ITT is offered by Chitty (1990, p.37 cited in Chitty, 2009), who states that ITE begins the ‘open-ended process’ with the aim of transforming a student’s view of the world...whereas ‘training’ is the correct term for tasks with ‘clearly pre-specifiable criteria for right and wrong’. Having a prescribed set of skills as a teacher will not automatically make you a competent teacher, however the recent ITT policies (CCF, 2021) are based on acquiring and evidencing such a skillset. In comparison, some

academics (Furlong, 2019; Vanassche *et al.*, 2019; Winch *et al.*, 2015) working within initial teacher education, at higher education institutions, have argued the importance of embedding theory and research. Later in this chapter, the philosophical underpinnings will be considered further, as will the marginalisation of ITE within HEIs in favour of school centred ITT (Tillin, 2023). However, as this thesis considers the journey of ECTs who are being assessed against the ITT ECF (DfE, 2021), the current induction framework, from this point forward in the thesis, the researcher will use the term ITT, however acknowledges that the terms are not easily interchangeable. The next section discusses the rationale for reform, to address the recruitment and retention of teachers.

2.2 The Rationale for Reform

In the past five years, the English Government have acknowledged and sought to address the issues regarding recruitment and retention. In a survey commissioned to gain further understanding, The Department for Education (2017) published a report in which participants cited the following issues as being the most prevalent reasons for leaving the profession;

- Workload
- Lack of support in school
- Working conditions
- Progression opportunities
- Well-being

As a result, the government overhauled the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and Early Career Framework (ECF) (DfE, 2021) and their priorities, to place more focus on the retention of beginning teachers. For some (NEU, 2018) the

changes were perceived as being overdue and they blamed the government for creating a shortage of teachers. Subsequently, some schools in England are struggling to retain their workforce, due to teachers leaving the profession as quickly as they started. Having explored the rationale for reform, the next section outlines how these reforms aimed to address the recruitment and retention of teachers in England.

2.3 Recruitment and Retention of Teachers in England

Whilst some of the policies focused on retention, teacher recruitment targets had not been consistently met for over a decade (House of Commons Library, 2019; Long and Danechi, 2021; Parliament. House of Commons, 2024). As a result, the Government published a Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy (DfE, 2019) with the aim of addressing both. After which, the 'Early Career Framework' (ECF) (DfE, 2019), was introduced as the strategy to underpin the retention of early career teachers (ECTs) in England, from 2020 onwards. The provision for ECTs changed from a one-year induction programme, to a two-year package of support (DfE, 2019). This included introducing a fully-funded five percent of non-contact time in the second year, in addition to the existing ten percent provided in the first year. Other benefits included greater focus on continued professional development, for ECTs and mentors, and giving the latter (who had largely been forgotten) more time to help support ECTs. However, simply focusing on recruiting more teachers (Schuck *et al.*, 2012; Parliament. House of Commons, 2024) is an insufficient solution, unless more attention is paid to considering why teachers are leaving the profession in the first place. The next section examines attrition in teachers.

2.3.1 Attrition in Teachers

Many factors could influence a teacher's decision to leave the profession, including workload, remuneration, lack of support, bureaucracy and external factors (DfE, 2017; Ingersoll, 2015), policy-makers need a better understanding of who leaves, when, and why, to target those who are more likely to leave (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014) and address the causal factors (Guarino, Santibarez & Daley, 2006). Teacher retention is a serious issue for the profession, especially where beginning teachers are concerned. Data from a survey conducted by Leeds Beckett University (2019), in England, suggests that of its newly qualified teachers 'only 43 per cent have definite plans to stay in the profession long-term'. One teaching union (National Educational Union, 2018) has argued that attrition is due to the underlying pressures that teachers now face, such as; a heavy workload, high stakes testing and data accountability. Workload, in particular, has been identified as one of the main causes of teacher stress (DfE, 2017). Whilst teaching has always been considered a job where work has to be taken home (such as planning or marking), a study by University College London (2019) explained that in order to keep up with all of the day-to-day tasks such as marking, planning, preparing and administration, some teachers were working sixty-hours a week, including evenings and weekends. It is possible that an increase of accountability (NFER, 2024) in the 'day-to-day' role has expanded to the point where some teachers cannot, or feel like they should not have to, spend as much time on the administration side of the job. Furthermore, if the job is considered less attractive as a result of the increased workload, or if we cannot recruit or retain enough trainees, this is likely to cause a shortfall in teachers in the near future. The government

attempted to mitigate against this by utilising bursaries as a way of both recruiting and retaining teachers, the impact of which will be discussed next.

2.3.2 Bursaries and Wider Changes

As part of their recruitment and retention policy (DfE, 2019) the government also proposed a review of the retention strategy to include restructuring the way some 'under-recruited' subject bursaries were awarded in England, moving away from a 'golden handshake' approach to a phased retention plan. However, this initiative was relatively short-lived, as funding for the 2021-22 academic year was either reduced or scrapped (NFER, 2020), as a result of an uptick in the supply of teachers due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This resulted in the initial scheme budget of two-hundred and fifty million pounds, cut to one-hundred and thirty million pounds (School's Week, 2020). This prompted one observer (NASBTT, 2020) to criticise the government for being short-sighted, stating that once the after effects of the pandemic had subsided, the same issues would prevail. However, the government seemed to be taking a three-pronged approach and further wider changes included the creation of a central job-share vacancy website, to acknowledge that some teachers do not wish to work full-time, and raising the existing starting salary for ECTs outside of London from £24,373 to £30,000, in 2023 (DfE, 2019). The latter was a proposal that aimed to make teaching a more attractive proposition for new graduates. As with many such initiatives, whether this was the correct approach could take four or five years to ascertain.

In summary, the government identified the need for policies to deal with the recruitment of new teachers, as well as the retention of ECTs. This appeared to be a more equitable balance, where previously more focus seemed to be

placed on the recruitment of trainees to replace teachers lost, which is reviewed in the next section.

2.3.3 Teacher Supply Model for ITT

The Teacher Supply Model (DfE, 2019) is used to estimate the number of postgraduate trainee teachers required in England for each phase and subject. This figure is assessed in advance and considers factors such as pupil numbers and the flow of teachers coming in and out of the profession. These estimates are then used to allocate the amount of training places available for ITT providers. However, since 2016, the limits on these allocated places have been flexed. One reason might be the numbers exiting the profession, so that more teachers are available to 'plug the gap', but other reasons may also exist. Over the past five years, this was evidenced in the disparate allocations made for different levels of training. In the academic year, 2019-20, providers had fixed allocations for undergraduate, Early Years and some physical education ITT courses. However, all other postgraduate ITT courses were left uncapped (DfE, 2019), meaning that providers could recruit as many trainees as they wished; across all postgraduate routes into teaching (of which there are several). It is evident from these statistics that not enough teachers were being trained to replace those leaving and that targets were not met to expand the flow into the profession. This coincides with the reduction in the number of trainees recruited, at that time, via university-based routes and a move towards school centred programmes, which will be considered next.

2.3.4 School-Centred Initial Teacher Training

Over the past few decades, there has been a 'pendulum swing' (Murray & Mutton, 2016) in many countries away from the dominance of universities,

towards school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) programmes. In England, Mutton, Burn & Menter (2016, p.3) described this 'practicum turn' as a 'relentless pursuit of the school led system' (p.5) and a direct result of the Coalition Government of England stating that 'Schools should play a greater role in leading the recruitment, selection and training of teachers' (DfE, 2011, p.11). This policy led to the creation of the School Direct programme salaried and unsalaried (DfE, 2012), a way for trainees to learn 'on the job' and for schools to grow their own work-force. It replaced the Graduate Training Programme (GTP, TDA, 2010) in 2012 and was based on a 'School Alliance' funnelling trainees into school placements once recruited, resulting in 'around 5000 teacher training places...made available for high-calibre career changers' (DfE, 2012). As part of the introduction to this new programme, the government also included a stark warning; that the goal was to ensure the 'Weeding out [of] poor-quality initial teacher training (ITT) providers while guaranteeing allocations for outstanding ones' (DfE,2012).

This proved to be a pivot point, that later saw the then Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, commission an independent review of initial teaching training in England, to ascertain quality and effectiveness. Led by primary Headteacher Sir Andrew Carter, this 'signalled the recognition of teacher education' (Mutton, Burn & Menter, 2016, p.3) as a 'policy problem' (Cochran-Smith, 2005). Whilst the Carter Review (2015) was widely criticised for not having any experienced teacher educators on the panel, and was believed to favour the Government's current ITT policy, despite these issues it did still see the value of university-led ITE. However, data suggests (House of Commons, 2019) that the Government preference for primary and secondary teacher

training was still leaning towards the school centred routes, for example Teach First or School Direct. Over the past five years, this has been evidenced by a drop in the number of trainees being recruited by HEI, forty-four percent of the thirty-thousand postgraduate ITT entrants in 2019-20, were recruited through this route (House of Commons Library, 2019). By contrast, a growing thirty-five percent (House of Commons Library, 2019) were recruited onto the School Direct programme. This apparent preference for SCITT was further underlined by the Market Review of ITT (DfE, 2021) which will be discussed next.

2.4 Market Review of ITT

The Department for Education, in England, decided to review the whole ITT market in 2021/2, stating that ‘the provision of consistently high-quality training, in line with the CCF, in a more efficient and effective market’ (DfE, 2021, p.4) was the rationale behind it. However, a previous survey revealed that eighty-nine percent of primary and ninety percent of secondary NQTs rated their training as at least ‘good’ (NCTL, 2015). Whilst Ofsted reported in 2019 that one-hundred percent of ITT providers were deemed good or outstanding (Ofsted, 2019). So, there was little evidence base to suggest that the ITT system was failing prior to the market review. However, Ball (2012) offers one possible explanation for this process; the ‘dismantling’ of the agencies, local government and universities involvement in ITE, in favour of total government control (Lofthouse, 2023). This critique proved to foreshadow the impact of the market review, wielding changes that resulted in some universities’ ITE programmes being disembowelled.

After the ‘Market Review’ of ITT (DfE, 2021), two further changes were made to the ways in which HEI institutes provide initial teacher training. First, was an

audit and quality assurance check, devised to evidence cohesion with the newly launched 'Core Content Framework' (CCF, DfE, 2021). This involved in some onerous evidence submission, which some HEIs rallied against due to its prescriptive nature (Cambridge University, 2021), and resulted in many historically successful providers losing accreditation and being unable to provide ITE, unless partnered with an accredited provider (DfE, 2022). Second, it saw the launch of a more practical based training programme called 'Intensive Training and Practice' (ITAP) (DfE, 2021; 2023a), that required all providers and schools to comply with, from September 2024. Furthermore, the School Direct programme is being phased out, replaced by the PGCE Apprenticeship (DfE, 2023) scheme. Schools are able to draw down from an apprenticeship levy to support and qualify new teachers, which is designed to appeal to existing staff members who had previously been working in support roles in school.

This increasing trend to move oversight of ITT towards school-based programmes has impacted some HEI, as the landscape and value of the traditional academic qualifications, such as the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) has changed (Times Higher Education, 2015). There is concern that by no longer focusing on 'academic knowledge', (Payne & Zeichner, 2017, pp1103), multi-disciplinary learning could be marginalised and create a binary argument of HEI vs SCITT (Teacher Education Exchange, 2017). Some commentators (Ellis, 2022; Faultley, 2021; Lofthouse, 2021) have stated that the CCF (DfE, 2021) has made ITE homogenised, and suggested that the prescribed ITT curriculum materials have created a 'teach by numbers' model which has left gaps in providers that could put teacher training places at risk (Teach Best, 2021). Furthermore, it is contested whether thirty-eight weeks

of ‘on-the-job’ training fully prepares trainees for a career as a teacher (Teacher Education Exchange, 2017) in comparison with other countries, such as Finland and Germany, where training occurs over the course of several years; sometimes resulting in completion of a Master’s level qualification. In recognising this, and the importance of ‘after care’, the government overhauled the framework for ECTs, but whilst the routes into teaching are still varied, only one is longer than an academic year. After considering the market review, the next section outlines the development of the Early Career Framework (ECF) (DfE, 2021) and the impact it has had on ITT.

2.5 The Development of the Early Career Framework

2.5.1 Overview

The Department for Education published their Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy (DfE, 2019) to expand the existing one-year induction programme for NQT’s, to two years (as highlighted earlier) and NQTs were re-labelled ECTs (Early Career Teachers). The ECF (DfE, 2021) has underpinned teacher induction in England, since 2020. Critics (Ellis *et al.*, 2023; Lofthouse, 2023; Rowe, 2023) of the ECF have sought to emphasise an increase in the Department for Education’s control over the ITT sector. Ellis *et al.*, (2023) have stated that ‘from 2024 any organisation across the country that wishes to offer ITT has to deliver the Government’s core curriculum that mandates certain content and proscribes other knowledge, with compliance micromanaged nationally by central government, to the level of reading lists and PowerPoint slides’ (p.2). Having created a national programme, the Department for Education own guidance (DfE, 2022) insists on complete fidelity to it. Failure to comply risks the ITT provider’s programme validation, inspected every three

years (Ellis, 2023), which implies a high level of government monitoring. To understand how this impacts the sector, a closer examination of the ITT accreditation process is required.

2.5.2 The ITT Accreditation Process

Initial Teaching Training, as a sector, has been under greater pressure to meet the government's prescribed programme requirements. The reaccreditation process, that all providers had to complete paperwork for, resulted in "20 per cent of those who applied, failed" (Fazackerly, 2022 as cited in Ellis *et al.*, 2023, p2). This included Durham University and the University of Cumbria, both of whom have previously been successful providers with 'good to outstanding' Ofsted ratings (Ofsted, 2012; 2013). Some commentators (Brookes & Perryman, 2024; Long & Danechi, 2022; NFER, 2023) have speculated that this may lead to geographical 'black spots' for teacher education. Resulting in a shortage of teachers in schools where it has been historically hard to recruit for. Furthermore, the creation of the Department for Education's 'flagship' ITT provider 'The National Institute of Teaching' (NIOT) drew some criticism initially, as they had "no students, staff and no track record" (Martin, 2022 as cited in Ellis *et al.*, 2023, p3). However, having a tightly audited system is not a new phenomenon. There have been attempts to regulate ITT from the 1970s to present day, by reducing the power of university-led programmes (Mentor & Childs, 2013). Despite whichever political party has been in power, policy has clearly shifted from university run ITE towards SCITTs. This shift has been gradually building momentum and can be evidenced across contradictory statements from the previous, and long-term, Minister for Education Nick Gibb. In 2012, Gibb claimed the Department for Education was not abandoning

universities as ITE providers, but by 2014 (supported by then Education Secretary Michael Gove) stated that “Who is to blame for our education system slipping down the international rankings? The answer is the academics in the education faculties of universities” (Gibb, 2014). Whilst more recently, some of those working in ITE departments of universities have placed the blame back with those responsible for the reforms, with Lofthouse (2022, p143) insisting that “Gove deliberately re-drew the map. He changed the landscape and the language” of ITE. Meanwhile Rowe (Ellis, 2023, p.110) argued that there has been “No positive impact on recruitment or retention in teachers in England” as a result of the policy churn. Consequently, a squeezing out of previously successful university ITE providers, in favour of those who now meet the government’s criteria, does suggest an intentional tightening on HEI and seems to have created further division in the sector.

The final two sections will discuss the ECF (DfE, 2021) pilot scheme, initial findings in relation to ECTs, mentors and schools and the overlap between the Core Content Framework (CCF) (DfE, 2019) and ECF (DfE, 2021).

2.5.3 ECF Pilot Scheme and Findings

Prior to a national roll-out, the ECF (DfE, 2021) was piloted across the North-East of England. Three programmes (EEF, 2020) were tested across two approaches; one for mentors only and the second for ECTs and their mentors. The programmes were a combination of in-person and online coaching, supplemented with webinars and online content. Across all of the programmes, schools were expected to use the training to provide ‘instructional coaching’, an idea developed in the U.S and largely untested or evidenced in the UK. In the

findings of the report (EEF, 2020), the two approaches to supporting ECTs were evaluated and the top line data showed that whilst the online materials and coaching were highly regarded by both mentors and ECTs, the mentor's existing workload could not realistically accommodate the programme. In addition, the resources were a 'one size fits all' for ECTs (*ibid*) and did not allow any flexibility for individual needs. Whilst the online delivery of the ECF was scalable, the success of the framework depended largely on mentors being given time to complete the programme coaching. The funding (ECF, DfE, 2021) available for schools to release mentors may help address this, but careful consideration of school staffing must be made to ensure it takes place. The pilot ran from 2019-20, but was not completed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions placed on schools. Whilst teacher educators involved with the roll out broadly welcomed the framework (Ovenden-Hope, 2022), this was largely dependent on the school take up and the scheme chosen.

The ECF programme (DfE, 2021), dovetailed with the Initial Teacher Training Core Content Framework (ITT CCF) published in 2019 (DfE, 2019). The next section discusses the deliberate overlap and the implications of this.

2.5.4 Overlap between the CCF and ECF

The main teaching criteria in both the CCF (DfE, 2019) and the ECF (DfE, 2021) is nearly identical, which could seem like a sensible bridge between 'training' and a teacher's early career (*ibid*). However, Turvey (2023) has highlighted that both the CCF and ECF are limited to being "knowledge bases" (p.117). The Department for Education, in England, seems to have jettisoned quite a lot of the language that was present in the three 'early rollout' pilots from

the Ambition Institute and the Chartered College of Teaching (Scutt, 2022). For example, whilst the early roll out talked a lot about mentoring and coaching (Ovenden-Hope *et al.*, 2020), the final iteration of the ECF (DfE, 2021) mentions mentoring just three times, and coaching twice. There is little to guide mentors, and some within the ITE sector (Iglehart, 2022; Lofthouse, 2022) have questioned how serious the Department for Education are about the mentoring role. Without this, ECTs will end up solely being *evaluated* - what Hobson (2016) called 'judgementoring' and not provided with a mentor with the time and expertise to do this role well. At the time of writing, the CCF (DfE, 2019) and the ECF (DfE, 2021) are due to be replaced by a model called the Initial Teacher Training Early Career Framework (ITTECF) (DfE, 2024) and, instead of having an overlap between the previous CCF and the ECF, the new iteration of the programme will follow on from each other. Whilst this may be a more common-sense approach to create a bespoke continuation of continued professional development, there is currently no framework in place to assess where trainees will leave the ITT part of the journey and pick up on the ECF. The efficacy of the ECF will be evaluated next to ascertain how mentors and ECTs experienced the framework upon the full roll-out.

2.6 Efficacy of the ECF

2.6.1 Overview

The 2021-2022 academic year was the first full roll-out year of the ECF (DfE, 2021) in England. Schools were given a choice of the programmes (*ibid*) to subscribe to; contract out to a 'one-stop shop' approved ECF provider, do a bit of both – your own induction and some shop bought CPD or *do-it-yourself* (Ovenden-Hope, 2022). The first two came with a financial incentive from the

government and may make it easier for schools when they are inspected or have to get the required ‘appropriate body’ to sign off their ECTs. The ECF (DfE, 2021) has since gained positive feedback, from some teachers who are going through it (Teach First, 2022) but has proved problematical from the point of view of mentors (Teach First, 2022; Lofthouse, 2022). In addition, schools are being funded for this ‘mentor-time’ *after* the two-year induction (Lofthouse, 2022) meaning they have to use their own budgets in the first instance. Schools also have to assign an induction tutor to complete the initial paperwork.

Realistically, some schools may appoint the same person as both mentor and induction tutor, which muddies the waters of the two distinct responsibilities, and risks further devaluing the role of the mentor. Recent reports (Booth, 2021; Tes, 2021) indicate that nine out of ten head teachers say that mentors in their schools have reported a very significant increase in workload for ECTs and mentors alike. Furthermore, only fourteen percent of ECTs and nine percent of mentors think that the ECF (DfE, 2021) training is a good use of their time, with sixty-four percent of ECTs stating that they disagree, or disagree strongly that they have learnt a lot from the ECF (Teacher Tapp, 2022). What follows is a summary of the ECF efficacy, by year of reporting.

2.6.2 First Year Reporting

The government’s own report to evaluate the first term of the ECF national roll-out (DfE, 2022), stated that forty-five percent of the ECTs surveyed were ‘still finding it difficult to manage to spend time on the provider-led ECF training programme alongside their teacher workload’ (p.14). It also highlighted that fifty-two percent of induction tutors reported that the work was too much for ECTs, with an additional ten percent stating that it was also too much for

mentors. These results were comparable to Gatsby/Teacher Tapp research (2022) which reported that sixty-five percent of the five-hundred mentors surveyed said that ‘the ECF adds too much to the workload of the ECT’ (p.3).

The government’s report (DfE, 2022) acknowledged that workload was a concern, and both mentors and ECTs surveyed had ‘low confidence in mentors’ abilities to help ECTs manage their workload’ (DfE, 2022, p.15). Around half of the mentors found it difficult to spend time supporting their ECTs and had to complete the provider-led ECF mentor training in their own time (*ibid*). Lead providers of the ECF training acknowledged that heavy workloads were a concern (*ibid*), and subsequently tried to make the programme more manageable by offering a combination of online, face-to-face and offline content. However, the report revealed a perceived lack of flexibility in the provider-led content, with twenty-seven percent of ECTs rating the tailoring of the training to their school context as poor (*ibid*). The induction tutor and mentors largely agreed and mentors found the content ‘too heavily balanced towards theory with too little applied content’ (DfE, 2022, p.15). Similarly, the second report, (Gatsby/Teacher Tapp, 2022), indicated that just two percent of the five-hundred mentors and four percent of the three-hundred ECTs surveyed, said that the materials used were useful to their phase of subject. The repetition of the CCF in the ECF, was discussed in both reports, with fifty-six percent of mentors stating that it repeated too much (Gatsby/Teacher Tapp, 2022)

2.6.3 Second Year Reporting

The second-year findings on the implementation of the ECF ‘saw increasing complexity in schools coordinating and supporting the ECF-based induction

programme' (DfE, 2024, p.4). Some of this could be attributed to schools and mentors having to take on a new cohort of ECTs, whilst the original ECTs were still on the induction programme and needed support. In primary schools especially, some teachers stated they were required to perform the dual-role of both induction tutor and ECT mentor, stretching their remit further. The report stated that 'towards the end of the 2-year ECF-based induction programme ECTs were mainly positive about their training' and that 'a larger proportion of ECTs continued to rate the elements of their training good than rated them poorly' (DfE, 2024, p.15). However, the data suggested that there were continued frustrations over the lack of tailoring of the programme to the school context, with some ECTs stating that their expectations had not been met. Workload was still a concern for ECTs in the second year, despite the easing of induction load. Some ECTs reported that they were not learning anything new and felt 'ready to move on before the end of the 2-year period' (DfE, 2024, p.15). However, one aspect of the ECF (DfE, 2021) programme that was rated highly by the ECTs in the second year, was the support provided by the mentors. Whilst it may be too early ascertain whether it is having the intended impact of aiding retention and adequately supporting ECTs, these initial findings would suggest some limitations within the ECF (DfE, 2021). In particular the lack of time mentors have to spend with ECTs, and the CPD designed to support both mentors and ECTs, causing workload issues; which is one of the main reasons (DfE, 2017) teachers are leaving the profession.

2.7 Chapter Conclusion

Having reviewed the landscape against which initial teacher training is set, this chapter has identified the policy churn that has led to HEI providers of teacher education being in a state of constant flux, as a result of the ITT Market Review (DfE, 2021) and accreditation process. It has also established that the recruitment and retention of teachers has been an ongoing issue for policymakers, with targets not being met (DfE, 2023), and some of the levers that have been pulled to address this include reforming the ways in which ITT (DfE, 2021) and ECT induction is structured, as well as routes into teaching and bursaries . Finally, it has provided an overview of the rationale, development and efficacy of the ECF (DfE, 2021) and the role of the mentor, which is an intrinsic part of the study focus. The next chapter will review the literature relevant to female career-changers who retrain to become primary school teachers, during their ECT induction journey.

Chapter 3 - Literature Review

3.1 Introduction to the Literature Review

This literature review aims to interpret, synthesise and critically evaluate published work related to career-changing females, who retrain to become primary school teachers during their ECT induction journey. In addition to exploring the induction of ECTs, it will also examine other aspects that affect the transition from trainee teacher to ECT and what impact the ECF reforms (ECF, 2021) may have. The purpose of this literature review is to ascertain the existing research surrounding the key issues, to establish whether there is a knowledge gap in the literature for this study.

In order to examine the most relevant material, this review is organised thematically. Thematic literature reviews are more suitable when there is no linear or chronological order to existing research (Newcastle University, 2024). First, literature was organised around the key search terms of 'career-changer', 'female career-changer', 'career-changing trainee teacher', 'female career-changing teacher' and 'ECT induction'. Then, themes were established by grouping the literature from these areas into sections, to answer the overarching research question, *'What are the experiences of career-changing female primary school teachers, in England, during their Early Career Teacher induction?'.* The rationale for this is exploring how female career-changing ECTs might experience their entry into the profession. The five sections broadly follow the key search terms, beginning with 'Female Career-Changers and Retraining as a Teacher'. This section encompasses female career-changers in general and why they might change career, career-changers who want to become teachers, routes into teaching, how mature trainee teachers experience

initial teacher training and the completion rates for female trainees. After which the focus moves to 'Females in the Workplace' to explore the experiences of women at work, the multiple roles of women in general, how this impacts women in teaching and the reasons for attrition in female teachers. The next section examines the 'Values important to a Teacher' including autonomy, job satisfaction and self-efficacy. Followed by the 'Experience Curve' in relation to novice teachers, teacher identity as a career-changer and the role of the mentor and the school culture; during transition from trainee to ECT. Finally, the theme of 'Attrition in the Teaching Profession' is considered; including the impact of teacher burn-out and the exit-routes from teaching. Whilst the focus will be primarily on ECTs in England, an overview of the relevant global literature will also be provided for context. Finally, the literature review chapter will discuss the theoretical framework for the research and conclude by pinpointing where this study will be located.

As a result of this study being partly conducted during the Covid-19 global pandemic, the impact on 'career direction' will also be considered briefly, prior to the other related themes, as it may have had a role in these female ECTs' decisions to change career.

3.2 The Impact of a Global Pandemic on Career Decisions

As this research was partly conducted during the COVID-19 global pandemic, the period declared between 11th March, 2020 - 5th May, 2023 (WHO, 2023), the researcher was aware of possible changes in behaviour towards career decision-making. Whilst it has been acknowledged that the pandemic caused 'life altering shifts' globally (Autin *et al.*, 2020, p.497) this also included job loss,

health concerns, anxiety at work, as well as blurred lines between home and work life. Cao & Hamori (2022) discussed this as 'event system theory' and examined literature on how employees behaved during such a crisis. The research highlighted that career priorities shifted from job 'content' to other factors such as security and the impact a job had on health and lifestyle. Similarly, McKinsey (2020) found that people re-evaluated their careers to better align the time spent at work, with their wider values. In addition, employees' needs to re-evaluate their income and professional achievements (Wisnievska, 2020) undoubtedly had an impact on those looking to make changes to their careers. In a poll (Aviva, 2020) of over 4,000 UK workers, three out of five were planning to change their career as a result of COVID-19. A further sixty-percent planned to change job or learn a new skill. Of these workers, nine-percent were planning on starting a new career. Although the study showed that those under twenty-five were most likely to want to make changes, due to the pandemic, it was those aged between twenty-five and thirty-four who were most likely to retrain or pursue a different career.

These insights, when combined with an uptick in teacher training recruitment figures (NFER, 2021), may help to explain the motivations to change career and retrain as a teacher; for either for financial or values-based reasons during a time of uncertainty. After outlining the impact of the Covid-19 global pandemic on career making decisions, the next section begins with why women may decide to change career during more 'normal' times.

3.3 Female Career-Changers and Retraining as a Teacher

This section considers the reasons why women might want to change career, when they are more likely to and why they might decide to retrain to become teachers. It also explores how mature trainee teachers experience initial teacher training, the available routes into teaching and course completion rates for female trainees.

3.3.1 Women and their Decisions to Change Career

Existing research into the reasons why women may decide to change career is somewhat limited, with more literature available for why men might consider it. Bahr (2009) stated that a common age for women to consider changing careers is between the age of thirty-five and fifty years old. However, there seem to be few definitive reasons for why people in this age group might want to change career. This is supported by Brown *et al.*, (2012) who argued that there were even fewer models about the most effective ways to change career during midlife. Bahr (2009) suggested that there are four theories of development in women's lives; the life cycle, transitional periods, career self-efficacy and psychological factors and these stages can all impact the decision to change career. The research offers useful definitions of the development, evolution and life stages of a person's life and also suggests that a period of 'reflection and resurgence in midlife' (Bahr, 2009, p.5) can make people question their life purpose and career direction. Self-efficacy and psychological factors have a bearing on women and career change, and whilst the study by Bahr (2009) was relatively small (fourteen participants) it detailed the experiences of these women; who had either just changed careers or were in the process of doing so. One criticism of the study might be that all participants were recruited from

a single HEI, so not fully representative of the general population. However, the women all seemed to have changed careers for different reasons and were involved a transitionary experience that led them to wanting to change career during midlife. The findings demonstrate that for these participants, regardless of age, the timings of decisions were important and a result of their own life experience and/or circumstances. These changes included divorce or the demise of a relationship, feeling like their current work did not matter, having a child or the realisation that they were not going to have a child, wanting a career or fulfilling the 'dreams of the past'. This is of interest to the current study, as it suggested that the timing of women deciding to change careers can be individual, but are generally instigated by feelings of more than just being dissatisfied with their current work. In the same way, 'transition theory' (Schlossberg, Waters & Goodman, 1981, p.2) discussed the moment where life reaches a crossroads and how this can result in life altering transitions. Therefore, the existing research suggests an intersectionality between life stage and an external prompt or force acting as a catalyst for changing career.

After discussing the possible reasons why (and when) women are more likely to change careers, the next section reviews existing research on why they may retrain to become teachers.

3.3.2 Female Career-Changers becoming Teachers

The gender make-up of the teaching workforce in England is predominantly female (DfE, 2023c). In 2021/22, over seventy-five percent of all teachers in England were female, rising to seventy-six percent in 2023/24 (DfE, 2023c). According to former Education Secretary Damian Hinds, in an average year,

approximately ‘...seven thousand career-changers enter the teaching profession’ and the plan is ‘..to grow the number of career-changers coming into teaching’ (School’s Week, 2024). Although recent research on female career-changers choosing to become teachers is relatively sparse, Cherrstrom (2014) examined female midlife career-changers moving into teaching and the transition from prior expert to novice. The findings of this study concur with what Bahr (2009) suggested, that these women had actively chosen to change career as a result of their collective experience. Noting that ‘second career’ teachers were in part motivated by their work experiences and had made a choice to work with children. This was of particular interest to the current study, as it may help explain the participants’ motivations. On a separate theme, the study (Cherrstrom, 2014) also raised the idea that expectations for career-changers can be higher and often result in destructive working relationships. Later in this chapter, further consideration will be given to whether this makes the ITT stage harder for career-changers. However, the research would have been more relevant if a wider range of reasons for the difficulties had been examined in greater detail.

Nearly twenty years ago, Newman (2006) studied both male and female career-changers moving into teaching and found that they sometimes struggled to adjust and lacked a sense of belonging. This research was the most similar to the current study and so was particularly useful, in terms of its findings and methodological approach. Although, due to both men and women’s experiences being researched, some of the results spoke only of the challenges the men in the study faced. In particular, not meeting the ‘normative requirements’ of what was then expected of a primary NQT (being female, aged 22 and white). This

‘accepted identity’ (Foster & Newman, 2005) for a primary teacher may have meant that whilst female staff in schools welcomed men as teachers, they still found it difficult dealing with their differences (Moyles & Cavendish, 2001). Therefore, this finding was relevant – as it suggested that any newcomer who does not fit the ‘normative’ expectations of a teacher (including mature females or career-changers) may still have to overcome this. A lack of shared commonalities (Alvesson & Billing, 1997), may mean newcomers struggle to understand the organisation of a school and the subtleties of ‘rules’ that current staff or normative newly qualified teachers take for granted (Newman, 2006). This limited awareness may also prove a challenge for career-changing teachers, with this transition likened to an impossible border crossing into teaching (Crow *et al*, 1990). Similarly to the current study, Newman (2006) was interested in how career-changers experienced primary school, the reality of their journey and whether there was a difference between career-changers during their induction, as opposed to newly qualified teachers in general. However, in light of the induction process and ECF (DfE, 2021) reforms, whilst there are many commonalities between the studies – the landscape for an ECT is very different now.

One of the largest UK-based studies into the significance of career-changing teachers, was also conducted almost twenty-years ago by Priyadharshini & Robinson Pant (2003). It followed thirty-four secondary ITT trainees, in East Anglia, who had been dissatisfied in previous careers despite being considered ‘high fliers’ with economic stability; as they moved into the teaching profession. Whilst the research did not equate to the experiences of career-changing primary teachers, the study highlighted possible reasons for

changing career and identified broad profiles of those who do want to become a teacher. The most relevant profiles were:

- 1) Parents wanting to spend more time with their children.
- 2) Successful careerists who, after doing well in their first careers, wanted to move into a more 'moral' career.
- 3) Serial careerists who, after moving from job to job, wanted a more stable and secure career.

The 'profiling' provided further insight into the idea of 'life stage' (Bahr, 2009; Spear, Gould & Lee, 2000) being important and included some intrinsic motivations behind the decision. The study also identified further insights into the participants' beliefs, including the value of 'transferable skills' (including management and organisation), which was of particular interest to this study as it challenged the idea that career-changers enter the profession as novices, without any existing transferable skills or beliefs from beforehand. Furthermore, it also supported that career-changers moving into teaching do not start this journey as adults, but instead harbour the idea from childhood. This was outlined in the seminal study 'Schoolteacher' (Lortie, 1975) which suggested that many individuals who eventually move into the teaching profession, begin with an apprenticeship whilst still pupils. Similarly, Cole & Knowles (1993) agree that before people even consider becoming a teacher, they have pre-conceived ideas about what it entails. However, whilst this would suggest the decision is made beforehand, there still needs to be a careful consideration of why someone would leave another profession to become a teacher. One of the main reasons impacting the decision is a person's circumstances. There appears to be three (Pomson, 2003; Spencer, Gould & Lee, 2000) main considerations; (1) altruism; wanting to do something that is directly beneficial to society, (2) the

desire to work with children and (3) the status of being a teacher (along with the appeal of holidays and expected pay).

More recently, Troesch & Bauer (2017) considered the training journey of career-changers alongside those for whom teaching was their first career. The study noted whether the difference had an impact on the likelihood of remaining in the profession. The findings suggested that the trainees, for whom teaching was a second career, were less likely to leave teaching. However, whilst it acknowledged that comparable data was scarce and conflicting, a prior study (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003) disagreed, stating that they were more likely to switch careers again if working conditions did not meet their standards. In addition, Zuzovsky & Donitsa-Schmidt (2017) suggested that the retention of career-changers was dependent upon a number of other factors, including the nature of teaching training and their educational background.

Having explored the reasons why female career-changers may become teachers, the routes into teaching will be outlined next and the journey of a trainee teacher in England considered.

3.3.3 Routes into Teaching: Teacher Training in England

There are many routes into teaching, including those delivered within a university setting or through a school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) provider. Broadly, there are two taught within universities; an undergraduate degree (BA Honours in Education with QTS) and a postgraduate study (PGCE with QTS). SCITT providers offer a number of 'on the job' training schemes, with most accredited by universities, and in recent years have included; School

Direct, salaried and unsalaried (QTS), Teaching Apprenticeships (PGCE with QTS), Assessment Only (QTS) and Teach First (PGCE with an option to complete Master's degree in the third year). Recently, the 'phasing' out of the School Direct route (DfE, 2023) has meant those who may have chosen this route, to continue to earn money as they train, have been funnelled into the apprenticeship route. Which, in England, allows schools to draw down from the Government funded 'Apprenticeship Levy' (DfE, 2023). With the exception of the Teach First qualification, which is two-years in duration, the other post-graduate routes vary in length from twelve weeks (on the Assessment Only route for those who already have extensive teaching practice in England or abroad) to thirty-eight weeks (on the PGCE route) to complete.

The cost of training a teacher in England is dependent upon the training route. The average cost is twenty-three thousand pounds for those entering ITT (via the postgraduate route) but varies from seventeen thousand pounds for an undergraduate, to thirty-eight thousand pounds for a Teach First trainee (IFS, 2016). The Institute of Fiscal Studies claimed to have completed the first cost-benefit analysis of each route into teacher training and stated that the Government must justify the differences between the varying costs per route and the benefits each brings (Schools Week, 2016). Whilst the report was limited to the data and statistics, rather than providing a genuine cost-benefit analysis, it did however highlight marked differences between the retention rates across the two postgraduate routes. The most expensive route into teaching, Teach First, has drawn considerable criticism around the longevity of the trainees in the profession after qualifying; prompting Smart *et al.*, (2009) to suggest that Teach First is a 'stepping stone' to other more prominent roles

outside of teaching. Teach First is also London-centric, as it places forty percent of recruits in struggling schools there, ignoring coastal and more provincial areas. It has developed a reputation of being a 'middle class' training scheme (Parker & Gale, 2016) for graduates who would never have considered teaching in the first instance (Ellis *et al.*, 2016). Initial IFS (2016) data shows that in 2016, sixty percent of Teach First trainees had left after five years, compared with forty percent across other routes. However, more recent research (Education Datalab, 2022) suggests that these trainees are seven times more likely to remain in teaching, in senior leadership positions, and twice as likely to be teaching in low-income communities, if they remain in teaching for three years. By comparison, trainees on the PGCE route have higher drop-out rates in the year after gaining QTS (Schools Week, 2016). Teach First have stated that fifty-six percent of trainees, who have started since 2003, have remained in teaching and sixty-eight percent within education (IFS, 2016). They have attempted to justify the additional cost to train via their route, by arguing that trainees are disproportionately likely to work in disadvantaged schools (Teach First, 2022). However, the fact that sixty percent of trainees leave teaching after five years does suggest that it is not good value for money.

When comparing ITT performance profiles (DfE, 2022) for the academic year 2020/21, some interesting statistics started to appear. The global pandemic caused an unprecedented upturn of trainees to just over thirty-five thousand, up six thousand on the previous year (DfE, 2022). School-led training had a four percent lead over those in Higher Education Institutes (HEI). However, less were awarded QTS in comparison to the previous year, and just over twenty-two thousand were teaching in a state school within sixteen months of

qualifying. The ‘high potential’ postgraduate trainees from Teach First (DfE, 2022) were the most employable after qualifying, ninety-one percent in service, which was twenty-six percent more than those trained in HEIs. It is worth noting that the average cohort size of Teach First is less than two thousand (*ibid*), and so the data does not tell the full story. More broadly, there were less trainees aged twenty-five and over than those under twenty-five, and of those, women edged ahead by two percent; demonstrating an uptick in females entering the profession but a downturn in more mature trainees (DfE, 2022). Overall, this indicated that some barriers to entry exist for more mature trainees, which will be considered next, together with the additional factors that impact the teacher training journey.

3.3.4 Mature Trainees: Retraining to become Teachers

Over the past twenty years, several studies (Challen, 2005; Coles, 2001; Turner & Zanker, 2012) have been conducted into the journey of trainee teachers in England. However, none with the singular focus of the journey of ‘mature trainees’ or ‘career-changing females’ retraining to become primary teachers. Whilst they did reference mature students as an aspect within their research, and reasons for these students leaving mid-way through the training, most findings outlined the well-being of trainees during their placements and the importance of mentors during this period.

In their investigation into teacher well-being, Turner and Zanker (2012), aimed to gain a deeper understanding of how a cohort of secondary PGCE students settled into their placements. Whilst they had an additional strand of enquiry into the differences between mature students, and those who progressed

immediately from an undergraduate degree, they classified a mature student as having 'at least a 1-year gap' between their first degree and teacher training; rather than a larger gap that a career-changer may experience. However, the methodology was useful and the insights gained into the journey to becoming a teacher provided an initial scope of how well-being was eroded during a trainees' first year. In the research, trainees identified that they found teaching to be both rewarding and exhausting (Turner & Zanker, 2012). Furthermore, the research uncovered several interesting strands under the over-arching theme of 'erosion of self'. This included the impact the training year had on the trainees' health and relationships, areas outside of the 'school' environment. It also raised the idea that the conflict and politics often found in schools (Ball, 1987) had an impact on trainees' well-being. This is supported by Day *et al.*, (2007) who argued that a positive sense of well-being helped teachers manage the pressures of the teaching profession. The idea of resilience may be especially important for mature trainees, who might have already been successful in a previous career but who are entering teaching at a more junior level. In addition, some of their school colleagues may be younger in age, but more senior in role and this could be a possible cause of friction. Establishing professional relationships is fundamental to the success of trainees (Kelly *et al.*, 2019), however it would seem that not all trainees feel accepted and welcomed into their placement school or indeed classroom. A supportive mentor, who can provide excellent practice and constructive feedback can help trainees become a reflective practitioner. Turner & Zanker (2012) also revealed the anecdotal evidence that mature students required more help with planning and other school tasks, whilst those who began their training straight from their undergraduate degree worked more independently and were able to

take advantage of opportunities in school. Similarly, in her paper 'Wasted Journeys?' Janet Coles (2001), of Leeds University, documented the mature students who withdrew from a secondary teacher training course. Out of one-hundred-and-fifty students on the course, twenty-five were mature. Some of the mature students had spent a long time out of academic studies and having to resurrect the required skills was deemed a step too far for them. The findings also suggested that family commitments and financial burdens were also prohibitive to mature females trainees successfully completing their training. The next section will examine this further, but begin with why trainees are generally less likely to complete their teacher training.

3.3.5 Failure to Complete Teacher Training

In a small-scale study (Challen, 2005), to examine the perception of trainees on the challenges they faced during placement, data revealed that the trainee withdrawal rate (on a one-year PGCE course) was ten percent. Whilst the data revealed that most chose to withdraw, as they had come to the conclusion that teaching was not the career for them, others cited 'difficult relationships and inadequate support from tutors and mentors' (Challen, 2005). Other reasons for withdrawing were the issues that trainees encountered every day and this was supported by Smithers & Robinson (2007) who suggested the main reasons for trainees withdrawing include; workload, pupil misbehaviour, low status, salary and a target driven culture. However, Chambers *et al.*, (2002) identified reasons that would align with mature students' experiences, that included; moving, childcare, health and financial issues. The Challen (2005) study also showed the differences between the mature students' reasons for withdrawing, when compared with the other students. Their reasons for having to withdraw

included feeling overwhelmed and that their own health and family suffered as a result of the stresses of the placement. Over seventy percent of the withdrawing students (eighteen out of twenty-five students surveyed) agreed with the statement 'I felt that the demands of teaching outweighed the rewards' (Challen, 2005). Whilst the study countered that the withdrawal rate during the placement year could act as a filtering system for teachers entering the profession, the trainees acknowledged a need for adjustments where necessary and having someone take more of an interest in their well-being.

Having now considered the experiences of females who decide to become teachers and their possible teacher training journey, the next section of this literature review will take into account the experiences of females in the workplace and, in particular, outline the challenges that women may face in general and within teaching.

3.4 Females in the Workplace

This section will explore the experiences of females in the workplace, how the likelihood of their multiple roles at work and home may affect them (Pixley & Moen, 2003), and whether the gender pay gap and inequality in the workplace may impact on a women's career. It will conclude by contextualising these aspects within the teaching profession and also consider attrition levels in female teachers as a result.

3.4.1 The Gender Pay-Gap and Working Environment for Women

Research (LSE, 2019; WEF, 2022) suggests the gender pay gap in the UK will take two-hundred and two years to close. The central factor to consider is that

women are twice as more likely to take time off paid work to care for dependants. One consequence of this, is the pay gap widening automatically, particularly after the birth of a first child. Motherhood is a greater predictor of wage inequality than gender and, due to spending longer outside the workforce, on their return after four years women earn sixty-five percent less than women who continue to work (WEF, 2022). An inability to work part-time, together with the 'hustle' culture (LSE, 2019) that glorifies working longer hours, can make gender inequality at work and at home a 'double whammy' for women (Orgad, 2009), who are generally the foundation parent and do the greatest share of childcare and domestic work. Even in cases where women had reasonable or flexible working hours, and a supportive workplace, the considerations of their partner's job sometimes forces them to leave their own. The 'old-fashioned' narrative and expectations of the 'mother' role is still popular today with parents taking 'gendered' roles in family life. Research (ONS, 2022) shows that women complete sixty percent more unpaid work than men. Whilst many employers make efforts to improve equality in the workplace and reduce the gender pay gap, the persistent and unchallenged views of gendered roles at home (LSE, 2019) may mean that women in the workplace continue to be at a disadvantage.

3.4.2 The Multiple Roles of Women

The multiple roles that women fulfil, in their careers and as caregivers, may mean they could face more difficulties in career growth (Pixley & Moen, 2003) as the two roles compete for their time. For some, being a wife, mother and a worker is too much to deal with (Kim, 1995; Kim & Hurh, 1988). The pressures of too much to do, with not enough time to do it (Lewis and Cooper, 1997), can

cause a spill-over of roles; with not enough time to do the non-work role and psychological absorption of thinking about work when not there (Crowther *et al.*, 1983). In their research, Marican *et al.*, (2014) explored the lives of over a thousand working women in Malaysia. The challenges they faced in the workplace were often as a direct consequence of their family lives. Conflict may occur when the demands of family life are incompatible with the those of work, resulting in them leaving the workforce (Coontz, 1992; Higgins, Duxbury & Lee, 1994; Marshall & Barnett, 1994; Roehling, Moen & Batt, 2003). The findings (Marican *et al.*, 2014) suggested that supporting women in the workplace might help them to balance their home and work life. Other studies related to work-life conflict (Cummins, 1990; Spielberger & Reheiser, 1995), identified that employee dissatisfaction lowered productivity and turnover, and also increased absenteeism. Organisations implementing or redesigning practices to address the issues around the multiple roles of woman, such as flexible work schedules, working from home and paid leave for both parents/carers might go some way to addressing these issues.

Since being introduced in April 2024, the Flexible Working Act (legislation.gov.uk, 2023) has given teachers the right to request flexible working from the first day of employment, when previously they would have needed to wait twenty-six weeks. In addition, there is no longer a need for employees to explain the impact this flexible working request would have. By offering more flexible working, teachers may be able to adjust more easily to changes in life stage (NASWT, 2024), such as parenthood, caring responsibilities or retirement. In teaching, flexible working might include working part-time, 'job-sharing' a classroom teacher role or taking planning time at

home. If honoured by schools, it may help stem the loss of female teachers from the workforce in the future, which is what will be considered next.

3.4.3 Attrition in Female Teachers

Whilst an individual's personal circumstances will have an impact on their career trajectory, some past researchers (Kelly, 2004; Kirby & Grissmer, 1993; Stinebrickner, 1998) have argued that female teachers have a significantly higher chance of 'exit' attrition compared to men. This is as a result of leaving the profession, or having a career break, to become the primary caregiver after having children. Conversely, others (Boyd *et al.*, 2005; Dolton & Van der Klaauw, 1995; Strunk & Robinson, 2006) have suggested otherwise, stating that females are more likely to continue to teach, but in a reduced capacity; pushing up the demand for part-times roles or 'job-shares'. Primary school teachers are thought to be less likely to change jobs than their secondary school counterparts (Murnane & Olson, 1989). In part, this may be due to secondary teachers of subjects such as maths, science or languages being more likely to use their transferable skills to pursue other careers (Arnold *et al.*, 1993; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Henke *et al.*, 2001; Strunk & Robinson, 2006) whilst similar routes for primary teachers may not be as obvious. In light of this current study, it is likely that the theme of female attrition in teaching will need to be considered globally (later in the chapter), as UK policymakers have only considered the broader reasons for attrition (DfE, 2017) not that gender or life stage may have an impact. Meanwhile, the next section will move on to examine the factors important to a teacher and what challenges them, before discussing autonomy and resilience in teaching and how they impact ECTs.

3.5 Factors important to a Teacher

This section will first briefly outline the factors that are important to a teacher, then consider what could impact or prevent them from being realised. Then, the ideas of ‘autonomy’ and ‘resilience’ in teaching will be explored and how they may affect career-changing ECTs joining the profession, as well as those already teaching.

3.5.1 Outline of Factors Important to a Teacher

Intellectual challenge, autonomy, being creative and valued are widely regarded (Cockburn, 1999; Fraser *et al.*, 1998; Varlaam *et al.*, 1992) as some of the reasons why people choose to enter the teaching profession; at any stage in life. However, the divide between the expectation and reality can be painful and wide (Bullough, 1997; Cole & Knowles, 1993; Day, 1999; Sabar, 2004).

Offsetting these important values, are factors that affect job satisfaction, including; workload, lack of time and that some elements of the wider role are not learner-centred. The first to be explored is that of ‘autonomy’.

3.5.2 Autonomy in Teaching

The average teacher in England reports (NFER, 2020) a lower level of autonomy over what tasks they do, the order in which they carry out tasks, the pace at which they work and hours they work. In the first large-scale quantitative study (*ibid*) looking at teaching autonomy, with a view on teacher retention, the key findings were three-fold. First, that teacher autonomy is associated with higher job satisfaction and retention. Second, teachers’ perceived influence over professional development and goal setting is the area most associated with high satisfaction and, when this is the case, there is a

correlation towards remaining in the profession. Third, teachers report relatively high autonomy over classroom activities and teaching method, how they plan and prepare but lower autonomy over areas such as the curriculum, assessment and professional development goals. Reporting of the study (Tes, 2020) also revealed that teachers have the second lowest autonomy of eleven professions (only healthcare finished lower), although at private schools this was slightly higher. For many career-changing ECTs used to a higher level of autonomy, having fewer opportunities in teaching than in their previous profession may come as a surprise. Of interest to the current study, findings (NFER, 2020) linked autonomy with job satisfaction and retention and highlighted that the proportion of working-age teachers leaving the profession, in England, rose from nearly six percent in 2011, to over eight percent in 2018. In addition, time spent in the classroom does not seem to increase levels of autonomy. Teachers who stayed in the profession after five years felt no difference in autonomy, only those who entered leadership reported higher levels. This is in contrast to other professions (*ibid*), for which autonomy usually increases in a person's twenties and thirties, something that a career-changing ECT may have already experienced. Furthermore, thirty-eight percent of teachers reported (Tes, 2020) having little, to no influence over professional development goals, but increasing control over this would lead to a nine percent rise in their intention to stay on the profession. The research (NFER, 2020) calls for autonomy to be embedded within the ECF (DfE, 2021), and stated that greater autonomy could be associated with lower job-related stress levels. Contrary to this, it has been suggested (ASCL, 2020) that schools being highly structured, with timetable demands and curriculum coverage, means that there is a natural tension with autonomy. This raises the question of whether there

should be 'autonomy' in teaching, when perhaps self-efficacy or agency might be more appropriate (Confederation of School Chief Trust, 2020) as developing teachers might require more structure or guidance from the start.

Research (Grant *et al.*, 2020) into the link between teacher proficiency and autonomy, suggested that teachers navigate policies in a variety of ways to meet their needs, own beliefs and those of their students. Teacher autonomy can also refer to the relationship between teachers and the state (Cribb & Gewitz, 2007; Wermke & Hostfalt, 2014). In relation to state control, it can either empower (Cribb & Gewitz, 2007; Smaller, 2015) or deprofessionalise (Ball, 2003, 2010) teachers. Some teachers might welcome the accountability of guidance, to prevent harm to the learners and maintain the standards outlined by the state. Whilst others feel a decreased level of agency and autonomy by the nature of the performativity (Ball, 2003, 2010). It is important to acknowledge here that most ECTs would fall into the former; as it would require a certain level of experience, tacit knowledge of the perceived freedoms and knowing when to comply to become more autonomous. However, career-changers in particular might struggle with the perceived lack of autonomy in direct comparison to their previous role in a different profession. The next section considers the importance of resilience in teaching.

3.5.3 Resilience in Teaching

Resilience in teaching is regarded by Scheopner (2010) as an important area of research, especially in countries with high rates of teacher attrition. The majority of researchers (Bobek, 2002; Egeland, Carlson & Sroufe, 1993; Masten, Best & Garmezy, 1990) describe resilience as involving a process or a way of interacting with an event (Brunetti, 2006; Yost, 2006). A study (Mansfield *et al.*,

2012) into teacher resilience suggested that there are individual and contextual factors to consider when defining resilience and that it can be confused with competence (Green, Oswald & Spears, 2007). The research considered how teacher resilience is perceived by graduating and ECTs, in a survey of two-hundred, and presented the idea that resilience is multi-dimensional and that the views of resilience may develop according to teacher career stage. When considering teacher resilience, it is possibly more accurate to say that it is a quality that enables teachers to 'maintain their commitment to teaching' (Brunetti, 2006, p.813). Professional work challenges, heavy workload, classroom management, being unprepared, lack of support, lack of resources and poor hiring practices (Jenkins, Smith & Maxwell, 2009; McCormack & Gore, 2008; Sumsion, 2003) are potential risk factors for ECTs building resilience.

The factors contributing to teacher resilience can include, altruism (Brunetti, 2006; Chong & Low, 2009), strong intrinsic motivation (Flores, 2006; Gu & Day, 2007; Kitching, Morgan & O'Leary, 2009), perseverance and persistence (Fleet *et al.*, 2007), optimism (Chong & Low, 2009; Le Cornu, 2009), humour (Bobek, 2002; Jarzabrowski, 2002) and emotional intelligence (Chan, 2008). These personal attributes are also combined with the support at home and in the working environment; family, colleagues and peers (Howard & Johnson, 2004; Le Cornu, 2009; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004) have a part to play. The focus of why teachers leave does not explain why equally they may decide to stay.

Examining attitudes and behaviours of teachers who remain despite the challenges (Gu & Day, 2007; Gordon & Coscarelli, 1996; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Towers, 2017) have suggested that teachers who possess the characteristics of resilience are far more likely to persevere in difficult situations

and therefore, likely to remain. Attributes such as competence, efficacy, accomplishment, humour (Bobek, 2002), self-insight and agency (Sumsion, 2004) are important, and those who are lacking in these are less likely to manage the emotional aspects of their lives and that is when burn-out is likely to occur (Chang, 2007). Discovering resilience is something that can be embedded within ITT and career entry, via induction (Sumsion, 2013). Building resilience is a possible way of addressing teacher attrition and promoting 'quality retention' (Gu & Day, 2007, p.1314).

In summary, whilst a sense of autonomy is important for most teachers, it may not be immediately feasible for all ECTs. In addition, although research suggests that resilience is a quality necessary for career longevity, it would seem that career-changing ECTs need to first reconcile aspects of their previous professional identity, especially those around autonomy, as they begin their career entry into teaching. The next section considers the issues raised previously as contributing to teacher retention; job satisfaction, job stress and teacher efficacy in relation to novice teachers.

3.5.4 Job Satisfaction, Job Stress and Teacher Efficacy

A widely acknowledged (Ingersoll, 2001; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Struyven & Vanthourout, 2014) factor in retaining teachers, is the level of job satisfaction (Fernet *et al.*, 2012; Katz *et al.*, 2016; Kyriacou, 2001; Steinhardt *et al.*, 2011) they experience. Job satisfaction is about whether people like their jobs (Spector, 1997) or if job related needs (Evan, 1999) are met. Although there are several differing theoretical models explaining the factors that lead to a high level of job satisfaction (Klasen *et al.*, 2010; Lent & Brown, 2006), the

consensus is that job satisfaction is affected by external factors, which could include work conditions, the environment and internal factors (self-efficacy). Self-efficacy is a concept originally proposed by Bandura (1977) in his seminal book 'Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioural Change'. Put simply, self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to execute behaviours necessary to complete a task or target of attainment. When facing a challenge, people with greater levels of self-efficacy are able to rise to the challenge (*ibid*) and meet their goals. Those with self-efficacy develop a deeper interest in activities and have a stronger sense of commitment. Whilst those with lower self-efficacy avoid challenging tasks, believing that difficult tasks are beyond their capabilities (*ibid*), and are so focused on failings that they lose confidence in their ability. Woolfolk-Hoy & Burke-Spero (2005) found that teachers' efficacy increased during pre-service, but dropped as they began to work as a new teacher. Novice teachers can underestimate the complexity of teaching and become disappointed when their output does not align with their standards, which then impacts their levels of self-efficacy.

Troesch & Bauer (2017) studied the levels of job well-being and self-efficacy after seven to ten years of teaching; for both 'first career teachers' (FCT) who had gone straight into teaching and those who had already had a first career, so were second career teachers (SCT). SCT in the study reported both higher job satisfaction and self-efficacy than FCT. Whilst the authors conceded that the research was based on general efficacy (not teaching efficacy), the results are still relevant to the careers of SCT; as levels of self-efficacy impact on job satisfaction and stress, indicating how well they can handle the demands of the role. According to Lent *et al.*, (1994), individuals with high self-efficacy beliefs

are more likely to change career, which implies that the SCT in the Troesch & Bauer (2017) study may have already had higher levels of self-efficacy to begin with. Therefore, it is possible that when entering a new career, career-changers are able to bring with them their sense of self-efficacy through experiences of being successful in their past career, and that may be what impacts on their levels of job satisfaction as novice teachers.

In conclusion, whilst Troesch & Bauer (2017) found that SCT are more likely to experience greater levels of both job satisfaction and self-efficacy, they acknowledged that little is known about their career development, beyond the initial teaching training and career entry stages. Skaalvik & Skaalvik (2011) also suggested it was important to view all stages of a teacher's career, since attrition levels follow a 'U-shaped' experience curve; the first five years and latter stages of teaching are both common times to leave the profession. The next section will explore this from the perspective of ECTs and what factors may impact their attrition.

3.6 Impact Factors for Attrition in Early Career Teachers

The level of experience a teacher has, is considered to impact on attrition levels in the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). This section considers the relationship between experience and attrition, and what other factors may impact career-changing ECTs.

3.6.1 The Relationship between Experience and Attrition

According to the research conducted by Struyven & Vanthournout (2014), attrition differs according to the level of teachers' experience; those with less

experience are more pre-disposed to leave. This is partly due to dissatisfaction with aspects of their training, induction or the profession (Kelly *et al.*, 2019) which has already been discussed. The study also investigated the dual view of attrition in ECT's; those who train, but never enter the profession and those who do enter, but leave shortly afterwards. Five reasons were explored across both groups (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014), and these broadly concur with the findings around the world; job satisfaction (Fernet *et al.*, 2012; Katz *et al.*, 2016; Steinhardt *et al.*, 2011), school policies, workload, future prospects (DfE, 2017) and relations with parents being identified as reasons for leaving the profession. However, there do seem to be other factors that might impact on ECT's decision to leave, particularly in the case of career-changers, and these will be explored next beginning with their evolving identity.

3.6.2 A Career-Changer's Evolving Identity

Teacher identity can be important to forge at the beginning of a career in school (Wenger, 1998) However, this implies it is an individual concern, without considering the impact an 'environment' has on a teacher's identity; and whether it is conducive for an ECT or career-changer to form theirs. It has been suggested (Hall, 1996; Hird 1998) that identity is not fixed, rather that it is a continuous work in progress and can change. Osbourne *et al.*, (2003) stated that identity can be created in a social context. Wenger (1998) also viewed identity and practice acting as a mirror for each other; people define who they are, by the community in which they find themselves. Therefore, in the context of career-changing ECTs entering the teaching profession, the community is a school full of existing teachers and teaching staff. This is not without issue, as the community of a school can be different from a career-changer's previous

place of work. Some may struggle to cross over into the new environment or be accepted in their new identity as a 'teacher'. Reconciliation for both newcomer (and to a certain extent the community) can be a challenge. Nias (1996) discussed the importance of belonging, which largely depends on understanding the Community of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and having a frame of reference by which to identify oneself (Newman, 2006). Moran (1997) went further to say that any newcomer has to conform the unwritten community rules which, considering it might take some time to assimilate, is not as easy as it sounds. It has been suggested (Newman, 2006) that newcomers also need to be sponsored by the experienced 'old timers' and where this does not happen, they could remain on the periphery of the community, without having an accepted 'teacher identity'. The support of other teachers is something that is important for all new teachers, in order to gain control of their class and workload, and is heavily reliant upon this acceptance (Totterdell, 2002; Williams *et al.*, 2001). For most ECTs, this will take the form of the allocated in-school 'mentor' whose role is to ensure that they are able to settle into school and provide professional support and advice. This is the next area to be considered, focusing on the importance of the mentor role for ECTs, trainees and the community they are joining.

3.6.3 Importance of the Mentor Role

A recent study (Curtis *et al.*, 2024), into the perceived needs of the 'mentor role', highlighted that mentoring has been credited for increasing ECT retention (Maready *et al.*, 2021). It has been suggested (Auletto, 2021; Collie & Perry, 2019) that the role of the mentor is just as important for ECT well-being and job satisfaction. Whilst previous research focused on the experiences of mentors,

this study (Curtis *et al.*, 2024) highlighted the perspectives of both mentors and ECTs. The findings showed that when they differed, it resulted in less positive outcomes. Mentors have the role of ensuring that ECTs are able to successfully navigate the, often turbulent, waters of transition into the profession (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Despite the importance of the mentor, many ECTs have a varying experience with them (Aderibigbe *et al.*, 2022; Burger *et al.*, 2021) and some of this can be attributed to the mentor not being aware of what the role entails (Burger *et al.*, 2021; Clarke *et al.*, 2013). However, ECTs also have a role to play in the mentoring relationship, as ‘mentoring activity is enhanced when actors understand their roles and responsibilities within a collaborative relationship’ (Shanks *et al.*, 2022, p.758). Overall, whilst the study (Curtis *et al.*, 2024) was useful to understand the importance of the role of the mentor, from the perspectives of both the mentor and ECT, one limitation to its relevance was research participants were based in Australia, so not experiencing the same ECF (DfE, 2021) induction process. Context limitations notwithstanding, it did still raise issues about the expectations around the role of a mentor and how, regardless of any formal definition, differences can occur. This is certainly relevant to the current mentoring provision in England, which is discussed next.

As previously discussed in chapter two, the role of the mentor and induction tutor has been re-formalised as part of the ECF (DfE, 2021). To recap, the ECT mentor role still requires a weekly meeting during ECT1, and fortnightly meeting during ECT2. There will likely be a ‘cost’ involved to the school to facilitate this, as mentors will not be available to teach during these times and so will likely require another member of staff to cover them. This is in addition to the time required for completion of the ‘mentor’ modules of continued professional

development, part of the ECF (DfE, 2021). Whilst the recent impact report (DfE, 2024) suggested that much of the ECF has increased the workload for both ECTs and mentors, the importance of a suitable mentor (and time off timetable for them to perform the role) was raised as one of the fundamental benefits of the induction programme. However, mentors are still finding the mandatory elements of the programme prohibitive (Murtagh *et al.*, 2024). The research (*ibid*) suggested that the dichotomy between the prescribed Government programme and the more nuanced school environment had resulted in mentors having to balance the demands of both. Additionally, it reiterated the idea that despite the significance of the mentor (Butler *et al.*, 2010) they were 'often selected for the role based on the assumption that anyone who has taught can effectively mentor' (Murtagh *et al.*, 2024, p.2) and that a 'one- size-fits-all' approach to mentoring is restrictive. In summary, this timely study (*ibid*) highlighted the additional layer of complexity to the mentoring role since the introduction of the ECF (DfE, 2021).

An earlier study (Hobson, 2002) focused solely on the mentees' perception of their mentoring experience whilst undertaking their primary ITT. The main finding from the survey, of over two-hundred and twenty student teachers across four different training locations in the north of England, was that trainees considered mentoring to be the key aspect of school-based ITT. However, it also found that mentors were not always successful in creating conditions for effective teacher learning (*ibid*). An additional conclusion to draw from this study is that mature trainees may have a more challenging time during ITT and this could later have an effect on their career entry as ECTs. Whilst the current study will not focus on the training stage of teachers, it is important background

information about the possible barriers faced prior to career entry. The next section outlines the impact the community and wider school culture can have on career-changing ECTs.

3.6.4 The Community of Practice and School Culture

Part of the journey as an ECT, is navigating the culture of a new school. As discussed previously, this is reliant upon the existing staff acknowledging the newcomer and they in turn, participating in the culture that creates acceptance. The dimensions of the 'Community of Practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) explore the ideas that represent this beginning relationship. Including mutual engagement, interaction and a shared way of working; including routines, and joint enterprise. Newcomers absorb the idea of what the Community of Practice is (*ibid*). For career-changers, this would involve reconciling themselves with their past identities, and belonging, to assume that of the new community. However, for some career-changers this may prove challenging and cause resistance to the shared way of working; and existing staff may not be as welcoming to the career-changers as a result. Of particular interest to this study, is how the participants will respond to this challenge as career-changers and whether the mentor or more experienced teachers pave the way to help them assimilate to the new community of practice.

The next section will expand the discussion, to consider attrition of ECTs globally and the factors that impact them in comparison to those in England; to locate similarities and differences.

3.7 Attrition of Early Career Teachers: A Global Issue

Over the past twenty years, the issue of teacher attrition has been a constant and widely debated topic in education globally (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). The early years of teaching appear to be crucial to attrition rates (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guanno *et al.*, 2006) as the consensus is that after five years in the profession, a turning point has been reached. In the UK, Australia, Norway and Spain, exit numbers in the first five years are thought to be approximately thirty to forty percent (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014). In comparison, this increases to fifty percent in Germany, Italy and The Netherlands (Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007; Purcell *et al.*, 2005; Smithers & Robinson, 2003). Whilst in the USA, The National Education Association (NEA, 2018) reported that 'twenty-percent of newly-hired teachers leave within three years, rising to fifty percent in urban areas'. The number of teachers leaving the profession worldwide, is increasing faster than teachers can be replaced. Ingersoll (2003) refers to teaching as the 'revolving door profession', whereby schools are losing as many teachers as they are recruiting. Whilst many countries seem to be facing similar attrition rates in beginning teachers, Canada appears to be 'bucking the trend'. It is claimed this is a result of focused attention, and resourcing of, the induction transition into the profession (Gambhir *et al.*, 2008). This may suggest that if induction programmes are managed effectively, attrition rates will decline. However, while the factors that encourage retention are generally known and articulated within the literature, this knowledge alone does not appear to have stemmed the attrition rates across many other countries; causing problems in maintaining the supply of qualified teachers (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Attrition is considered by many researchers as an important determinant for policy makers worldwide, as

it has a 'knock-on' effect to the quality of contemporary education (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008) and is related (Milanowski & Odden, 2007) to lower student achievement.

In a small-scale study (Palis, 2014) of teacher attrition in Manila (the Philippines), findings revealed working conditions, support received and teachers' professional growth were cited as the reasons for leaving teaching. Alongside these more generic factors, the participants' personal characteristics, ideologies and societal pressures were also considered. However, of particular interest to this study, the research (*ibid*) discussed conditions as 'driving' and 'restraining' forces within teaching; which included salary, workload and the relationship with an immediate supervisor. The disequilibrium between the two forces provided a useful insight for the current study, into what may have finally caused these teachers to leave and was valuable to this study its underpinning theoretical framework.

One response to the problem of attrition in teachers might be to simply recruit more, it is insufficient to focus on this alone, without paying attention to why teachers are leaving the profession in the first place (Schuck *et al.*, 2012). In addition, this strategy does not take into account the rate at which ECTs are lost, nor the expertise they are taking with them as newly trained teachers. Furthermore, in England, the cost of recruiting and training new teachers is more expensive than retaining those who have already completed training (DfE, 2018). The global literature has shown that there are many factors that could influence a teacher's decision to leave the profession, including workload, remuneration, lack of support, bureaucracy and external factors. Policy-makers

need a better understanding of who leaves and why, to drive initiatives that aim to alleviate the problem, by targeting those who are more likely to leave (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014) and address the issues (Guarino, Santibarez & Daley, 2006) that are causal factors. While it is acknowledged (Ingersoll, 2015; UNESCO, 2013) that there is a shortage of teachers to meet demand worldwide, efforts to inform the issues of teacher attrition have focused on external factors; such as school and national policies - rather than on the personal circumstances that affect individual teachers in their careers. Therefore, this is an area that warrants further exploration. So, in the next section, the focus of the literature review will highlight the individual reasons for leaving teaching and return to the national context of ECTs in England.

3.7.1 Attrition of ECTs in England

When considering attrition statistics over the past decade in England, it is important to recognise these rates relate to those who have left state-maintained schools, not necessarily the profession. Of those ECTs who began to teach in 2016, over thirty-two percent were not working in the state sector five years later (House of Commons Library, 2019). In real terms, forty-two thousand qualified teachers left state-maintained schools between 2017-18 (DfE, 2019). Suggesting that teacher retention is a serious issue for the profession, especially where beginning teachers are concerned. This is supported by data from a survey conducted by Leeds Beckett University (2019), which revealed that of two-hundred and seventy-five newly qualified teachers 'only 43 per cent had definite plans to stay in the profession long-term'. Some (National Educational Union, 2018) have argued that attrition is due to the underlying pressures that teachers face, such as; a heavy workload, high

stakes testing and data accountability. However, if as a country we cannot recruit or retain enough trainees, this is likely to cause a shortfall in teachers in the near future. Whilst the government has attempted to mitigate against the loss of ECTs, the recruitment targets for trainee teachers have not been met since 2012 (House of Commons Library, 2019), provoking some observers to question the effectiveness of the current recruitment and retention policies in England. In summary, a combination of teachers qualifying but never entering the profession, or leaving whilst still an ECT has arisen in England. What follows will provide an explanation for this and begins by considering burnout in teachers, specifically ECTs.

3.7.2 Burnout in Teachers

Burnout in the workplace can be broadly defined (Jennett *et al.*, 2003) as an individual not being able to cope with career stress. A past study (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011) has shown that burnout amongst teachers could result in poor health, performance or lack of motivation and is related to job satisfaction; which can be an early indicator of burn-out and attrition. Some argue (Jimenez, McClean & Taylor, 2019; Maslach *et al.*, 1996) there are three related dimensions of burnout; emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment. The most reliable indicator of burnout (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007) is considered to be depersonalisation, as it reduces the human connection needed to be able to successfully work with others. Whilst the other indicators relate more to how a person is feeling internally. When burnout is present, there is a decrease in career optimism and this may impact on expectations and long-term plans (Rottinghaus *et al.*, 2005). Career longevity and well-being have been given increased attention in recent years, with

findings (Katz *et al.*, 2016; Steinhardt *et al.*, 2011) consistently illustrating that stress levels, mental health and burnout are prevalent amongst the teaching community. Whilst these issues may negatively impact on teachers' professional performance (Kyriacou, 2001; Fernet *et al.*, 2012) in the short-term, over a sustained period of time, they might be contributing to high rates of attrition (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014). More recent findings (McClean *et al.*, 2017) suggest that beginning teachers' well-being and commitment to the career may be especially vulnerable in the first five years. When ECTs leave the profession after qualifying, this not only creates a shortage of teachers, but also a loss on the investment (time and money) for schools and governments alike (House of Commons Library, 2019). This waste of untapped potential, has created a substantial amount of teachers who can teach - but choose not to (*ibid*). It is now necessary to explain how this phenomenon arose.

3.7.3 Exit Routes

According to Ingersoll (2001), two different exit routes have been identified for teachers leaving the profession. The first, takes into account 'life stage' milestones for leaving, such as; retirement, maternity leave or career breaks and this is defined as 'wastage'. The second is related to choosing to leave the profession as a result of being dissatisfied and this 'turnover' has been documented in the past (Macdonald, 1998; Williams, 1979). Turnover can be separated further, into 'transfer' or 'exit' attrition. The former implies an element of movement and there is a natural migration (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008) to other teaching jobs outside of mainstream education; to independent schools or teaching abroad. Whilst in exit attrition (Billingsley, 1993), teachers are leaving the profession completely, often changing careers (Ingersoll, 2001). Although in

attrition statistics for England (House of Commons, 2019), both types are grouped together; assuming all teachers who have left 'mainstream' education have left teaching altogether. This grouping together of all teachers who have exited the profession, has been referred to as 'Ghost Teachers' (Association of School and College Leaders, 2020). In 2017, there were around two-hundred and sixty-one thousand qualified teachers, under the age of sixty, who had previously worked in state schools in England - but were not currently doing so (House of Commons Library, 2019). A further one-hundred and six thousand qualified teachers, again aged under sixty, have never taught in the state sector (House of Commons Library, 2019). Teachers classified as 'out of the profession' may return, so these figures summarise the flow in and out of the profession. For example, only fifty-three percent of the teachers who entered state-funded schools in 2014 were newly qualified (House of Commons Library, 2019). The National Foundation for Education Research (NFER, 2016) found, from a sample of nearly seven-thousand teachers between 2001 and 2015, 'over fifty percent of those who left state schools for reasons other than retirement left to jobs in the wider school sector'. This might suggest teachers who have trained to teach, but did not wish to remain in the state sector, have moved into the independent sector or remained in education, but perhaps not in the classroom. Whilst the current study is focused on career-changers who move into teaching, this was an interesting insight into those who moved out of it; changing career into other education-based sectors.

After considering exit attrition of teachers in England, the final section of this literature review will consider the most suitable theoretical framework for the

current study and provide a rationale and justification for choosing it, in light of reviewing the existing literature.

3.8 Research Framework: Possible Approaches and Rationale

In order to find a suitable framework to underpin this research, three different approaches were considered. The first was a feminist approach (Junqueira, 2009), as the researcher was interested in the reciprocity found within it and sought to shine a light on voices of females to provide them with a platform to tell their authentic stories. The second was constructive grounded theory (Charmaz, 2008), as the study was interested in making sense of a phenomenon that had not yet been fully explored and could have benefitted from generating data first prior to using a pre-existing theory. The third was Kurt Lewin's (1948) 'Force Field Analysis' conceptual framework, which was relevant as these career-changing ECTs had to balance the driving forces in their new career against the restraining forces of assimilating into their new Community of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The next section will consider each in turn and then outline the chosen framework and rationale.

3.8.1 A Feminist Approach

Utilising a feminist approach enables researchers to use data collection methods that detail the experiences and perspectives of woman (Leavy & Harris, 2019). One such method is 'oral histories' and Armitage (2011) started using it in 1974 when teaching women's history and searched for local examples but found none. Valuing the participants' words and knowledge, eliciting information and this type of interview, where one participant is interviewed over many sessions, is suited to documenting a particular time in a person's life (*ibid*). It is an appropriate way of

gathering rich and descriptive data from one participant or a small group of participants (Leavy & Harris, 2019). Oral histories fits a methodological approach of minimal structure as a participant is telling their story or lived experience at the time of recording it, which is suitable for the participants within this study. This approach was of particular interest to this study, as the methods were aligned with the research aim. However, it would not be as effective at identifying the critical incidents experienced by participants and so whilst the feminist method to discover the experiences and perspectives of woman (Leavy & Harris, 2019) could be overlaid on a framework, it was deemed insufficient enough by itself to support the whole study. So, the researcher looked to supplement it with a more suitable framework. The next approach considered was that of constructive grounded theory.

3.8.2 Constructive Grounded Theory

Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) as proposed by Charmaz (2008) is a research methodology that focuses on generating new theories through analysis of the data gathered from participants, rather than from pre-existing theoretical frameworks. Using a qualitative research approach, the researcher seeks to understand a social phenomenon and construct theories through participants' experiences, using iterative data collection and analysis. It is a later version of the Grounded Theory developed by sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967). However, Charmaz (2008) argued that the researcher is not a neutral observer but a co-participant in the study, which would have suited the approach the study was taking with the participants. However, the researcher was uncertain that collecting data without a framework (despite the benefits of not forcing the knowledge) was possible now that she had conducted a

sizeable amount of prior literature research on the topic of ECTs. In addition, as the researcher had lived experience of the induction process, it was felt that using this approach would not be in keeping with the essence of CGT and therefore it was discounted for this reason.

3.8.3 Force Field Analysis

In order to effect change, to become fully inducted members of the teaching profession, the ECTs in this study will have to overcome the challenges that push back on them during induction. Whilst there are many effective change management models (Bridges, 1991; Hiatt & Creasey, 2003; Lewin, 1948; Satir *et al.*, 1991) Kurt Lewin's (1948) Force Field Analysis model is a tool that can assess the forces that impact any given situation, and can help to elicit change once the root cause of inaction has been identified. It works on the basis that any given situation is the result of being in equilibrium, and Lewin (1948) speaks of 'positive' forces for change and 'restraining' forces for change. In this study, the ECTs would need to experience more positive forces, in order to reach the 'desired' state of completing induction. As suggested by Lewin's Force Field Analysis model (1948) '...the balance between the forces which maintain the social self-regulation at a given level has to be upset' (p.47) in order to achieve this. As previously discussed, school is the Community of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) that these ECTs must assimilate to, in order to fully step into the profession. However, the ECTs may have little control over the provision of support that they receive in school during their two-year induction. Teaching can also be a time intensive profession (DfE, 2017). As female career-changers, it is possible that they may have other responsibilities outside of the school; including family, parental or caring roles (Marshall & Barnett, 1994; Moen & Batt,

2003). Finally, whether these ECTs are able to fully integrate within the school setting may depend on a number of factors including developing the institute capital required. Combined, these may be the deciding factors in whether they are able to meet the demands of induction and Force Field Analysis (Lewin, 1948) would be able to ascertain these critical incidents.

After weighing up the benefits and limitations of each of the three approaches, the researcher decided to utilise a feminist approach to data collection and adapt Lewin's (1948) 'Force Field Analysis' to create a more suitable framework to underpin the research. It offered a way of ascertaining the individual experiences of these career-changing ECTs which, in light of the literature reviewed, would provide a unique and nuanced insight into the journey of female career-changers during their ECT induction. In addition, it offered flexibility as a framework to be adapted if the data collected highlighted differences in participants' experiences from the literature reviewed.

By adapting Lewin's (1948) Force Field Analysis model, the researcher constructed a conceptual framework called 'Early Career Teachers Force Field Analysis' (see figure 3.1) to consider the possible driving and restraining forces for change. In addition, a third 'facilitating' force was added to reflect the key factors supporting change; starting from the decision to change careers and finishing when the two-year ECT induction is complete.

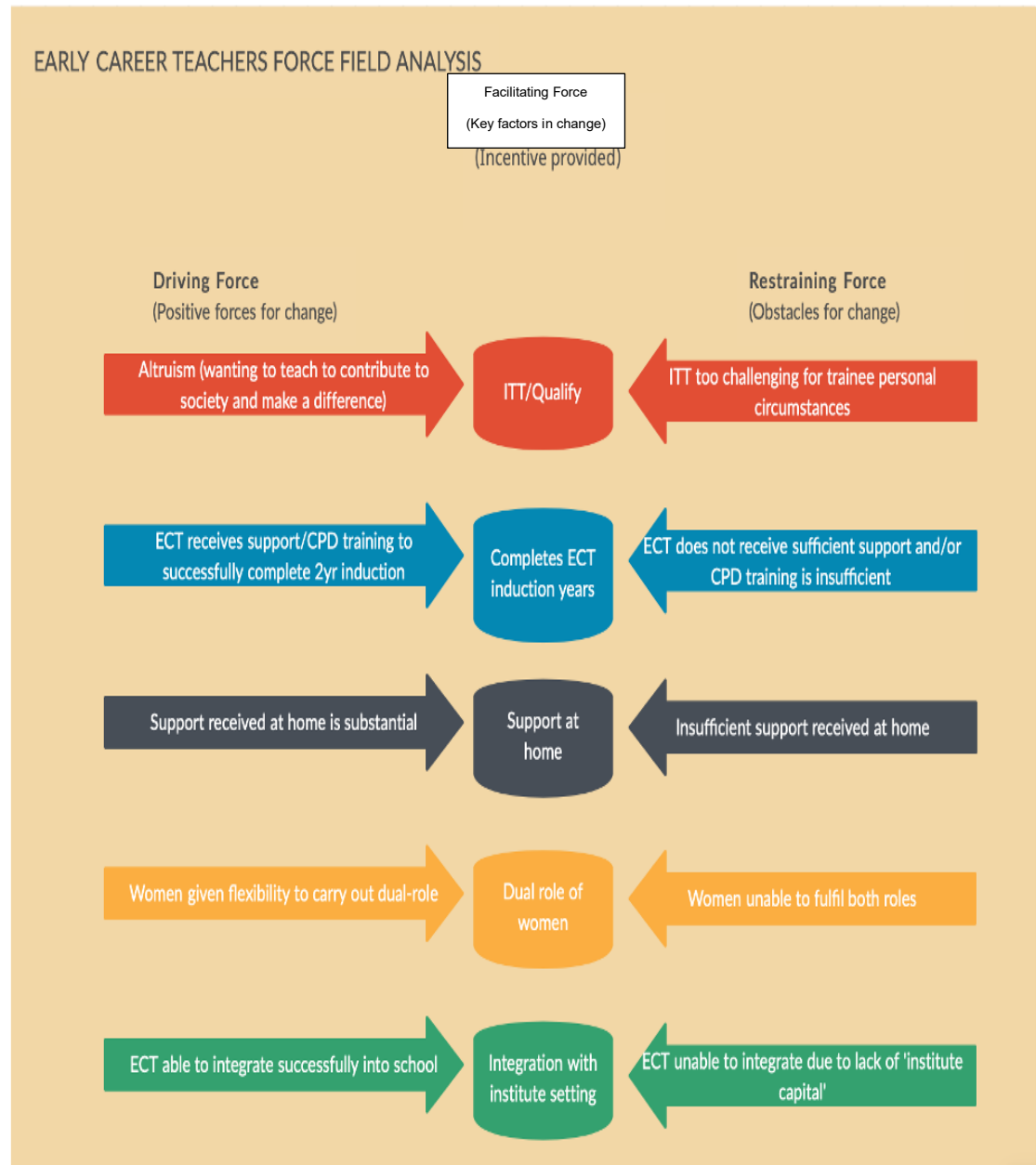


Figure 3.1 Early Career Teachers Force Field Analysis, adapted from Lewin's Force Field Analysis (1948, p.47).

3.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, this literature review chapter has considered the main factors that impact career-changing females entering the teaching profession. To date, existing research surrounding career-changers moving into teaching has focused on both men and women (Newman, 2006; Priyadharshini & Robinson

Pant, 2003; Troesch & Bauer, 2017), even though the literature reviewed suggests that females experience changing career (Bahr, 2009; Cherrstrom, 2014), the workplace (Orgad, 2009; Pixley & Moen, 2003) and teaching (Kelly, 2004; Kirby & Grissmer, 1993; Stinebrickner, 1998) differently. Women, in particular, are more likely to change career when their lives reach a crossroads (Schlossberg, Waters & Goodman, 1981) but prior research suggests that most people choose to become teachers for three main reasons; becoming parents, wanting to move into a more 'moral', or secure career (Priyadharshini & Robinson Pant, 2003). This chapter concluded that studies (DfE, 2022, 2024; Gatsby & Teacher Tapp, 2024) into the experiences of ECTs in general have been scarce due to the relatively recent introduction of the ECF (DfE, 2021). In contrast, this study seeks to fill the knowledge gap on the issues that 'female' career-changers now face; to establish what the key issues are during their two-year ECT induction. Finally, the conceptual framework for the study was presented (figure 3.1 Early Career Teachers Force Field Analysis, adapted from Lewin's Force Field Analysis (1948, p.47) and a rationale provided for the efficacy of the framework to identify the driving and restraining forces, to ascertain the critical incidents during the induction journey.

After completing the literature review, the next chapter will consider the most suitable methodological approach to ascertain the experiences of the female career-changing participants, during their two-year induction, and provide justifications for selecting the chosen data collection methods.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction to the Methodology

This chapter addresses the methodology of the study and provides a rationale for the chosen interpretivist paradigm, as well as reflecting on the researcher positionality and ethical considerations that underpin the research. The researcher justifies how these factors impacted the research design, data collection methods and analysis of the study. It begins with stating the research question and contribution to existing knowledge.

4.2 Research Question and Contribution to Existing Knowledge

In establishing the contribution to existing knowledge, it is important to consider the overarching research question *‘What are the experiences of career-changing female primary school teachers, in England, during their Early Career Teacher induction?’*, and the research methodology. The aim was to examine the journeys of six ‘female career-changing ECTs’ in order to further understand the nuanced view of their early careers, as career-changers, and how they experienced the first two years of induction. Whilst prior research reported on the ‘induction’ of newly qualified teachers (Gambhir *et al.*, 2008; Jones, 2002), the causal factors of ‘attrition’ during the early years (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014) and how to retain ECTs (EEF, 2018) there was limited research evidence of how the ‘two-year’ Early Career Framework reforms (DfE, 2021) affected ECTs in England. In part, this was due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic; as the pilot ECF (DfE, 2021) evaluation (EEF, 2020) was ‘designed to run from June 2019 – July 2020. However, both delivery and evaluation were modified...and this means that we only saw the very early stages of these programmes, which

limits the evaluation and its findings' (EEF, 2020, p.5). Resulting in the study being 'unable to ascertain the impact of programmes and support around the ECF in the second year of teaching after qualification' (EEF, 2020, p.100). More recently, in June 2024, the Department for Education (DfE, 2024) published an update evaluating the 'second' year of the ECF and there has also been a similar report produced by Gatsby/Teacher Tapp (2024). Therefore, limited research exists for the whole of the ECF induction (DfE, 2021). Whereas, the duration of the current study spans both ECT years and so data was collected consecutively for the second year of the ECT induction. Finally, there has been limited research evidence of the early career journeys of 'female' career-changing participants and the factors that impact them. Thus, establishing a contribution to existing knowledge, but also uncovering new insights.

Consequently, the literature for this study focuses on the induction of ECTs, female career-changers who move into teaching, recruitment and retention of teachers and how ECTs are supported by the ECF (DfE, 2021), within the school that they complete their induction. However, whilst there is a notable gap in existing literature on 'female' career-changers who retrain to become primary teachers, this study complemented others in the field. Most notably Newman's (2006) narrative study into the induction of *both* male and female career-changers who become primary teachers, during their newly qualified teacher (NQT) induction. Whilst both the current study and Newman (2006) share similarities, they differ in two important ways; the gender of the participants and methodological approach. The data collection methods for the current study, were informed by the need to hear from the female participants; through the use of self-recorded 'oral histories' to provide greater opportunities to listen to their

'stories' and authentic voices. In contrast, Newman (2006) was based on using constructivist grounded theory and one of the limitations of using this method is that it can fail to respect the stories of participants and fracture the data at analysis stage, which can limit understanding (Conrad, 1990; Riessman, 1990). Troesch & Bauer (2017) considered the training journey of career-changers, alongside those for who teaching is their first career, and whether the difference had an impact on the likelihood of remaining in the profession. Troesch and Bauer (*ibid*) adapted the theoretical foundation of the model for 'teacher stress and strain' (Rudow, 1994) and whilst the research questions considered the journey of these 'second-career teachers', their experiences were contrasted against those for whom teaching was a first career, rather than in their own right. Whereas, in the current study, only career-changers were recruited and the research was located in England; which has a different set of ECT induction criteria and government policies considered by Rudow (1994). Finally, whilst earlier research conducted by Jones (2002), on the induction of secondary trainee teachers, spoke about the challenge of the 'bridge' from induction into the profession, this was viewed through a secondary lens and conducted nearly twenty years prior to the implementation of the ECF (DfE, 2021). So, whilst useful, is significantly different to a primary phase study conducted between 2022-2024. Now that the research questions and contributions to knowledge have been outlined, the next section explores the research methodology.

4.3 Research Methodology

4.3.1 Methodological Considerations

Initially, the researcher considered using auto-ethnography as a methodological approach; as she was a female career-changer herself, and had retrained to be

a primary teacher. However, during the transition from teacher to teacher-educator she became more interested, both personally and professionally, in the career longevity of ECTs. So, in light of these considerations, wanted to conduct research with ECTs and explore their experiences during induction. The next section will document the methodological approaches considered and the reasons for selecting an interpretivist paradigm.

4.3.2 Methodological Approaches and an Interpretivist Paradigm

In educational research there are 'several competing views of the social sciences' (Williams, 2020, p.79-84). Whilst commonly known as methodological 'paradigms' (positivist or interpretivist) Hammersley refers to these more 'as a way of looking at the world, the assumptions we make about what the world is like and how we can begin to understand it' (2013, p.13). Nevertheless, whether to use a quantitative or qualitative methodological approach in research has been an ongoing debate and, in his article 'Getting over the Methodology Wars', Bredo (2009) discusses the supposed hierarchical order between them stating "the notion that quantitative research is the truly scientific form of education research that can (and should) be purified by separating it from qualitative research" and qualitative research is "viewed as a merely exploratory or imaginative phase of inquiry that is unscientific but can be replaced by a later quantitative phase in which claims are scientifically "verified" rather than merely "discovered" (p.442). Bredo comments further on how researchers often, by choosing one or the other, have to decide on an approach "as though they had to proclaim doctrinal loyalty immediately for fear of being burned at the stake" (2009, p.443) rather than considering the viewpoint "different data types could benefit each other or that methods other than their own could provide a coherent version of reality"

(Symonds & Gorard, 2018, p.2). Using a 'mixed-method' approach could therefore triangulate the data, to offer a more robust outlook, but it was important to the researcher to select an approach that privileged the holistic experiences of the participants, which a qualitative approach would support.

Paradigm wars notwithstanding, the researcher chose an 'interpretivist' lens to seek to understand the situation and people within an environment. From the researcher's underlying viewpoint that research cannot be completely 'value-neutral' (Hammersley, 1992), it followed that the participants' perspectives were value-laden, because knowledge is constructed by making sense of the world as an individual. In asserting one's underlying values (Skeggs, 1994), Creswell (2014) suggests that the interpretivist viewpoint is allied with constructivism, which resonates with the researcher's own teaching practice, so sits comfortably with her personal ontology. Interpretivist research is likely to use more qualitative than quantitative data, such as transcripts, observations, interviews, descriptions and other supporting documents. Despite evidence to the contrary, it is not inferior in status to quantitative data because it can highlight an individual's feelings and provide good insights into human behaviour. Creswell (2014, p.8) states 'social constructivists hold assumptions that individuals seek understanding of the world in which we live and work [to] develop subjective meanings of their experience'. However, Bernstein (1974) argues that qualitative research is inaccurate, subjective and misleading. Therefore, it does rely on the researcher capturing and disseminating the participants' opinions on the subject and this is perhaps why Bernstein argued it was inaccurate. Reason and Bradbury (2001) see it as generating 'living knowledge', whilst Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2017, p.166) state the use of qualitative methods in educational

settings as discovering ‘the social and educational world is a messy place, full of contradictions, richness, complexity, connectedness, conjunctions and disjunctions’. For the researcher, this is an excellent place from which to start to sort through the tangle of lived experiences and in doing so, weave a tapestry of rich and descriptive meaning. As the research sought to explore the ‘stories’ of the research participants, it was clear that a qualitative, interpretivist research design was the most appropriate fit for this study, and this will be discussed next.

4.4 Potential Interpretivist Approaches

The three potential interpretivist approaches considered for this study were; feminist ethnography, phenomenological analysis and narrative inquiry. This next section will discuss the merits of each and a rationale for why narrative inquiry was the chosen approach.

4.4.1 Feminist Ethnography

Ethnographic research applies a cultural lens when studying people within their communities (Atkinson, 2007). Whilst feminist ethnography aims to shine a light on the unequal relationships between researchers and their participants (Junqueira, 2009). Rosalie Hankey Wax (1952) first raised the concept of researcher and participant ‘reciprocity’ and that an exchange between the two might address the problem of the researcher taking “something for nothing” (Wax, 1952, p.36). In light of this study, the researcher providing a ‘sounding board’ for ECTs during their early careers might have offered a fair exchange for the time a participant gave to collaborating in the research, hence could have been classified as feminist ethnography. However, this method normally involves the

ethnographer becoming integrated within the community of study and during the time the research was conducted this was not possible, due to a global pandemic. Turning now to the restrictions in place, due to the pandemic, and the other implications this had on the researcher.

4.4.2 Restrictions due to the Global Pandemic

During the 'Covid 19' global pandemic, the university the researcher worked for terminated the 'fixed term' contracts of the lecturers within the ITE department. As a result, this impacted the potential methodological approaches considered for the study. In addition, Government restrictions in place at the time meant that having any 'in-person' contact with members outside of your own 'bubble' was not permitted. Whilst at first this was disappointing for the researcher, it did have some advantages. One of which, was the ability to remove herself from the lived experiences of prospective participants and observe the phenomenon of career-changing ECTs from a distance. After careful research, phenomenology was considered next, as it had the potential to offer a better fit for the outcomes and research being undertaken; resulting in rich data, with thick description (Geertz, 1973) and this is discussed in the next section.

4.4.3 Phenomenology

At its broadest meaning, phenomenology is 'a theoretical point of view advocating the study of individuals' experiences because human behaviour is determined by the phenomena of experience rather than objective, physically described reality that is external to the individual' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, as cited in Sloan & Bowe, 2014, p14). Curtis (1978) states that features of phenomenology include a belief in the importance in subjective consciousness; understanding that it is active and can bestow meaning. However, in the seminal work of Husserl

(1970), thought to be the founder of phenomenology, this is demonstrated by questioning the often taken for granted assumptions within a situation.

The study of phenomena as they manifest in our experiences, and the way in which we perceive and understand them, is subjective in the meaning we attribute to them. Researchers try to understand the meaning of people's lived experiences, by exploring what was happening and by focusing on their experience of the phenomena, as an individual (Lester, 1999). Pure phenomenological research describes rather than explains, with no pre-conceived idea or hypothesis to begin with. The general principle of phenomenology is of a minimum structure with maximum depth, to focus on the research issues rather than face undue influence by the researcher. It requires a good rapport between researcher and participant; empathy is critical due to the fact that sensitive and emotional subjects may emerge, particularly if the participant has a personal stake (Oakley, 1981), which may have been the case when conducting research with career-changing ECTs. In addition, using a phenomenological framework means that a large amount of data will be collected, by way of interview notes, recordings and field notes, prompting some to attribute a 'disorganised' quality to it (Hycner, 1985). However, in a small-scale research project, it enables the researcher to look across the data of participants in similar situations and it is likely to generate a number of themes that are comparable. This does of course not mean that a small-scale study will offer any generalisation across wider sets of similar situations, but does offer the rich, detailed insight the researcher was seeking. There also needs to be a transparency between the data as reported and the interpretations, to minimise any misrepresentation or distortion of the participants contributions, which was

fitting with the researcher's preferred ethos of being faithful to the participants and ensuring that soundbites and direct quotes are used to illustrate the points being made and demonstrate rigour (Creswell, 1998). However, as the researcher had been a career-changer, who retrained as a primary teacher and experienced the NQT transition personally, it may have meant that the research would have been unduly influenced by the backdrop of her own experiences, and positionality, which could have resulted in pre-conceived ideas or implying meaning on behalf of the participant's lived experience; not allowing them to tell their 'story'. This potential drawback led the researcher to consider utilising a narrative approach, which is outlined next.

4.4.4 Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is the overall term for the process of documenting personal human experiences over time (Etherington, 2007) and takes into consideration the relationship between individual experience and the cultural context (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). At its simplest level, narrative inquirers work alongside research participants to understand the ways in which individuals and communities live their stories (Barratt & Stauffer, 2009). They construct meaning (Bruner, 1986; Geertz, 1973) from places and moments that serve human connection and understanding in the world around us. There is often some discussion about what makes a story a narrative inquiry, usually it is the identification of the perspectives and experiences that they can inform (Barratt & Stauffer, 2009). Whilst stories are features of human experience, not all are necessarily narrative inquiries "All talk and text is not narrative" (Riessman & Speedy, 2007, p.428). Coles (1989) states that stories provide alternative ways of exploring, recording and interpreting experiences.

By using stories to understand social patterns, from the perspective of participants, they are retold by researchers from information they gather, to form the heart of narrative inquiry. These stories are reconstructions, further interpreted by the researcher, and this has an impact on the way in which they are retold. However, the analysis treats the stories collected as knowledge *per se* which constitutes 'the social reality of the narrator' (Etherington, 2004, p81). It is recognised that by conveying the experiences of the people they are researching, the researcher themselves is included within the conversation; in all its qualities of richness, dialogue and co-construction. Narrative inquirers acknowledge that the researcher and the researched, in a particular study, are in a relationship with each other and both parties will learn and change during the encounter. Geertz (1983) argues convincingly that local knowledge forms the most important basis for understanding human culture and personal interaction and the output of thick description in narrative inquiry.

The 'renewed interest in storytelling' (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009, p.7) has meant that the use of narrative has joined the landscape for inquiry by researchers looking to learn from a variety of settings, by getting 'up close and personal' to their participants. The ability to connect with others, and find meaning through stories, can help us to expand our knowledge of the social world around us (Bruner, 1986) in the present day, using a method from the past. Story-telling pre-dates literate cultures and some scholars have linked it to the emergence of conscious thought (Jaynes, 1976). As educators started to use the call of stories (Coles, 1989) to explore and record experiences, Bruner's work challenged researchers to consider narrative methods to construct meaning, as an individual and collectively (Barrett and Stauffer, 2009).

In conclusion, narratives are immensely rich and detailed and afford the researcher the experience of witnessing a testimony (Pelian, 2011) and, as such, must be assessed by the lens of the researcher rather than the participant, however it is a researcher's responsibility to honour the story being told.

4.4.5 Chosen Methodology: Advantages and Limitations

Whilst the considered approaches may have offered a good insight into the lived experiences of the participants in this study, narrative inquiry was deemed to be the most well-suited to telling these participants' stories and being part of the story, as a researcher. The advantages of selecting narrative inquiry relate to both methodology and methods used. A commitment to data analysis in which the theory develops from the data collection methods, in particular oral histories, meant that the analysis was rooted in the participants' experiences and what they chose to reveal and expand upon. One possible limitation of this approach was that only part of the story was recorded and so the 'lived experience' of a participant revealed the 'individual' journey and would not offer the insight into the whole picture, that an ethnographic study might offer. Due to the fact each story would be different, unlike a phenomenological approach, it was possible that no general themes would emerge. Finally, the amount of data collected from a narrative inquiry means that a researcher must utilise a robust method of analysis in order to reduce a mass of data to manageable key highlights, from which to interpret, which using 'Holistic Content Analysis' (Beal, 2013) helped to manage in this study, and is outlined next.

4.4.6 Holistic Content Analysis and Representation

One advantage to using Holistic Content Analysis (Beal, 2013) is that it can provide an accurate reflection of the whole data set and not just the key themes. Beal (2013) suggests being more 'playful' with the size of the data elements used, in order to keep the stories as a coherent whole. Furthermore, the 'River of Life' chronological tool (Denicolo & Pope, 1990) used (which will be discussed later in this chapter) allows the user a chance to reflect on key moments in their development. It also enables a researcher to follow the path of individuals and the critical incidents that mattered to them, regardless of whether similar events were replicated throughout the study. In order to present the data in a rich and full descriptive way (Geertz, 1973) narrative inquiry can be used to reveal events of tension, when collated, within an individual journey. This helped to show the participants' full story, even with the limitations of this thesis' word limit.

To establish whether there was a collective, as well as individual, experience for the female career-changing ECTs, it was necessary to make comparisons between their data. This was similar to Newman's (2006) study into career-changing NQTs, but focused solely on the experiences of females ECTs and considered their ability to assimilate, understand institutional norms, as well as balance other responsibilities that may have been in direct conflict with their role as a teacher. This 'dual-role' is something that a Malaysian research project (Marican *et al.*, 2014) suggested was the result of family life being incompatible with work, resulting in females leaving the workforce (Coontz, 1992; Higgins, Duxbury & Lee; 1994; Marshall & Barnett, 1994; Roehling, Moen & Batt, 2003) and one possible explanation of why career-changing female ECTs may leave

teaching in their early careers, or struggle to cross the border in to teaching settings (Lave and Wenger, 1998).

An additional approach used, was based on the potential common themes to emerge from the participants' oral histories, then followed-up on within the semi-structured interviews. So, with this in mind, subsidiary questions were asked about the induction period, mentor support and the CPD of the ECF (DfE, 2021) as a framework. These were important themes that emerged from the literature review and part of the ECT's reflections anyway.

4.5 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are used to evaluate the quality of research by assessing how well a particular method measures what is being investigated. Reliability is about the consistency of what is being measured, validity is how accurate the given measurement is (Cohen *et al.*, 2017). Validity can be a challenging concept in qualitative research, as the 'truth' of any situation is open to interpretation (Denzin, 1989). Whilst the terms 'reliability' and 'validity' are used with reference to the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Merriam, 2009), it could be argued that these terms are less useful for those conducting interpretivist research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) further refined 'trustworthiness' by adding a criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to reliability and validity. Credibility in this study was achieved by the consistent observation across the years and data triangulation used. Also, by providing 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973), so others would be able to judge the transferability to their own research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Tobin & Begley (2004) suggest that to achieve dependability, the research process is logical,

traceable and clearly documented. Whilst confirmability is concerned with ensuring the findings are derived from the data, which in this study required the researcher to state how interpretations had been reached. An audit trail of the findings in this study provide evidence of the decisions and choices made, for another researcher to follow and arrive at similar conclusions (Koch, 1994). To establish authenticity, qualitative researchers must ensure their findings are credible, not only from the participants' experiences, but also in regard to the larger implications of research, including: fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity. Each considers a different aspect of possible change in participants, systems, or power structures that may be associated with the inquiry process. Fairness was important in this study, as the participants were empowered to have a voice and encouraged to participate (Nolan *et al.*, 2007). Catalytic and tactical authenticity are often difficult to assess. However, tactical authenticity examines whether a redistribution of power among stakeholders occurred, which was central to this study, as the participants led the data collection.

Many researchers have discussed the issue of validity and Goodson and Sikes (2002) maintain that the first step for researchers to be explicit about what they are aiming to create. Therefore, this study did not measure the ECT induction as a whole, rather the partial, local and individual experiences of the six participants and the collective experiences to view the bigger picture of these female career-changing ECTs, rather than universal truth or wider generalisation.

The sampling (see 4.8) was designed to ensure that differences between the participants would arise as a result of personality, life stage and setting, rather than just the differences between different ECT provider programmes. This was

important for the context of the study – being interested in the lived experiences of career-changing females and the impact of how the ECF (DfE, 2021) is interpreted by the individual setting. The stories were the experiences of these six ECTs, in their first two years of mandatory induction, reflecting on their points of tension and, once collated by the researcher, represented by a visual data representation of their journey. The participants constructed their own individual ‘River of Life’ (Denicolo & Pope, 1990), as told to the researcher through the oral histories and interviews, and the visual of this was sent to the participants and they were asked to confirm that it was a true representation of the information shared. Participants could make changes, add comments and most chose to do so via email, or directly using an online platform called ‘Padlet’. Therefore the data had ‘participant’ validity, as it included approval of how their experiences had been represented. One limitation of the researcher collating the data and representing this as a visual, instead of asking participants to draw this themselves, was that it was open to interpretation of the researcher. Whilst the researcher considered the participants completing this final stage themselves, pragmatic considerations (and the time-constraints of the study), together with the amount of additional work the participant would be expected to do, made it less viable. However, steps were taken to mitigate against a biased narrative and ensure the voices of the participants were the ones doing the storytelling, by addressing the ethical considerations and power balance discussed in this chapter. Furthermore, as the participants were recording their own oral histories, providing explanations for critical incidents that occurred during interviews and given access to amend the online chronological timeline – they were the ones creating their own ‘River of Life’ (Denicolo & Pope, 1990) and the researcher was taking on the role of storyteller.

The data was compared with existing literature to locate participants against other ECTs or career-changers, to identify where nuances within themes could be located. Goodson and Sikes (2001) state that qualitative researchers cannot write what they like, so, on the one hand there is a need for research to break new ground, but careful consideration of literature is imperative to ensure that before claiming new knowledge it considers each nuance; existing or emerging (Bullough, 1998, cited in Newman, 2006). In addition, it is important to acknowledge the role of the researcher in the data and how the interpretation can be seen in the write up (Denzin, 1998). Making the researcher central when synthesising data can generate problems in terms of validity as his/her perspective may bias the data analysis. One suggestion is to state this clearly and include the biography of the researcher (May, 2005) in order to have a sense of their experience, that way the reader is provided with evidence to use to evaluate the research account (Ball, 1990). In light of this, the researcher's positionality is shared next, how it relates to the research process and is written in the first person.

4.6 Researcher Positionality

As already outlined in chapter one, I retrained as a primary school teacher after a first career in advertising. After qualifying, via the Schools Direct salaried route (DfE, 2013), I remained in my placement school as an NQT. As a career-changer, and mother of a young child, at times I felt excluded from the existing community of teachers. Lave & Wenger (2002) refer to this as Community of Practice and, furthermore, I did not understand the unwritten rules of the school setting. I also struggled being accepted by the wider staff

body, as my opportunities to socialise and be part of my immediate team outside of work were limited; due to my parental responsibilities. The 'rules' present in my previous professional setting were vastly different and, despite being a competent NQT, I did not assimilate into school life immediately. Consequently, during the transition to NQT, my working conditions became challenging to navigate. Furthermore, as a career-changer who had been successful in another industry, it seemed possible that I might be less likely to stay in an unsatisfactory work situation (DfE, 2017), as a result of prior career experiences and perceptions of what I found acceptable. Thus, I am personally invested in the intersectionality of female career-changers and if they face different challenges as newly qualified teachers, compared to those for whom teaching is a first career.

As a lecturer who has been involved in delivering ITE within HEI, my research interests around initial teacher training co-exist with my professional role; as I have been involved in the transition from trainee to ECT and discovering how newly qualified teachers' values and previous career experiences are accommodated within a school environment. Therefore, my overall positionality (Ritchie & Rigano, 2001) impacted on the research framework and methodological approach and I will explore this further next.

4.6.1 Research Relationships

In my previous ITT role, my relationships with some of the research participants were already well established; as they were trainee teachers within my tutor group. Therefore, the researcher-participant relationships could only move forward after a cooling off period, which meant having no contact with them over the summer (after they had achieved QTS). This was a deliberate choice on my

behalf, to re-establish the relationship once they were ECTs and qualified teachers, prior to being recruited as participants. However, as trainees, they were aware of my area of research and professional interest in their journeys, as we spoke regularly about the transition from trainee to qualified teacher. I was undoubtedly very positive about how best to prepare for this and demonstrated this throughout the final term. Those who decided to participate in the research were small in number (three from a tutor group of twenty-two) due to the research criteria requiring career-changing females only. However, during our initial meetings, there was still some tension from the existing power balance. I accounted for this by adopting the ethical guidelines of BERA (2024) whilst also consciously designing my first research method to be participant-led.

The other half of the research participants (three of the six in total) were unknown to me, recruited through social media platforms. Forming a relationship with these ECTs required an extended initial 'chemistry' meeting to find out their back-story, as well as introducing myself to them - as a researcher and personally. These meetings were extremely important, beyond the initial bonding between participant and researcher, as they provided background information that formed part of the field notes. Those recruited via this method, were likely be from different geographic areas and school settings across England and that was interesting to the research; as the ECF guidance (DfE, 2021) can be interpreted differently by schools. All participants spoke with me on a one-to-one basis, as only their individual experiences of their induction were of interest.

The next section introduces the data collection methods used and returns to being written in the third person.

4.7 Data Collection Methods

4.7.1 Selecting Methods

A researcher can use a variety of methods to collect data and there are several important aspects to consider; including the aims of the research and what areas are brought into focus. Any research needs to be well-evidenced and a realistic data collection and analysis schedule considered (Drever, 2003). In addition, a researcher must consider the most suitable method for the task in hand, depending upon the type of research being conducted and how involved they are in the process. Cohen, Manion & Morrison, (2017) suggest that the quality of data is the most important thing, rather than the myriad ways it can be collected. For the research being undertaken, the most suitable methods of data collection were: oral histories, semi-structured interviews and representing the participants' data visually.

The chosen methods of data collection were interpretivist in nature. The first, self-recorded oral histories (Armitage, 2011), provided participants with the opportunity to tell their story or experiences in their own words. The second, semi-structured interviews, followed-up on the issues they raised in the oral histories. The third represented data from the ECT's journey visually; using a tool for plotting chronological incidents called 'The River of Life' (Denicolo & Pope, 1990) and participants were given the opportunity to review this for accuracy. In selecting the chosen methods, the researcher had also considered what was practical and permitted during a time when government guidance

changed regularly, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Self-recorded oral histories provided a safe method of collecting data. As did using online video conferencing to meet remotely for the semi-structured interviews. In conclusion of justifying the selected methods, the next section outlines each method in greater detail.

4.7.2 Oral Histories

The first of the chosen methods, oral history recordings (Armitage, 2011), provided participants with the opportunity to share the story of their ECT experiences in full, using their own words, and without input from the researcher. A useful definition from the Oral History Association (oralhistory.org, 2023) describes oral history as “...a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events”. In modern terms ‘oral history’ can be traced back to the 1940s in the work of Allan Nevins, as he recorded the memories of significant American people in 1948 (University of Leicester, East Midlands Oral History Archive, 2023). These individuals were white, male and elite – which was fairly representative of oral history participants at the time. However, during the 1950s and 1960s the pioneer of oral histories in Britain, George Ewart Evans, moved towards collecting memories of more ordinary people - on life in a Suffolk village. Perks and Thomson (1998, p.1) commented it showed ‘interest fused with political commitment to a ‘history from below’ amongst many social historians in Britain and around the world’. Paul Thompson, a social historian, played an instrumental role in developing the oral history movement internationally. Thompson was a socialist and committed to preserving history of the working classes. He was also an advocate when it came to defending

(Thompson, 1978) the method against critics who claimed that memories were unreliable historical sources.

Furthermore, oral history and feminist history have 'enjoyed a symbiotic connection since the late 1960s' (Perks & Thomson, 1998, p.4). Many feminist researchers have chosen this interview method to detail the experiences and perspectives of woman (Leavy & Harris, 2019). By deciding that stories of women's lived experiences were important, researchers affirmed that their everyday life experiences were history (Gluck, 1977). This is one of the advantages to using oral histories, as it can capture under-represented voices, often unheard in previous research; which is the case for the participants in the current study. The Oral History Society (ohs.org.uk) illustrates this point clearly by stating we "Tend to miss out ordinary people talking about everyday events". By valuing these ordinary participants' words and knowledge and eliciting information, over many sessions, the method is suited to documenting a particular time in a person's life. It is also an appropriate way (Leavy & Harris, 2019) of gathering rich and descriptive data from one participant or a small group of participants.

In summary, oral histories fits the approach of a narrative inquiry with minimal structure; as participants are telling their story or lived experience at the time of recording it. Meaning it was suitable for the participants in this study; making the transition from trainee to ECT during induction. However, prior to selecting the method, the limitations of oral histories were considered.

4.7.3 Limitations of Oral Histories

There are three main criticisms of using oral histories and Perks & Thomson (1998, p.40), classified these as ‘...interviewing, research standards for preparation, and questions of historical methodology’. The first, interviewing, oral historians and researchers can learn how to do; as a wealth of knowledge on interviewing techniques already exists. The second, research standards, can be upheld by checking the sources, data gathered and analysis carefully. However, perhaps the most contentious is the third, historical methodology. The approaches used in the oral history method include reliance on memory, potential bias and the validity of individual accounts of the past. Some critics (Cutler, 1970; Summerfield, 2004) have raised doubts about the validity of oral testimony and ‘the distinctions made between discourse and experience as articulated through language’ (Batty, 2009, p.111). In the same way, Hobsbawm (1997), questioned how far the recollections of an individual can be generalised beyond their own account. By contrast, Italian oral historian Alessandro Portelli argued that oral sources “tell us not just about what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, what they now think they did...Subjectivity is as much the business of history as the more useful “facts” ...” (History Workshop Journal, 12, Autumn 1981). Suggesting that what is considered oral history’s main weakness, may actually be its greatest strength in understanding the lived experience. For the current study, this related to the individual recordings made; where participants were reflecting on their own subjective view of their ECT induction and the intentionality behind this as a method. Similarly, the Oral History Society (ohs.org.uk, 2023) believe oral histories capture how a person felt, as we tend to remember that which produces strong emotions, rather than just precise details. However, another notable limitation of oral histories is the choice of whose story is told. Nyhan and Flinn

(2016, p.21-36) explained this as a 'choice of which 'significant' lives are privileged to tell the story of the community (and therefore which significant lives and perspectives might be missing)'. This may make the unchosen excluded from the phenomena being studied. However, the researcher of the current study has stated from the outset that participants were chosen because they had not been prioritised in previous research and so, this would negate the last potential limitation.

4.7.4 Recent Developments in Oral Histories

Whilst oral histories are usually conducted via interviews with participants, a recent development has seen the use of digital technology to self-record experiences. By asking participants to self-record, researchers may be able to remove the power divide further and honour the authentic voices of their participants (Leavy & Harris, 2019) and this is in alignment with feminist principles. However, Armitage (2011) has argued that when participants self-record oral histories without a trained researcher, they can 'dilute' the purpose; therefore it depends on the researcher to provide more context around the reasons for recording the oral histories, through triangulation of the other tools chosen. Furthermore, recording in this way does not follow the expected structure of building the rapport during a conventional interview (Newcastle University, 2018). However, the researcher mitigated against this by conducting pre-study interviews (which will be discussed later in section 4.8.10) and semi-structured interviews; to ask follow-up questions to obtain a deeper understanding of the participants' meaning and feelings shared in the oral histories (Oakley, 1981; Olesen, 2000; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). This allowed for the development of the participant-researcher relationship, which Barber (2023, p.1) suggested fulfilled the criteria as 'Put simply, oral history is a process created by a narrator and

interviewer that gathers and preserves information about the narrator's first-hand experiences'. The next section explores the advantage of using oral histories and the rationale for using it in this current study.

4.7.5 Advantage and Rationale for Oral Histories

The main advantage and rationale for choosing to include this method, was its ability to hear the participants' stories at the various stages of their early career and for the opportunity to record their authentic voices. Participants were asked to self-record their experiences using a simple prompt from the researcher, to describe how they were experiencing their ECT journey, and this was replicated across the whole two-year induction period. These individual recordings varied in length however, provided approximately two to three hours of data documenting each participant's experiences of the 'induction' period and transition from trainee to ECT. The next method to be considered is semi-structured interviews, which followed up on the oral history recordings.

4.7.6 Advantages of Semi-Structured Interviews

The second method chosen was that of semi-structured interviews, to follow-up on the issues raised in the participants' oral histories; about the incidents that had impacted them during the two-year ECT induction. They took place online, at a convenient time for each participant, using Teams software. Semi-structured interviews provide an opportunity to supplement previously collected data (Koshy, 2010) and to ask further probing questions; whilst still allowing freedom to follow up on answers. They are suitable for small-scale research, such as the current study, however can quickly become too rigid if the same questions are asked or prompted without considering the differences in participants' experiences. Whilst having a set of indicative questions (see

appendix 1) was necessary, they only served as an outline. Having follow-up questions makes it easier for the researcher to prompt for an expansion to a particular answer, whilst also providing a framework to steer the participant through the interview. Advantages of conducting interviews online include, is the ease of generating both video and audio recordings. These can then be transcribed more easily, as well as being able to watch the video recording back; to draw conclusions.

4.7.7 Limitations of Semi-Structured Interviews

However, there are some drawbacks to using semi-structured interviews, including the time they take to transcribe and that participants may feel self-conscious or compelled to say what they think a researcher wants to hear (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2017) because they are recorded. Ways of mitigating against this may include limiting an interview to a set duration, which for this study was thirty minutes, to establish transcription parameters from the outset. Sharing the indicative questions in advance can also help reduce the power of an interviewer. In addition, as the research design included following-up on what the participant had already disclosed in the oral histories, it ensured they were leading the discussion. Weighing up the advantages and limitations, the researcher was satisfied that semi-structured interviews would be suitable for this study.

The next section discusses the use of the final method, the 'River of Life' (Denicolo & Pope, 1990) chronological plotting tool.

4.7.8 'River of Life' Chronological Plotting

After collecting data using the previous two methods, it was then integrated (Creswell *et al.*, 2011) into one document. Then, each participant's journey was documented visually; using a tool for plotting chronological critical incidents, called the 'River of Life' (Denicolo & Pope, 1990). Afterwards, participants were then given the opportunity to review the visual for accuracy. The benefit of using this research tool, is that it allows participants to reflect on their individual pathway, and can help to reconstruct the significant milestones in a personal or professional journey. By zooming into our decisions, it provides us with an insight to chart our journeys. Critical Incident charting refers to a tool used in counselling, as well as teacher education, and originated as a clinical tool in psychotherapy (Kelly, 1955) but has been used widely in research into classroom teachers. It was developed as 'career rivers' by education researchers (Denicolo & Pope, 1990). Focusing on the beginnings, endings and periods of strain during a teacher's career, it highlights the career changing incidents (Tripp; 1993; Woods, 1993) that were not first obvious. In the context of this study, the incidents that occurred at the 'pinch points' throughout ECT induction or as a result of being a female career-changer. There are several types of critical phases to mark changing incidents (Burnard, 2012) and these include extrinsic (external obstacles), intrinsic (natural progression) and personal (issues relating to self or family) and these can be the catalyst for change. After each interview, the link to where the critical incidents were recorded was shared with each participant. Participants were then able to annotate their own chronological timeline with additional incidents significant to them (recorded on an online platform called 'Padlet', see appendices five and seven) and this was open for their review for the duration of the two-year study. Whilst there are different ways of producing these visual journeys, plotting the critical incidents (after reviewing the data

provided) then asking participants to verify or amend them seemed the most appropriate way to utilise this method. This tool was also chosen for its ability to bring the seemingly unseen incidents that have caused a change to the forefront.

Although this concludes the data collection methods, the researcher also utilised two further ways of documenting participants' information. What follows is an outline of additional field notes and pre-study background interviews.

4.7.9 Additional Field Notes

In addition to the chosen data collection methods, the researcher decided to utilise 'field notes' - as useful way of keeping a record of what happened during the research process. By keeping an account of reflections and personal commentary, a researcher is able to begin initial interpretations which is useful when writing the project up. The 'reflective process contributes to the professional development of the researcher' (Koshy, 2010, p97). Whilst there are numerous types of field notes a researcher could use, Leavy (2017) lists among them thick descriptions, reflexivity notes and interpretation notes. These all build a picture of the participant and the researchers' thoughts and feelings on an issue; to enable a greater 'sense check' on the research itself during the proceedings. Other advantages of using field notes include a more personalised project, the ability to track the research and being able to support other evidence when triangulating the data (Koshy, 2010) during analysis. Although it may be tempting to document every thought or feeling, this could make it more subjective and take considerable time when analysing at the end. Another issue of using field notes, is reaching the point of 'data saturation' whereby a researcher could end up in a data analysis cycle (Tenni, Smith & Boucher, 2013). For this study, it was necessary to only deploy this method prior to the collection of the oral history, but not after the

interview stage. This resulted in the collection of field notes collated after the pre-study background interviews, which are considered next.

4.7.10 Pre-Study Background Interviews

After recruiting and qualifying participants, the researcher met with each of them online (via Teams) to discuss their background and forge a positive participant-researcher relationship, prior to the start of the study. During these meetings, the researcher was able to gather important information about each participant, such as their motivation for changing career, retraining to become a teacher and the route through which they qualified. Having background information, allowed the researcher to view participants holistically and then plot important details chronologically (Denicolo & Pope, 1990). The researcher was also able to compare the participants against government demographics on the recruitment of postgraduate career-changers. This information is outlined in the table (4.1):

Table 4.1: Details of participants interviewed

Participant	Age	Past career	How long for?	Region
Athena	28-30 yrs	Retail management	8yrs	Leicestershire
Kelly	35yrs +	Retail management	10+ yrs.	Midlands
Tanie	30yrs +	Event management	10yrs	Yorkshire
Jessica	28-30 yrs	Heritage sector/museum management	5+ years	Essex
Beatrice	30yrs +	Retail management	10yrs	Hertfordshire
Nadia	25yrs	Police/TEFL (Thailand)	3yrs	Warwickshire

The table displays the pseudonym of each participant: their age, prior career/job, how long they had been in this role and the region of England in

which they now teach. The data showed that half of the group were in the thirty-plus age bracket, two aged between twenty-eight and thirty years and only one aged twenty-five. The duration of past 'careers' (as self-identified by the participants) ranged from three to ten plus years, with the average being just over seven and a half years in role. ITT statistics show that forty-seven percent of those going into teaching, via a postgraduate route, are aged twenty-five plus and in 2022/23, seventy-two percent of trainees were female (Gov.uk, 2022). The majority of the participants were in the 25+ age bracket and therefore the sample echoed the sector (Mattock, 2010). Whilst the study was located in England, three participants were based in the Midlands, one in Yorkshire and two in the home counties of Essex and Hertfordshire. Despite this not being an exhaustive list of counties, it did take into account several regions of the country. The fact three participants were based in same region may or may not prove significant, but can be explained by the fact that the researcher taught at a Midlands-based university, from which three participants were recruited after completing their PGCEs.

What follows is a summary of the data collection methods, before sampling concludes the section.

4.7.11 Summary of Data Collection Methods

In summary, the most suitable methods of data collection for this study were self-recorded oral histories, semi-structured interviews and a chronological tool called the 'River of Life' (Denicolo & Pope, 1990). Using a combination of these methods offered an insight into the stories of the participants; providing a way of cross-referencing the experiences in a cohesive way. Furthermore, the research questions in this study were addressed through utilising an interpretivist lens,

from a critical stance of narrative inquiry. This aligns with the feminist data collection method (Oakley, 1991) of oral histories (Armitage, 2011), whereby the lived experiences of women are important stories to capture (Gluck, 1977). Using semi-structured interviews also supported the freedom to express authentic voices, capturing the experiences of participants; so long as the researcher is mindful of dictating the outcome (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2017). Reflecting on the individual pathway of participants helped to reconstruct significant 'milestones' to provide insights that charted 'critical' incidents (Kelly, 1955) and representing this visually using the 'River of Life' chronological tool (Denicolo and Pope, 1990) allowed the researcher to highlight the career changing incidents (Tripp, 1993; Woods, 1993) at the beginning, ending and periods of strain during an ECT's entry into the profession.

4.7.12 Sampling

Participants were chosen using an 'purposive' sample (Cohen *et al.*, 2017), meaning that the sample contained the desirable characteristics required for the research, and were selected by the inclusion criteria; newly qualified, career-changing female ECTs who were embarking on the two-year ECF induction (DfE, 2021) in English state primary schools. Secondary to this, participants may have also had other responsibilities outside of school, as parents or carers. Of the six participants in total, five were recruited from the first year of induction and followed until the end of the two-year period, however one participant was recruited in year two but still provided data for both years. Due to the small-scale nature of the study, it was more likely that participants would be similar rather than diverse groups of female ECTs. A way of mitigating against this was the ability to 'vet' participants beforehand, to ensure that the research was

broadened in several areas, by choosing participants based on socio-economic group, ethnicity, age, educational background and location within England.

4.8 Data Collection across Year One and Year Two

Data collection began in September 2023 and concluded in May 2024. In year one, data was collected from September 2022 until July 2023, and between September 2023 and May 2024 in year two. In year one, between two and eleven oral histories were received for each of the participants (five to fifteen minutes per recording) and this spanned the full academic year of 2022/23, during the participants' ECT1 year. In year two, there was a decrease in the frequency and number of oral history recordings received, with each participant sending two; the first in the autumn term and the second in the summer term of the academic year 2023/24, during the participants' ECT2. Participants were interviewed twice, once each year, in the spring terms of 2023 and 2024. The semi-structured interviews lasted thirty minutes and yielded ten interviews in total. These, together with the oral histories data, were added to individual chronological timelines on Padlet before being represented visually at the end of the study. On several occasions during year one, 'incidents' were mentioned for the first time during the semi-structured interviews and this was a result of a 'newer' incident occurring (after the recording of oral histories had been submitted). Whilst in year two, the participants utilised the interviews to discuss incidents for the first time. From here, 'critical incidents' were documented for each participant and these were added to their chronological timeline. Timelines were then shared with participants to provide an opportunity to co-create and to ensure details were accurate. Participants were able to send oral history recordings, for the first year, until the end of July 2023. Whilst in year two, the

data collection window closed at the end of May 2024. During year one of the study, most participants added more up-to-date incidents or reflections directly to their chronological timeline (on Padlet) which, whilst unexpected, demonstrated that they wanted to be more involved in the telling of their stories. One participant struggled to find time to record the oral histories and yet stated on a number of occasions that she would still like to be part of the research. Whilst data was not provided, it highlighted the pressure experienced during the ECT1 year. This participant also has two young children and so her 'dual-role' could have meant she had been overstretched and could not find time to take part in the research. As a result, there was one final opportunity to 'catch-up' on her experiences at the end of year one of the study. However, despite attempts to contact the participant, no response was received. As a year had already elapsed, the researcher made the decision (in consultation with her supervisors) that the participant would not be replaced and the study would continue with the remaining five participants.

4.8.1 Summary of Data Transcription

Across both years, the oral history recordings were partially transcribed. One useful explanation of this process is that a "...semi-transcription is not a full word-by-word written transcript. Instead, points from the conversation have been 'bulleted' and precised..." (Dalladay, 2014, p.121). This meant that only the main critical incidents were captured and included within the transcription, which enabled the researcher to ascertain and review the most important incidents to use as individual discussion points for the follow-up interviews (see appendix 1 for indicative questions). After which, the individual thirty-minute

semi-structured interviews were transcribed in full, to ensure that participants' stories were fully documented to pinpoint critical incidents.

4.8.2 Narrative Analysis: Holistic Content Analysis

After which, research findings and analysis were deciphered using Holistic Content Analysis (Leiblich *et al.*, 1998) to provide an accurate reflection of the whole dataset and not just key themes. Holistic Content Analysis, adapted from Polkinghorne (1995), by Beal (2013), is similar to that of narrative content analysis. However, instead of breaking down the data into codes, she suggests being more “playful” with the size of the data elements used; in order to keep the stories as a coherent whole. This enables the use of key phrases, words or whole paragraphs to illuminate the individual's story in association to the context in which events take place. Whilst there are many ways of carrying out narrative analysis, the researcher had to decide from the four most appropriate methods. Polkinghorne (1988, p13) suggested it can be “Spoken or written presentation...the kind of organizational scheme expressed in story form”. Marsh (2018) stated there is no singular framework or theoretical approach, rather it is about the context of the study and for researchers to forge their own route, or to choose a pick and mix approach. However, whilst Lieblich *et al.*, (2008) argued that identifying themes is key, Riessman (2018) maintained hearing the ‘voices’ of participants is important.

These methods offered great advantages of telling the participant's stories and hearing them express their experiences in their own authentic voices. However, it was Polkinghorne's (1988) ‘emplotment’ method of working backwards and forwards, across plots and sub-plots to highlight key elements to get sense of each ‘story’ and the meaning behind them. Afterwards, the goal of analysis is to

uncover common themes or patterns within the collection of stories. Barthes (cited in Polkinghorne, 1988, p14) explained that "...people have a narrative of their own lives which enables them to construct what they are and where they are headed." Expanding upon this statement Bruner (cited in Polkinghorne, 1988, p17) stated that "Narratives mode looks for connections between events". Thus, in the current study, the incidents charted in the latter data collection methods can provide an insight into the journey of the participants, as they present them. It can also help to make sense of the behaviour of others (Barthes, cited in Polkinghorne, 1988, p18) as "We conceive our own and others' and behavior within the narrative framework" ...and through it recognize the effects our planned actions can have on deserved goals" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p18). Which is particularly relevant for the ECTs in this study as they experience induction. Any narrative has an order to it, and the next section outlines this further.

4.8.3 Narrative Ordering

Narrative ordering links events together and identifies the effect one has on another, to create a 'whole' story. Polkinghorne stated that "by inclusion, in a narratively generated story, particular actions take on significance as having contributed to a completed episode" (1988, p18). By organising the significance of events in a narrative or story, a researcher can uncover the 'plot' and in most cases, sub-plots. Like a traditional story, the developments within a plot can have an impact on the outcome of a story but they first need to be excavated as, without recognition of significance given by the plot, each event would

appear as separate. The process by which this can be achieved is discussed next.

4.8.4 Excavating the Plot

During the data collection process, data recorded on the Padlet was used to weave the complex events together to create the 'whole' by recognising the critical incidents to construct the story. Riessman (2008, p.13) discussed this as "A good narrative analysis prompts the reader to think beyond the surface of a text, and there is a move toward broader commentary". In doing so, "Reasoning used to construct a plot is similar to that used to develop a hypothesis", (Polkinghorne, 1988, p19). A flow chart was used to join the plot and, by listening to the voices carefully, to interpret the plots and sub-plots to draw the story together:

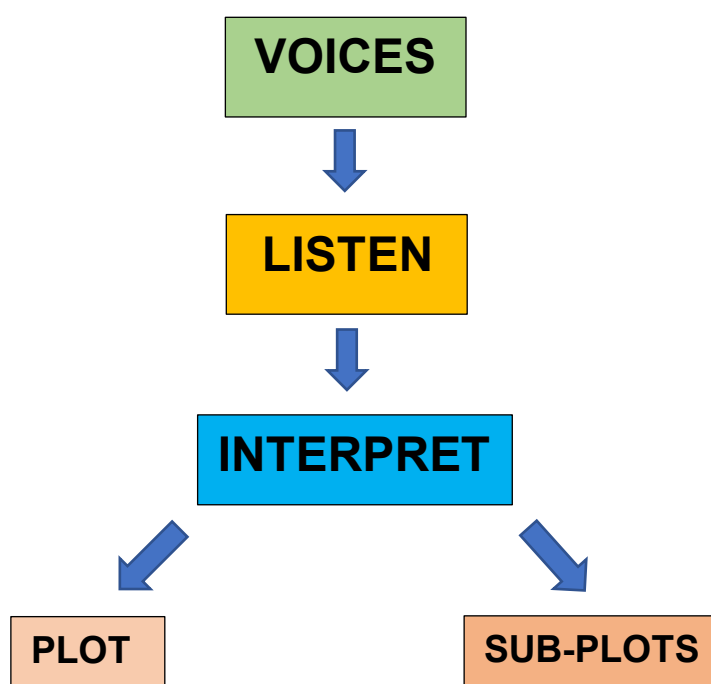




Figure 4.1 Flow-chart describing procedure of analysing the findings.

Data collection can uncover past events, to help document phenomena, and Holistic Content Analysis (Polkinghorne, 1988) can generate the major themes in texts. For conducting analysis, Lieblich *et al.*, (1998) recommend that researchers read the texts several times, to ascertain patterns, before documenting their overall impressions. Then code and note down the themes and record them. In order to track themes, it was necessary to develop a flow chart to document this process. Initially, the coding used was too complicated, and the researcher was aware that by ‘over coding’ she was dictating the outcomes and themes; which weakened the nuanced contributions of the participants. However, by using a system based on Iyengar (2014) the coding was simplified into positive/negative experiences, then themes developed from reviewing the word level ‘labels’ and how these could be grouped to form a theme and from these themes, a category. The flowchart (4.2) documents this:

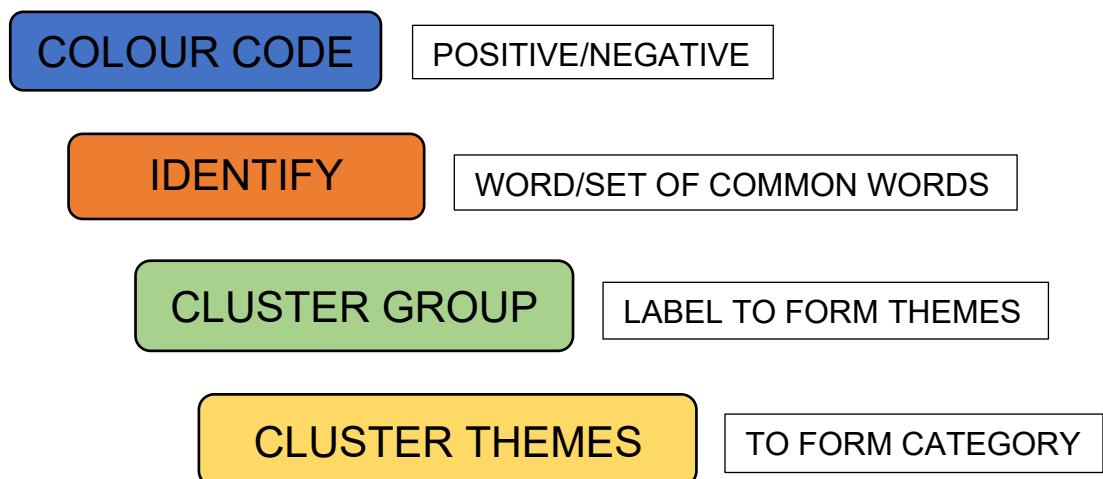


Figure 4.2 Flow-chart describing procedure of coding the findings.

An example of the simplified coding, based on positive or negative incidents, can be seen in an example of the Padlet timeline for Jessica:

Jessica, 2 of 4:

Timeline of critical incidents - Jessica

Critical incident 2, Year 1, Autumn 1
NEGATIVE: ECF

- Slow going but good over 2yrs, have to adapt.
- 4:03: In terms of first module – behaviour – because of route taken (SDS) – trainee thrown in “deep end”, spent last year with own class.
- 4:28: “Have to make own decisions and get by.” Does feel like I’m covering old ground.
- 4:37: “That I’ve already had to cover over last year.” But suppose this is how things work and do have to go over it to make sure you have ‘mastered them’. Well, not that you can master them in a year, it’s reflective practice.
- “Yes, I have covered this and yes, I did have to deal with them all last year.”
- 5:08: “Talking about routines in week 7, 8, 9 does feel a little bit late.” Most important things about having routines – having them straight away.
- 5:29: Me and my mentor are finding ways of building up targets that reflect modules as they are, but more specific to practice. That’s good. Only hiccup is mentor leaving after Christmas.

Interview
NEGATIVE – ECF/TRANSITION”

Jessica 3:55
When I was thinking about the transition from schools direct salaried training to ECT. I think at the time, like last term, it felt very much like what am I doing, I’ve done all of this. Like, I’m, I know what I’m doing.

Jessica 15:00
I think in kind of when you think about having something like this ECT programme because it’s such a it’s like a national thing that everyone has to do. It is by nature very general, which sometimes can be a bit frustrating, because that you’ll sit in like a conference. And it’s about adaptive teaching or whatever. And it’s like, oh, you have to make sure that you’re assessing understanding and then adapting your learning, which is fabulous to know. And it’s like, I probably could have told you that anyway. But sometimes it can feel a bit like, it doesn’t go far enough in that kind of model. When you go to something like those conferences, it doesn’t go far enough to give specific advice. But then it’s like, well, they can’t do that, because everybody has got such different situations. And I think having the kind of mentor system, that’s when that can become more helpful.

Interview
POSITIVE – ECF/PROVIDER:

Jessica 3:55
I feel like actually, it is useful to be doing all these same things. Because it’s like you say, when when you’re planning a lesson for children, it’s like, well, it’s useful to cover what you know, because then you then new things will come out.

Jessica 18:55
Exactly. And I think that is how it’s meant to be. Like, I think that’s how it’s intended. Because, obviously, like, I can go to the conferences and sit there and be like, Oh, that’s not very helpful to me, because I don’t teach GCSE drama. But then it’s like, you have to do the work to be like, well, how does it apply? And it kind of, you know, and I think, actually, which ties in with the idea of the teaching profession, if you want to be a teacher, and that’s what you want to do, you are ready to do that. Because, you know, you understand how it works, because it’s like, it’s exactly as they’re teaching you the way that we teach children is like, well, you know, you have to generalise it. And then you have to take the things that are useful and use it because it’s like, they kind of assume, if you’re in that room, and you’ve become an ECT, you have you are ready and you are willing to do that bit because otherwise it’s not gonna work. That piece about reflective practice, isn’t it?

Example of simplified coding by positive or negative incidents.

Using a simplified way of coding by ‘type’ of incident (positive in yellow/negative in blue), was a more authentic way of reflecting upon the ‘driving’ or ‘restraining’ forces within the narrative. This mitigated against searching for pre-conceived themes and removed the potential for bias (Thomas, 2017) by allowing the

researcher to identify and label words, or a set of common words, to create a 'cluster group'. Finally, themes were clustered to form specific categories such as the ECF (DfE, 2021), workload or being a career-changer, which relates back to the 'Early Career Teachers Force Field Analysis' conceptual framework and existing literature. This provided nuanced context for the research and helped to answer the research questions based around the categories identified. However, it is worth stating at this point that Holistic Content Analysis (Polkinghorne, 1988) differs from thematic analysis. The former allows more for contextual nuance to value the unique contributions and maintain the integrity of the lived experience of the participants. Charmaz states that context is dynamic (2006), which is of particular importance when drawing conclusions; as conclusions do not equate to certainty. Whilst a finding may be significant, if it is important to the story, in narrative research "valid retains its ordinary meaning of well-grounded and supportable" (Polkinghorne, p175, 1988). The penultimate section of this chapter reviews the ethical considerations of the study.

4.9 Ethical Considerations

BERA (2024, p.4)

'all educational research shall be conducted with an ethic of respect for; the person; knowledge; democratic values; the quality of educational research; academic freedom'.

The current research involved speaking to participants who may have experienced a highly stressful transition, from trainee teacher to completing their ECT induction. As the researcher had experienced this first-hand, she had to consider the moral responsibility of what to do if the participant being interviewed exhibited concerning behaviour, about teaching experiences or

practice. The study required the informed consent of the participants, by outlining the scope of the research and being transparent about the risks, whilst also highlighting the purpose of the research and how participants would be involved (see appendix 10). Seeking the consent of the participants, with an option to 'opt out' of the research up until the point where data was analysed, was considered the best ethical practice. After consent was given, there were brief discussions with each participant about what the research would entail, the ethical duty of care of the researcher and how the data would be collected. Before and after the oral histories were recorded, participants were made aware that they only needed to record what they felt comfortable discussing and could decide to withdraw from the research, without having to provide a reason. During the semi-structured interviews there was potential for participants to feel uncomfortable or get upset at remembering events from their induction experiences. The researcher mitigated against this by informing the participants before and during the interview that they were able to refrain from answering any follow-up questions and terminate the interview at any time. The researcher was also available for debriefing before, during and after the data collection stage, and provided participants with a leaflet that signposted them to specialist support available if they found the experience upsetting (see appendix 10). As the researcher had already formed professional relationship with some participants, during the initial meeting steps were taken to minimise any issues by explaining that the research was being conducted outside of the parameters of the prior relationship and the methods of data collection structured so as to remove the some of the power imbalance.

Precautions to protect participants' identities were taken and whilst personal background data was collected during the pre-study interviews, each participant was given a pseudonym and this was used in the reporting. The research data was held securely, on an encrypted laptop (in accordance with the GDPR, 2016) and after the completion of the study, recordings destroyed securely.

There was an additional layer of risk, as the study was partly completed during the COVID-19 global pandemic, which is discussed next.

4.9.1 Risks due to the Covid-19 Global Pandemic

During the Covid-19 global pandemic, some teachers were less able to teach, plan lessons or collaborate, as schools switched to remote learning or allowed teachers to take 'non-teaching' time at home. This may have resulted in some ECTs feeling isolated from the face-to-face support of their mentor or induction tutor. This added an additional layer of complexity to the study, as some participants may have viewed the researcher's interest in their journey as an opportunity to gain advice during a time with less mentor contact. However, researchers have a duty of care to signpost participants to the relevant professionals to support their needs, which in this case was either the ECT induction tutor or mentor. Furthermore, the researcher wanted to treat participants with kindness and compassion during this challenging time, as research environments can be 'fraught with emotional landmines' (Boler, 1997,p.255) and the circumstances had made it more challenging in many ways.

Now that the ethical considerations have been discussed, the final section provides a conclusion to the methodology chapter.

4.10 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has provided a summary of the study's contribution to knowledge, and how it will offer nuanced insights into the under researched area of female career-changers who become primary teachers, during their ECT induction. The chapter ascertained that, despite prior research (DfE, 2021, 2024; EEF, 2020; Gatsby/Teacher Tapp, 2024) into the efficacy of separate years of the now established ECF (DfE, 2021), the current study will build a narrative for individual ECTs across two consecutive years. A discussion of the interpretivist methodological approach, and justification for the chosen data methods, was also offered; with self-recorded oral histories (Armitage, 2011), semi-structured interviews and a chronological plotting tool called 'River of Life' (Denicolo & Pope, 1990) deemed the most appropriate for a narrative inquiry. The researcher's positionality was stated and the importance of hearing the authentic voices of the participants, which justified the use of Holistic Content Analysis (Beal, 2013) to provide an accurate reflection of the whole data set and not just the key themes. Finally, the ethical considerations were discussed (BERA, 2024) and the additional risks due to the study being partly conducted during the Covid-19 global pandemic.

As the methodology chapter concludes, the next two chapters report the data findings from the study and are separated by each year, beginning with year one.

Chapter 5 – Data Findings in Year One

5.1 Introduction to Data Findings

Having applied the methods described in the previous chapter, the next two chapters report the findings and interactions with the data, and participants, throughout the two-year study. The data collection methods allowed for detailed reflections of the narrative, as viewed through the perceptions held by the participants (and the researcher, in telling their stories). Year one and two are reported in separate chapters, before both years are discussed as a 'whole' in relation to the research questions. The rationale behind this was two-fold, first (for the purposes of answering the research questions) it was important to report on the beginning of the induction period; as participants experienced the 'transition' from trainee to ECT. The second was for more accurate data collection, as it allowed each year to be reflected upon in its entirety, to enable critical incidents to be recorded as they happened, by academic term, rather than grouped together annually. This was deemed important by the researcher when telling the 'stories' of participants, both through common themes and as individuals, to allow their experiences to be told in full, rather than remembered and summarised across two years. Another advantage was it enabled participants to reflect more regularly, via self-recorded oral histories, which they later referred to when discussing differences in their experiences of the second year. Whilst it was not an intended aim of the research study, the researcher

was able to observe these comparisons within the data and use them to ‘frame’ questions more accurately during the interviews in year two (see appendix 1). Before research findings are discussed, it is important to reiterate that in framing data, the aim was to keep it in larger chunks (Beal, 2013) to ensure participants’ individual authentic voices were heard and their stories represented accurately. The overall intention was to present the findings as holistically as possible.

5.2 Data Collection Process in Year One

The data collection process, in year one, yielded data findings in the form of:

- 1) **Oral histories** - self-recorded during year one, to record participants’ experiences and ascertain critical incidents during ECT1 (partially transcribed, see appendix two).
- 2) **Semi-structured interviews** - one interview conducted in year one, during the spring term, using the critical incidents from the oral histories and indicative interview questions (please see appendix 1) transcribed in full (see appendix three).
- 3) **Chronological timelines** – integrated data from the oral histories and interviews, presented in a chronological format (using Padlet) to which the participants could add to and then confirm/approve entries were accurate (see appendix four).

5.2.1 Integration of Data

Whilst findings from each data collection method in year one were recorded separately, being able to overlay the integrated data (Creswell *et al.*, 2011) on to one chronological timeline, per participant, offered the advantage of being

able to see the 'bigger picture'. This made it easier to view participants' holistically during analysis, draw parallels between similar stages of their ECT journey and identify their individual experiences. Themes broadly followed the existing research identified in the literature review chapter, but also revealed new insights related to being a female career-changing primary ECT, during the ECF (DfE, 2021) induction. The research design meant the content of the oral histories were followed-up in the interviews and so there was a natural overlap. Presenting by theme, rather than by data collection method, meant that findings were less repetitive when being reported. This resulted in the participants' experiences being built upon, each method adding a 'layer' to further identify the critical incidents (Tripp; 1993; Woods, 1993) and the 'driving' and 'restraining' forces during their ECT1 induction year. With this in mind, a short summary of how the data was treated, by method, will be outlined next.

5.2.2 Ascertaining Themes

The transcripts of the interviews were read several times, to confirm the critical incidents resonated with the oral histories and take into account the new incidents discussed at interview stage. Then data was coded, using the flowchart already discussed (figure 4.2) to find the 'positive' driving forces and 'negative' restraining forces, using the adapted 'Early Career Teachers Force Field Analysis' conceptual framework to ascertain themes. This process can be seen in the diagram (figure 5.1).

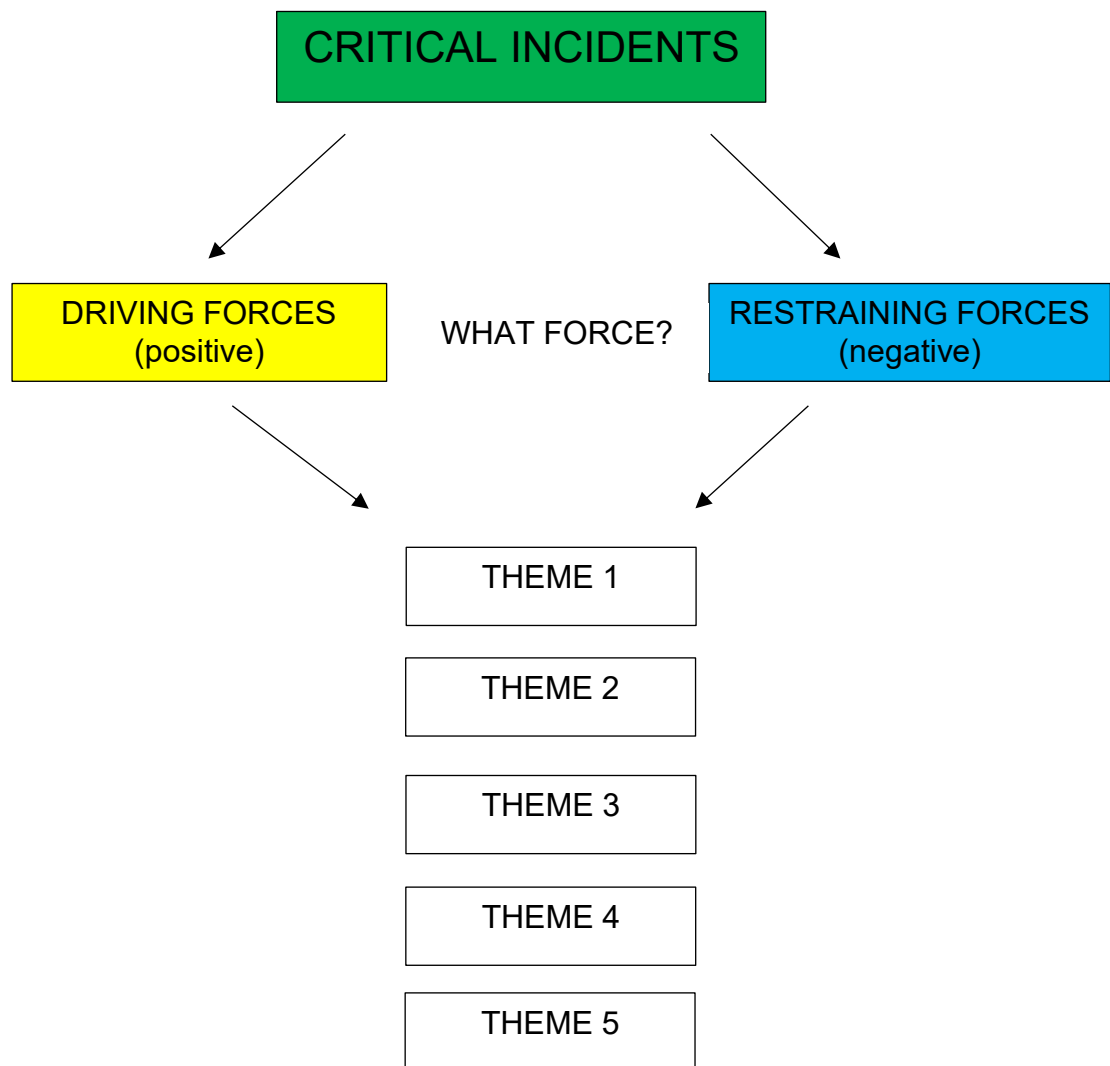


Figure 5.1 The process of identifying critical incidents and classifying by driving/restraining forces to ascertain themes.

Common themes emerged for the participants as a collective and theme mapping began by considering each word, sentence or phrase in comparison to each other (Miles & Huberman, 1994). By coding these elements to capture the

essence of the data, a researcher is able to form themes or sub-themes and be able to ascertain connections or differences between the themes. Furthermore, a researcher can then select key words, phrases or quotations to use to present or bring the themes to life. Then sentence and word level analysis can be useful units of understanding and contribute to 'meaningful wholes' (Polkinghorne, 1988, p.31) and, when drawn together, can create higher order meaning.

5.3 Year One Findings

The next section summarises the critical incidents experienced by the participants during ECT1. First, an overview of the driving and restraining forces will be presented, before an outline of themes is provided. After which, the findings will be presented thematically taking into consideration the intersection where themes overlap.

5.3.1 Identifying Critical Incidents and the Driving or Restraining Forces

The chronological timelines (see appendix four), were reviewed for driving or restraining forces using the simplified colour coding system (as discussed in chapter four). Despite participants experiencing similar critical incidents, these could be classified as different forces. This meant that some incidents could be both driving and restraining forces, depending upon each participant's experience.

5.3.2 Outline of Themes

Themes will be outlined and then categorised to ascertain the most common to emerge across the participants' critical incidents. Several areas that arose from within the literature review were also present in the findings, namely; mentor

support, behaviour, workload, ECF, being a career-changer and lack of autonomy.

The Venn diagram (figure 5.2) summarises all of the themes within the year one findings. This system of classification helps distinguish between driving and restraining forces, and the intersection between:

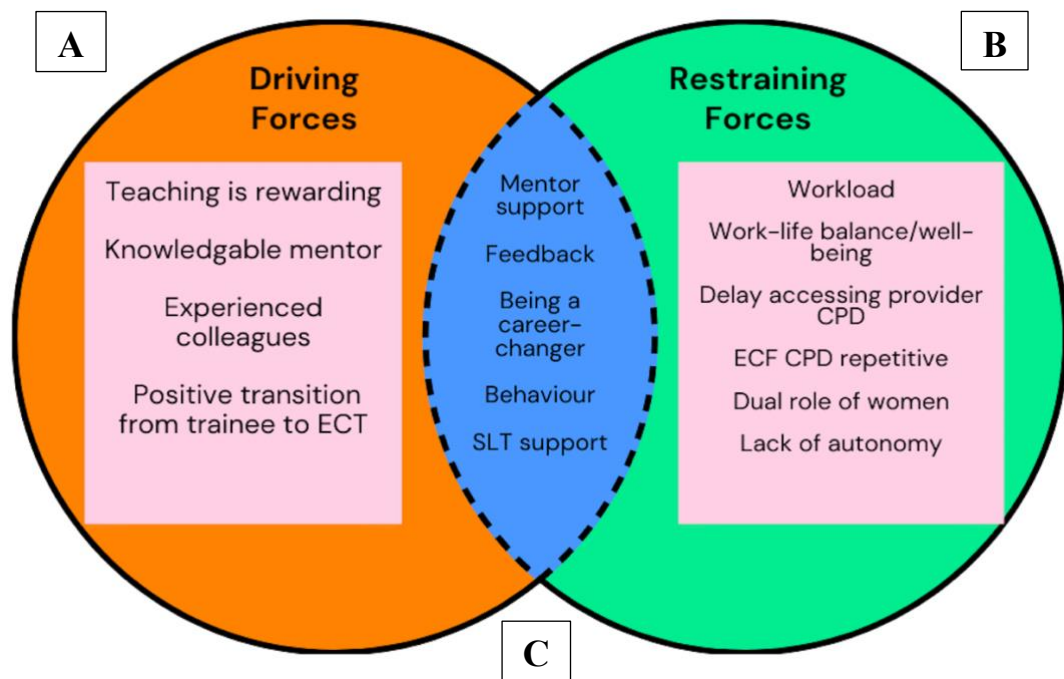


Figure 5.2 Venn diagram showing the driving forces (set A), restraining forces (set B) and intersection of both sets (C) during ECT1.

Some themes identified can be categorised together, as both the ECF and provider CPD are different parts of the same programme, and so, the main ten themes across both driving and restraining forces are listed next.

- 1) Transition from trainee to ECT
- 2) Mentor support
- 3) SLT support
- 4) Being a career-changer
- 5) Behaviour
- 6) Workload
- 7) Work-life balance

- 8) ECF
- 9) Dual role of women
- 10) Lack of autonomy

5.3.3 Critical Incidents and Common Themes

Initially, each participant experienced between five and ten critical incidents during ECT1. The driving and restraining forces that underpinned these incidents were broadly categorised into five common themes (classified as experienced by more than one participant). They were as follows: mentor support, transition from trainee to ECT, ECF, workload and being a career-changer. The table (5.1) shows the four main experiences per participant, by the number of critical incidents; with five common themes arising from the collective oral histories data collected during ECT1 (as not all participants experienced the same incidents).

Name	No of critical incidents	Incident 1/ Theme	Incident 2/ Theme	Incident 3/ Theme	Incident 4/ Theme
Tanie	6	Mentor support	Transition to ECT	ECF	Career-changer
Athena	10	SLT support	Transition to ECT	Workload	Career-changer
Beatrice	6	Transition to ECT	School culture	ECF	Mentor support
Jessica	5	Transition to ECT	ECF	Mentor support	Workload
Nadia	5	Mentor support	ECF	Workload	Support from wider school

Table 5.1: Critical incidents experienced and themes arising per participant, listed chronologically

The five common themes experienced across the board are listed in the table (5.2), by frequency of occurrence and whether they were mentioned as a driving or restraining force:

Theme	Frequency	Driving force, restraining force or both?
Mentor support	4	Restraining
Transition to ECT	4	Both
Early Career Framework	4	Both
Workload	3	Restraining
Being a career-changer	2	Both

Table 5.2: Forces experienced by theme, frequency and type.

The most frequently occurring critical incidents were based around mentor support, the transition to being an ECT and the ECF (DfE, 2021). This indicates that these were the most important areas for participants to navigate, during the first year of induction. However, mentor support was only classified as a restraining force, whereas the ECT transition and impact of the ECF (DfE, 2021) were spoken about as driving and restraining forces. Whilst it was surprising that workload was not mentioned more, when it was, it was discussed as a restraining force. By contrast, being a career-changer was classified as both a driving and restraining force but only mentioned twice. This may suggest that, in year one, being a career-changer was less important to participants than being an ECT.

5.4 Themes

Now returning to the themes categorised in the Venn diagram (figure 5.2), these will be discussed, in turn, beginning with the transition from trainee to ECT.

5.4.1 Transition from Trainee to ECT

Whilst participants had varied experiences of the transition from trainee to ECT, some seemed less straightforward than others. For example, although Beatrice's transition was in the same school as she had completed her School Direct training, it proved to cause an issue with her being viewed as an ECT. Beatrice explained: *'Moving into my ECT year...paired with another ECT...I was told I was an experienced member of staff, so I could support another ECT – which is not the case'*. She added that as a result, they had *'Joint mentor meetings'* which *'sometimes worked well, but [I] didn't have someone dedicated to me'*. Beatrice finished by stating that she felt she was *'Used as an example of what to do for ECT, rather than developing me'*. Beatrice was one of two participants who remained in their training school, for ECT1, and stated that she was treated as an established member of staff rather than an ECT. One possible reason for this, could be that the school was unable to provide a mentor for each ECT, or that as Beatrice was familiar with the school processes she required less support as an ECT. The next theme was concerned with levels of mentor support.

5.4.2 Mentor Support

Perceived levels of mentor support impacted three of the five ECTs, as a restraining force; causing two to either move school or year group. These participants used the words, 'jaded', 'negative' and 'struggling', to describe their mentor/mentoring experience. Whilst the words have very different meanings, the overall perception was how the mentor felt about the role, and their views on

teaching, seemed to impact the ECTs they supported. An example of this was Beatrice's description of her mentor, who gave only '*negative*' feedback and was therefore viewed as being '*unsupportive*'. This mentor also left half-way through the year and whilst this research only focuses on the experiences of ECTs, so offers one side of the story, it was interesting to consider what prompted the mentor to feel this way and whether their role as a mentor, or the ECF mentoring requirements (DfE, 2021), contributed to the decision. Similarly, Tanie described her mentor as being '*jaded*' and said they seemed to dislike the role of being a mentor, and possibly, the teaching profession itself. Although caution must be applied to the perception of how the mentor felt, as this was Tanie's belief and there was no way to confirm or disprove this. In the same way, Nadia discussed the fact that her mentor was responsible for two ECTs and '*struggled*' to devote time to each. Whilst she acknowledged that having joint meetings with the other ECT could sometimes be positive, Nadia did infer the mentor was overstretched.

By contrast, the remaining two participants used words that denoted positive mentoring experiences and the impact that '*experienced*' and '*on-it*' mentors had on their ECT1 year. Athena discussed that having a mentor who had been teaching for twenty years meant she was '*experienced*' and she found her '*supportive*', due to having a good understanding of teaching and the support Athena required. Jessica explained she also had a mentor who knew the role, and everything required to support her, referencing the fact that the mentor was a classroom teacher and very organised. All of the single word descriptors, can be seen in the table (5.3):

Participant	Single word descriptor	Meaning in context of data
Athena	experienced	Been teaching for 20yrs and supportive.
Tanie	jaded	Mentor seemed to hate everything about teaching and was disinterested in being a mentor.
Jessica	on-it	Knew how to do everything required as a mentor (was a class teacher so organised).
Beatrice	negative	Only gave negative feedback/unsupportive (left mid-way through year).
Nadia	struggling	Couldn't manage 2 ECTs and struggled for time to give them.

Table 5.3: Single word descriptors of ECT 1 experience – **Mentor support**

In addition to the participants' perception of mentor support, the time mentors could spend with them varied too. Athena commented that whilst she found her mentor to be *'very supportive'* they did not spend *'much time with me'*, adding *'I hoped for a little bit more in terms of check-ins...what mentor is for, but she can't do that every week, she has too much extra-curricular'*. This could indicate that, despite the ECF (DfE, 2021) stipulating weekly mentor meetings, mentors are struggling to find time to support ECTs. Whereas Nadia's experience was slightly different and she mentioned that although she had *'Sat with the deputy head who is my ECT tutor and supportive'* she also felt she *'wasn't being mentored'*. The most likely explanation for this was either the mentor was inexperienced in the role, or that Nadia's expectations of what mentor support she received was different to the mentor's. In contrast, Beatrice reported she now had a *'Strong mentor, [who] pushed me – feedback I got was positive'*, a development from the first mentoring experience she had. Jessica was the other participant whose mentor left midway through ECT1, and commented that it would be *'Interesting to see how I can build up new mentor relationship'*.

Overall, the 'suitability' of mentors to perform the role was the most important element of mentor support to the participants, during ECT1, with acknowledgement that their availability was also a concern. The next theme discusses SLT support, and may indicate a link between this and mentor provision.

5.4.3 SLT Support

The involvement of, and support from, the senior leaderships team (SLT) was raised more than once. Athena said that the:

"Deputy and Head were very eager and welcoming' but that 'in terms of check-ins from them [SLT] I don't feel that it is a lot. There has been one time recently where the Deputy Head has actually sat down and said, "How are you?" And I said in all honesty, I'm overwhelmed and exhausted. And she offered to do an afternoon for me. We just didn't get round [to it] because we've had Ofsted".

Indirect comments emerged over choices the respective SLT made in appointing ECT mentors. Two participants linked the responsibility of the SLT to the importance of choosing a suitable mentor. This was highlighted by Tanie, over several comments, regarding the experiences with her mentor who she said was:

"Not the most supportive person' and a 'strange choice from the school to put an ECT with someone like that.' She continued that 'If I were a younger ECT, straight from university – I'd find it really challenging' continuing that she has 'got that work experience, worked with difficult people before - and learnt ways not to take things personally – with a pinch of salt".

Whilst Nadia raised the lack of guidance from her mentor, after an incident occurred, and the pressure she felt from the SLT:

"There was an incident, out of my control, yet I got an email [from the Deputy Head] to say "What am I doing about it?". I think for me, that's when I just felt lost. I didn't know what to do, because my mentor is the is my first point of call. But because my mentor...she wasn't communicating

with me. I didn't feel that guidance. And I think she's also quite inexperienced herself. And she didn't know quite what to do".

This suggested that a lack of guidance from her mentor left Nadia feel uncertain of how to proceed, which may demonstrate that ECTs require their mentors to act as a 'buffer' between them and the SLT. In summary, some of the findings around levels of SLT support were made indirectly, linking it to mentor support or suitability. This suggests that the participants viewed the SLT as responsible for mentor choice, as well as the support the SLT provided.

The next theme outlines the ways in which being a career-changer impacted the participants during ECT1.

5.4.4 Being a Career-Changer

Although being a career-changer was less of a concern for the majority of the participants during ECT1, it was classified as both a driving and restraining force. A positive correlation was found between being a career-changer and ECT induction. Tanie stated the '*Benefits of having life/work experience*' meant she was '*able to get through that a bit better...I wouldn't have known what to do/how to deal with it*' otherwise. Jessica agreed with this, stating:

"In many ways, it has been easier. Because I think when you are a career-changer, you're potentially an older trainee...to decide to change your whole trajectory is such a big decision that you've done a lot of reflection already on what you want...what you think you can do, what you enjoy".

However, Tanie also mentioned the differences from her past career and teaching, in terms of autonomy, '*I've come from a role where I managed myself – nobody [was] telling me...I was trusted I would do my job*'. She also referred to her mentor being '*younger than me*' and it had resulted in a '*difficult*

dynamic...as I'm coming in as a career-changer, with lots of experience on one hand, but no experience of school and teaching'. Beatrice explained that she thought her previous management experience had meant she was expected to mentor another ECT and it was the *'Main sticking point in our early relationship'* and *'although I used to manage a team in my old career, I didn't feel that it was my job to manage her as well'*. She also mentioned her mentor's feedback *'...didn't align with me and that it was 'not why I'd left a corporate job to be treated in that way'*. This suggested friction between the participant's previous career experience and the transition to being a novice in teaching. It also indicated a divide between their previous professional identity and trying to establish a new one.

Perhaps the most illuminating single word descriptor around being a career-changer was 'easier'; in regard to the impact this had on their ECT1 experience. Tanie and Jessica both used the word to explain how dealing with people was, in light of having prior experience in public-facing roles or with difficult people. Athena was certain that her previous management *'experience'* also made it easier to cope with the demands of having other staff in the classroom. Meanwhile, Beatrice had felt more *'prepared'* as she already had the skills and experiences to deal with most situations as she had done so before. Only Nadia *'struggled'* as a result of not being in her prior job long enough to benefit. Table 5.4 explains this:

Participant	Single word descriptor	Meaning in context of data
Athena	experience	Able to cope with the demands of managing people again because of prior experience.
Tanie	easier	Experience of dealing with difficult people in prior career.

Jessica	easier	Previous experience made this job easier as prior career was also public-facing.
Beatrice	prepared	Skills and experiences to deal with most situations as has done it before.
Nadia	struggled	Wasn't in prior job long enough to help.

Table 5.4: Single word descriptors of ECT 1 experience – **Career-changer**

Finally, two participants mentioned the differences between their experiences as ECTs, due to the fact that they were career-changers, and the environments they had been in previously. Beatrice said *'I knew it was a difficult school to work at. No one had been shy in saying that...but coming from a corporate environment thought that was what I wanted from my teaching journey'*. Whilst Tanie stated it was an advantage, *'If I were a younger ECT, straight from university – I'd find it really challenging. I have got that work experience...worked with difficult people before and learnt ways not to take things personally...found that's what got me through, would've been very difficult'*, and made the transition easier as a result. Overall, although some participants faced challenges in reconciling their previous career expectations with being an ECT, the findings suggest that being a career-changer had a positive impact during ECT1.

Moving on now to consider the final frequently occurring theme, the impact of the ECF (DfE, 2021) on participants during ECT1.

5.4.5 Early Career Framework

From the critical incidents reported in the first year, on the impact of the ECF (DfE, 2021), the initial findings suggested that participants found the provision problematic to access and cumbersome to use. After sifting through the data compiled from the individual chronological timelines, the following words (in

table 5.5) were used to explain how the ECTs had found their experience of the framework and subsequent provider training:

Participant	Single word descriptor	Meaning in context of data
Athena	consuming	Content is heavy/takes too much time to complete.
Tanie	nuanced	Too specific in places and does not translate into every setting.
Jessica	frustrating	Took too long to set up and slow to get going.
Beatrice	disengagement	ECF too generalised to resonate
Nadia	repetitive	Content is a repeat of PGCE.

Table 5.5: Single word descriptors of ECT 1 experience – **ECF**

Jessica found it ‘*frustrating*’ that her school took a while to get set up for the ECF (DfE, 2021), as a result of delays with the CPD provider, and then once set up it ‘*took a while to get going*’. In addition, whilst it has been documented (DfE, 2023; Ovenden-Hope, 2022) that the ECF was created to overlap with initial teacher training, and the existing Core Content Framework (CCF, DfE, 2019), there was evidence that the repetitive nature of the programme caused issues for some of the participants. An example of this was provided by Nadia, who felt it did not take into account her prior knowledge from completing a PGCE:

“When I first started it, it felt like I was repeating my training...it felt repetitive. I felt like my theory was so strong from my training, but actually, it was more the practical side that I needed support with. I found that in my training we covered everything that we possibly could, but actually, what I didn’t get lots of experience [of]...working with other team members or dealing with parents or filling in forms. It sometimes felt like I was wasting time that I could put into reading about something that actually I needed more support with or, you know, needed to broaden my knowledge”.

On the other hand, Beatrice used the word ‘*disengagement*’ to describe how she felt as a result of finding the ECF (DfE, 2021) too generalised to resonate with her setting and experience. Similarly, Tanie commented it was too ‘*nuanced*’ and specific in places, but again stating it did not translate into every setting. Whilst Athena mentioned how the amount of work involved with the

ECF/CPD was ‘*consuming*’, explaining that the content was heavy and laborious to complete:

“I’ll be honest, it’s difficult, I can’t get it done. I have to catch up...we get weekly messages to say you’ve completed 0% or you’ve not done this...I find that Ambition is just so heavy. It’s one screen full of reading and then you have to do quizzes, get them correct, then, obviously [watch] the videos”.

After considering their interactions with the programme, it was an organic step to ask participants during the interview stage how they felt the ECF (DfE, 2021) had supported them during ECT1. The researcher asked the same question to all participants and Jessica’s response is next:

Jessica’s Interview:

PD 14:28

“I’m interested to know how the ECF training that you’ve received, and all the benefits that go with being an ECT, has helped you?”

Jessica 15:00

“...when you think about having something like this ECF programme, because it’s like a national thing that everyone has to do...it is by nature very general, which sometimes can be a bit frustrating. You’ll sit in like a conference...and it’s about adaptive teaching or whatever. But sometimes...it doesn’t go far enough...to give specific advice...because everybody has got such different situations. And I think having the kind of mentor system, that’s when that can become more helpful.”

Jessica acknowledged that having a ‘one-size-fits-all’ CPD programme meant it could be quite generalised and this caused frustration. However, she also stated that it cannot provide more specific guidance as each ECT’s setting could be different. Jessica started to naturally move the conversation on to the role of the mentor, within the ECF (DfE, 2021), and continued:

Jessica 15:43

“But again...[it] relies on the mentor...on the relationship between you and a mentor. For me to be able to say, ‘Oh, I’m having this particular issue...in the training, they said, I could maybe try this, what do you think?’...and I think a lot of that relies on mentors, being aware of what’s worked for them, but also to be aware of my class, to then help me. It’s quite difficult for her”.

In this part of the interview, Jessica was pragmatic about the limitations of the ECF (DfE, 2021) and stated that whilst the mentor role is incredibly important in contextualising the training, having a mentor help with specific class-based requirements requires a mentor that is both available and welcomes the role. This has reinforced the idea, from earlier in the findings, that mentor support is key to the success of ECTs and that whilst the ECF (DfE, 2021) stipulates many things, it does come down to how a mentor (and school) interprets the programme. In summary, these findings suggest that the individual starting point of an ECT, the time it takes to complete the provider-led resources and the generalisability of the programme were important concerns for the participants.

Whilst less frequently occurring in the data, the next three themes detail findings on pupil behaviour, workload, work-life behaviour and how they impacted participants during ECT1. After which, final consideration is given to critical incidents experienced by individual participants.

5.4.6 Behaviour

Pupil behaviour was mentioned briefly by three of the five participants and, whilst Athena and Jessica initially discussed behaviour in a positive way, this changed over the course of the year. Athena stated: *‘I want to talk about the children – everyone says I have the nicest year group!’*. However, she

subsequently spoke about how she saw the pupils' *'behaviour changing* [due to]...*group chat on phones [with] nasty messages*'. Similarly, Jessica discussed she was *'Adjusting to needs, interests...[but] a lovely bunch!'*, then went on to say she had found it *'Harder to focus on positives when you're faced with 3 or 4 children that make life difficult as a teacher'* and questioned *'why are you doing that?'* and that some pupils were *'starting to get difficult'*. Beatrice echoed this when she spoke about the challenges with behaviour throughout ECT1, stating she *'had [a] challenging class'*. Whilst it was surprising that not all participants mentioned behaviour as a critical incident, it was clearly important to some of the participants, but not their main concern during ECT1.

5.4.7 Workload

The next theme to emerge from the findings was 'workload' and whilst this generally meant the overall volume of work to be completed, the two areas of 'role' and 'ECF' overlapped, so it was the impact of all tasks combined. Athena found it *'difficult'* to get all of the work assigned to her done, which left her feeling exhausted. Nadia agreed, using the same word to describe the struggle and how difficult it was to maintain work-life balance. Meanwhile, Tanie commented that workload encompassed *'responsibility'* for so much, including the children. She then went on to link this to having responsibility without autonomy, which was an interesting perspective as a career-changer and will be explored further within the individual themes section. However, not all single-word descriptors around workload were negative. Jessica found workload *'sustainable'* in comparison to her training year, and Beatrice stated it was *'shared'* between herself, an experienced teacher and a student in the same year group. Table 5.6 summarises the single word descriptors for workload:

Participant	Single word descriptor	Meaning in context of data
Athena	difficult	Exhausted and couldn't get it all done.
Tanie	responsibility	Responsible for so much – including the children.
Jessica	sustainable	Compared with training year.
Beatrice	shared	Workload was shared with experienced teacher and student.
Nadia	difficult	Struggled to get everything done and maintain work-life balance.

Table 5.6: Single word descriptors of ECT 1 experience – **Workload**

In addition, excerpts from the dialogue with participants during the interviews revealed more about the emotional toll of the 'workload' and how it made them feel about joining the teaching profession. An example of this is an excerpt from the interview with Athena.

Athena's interview:

PD 16:29:

"The other thing you said, and I'm using your words now...the pressure and the workload...and how it left you feeling a little bit emotional. I just wondered if you could tell me how feeling like that has made you feel about the teaching profession?"

Athena 16:59:

"So, this is actually a point I've written down to talk about, I feel that this workload and this stress has actually really affected my mental health. Before all of this, I was so independent, I'd go out all the time, and go and do things. And now I'll be honest with you, I've struggled with the anxiety...and I've never, ever been like that. And it's got to the point now...it's procrastination. I know I've got work to do at the weekend. But I'm either so exhausted, or I just don't want to do it. And the thing is, I don't want to fall out of love with teaching. But it's what everybody said, it's not the teaching, it's the admin side of things. It's all the extra things. I have been open with my mentor about (not necessarily the mental health side) but...my mentor has told me to just do what needs [doing]".

Athena was open to discuss the issue of 'workload' further, writing it down to bring up during the interview; as it had impacted her mental health to the extent where she was not able to lead her normal life and felt exhausted by the amount of work that needed completing. When the researcher framed the question to ask how this made her feel about teaching, she was conflicted by 'loving' the job itself but struggling to keep up with the demands of the 'admin' the role entails, with her mentor advising her to only do 'what needs doing'. This raised the question of how ECTs are able to adapt in the early days of teaching, and the importance of mentor guidance on how to prioritise the essential tasks and learning to leave the rest. Which relates to the next theme of establishing a work-life balance.

5.4.8 Work-Life Balance

Whilst work-life balance can have different meanings, the participants used the expression to convey having a life outside of school and not taking work home with them. Nadia explained she was '*constantly reminded of work-life balance and it was difficult to fit that all in, and not take it home*'. She added that her school tried to enforce this '*At my school...can't stay later than 5.45pm. Every day I start at 7.30am and leave at 5.45pm...it started to take a toll, but as an ECT I didn't want to complain*'. Whilst Athena stated '*Staff meetings are two hours long and I'm working every night...until 9pm and also working weekends*'.

During the interview stage, Nadia mentioned how she struggled to gain work-life balance and had '*broken-down*' in front of the Deputy Head; feeling overwhelmed by the workload which suggested that workload impacted on her work-life balance.

Nadia's Interview:

Nadia 18:00:

"I knew I'd love teaching. I loved my class. And that was the funny thing. I think it was the children, it was these 30 children that kept me going. And actually, you know what, after everything that happened...I had the breakdown in the morning and went into class, and we carried on...it's those children who made me go...I do like this job. And I do enjoy what I'm doing. But actually, it was every other thing that made me question the profession, not the children, not my teaching. It was everything else that made me think could I cope with this? It wasn't the actual job itself. It was more of everything around it".

Nadia's feelings surrounding the 'love' of the job, echoed Athena's viewpoint and raised the idea of 'sacrificing everything' for the role, even to the detriment of one's own health and wellbeing – which was identified in the Government's own report (House of Commons, 2018) of reasons why teacher's leave the profession in their early careers. The findings showed links between workload and work-life balance.

5.4.9 Additional Themes

In addition to the themes already discussed, two other themes were noted by an individual participant. The first was around the theme of the 'dual role of women' and the second on a 'lack of autonomy'. Both were interesting themes in this study, as they had already been identified within the existing literature.

Beginning with the dual role of women, Jessica discussed that she had '*Got married in September...but will see if additional 'family' responsibilities [arise] and how I manage those*' explaining it was a '*personal challenge*'. So, whilst it did not feature as a major incident for her during ECT1, it was clearly an issue that she felt may impact her in the future. Whilst Tanie spoke more on the theme of autonomy in teaching, saying she had made an observation about it:

“...both as a career-changer and in general. Teachers aren’t left to manage their own time and development. Almost as if we are not trusted – but are with the children’s development”.

This echoed the existing literature on teachers having a lower level of autonomy than in other professions (NFER, 2020), something Tanie had experienced in her previous career. Once again, it was interesting that only one participant had mentioned autonomy, however ECT2 data may provide further insights.

The next section outlines how these findings were represented on a chronological timeline for year one.

5.5 Data Represented on a Chronological Timeline

During year one of the study, as outlined in chapter four, data from both the oral histories and the interviews were integrated and overlaid on a chronological timeline (on Padlet) to plot the critical incidents. These data findings can be found, in appendix four, for each participant. Whilst the findings have already been discussed in this chapter, these chronological timelines were used to produce the ‘River of Life’ (Denicolo & Pope, 1990) visual data representation at the end of year two of the study (so will be discussed in chapter six). This was essential to ensure the accurate representation of the whole induction journey of each participant. The relationship between the first two methods of data collection and the chronological timeline was two-fold, firstly it offered a practical way of combining the data and secondly it provided a clear and visual record of critical incidents that would have been harder to analyse separately.

Polkinghorne (1988) discussed the idea of narrative presentation taking three forms, the first is the original story, the second a representation of the story and

the third is the interpretation and understanding of the story. The chronological timeline was a combination of all three, co-constructed between participants and the researcher. However, the results of any study is not simply a presentation of the story, as Polkinghorne continues, "It's an argued essay that conforms to the rules of a scholarly presentation", (1988,p.169). Evidence from the chronological timeline is used to argue the conclusion the researcher has reached and it is they who present the story, as they have inferred. This overarching story is as thorough as the information participant has shared, and aims to tell the story through critical incidents, in the participants' own words.

5.6 Chapter Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter began by outlining the ways in which findings were ascertained and data from both the oral histories and the interviews were integrated and overlaid on a chronological timeline to plot the critical incidents. Before moving on to classify the critical incidents; to reveal the themes from the first year of the study. The common main themes to arise were based around the role of the mentor, the transition from trainee to ECT, the impact of the ECF (DfE, 2021), workload and being a career-changer. Whilst these themes were identified as being important during ECT1, as participants enter ECT2 with more experience, it is interesting to consider whether second-year themes will differ. The next chapter will focus on the findings of the second year of the study.

Chapter 6 – Data Findings for Year Two

6.1 Introduction to Data Findings

Having considered the findings from year one of the study, in the previous chapter, this chapter reports on the second year. Data has been presented in similar ways to year one, however, due to a variation in the number of oral history recordings, the majority of critical incidents were logged within the interview data. This was mitigated by the fact data for year two was combined and this data integrated with year one, which will be explained in more detail in the next section. As the research concluded at the end of the second year, the visual representation of the two-year 'River of Life' (Denicolo & Pope, 1990) participant journey will be included in the findings (as discussed in chapter four). The next section begins with an outline of the data collection process, including the variations in year two.

6.2 Data Collection Process in Year Two

The data collection process, in year two, yielded data findings in the form of:

- 1) **Oral histories** - self-recorded during year two, to record participants' experiences and ascertain critical incidents during ECT2 (partially transcribed, see appendix five).
- 2) **Semi-structured interviews** - one interview conducted in year two (during the spring term) using the oral histories and indicative interview questions (see appendix 1) to ascertain critical incidents during ECT2, transcribed in full (see appendix six).

3) **Chronological timelines** – integrated oral histories and interview data, presented in a chronological format using Padlet (see appendix seven).

4) **‘River of Life’** – individual visual data representation of the participant journey; including background information, first career, entry to ITT and critical incidents during ECT induction. Participants confirmed/approved visual representation.

6.2.1 Variation in Data Collection

Whilst oral histories were still used to ascertain critical incidents, and ask follow up questions at interview stage, the number of recordings received (on average only two per participant) was a significant reduction from the first year of the study. Therefore, after reviewing the amount of data collected across the oral histories, the researcher decided to integrate all year two data; to see the ‘bigger picture’ of the critical incidents experienced. Furthermore, when the researcher asked participants whether there was a reason for the reduction in oral history recordings, most could not pinpoint a specific reason, but explained it may have been due to being busier during ECT2. It is worth acknowledging that conducting longitudinal research can result in a decrease of motivation to complete the study (Simkus, 2023) and could explain the drop in recording frequency, despite the researcher communicating with the participants at the same intervals during the second year. Additionally, the critical incidents reported in the oral history recordings appeared less detailed compared with those from the first year. However, perhaps a result of recording fewer oral histories, the participants appeared keener to share their experiences in greater detail during the interviews, using the opportunity to update the researcher with

further critical incidents. These differences have been reflected in the findings, with the researcher drawing predominantly from the interviews to ascertain themes. Thus, the section that follows outlines the findings from the combined oral histories and interviews in year two.

6.3 Year Two Findings

6.3.1 Oral Histories and Interviews in Year Two

Data was categorised in the same way as in year one, to reveal the critical incidents experienced by participants and then by classifying the driving and restraining forces to ascertain themes. However, due to combining the oral histories and interview, the researcher had to find a more efficient way to review data and achieved this by producing a cumulative summary for each of the driving and restraining forces. The next two sections summarise the data.

6.3.2 Summary of the Driving Forces

The table (6.1) summarises the eight driving forces experienced by participants, with a tick to denote those who experienced it. The most commonly appearing driving force categories are highlighted in bold.

	Career changer	Mentor support	Unofficial mentor support	COP	Transition from ECT1 to ECT2	SLT support	ECF/ CPD	Well- being/ mental health
Athena	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Jessica	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
Nadia			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tanie	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

Beatrice	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
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Table 6.1: Summary of the driving forces experienced by participants in year two.

The table is revealing, as whilst not every participant experienced the same driving forces, all of the participants mentioned the transition from ECT1 to ECT2 and well-being/mental health as driving forces in year two. Whilst at least four out of five participants experienced the positive impact of being a career-changer and seeking out ‘unofficial’ mentor support. As a result, it was interesting to see that mentor support was not mentioned as frequently.

In summary, whilst the oral histories and interviews covered a breadth of driving forces, it is clear that support from an ‘unofficial’ mentor, being a career-changer, a successful transition between ECT1/ECT2 and improved well-being/mental health were the most important driving forces for these participants during year two. The next section summarises the restraining forces identified.

6.3.3 Summary of the Restraining Forces

Similar to year one, there were more restraining than driving forces seen across year two data. Whilst there were eleven restraining forces in total, seven were mentioned across more than two participants’ accounts. However, it was interesting to note that five were repeated from the driving forces data, namely: being a career-changer, mentor support, community of practice, SLT support and ECF CPD. Which meant that six restraining forces were identified, in year two, and were as follows: workload, the dual role of women, autonomy, induction, behaviour/SEND and whether teaching was sustainable. Whilst lack of autonomy and the dual role of women were each only mentioned by a single

participant in year one, they were recurring forces in year two. The table (6.2) summarises the restraining forces affecting participants:

	Career changer	Mentor support	Workload	COP	Dual role of women	Autonomy	SLT support	ECF/ CPD	Induction	Behaviour/ SEND	Teaching unsustainable/ may consider leaving
Athena	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
Jessica	✓				✓			✓	✓	✓	
Nadia		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tanie	✓	✓		✓		✓					✓
Beatrice		✓					✓		✓		

Table 6.2: Summary of the restraining forces experienced by participants in year two.

The table (6.2) revealed that participants experienced a wider range of restraining forces, in comparison to the driving forces, where more commonalities were seen. However, mentor support and the overall ECT induction process were mentioned by four out of five participants, as restraining forces.

6.3.4 Chronological Timeline in Year Two

Similar to year one, all data collected across the oral histories and interviews were integrated chronologically and added to a timeline (see appendix seven). As this was the final data to review, the participants then 'closed' their stories and the researcher was able to create individual visual data representations of their journeys, called a 'River of Life' (Denicolo & Pope, 1990). To ensure accurate representation, the researcher provided participants with an opportunity to review, amend and approve the final visual. This will be explored fully, later in the chapter, however the next section outlines the themes within the data, before discussing the main themes experienced by the majority of the participants.

6.4 Outline of Themes

6.4.1 Venn Diagram to map the Themes

Following a similar process to the first year, the data was then sorted using a Venn diagram to map the themes and the intersection between driving and restraining forces. Figure 6.2 shows this:

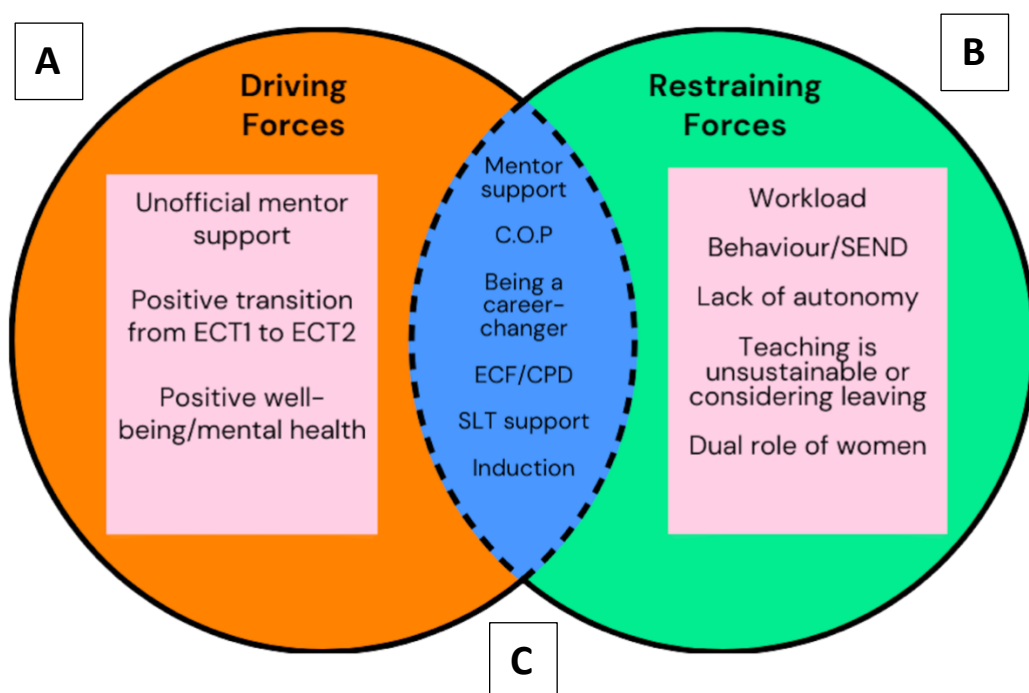


Figure 6.1 Venn diagram showing the driving forces (set A), restraining forces (set B) and intersection of both sets (C) during ECT2.

6.4.2 Classifying Themes emerging from Year Two

The next step was to classify the themes arising from the data, listed in table 6.3, to ascertain frequency and whether it was classified as a driving force, restraining force or both.

Theme	Frequency	Driving force, restraining force or both?
Being a career-changer	7	Both
SLT support	6	Both
Community of Practice	6	Both
Mentor support	6	Both
ECF/CPD	5	Both
Transition from ECT1 to ECT2	5	Driving
Well-being	5	Driving
Unofficial mentor	4	Driving
Induction	4	Restraining
Behaviour/SEND	3	Restraining
Dual role of women	2	Restraining
Teaching is unsustainable	3	Restraining
Workload	2	Restraining
Autonomy	1	Restraining

Table 6.3: Forces experienced by theme, frequency and type.

Being a career-changer appeared most frequently in year two, however was still classified as both a driving and restraining force. Collectively, a third of the incidents mentioned SLT support, community of practice and mentor support. The transition from ECT1 to ECT2 was discussed as a driving force, as was well-being and the support from unofficial mentors. In comparison to the ECF/CPD, which appeared as both a driving and restraining force. The remaining incidents were mentioned as restraining forces only, including the induction process and the dual role of women. All of the themes in the data will now be presented as findings in the next section.

6.5 Themes

As the findings were integrated, the following sections use participant quotes from the combined oral histories and interviews to highlight their experiences. These can be found in their entirety, in appendices five through to eight, and were classified by theme, with the data collection method noted. The first to be discussed is the most frequently occurring theme of being a career-changer.

6.5.1 The Impact of Being a Career-Changer

The impact of being a career-changer was seen as both a driving and restraining force. Four participants spoke of how being a career-changer had benefitted them during ECT2, by comparison only two did during ECT1. The data revealed the ways in which the participants' thought their previous experiences had equipped them with the necessary skills to navigate the demands of teaching. Beatrice explained that her past career had meant dealing with difficult and challenging situations and this had made it easier to be prepared for the school environment:

"I think it's made it easier than it would have been. I think the previous career...was so high pressure...I was used to dealing with crazy situations and confrontation and things not going my way and listening to feedback. So that environment that I'd moved into teaching from...had really prepared me for it".

Tanie agreed that confidence gained from having a previous career, had helped her to deal with challenging situations in school. She referred specifically to an example where she was able to proactively resolve an issue with her mentor, in relation to the support she was receiving:

"I wouldn't have had the confidence to seek it [mentoring] out elsewhere. Having that sort of [prior career] experience, lets me know that actually he's not a very good mentor for me...because it's just not a great fit. I feel like we kind of got it to work... more from me, and I don't want to say

managing the situation - how I knew how to interact. I wouldn't have questioned it as much, if I wasn't a career changer, and didn't have that experience. I would have probably just thought that it was me".

This was similar to Jessica's experience, who felt empowered by her previous career experience when seeking out additional support for her class:

"I think because I'm a career changer, a bit older, I'm kind of aware of...if you're not going to help me, I'll just go find the person that will. I don't have to just stick with what you're telling me...I think there's a bit more of confidence... Like...now with this class - I'm having issues with SEND...well I'm going to go to the SENCO. I think you get a bit of 'oomph' when you're...[a career-changer]. If I think back to coming out of uni, starting my first job...you're probably not going to do that...I'll just do what I'm told".

Beatrice made a similar comment that if she had become a teacher straight from university, she would not have had prior career experience to help her

"And I feel that if I had gone...straight out of uni, I wouldn't have had those skills and those experiences to help me", which Athena agreed with, saying if she had been a recent graduate that she would not have coped as well with the workload. Whilst Athena also spoke of her prior retail experience being similar to the 'customer service' role she now provided for the parents and that having been in a managerial role had prepared her well for deploying the other adults in the room to support the children:

"I think because in my previous roles, I've had management experience. I feel that that is what you kind of have to be as a teacher...to be the customer service person for the parents. But then also...I've got two TAs and it's making sure that I manage them correctly, so that I can get the best for the children".

Whilst four participants spoke about the positive benefits of being a career-changer during ECT2, three mentioned it as a restraining force. Athena compared her previous career in retail management with teaching; about how she found it harder to 'switch off' after work and expressing the view that

teaching is a more all-encompassing profession, with less delimitation between working and non-working hours:

“...when I was in management, I'd be doing...39 hours a week. The difference was that you'd go in and you'd come home, you'd switch off. Okay, we'd have the occasional bad day, fair enough, but that's it. Whereas I've noticed...I try and leave school when I can - but it's not just the hours you do in the school, it's hours out of school, putting all the time in at the weekend”.

Jessica spoke of her frustration at the limitations placed upon her as an ECT, despite having past career experience. For example, when there was an opportunity to utilise her degree in archaeology and contacts in the heritage sector, to lead on a management development programme, but was discouraged from doing so as was ‘*just an ECT*’:

“...they overlook the fact that you've got experience of things that could be helpful...it's almost like they look at you and go ‘No, but you're just an ECT’. I'm not just an ECT. I've got experience of balancing my time like, I can organise myself”.

Tanie mentioned an incident during a training session where she was remonstrated by the Head Teacher for using her laptop, which she said would not have happened in her previous career.

Finally, similar to in year one, four out of five ECTs used words to describe their previous career experience as helping with their new roles as teachers. A summary of these single word descriptors can be found in the table (6.4):

Participant	Single word descriptor	Meaning in context of data
Athena	management	Previous career experience helps manage other adults in the room/parent relationships.
Tanie	managing	Prior career experience helped with ‘managing’ relationships and personal development needs.
Jessica	confidence	Previous career provided confidence to seek out support.
Beatrice	prepared	Prior career/experience good preparation for teaching role.

Table 6.4: Single word descriptors of ECT 2 experience – **Being a career changer**

Tanie and Athena both used derivatives of the word ‘manage’ to explain how managing relationships with people in school felt easier, in light of having prior management experience. Athena was certain it helped with managing other staff in the classroom. Meanwhile, Beatrice had felt more ‘*prepared*’ as she already had the skills and experiences to deal with most situations. In summary, whilst the majority of participants viewed being a career-changer a positive attribute, that helped them carry out their day-to-day role, these findings must be viewed with some caution as it did not seem to transfer into the way others perceived them.

The next section discusses mentor support and a shift in the way the participants viewed their mentors.

6.5.2 Mentor Support

It was unsurprising to see mentor support being repeated as a theme in year two, as the ECF (DfE, 2021) provision recommends mentor support during ECT2; albeit on a reduced timetable of one meeting per fortnight, rather than the weekly meetings suggested in year one. However, what stood out was that only Athena and Jessica mentioned it as a driving force, whilst four participants did in year one. When discussing the level of support provided by mentors, Jessica discussed the rapport she had built with her mentor, explaining that she felt comfortable going to her for advice:

“My mentor has taught year two before...we get on and I'm going to ask for her opinion. Because...who am I going to feel most comfortable being the most honest with...this is exactly the thing that I'm struggling, what would you do?”.

Athena's experience with her mentor was similar and the support she provided made Athena feel more confident as a teacher:

"My mentor's the year below me...she's the year four teacher - she's already had them from last year...and she gives me these tips on what to do. I think that because of the support...it's made me feel better about myself".

However, Athena also spoke about mentor availability and that she would have liked more mentor support, but explained her mentor was already over-stretched in school. In addition, both Jessica and Beatrice discussed that their mentors were leaving, part way through the academic year. Teachers do resign at three main points across the year, at the end of each term, but for such a small study, two mentors leaving in the same year was surprising and meant the participants were allocated new mentors. By contrast, Tanie mentioned that having a younger mentor was a challenging dynamic, as she realised whilst she had more career experience than him, she had less teaching experience. In comparison, Beatrice found herself mentoring another ECT, due to it being her second year at the school, and, possibly, because she used to manage a team in her previous career.

The most striking result to emerge from the data, was three out of five participants used words with negative connotations to describe their mentor experience. This can be seen in table 6.5:

Participant	Single word descriptor	Meaning in context of data
Athena	pushy	Replaced another mentor and pushes, but perhaps too picky.
Tanie	not the best	In the context of best fit and advice offered.
Jessica	comfortable	Mentor is a known and trusted person.
Beatrice	new	Mentor is inexperienced and sticks to the script.
Nadia	another person	In the context of already being supported by year lead and so does not speak to mentor as much as it feels like 'bringing someone else in' to the dynamic.

Table 6.5: Single word descriptors of ECT 2 experience – **Mentor support**

Whilst the words have very different meanings, the general overview was that participants felt their mentors were either not the 'right fit' or the relationship had become strained or distant (meaning they were classified as restraining forces). By contrast, Jessica felt positively about her mentor's support and stated that she felt '*comfortable*' within the mentee/mentor relationship and saw her mentor as a known and trusted person. Beatrice used a neutral word, '*new*' to describe mentor support. The mentor being new raised concerns about their experience, further compounded by how they seemed to '*stick to the script*' provided by the ECF (DfE, 2021) CPD provider. Beatrice explained this further:

"One downside, has been no-one has been a second year ECT mentor. My mentor was new when we signed-up...missed the training...still feel like he's the mindset of "let's follow the script". BP did communicate could 'go off-piste' and tailor it...back to square one to tick this off".

Meanwhile, Nadia mentioned that she sought the advice of another colleague in her team, as her mentor is in another year group '*...if I go to my mentor, it's bringing another person to the team. And I don't think that would work well*'. She also raised an interesting point regarding the roles of mentors and ECTs within the ECF programme:

"...everybody gets assigned a role - you're the mentor, you're the ECT. But I don't think that necessarily means we're fulfilling our roles properly. I think on paper, it just looks good that I have a mentor...but actually, as an

ECT...have to show that we are doing things but my mentor doesn't have to...sometimes, as a result, things don't technically happen...the weekly or termly meetings”.

Tanie felt similar about the choice of ECT mentor, explaining that not enough consideration was given to choosing the ‘right’ mentor:

“...I feel like in teaching that a ‘mentoring’ role is just given to people as a career development step, it's not given because you're the best person to mentor...it was the next step in his career development and somebody didn't go - okay, so we have this new teacher coming, who's best to mentor them?”.

This viewpoint was particularly interesting in light of the next theme to emerge, that of unofficial mentor support.

6.5.3 Unofficial Mentor Support

The most unexpected theme to emerge from the year two data, was that of ‘unofficial’ mentor support. With the exception of Jessica, the rest of the participants discussed how they had proactively sought out ‘unofficial’ mentors’, as opposed to utilising the mentor support set out for them in school. The table (6.6) summarises the single word descriptors for unofficial mentors and demonstrates that four of the five participants found they had a positive impact on their ECT2 year:

Participant	Single word descriptor	Meaning in context of data
Athena	realistic	Offers realistic/pragmatic advice.
Tanie	reflective	Offers other information/viewpoints.
Beatrice	useful	Discussing issues with wide range of others, not just mentor.
Nadia	mentoring	Has more time and knows how to mentor.

Table 6.6: Single word descriptors of ECT 2 experience – **Unofficial Mentor support**

When discussing her unofficial mentor, Athena rationalised the decision to seek her support as this teacher was more ‘*realistic*’ about expectations. Expanding on this point, she explained:

"My mentor [has] been a teacher for twenty-plus years, and she's great and she gives good advice. But there are some things...[she's] very nit-picky. So, that's why I go to the other one [unofficial mentor] the year six teacher. She's been in teaching for nine years, but she's more realistic about things. Whereas the mentor [is] unrealistic, I believe".

Whereas Nadia discussed proximity and availability being the key factors in finding her 'unofficial' mentor:

"...it doesn't make sense for me to reach out to my actual mentor, who's not even in the same year group. And our timing just doesn't align. Whereas my year lead knows exactly the support I need...he works day-to-day, side by side with me. So it makes sense for me to go to him, rather than my actual mentor".

However, Tanie stated she needed support from colleagues more reflective than her mentor, as he had a tendency to just *'tell her what to do'* if she raised an issue, rather than discuss possible solutions, *'I need support from someone more reflective. Colleagues talk about things – offering alternative ideas. It becomes tricky if [the mentor] just gives advice of 'how to do it'.* Finally, Beatrice alluded to the fact that going to one person (her mentor) was not always the best idea and she preferred to *'check with different people'*. These combined insights were interesting, as suggested it was a common occurrence amongst the participants to seek out colleagues that suited the stage of development they were at. This also overlaps with the impact of the 'Community of Practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and support received from the wider school, which is the next theme discussed.

6.5.4 Community of Practice

Whilst feeling 'accepted' by the 'Community of Practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) was a driving force for three of the participants, overall, this was mainly due to the expectations of the school seeming clearer to them in year two. Beatrice commented she *'had found her feet'* and that her school environment

encouraged the process of learning how to teach. She also credited her positive mindset to feeling valued as a teacher:

"I feel that the whole school culture has helped to change my mindset, because everything they do is really positive. And I feel that I wouldn't be working there if they didn't think I was a good teacher".

Nadia spoke about how understanding the expectations had reduced the pressure during ECT2, '*...it sort of all aligned and I know the routine now, I know the expectation. So that pressure was gone*'. However, when Tanie discussed the same issue, she explained how 'understanding routines' seemed to be amplified in teaching and this felt different in comparison to starting other jobs:

"I hate that first bit of a job where you don't know how anything works - you don't know routines and things. I just think all that's so amplified in teaching and in a school, because usually (in other jobs)... you'll be shadowing somebody or you're going in at a junior level, so you're not expected to know and do everything. I've just felt like this year, I vaguely know what I'm doing, in terms of like the routines. I've done every one before, which I think is a big part of it".

It was interesting to note that Tanie then went on to mention 'schools' in general, as well as her own school, as 'withholding' tacit information from newcomers:

"...if you forgot about something, people were funny about it and wouldn't remind you. There was all sorts of things you're expected to know, and there's no way that you would know without somebody telling you. I think schools, or this school in my experience, is particularly bad with that".

As seen in the table (6.7), Athena used the word '*clique*' to describe the teachers in her school and revealed she did not feel as if she could always join in with conversations, as was not yet a parent and most of the conversation revolved around this topic. Nadia used the word '*boundary*' to describe that,

whilst most of the time she felt she had integrated into the school, at times the ‘ECT’ label she was given meant she felt the segregation between ECTs and more experienced teachers.

Beatrice was the only participant to use a single word descriptor with a positive connotation, stating that the school environment was ‘*positive*’ and encouraged the process of learning to teach. She further elaborated that it was in contrast to the school in which she completed ECT1 and felt the new school made her feel more valued.

Participant	Single word descriptor	Meaning in context of data
Athena	cliquey	Sense of not belonging to ‘group’ of teachers who are all mothers.
Tanie	routines	Difficult to gain awareness routines/politics of how a school runs, as not always discussed (tacit).
Beatrice	positive	Environment encourages learning how to teach.
Nadia	boundary	Whilst fits in most of the time, worried about ‘over-stepping’ boundaries due to being an ECT.

Table 6.7: Single word descriptors of ECT 2 experience – **Community of Practice**

The next section discusses the findings around the transition from ECT1 to ECT2.

6.5.5 The Transition from ECT1 to ECT2

There was a significant increase in teacher confidence for participants during the transition from ECT1 to ECT2. This was mentioned as a driving force by all of the participants; with Nadia and Tanie stating this was partly related to being aware of the school expectations, having already completed ECT1. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the ECF (DfE, 2021) was created to support

ECTs by extending the induction period from one year to two. Therefore, it was interesting to ascertain that participants experienced a positive transition from ECT1 to ECT2, and having already completed the first year made the second year easier and more straightforward for all participants.

Participant	Single word descriptor	Meaning in context of data
Athena	easy	In comparison to first year, does not worry as much – perspective on what is possible.
Tanie	helped	Acknowledgment that second year of ECT is 'stepped' to support.
Jessica	straightforward	In comparison to first year, transition aided by working with known 'partner' teacher from training year.
Beatrice	helped	Acknowledged that training year and ECT1 helped to secure confidence for ECT2.
Nadia	experience	In context of experience gained during ECT1 and confidence with dealing with aspects of role, particularly with parents.

Table 6.8: Single word descriptors of ECT 2 experience – **Transition from ECT1 to ECT2**

In the single word descriptors, in table 6.8, Jessica explained that despite being concerned about changing year group, having already worked with her year group partner as a trainee had made the transition more straightforward. She also mentioned feeling more confident in her own ability to '*manage a classroom*'. Athena echoed this, stating she felt she had a 'base' of knowledge to build upon and a more realistic approach to teaching after her first year.

Continuing the benefits of the ECF (DfE, 2021), Tanie made an interesting comment that the transition to ECT2 was helped by the acknowledgement that she was still an ECT and, despite not feeling any more supported, this '*stepped*' approach meant others recognised she was still new to teaching:

"... I don't feel more supported, but I do think it's helped. I do think that it's good, that it sort of steps down, but... still acknowledging that you're

new to this. So, I do like the two-year thing. I do like it stepped-down a bit”.

Overall, the acknowledgement of the second year being a positive aspect of the ECF (DfE, 2021) was a surprising finding. Support received from the SLT will be discussed next.

6.5.6 SLT Support

Evidence was found to indicate that the SLT continued to be a source of support for the majority of participants, during year two, with three mentioning the SLT had impacted them positively. Athena spoke of how the Headteacher’s praise, during a book scrutiny, made her feel capable and she was grateful for the reassurance. Whilst Nadia praised an Assistant Head Teacher for being supportive. Meanwhile, Tanie commented that the SLT were ‘broadly supportive’ but that it had taken time to get used to having their support, after being more autonomous in her previous career:

“I’m getting used to it...but I was in a job where I was managing all situations. Now, it’s nice to have knowledge and back up of SLT. It’s a strange balancing act...to figure out what I can deal with on my own and what SLT will do”.

Although, Athena and Nadia, had spoken of the support received from SLT as a driving force, this was contradicted and appeared as a restraining force too. Athena stated her TA had to make the SLT aware of the behaviour issues within her class, and whilst they were still supportive, the Head Teacher and Deputy Head had announced their retirement, and were therefore ‘*starting to wind down*’. This can be seen in the table (6.9), where at word level three participants described their experiences of the SLT support received as ‘*unsettled*’, ‘*disappointed*’ and ‘*winding down*’.

Participant	Single word descriptor	Meaning in context of data
Athena	winding down	The head and deputy head are retiring – so it changes everything.
Tanie	trust	Head doesn't micro-manage – gives teachers more ownership.
Beatrice	unsettled	Not much communication or guidance from SLT at the start of the year.
Nadia	disappointed	Lack of recognition that need support as have a challenging class and still an ECT.

Table 6.9: Single word descriptors of ECT 2 experience – **SLT support**

The first two words indicate either a lack of communication or support, with Jessica and Nadia expecting more from their respective SLT. Whilst Beatrice acknowledged that her ECT2 school had less routines in place, than her previous school, and as a consequence she felt she did not receive much guidance from the SLT at the start of the year. Finally, Nadia felt disappointed that, despite being an ECT, the SLT did not recognise she had been given a challenging class and needed more support:

“...I thought, as an ECT, they would realise I've already got other pressures. And I thought they would recognise we've given her a bit of a difficult class, she's going to need support”.

These contradictions highlighted a difference in expectations, for the participants and perhaps even the SLT, about the level of support the ECTs required in the second year. This was of interest to the study as it sought to understand the impact of the ECF (DfE, 2021) in the second year, which this insight does, and the next section expands on this and the impact of provider CPD.

6.5.7 Early Career Framework/Provider CPD

There was a marked difference between how the participants felt about the ECF (DfE, 2021) and the provider CPD in ECT1, compared with ECT2. The general consensus was that there was less pressure in ECT2 and the format of the provider course materials allowed for a more ‘open’ enquiry-based research projects. Three participants referred to the change in requirements as being more suitable, in comparison to the mandatory modules in year one. This is summarised in the table (6.10) and categorised as driving forces:

Participant	Single word descriptor	Meaning in context of data
Jessica	less pressure	As only needs completing fortnightly and already completed a lot of the modules last year.
Beatrice	enquiry	Research-based learning has been better – more personalised for my development.
Nadia	open	Research based and appropriate/current for my development needs (SEND).

Table 6.10: Single word descriptors of ECT 2 experience – **ECF/provider CPD in year two**

Beatrice spoke about the programme change to more enquiry-based content and how it seemed more personalised, meaning she had engaged with it more.

Nadia added there were less tasks to complete and the format was ‘open’:

“...not as many modules or tasks to do. It’s quite open and research based. Easier than last year – amount of tasks. I want to focus on SEN – as it’s appropriate for me and current”.

Whilst Jessica admitted that because she had completed the mandatory content during year one, she sometimes forgot about the ECF (DfE, 2021) requirements completely:

“...there’s less pressure from things like your ECF...and because I actually did all the modules last year...sometimes I completely forget...so...almost feels like I’m not doing ECT anymore”.

Jessica also mentioned another positive aspect of ECT2 was having mentor support for an additional year. However, there seemed to be a disconnect in the time participants allocated to complete the ECF/CPD during year two. Whilst Nadia acknowledged the ECF (DfE, 2021) and the provider course materials were more necessary for her during ECT1, in the second year she did not have as much time to focus on the 'research-based' format. She went on to explain that it was a combination of not having the right mindset, or time, stating the five percent non-contact time provided was only an hour and it was insufficient time to conduct research. Echoing this, Jessica also found the first year more helpful and that she could have completed induction in a year. Expanding on this, she felt it was partly due to the route through which she had completed her initial teacher training, feeling it had prepared her sufficiently well:

"I think last year, I found it more...helpful. And I think that's because obviously, I'd finished my training year...and it was almost like a stepping stone...part of me does think that I could have done it in a year. But I think that's because of the way I came through...because I did School Direct salaried and I was straight into teaching in my training year – I felt like almost that was my first year... this feels like almost unnecessary...but there are elements that are helpful, even if I didn't use it all".

Another aspect Jessica discussed was that the ECT conferences had given her an opportunity to speak with others, to ascertain what additional support they received from their schools. She felt she did not have as many opportunities for training and that other schools seemed more proactive about CPD. This highlighted that schools and providers interpreted the CPD in their own way, despite the ECF (DfE, 2021) guidelines.

Moving on to the positive side-effects of having less to do for the ECF (DfE, 2021), the next section expands on an increase in well-being and mental health.

6.5.8 Well-Being/Positive Mental Health

The findings showed that a perceived decrease in the ECF (DfE, 2021) requirements, during year two, had a positive impact on all of the participants. As seen in the table (6.11), all five participants experienced an improvement in their well-being and mental health during ECT2, with Jessica stating that she had made ‘*adjustments*’ to her approach to teaching to enjoy a life outside of school. Whilst Beatrice commented she had a more ‘*positive*’ mindset.

Participant	Single word descriptor	Meaning in context of data
Athena	better	Changed for the better this year.
Tanie	relaxed	Feeling more relaxed after Ofsted.
Jessica	adjustment	Recognition of a life outside of teaching means an adjustment in the way of thinking about workload.
Beatrice	positive	Positive/pragmatic mindset is helping to cope.
Nadia	better	Handling workload better.

Table 6.11: Single word descriptors of ECT 2 experience – **Well-being/mental health**

In addition, having already completed ECT1, participants had some experience of knowing what was important and could keep workload concerns in perspective, something many of them struggled with during ECT1. So, whilst Athena and Nadia both used the same word ‘*better*’, Athena meant that her well-being had improved:

“I made a promise to myself over the summer that I won’t suffer again. It was making me really ill...a couple of weeks in – feeling dizzy/tired. Something’s changed for the better though. I’d never suffered with [bad] mental health before. I don’t know if it was the combination of like the training and the wedding? But I’ve come out the other end”.

Whilst Nadia explained that she was talking about handling the workload better:

“Stress levels last year [were] high – feel like I’m handling the workload much better...found ways of going about things differently, that has been helpful...realised [it is] important to make year leads know how I’m feeling...[he] is very active on “What can we do? What can we put in place?”.

This links to the next theme of workload, where the same participants spoke of it still being a challenge in year two.

6.5.9 Workload

Whilst Nadia acknowledged she was dealing with her workload better, she confirmed it was still an issue and had impacted on her mental health. She explained the SEND needs of her class, and lack of adequate support, had exacerbated the issue and left her feeling ‘*burnt out*’. Whilst Athena mentioned the stress an impending Ofsted visit had on her:

“3 weeks left of term and the goal is to make it until the end of term...we’ve either got a deep dive from the MAT or R.E. Ofsted inspection. Why do it now? This is a 9-week term – we’re absolutely dying here, the children are knackered. Why do it now? It’s so tough and there’s so much pressure and stress. We’re all trying the hardest for the children...I’ll have to prep for this over the weekend”.

It was surprising that workload was not mentioned by all of the participants, but this may suggest that some were better able to deal with the pressures of the day-to-day role or the perception of having ‘less’ to do in regards to the provider CPD in year two. These individual experiences will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The next two sections consider the critical incidents that impacted individual participants, beginning with the impact of having a ‘dual role’ as a woman.

6.5.10 The Multiple Roles of Women

The impact of the multiple roles that some women undertake in the workplace and in their personal lives, was mentioned by two participants. They discussed the impact it had on their teaching career, when wanting to start a family, and

how it could be a restraining force for them. During ECT2, Jessica revealed she was pregnant (in her first oral history recording) and then in the interview she expanded on this by stating it was perfect timing for her professionally, as she would get to complete ECT2. Jessica added she would be taking maternity leave at the right time of her teaching journey, as had found ECT2 more straightforward. She also discussed how the Covid-19 pandemic and being a career-changing ECT had impacted on planning for a family:

"I think it did effect our planning...if I hadn't have changed career...it wouldn't have even been a consideration of how many years do we need to wait ? As an ECT do we need to try and plan a certain month for... my holidays and things like that. I think at my age - COVID had a massive impact, especially around our wedding, because we got engaged in 2020. So I think that coupled with like, changing career was a massive influence. And I do think if I hadn't have been a changer, we probably would have been in this position earlier".

Whilst Athena admitted part of her desire to work part-time, after completing induction, was so that she and her husband could start a family:

"...one of the things I mentioned today in this meeting, I'm turning 28 in a couple of months. And the thing is, we've been married and it won't be anytime soon, but within the next year, it's likely that me and my husband, we're going to want to start thinking about having children...if I secure myself as part-time now, and say if I do end up pregnant next year, then I can come back into a role that's part-time, which is what I want for when I have children".

It was of interest to the study that two of the participants acknowledged the impact changing careers had made to their personal lives, and followed on from three of the participants getting married either immediately before starting their ECT induction, or within the first few months. This may highlight the sense of immediacy for the next stage of their lives, regardless of being new to the teaching profession, and how changing careers for some, had delayed plans to start a family.

The next section discusses the theme of autonomy within teaching, in comparison with one participant's previous career.

6.5.11 Lack of Autonomy

A perceived lack of autonomy was mentioned, as a restraining factor, again by Tanie during ECT2. Tanie believed there was a general lack of autonomy in teaching and referred back to her old role where she *'was trusted to do her job'*. This seemed to contradict the data received from earlier oral history recordings, when Tanie remarked that her Head Teacher trusted the teachers and refrained from micromanaging them but, by the end of the year, her view had changed. Tanie expanded on this, by speaking about having to 'second guess' whether she was allowed to carry out parts of her role autonomously:

"...on some things she seems to want to give us autonomy, but then she's quite particular and specific about things with parents".

This included tasks such as emailing parents, and the 'unofficial' requirement of having to gain approval and discuss the content of the email with the Head Teacher beforehand. Whilst only Tanie mentioned this, it was an interesting insight into what some career-changers may experience, and echoed with what prior literature had revealed, to provide an important part of Tanie's individual story. As before, this will be explored later in this chapter, within the individual 'River of Life' (Denicolo & Pope, 1990) visual representation.

The final three sections, of the year two findings, focus on the overall experiences of the ECT induction, the impact of behaviour and SEND needs and how some participants felt that teaching was unsustainable.

6.5.12 Induction

Overall, findings on the impact of the two-year ECT induction reflected that participants did not think the second year of the ECF (DfE, 2021) had helped them as much as the first year. This is summarised at word level in the table (6.12):

Participant	Single word descriptor	Meaning in context of data
Athena	getting through	Just need to carry on and get through the year to be a fully-qualified teacher.
Jessica	out of the way	So no modules/conferences hanging over me.
Beatrice	hasn't helped	In year two, time off timetable hasn't given me more experience or made me more prepared, just about getting everything completed.
Nadia	ECT label	Whilst it's been nice having the ECT 'label' for another year (as people are more accommodating) – it's extra pressure and that has knocked my confidence.

Table 6.12: Single word descriptors of ECT 2 experience – **ECT induction** overall (2yrs)

Surprisingly, considering the participants were generally positive about the transition to ECT2 and had experienced improvements in their well-being, four were negative about the overall induction period being two years in duration. Beatrice admitted whilst time out of the classroom helped, it was only to deal with the day-to-day teaching tasks, such as planning, rather than giving her more experience or teaching preparation. Whilst Nadia reiterated her previous view that having the '*ECT label*' during the induction period was both a benefit and a drawback. She felt that one element of having the label, was the pressure to '*prove yourself*' which she felt was constant. Continuing, Nadia also stated that time out of the classroom had been the only benefit of the second year and the rest of the framework had not made a difference to her experience of teaching either. She finished by saying that having to complete the second ECT year had made her feel trapped and she just had to '*grit her teeth*' to get through it, in order to be fully qualified:

“If you stop here, then that means you haven't completed the ECT. I think sometimes it feels like you're trapped because if I didn't have that second year [of] ECT, I think I would have looked for an alternative. I would have had thoughts of maybe trying somewhere new. But because of that, and having to find a school that then accepts an ECT, halfway across - it's not even an option. And so I think I just have to grit my teeth and get through”.

This viewpoint was also shared by Athena who said, for her, ECT2 was just about ‘*getting through*’. Jessica agreed, saying it was just about just needing to get the ECT induction ‘*out of the way*’.

The findings offered a mixed view of the second year, suggesting that whilst the participants appreciated the five percent non-contact time they were not using it for what it was intended; raising questions over the efficacy of this allocated time. In addition, despite an easier transition between ECT1 and ECT2, the pressure of being an ECT for a second year made some of the participants feel as if it was something to get through, rather than a supportive element of the ECF (DfE, 2021).

The next section discusses the impact of behaviour and SEND needs on the second year of induction.

6.5.13 Behaviour/SEND

For the purposes of the findings, behaviour and SEND needs have been categorised together. This was the basis upon which the participants combined these two separate issues when discussing pupils. The table 6.13 summarises the single word descriptors:

Participant	Single word descriptor	Meaning in context of data
Athena	undiagnosed	Half of the class potentially have SEND needs.
Jessica	complex	Complex SEND needs in class.
Nadia	difficult	To plan for lessons and stay on top of needs/paperwork.

Table 6.13: Single word descriptors of ECT 2 experience – **Behaviour/SEND**

Whilst Jessica acknowledged that behaviour was good within her class, she did say that they had ‘complex’ SEND needs and that two of the pupils were not able to access the curriculum of a mainstream school. Athena and Nadia echoed this, with Athena noting that undiagnosed needs presented a challenge. Whilst Nadia spoke of the difficulties of adaption lessons and completing paperwork for those pupils with SEND needs:

“I’ve got two EHCP children, I’ve got one potential for EHCP. And then I’ve got eight SEND. And that has been really difficult in trying to...I’ve got a lot more forms to fill out, in terms of planning, I’m constantly having to think about adaptation”.

Only Athena cited poor behaviour as a direct issue, concluding that, in her view, the class had been affected negatively by the interruption to their schooling during the Covid-19 global pandemic.

The final section discusses how some participants felt that teaching was an unsustainable profession for them.

6.5.14 Teaching is Unsustainable

Three participants spoke about the profession being unsustainable for them and, as a result, they had contemplated leaving teaching. This is summarised in the table (6.14), at word level:

Participant	Single word descriptor	Meaning in context of data
Athena	drained	I’m losing the love [for teaching] and I don’t want to. Have spoken to deputy about moving to part-time.
Nadia	just leave	I spoke with SLT because I’m starting to recognise it’s deeply affecting me.
Tanie	doesn’t change	At the end of last year, I thought to myself I will leave after my second year if it doesn’t change. But I’m not there now - we’ll see how next year goes.

Table 6.14: Single word descriptors of ECT 2 experience – **Teaching is unsustainable**

Athena admitted she had already spoken with the Deputy Head at her school about the possibility of a part-time contract, as she felt drained working full-time. She rationalised that although she did not want to give up the job, she was losing her '*love for teaching*' and therefore '*going part-time*' might help. Similarly, Nadia had spoken with the Assistant Head and disclosed that she might not be able to '*do it anymore*' and would need to pause her ECT2 year. She continued that she did not have enough energy to keep going. Whilst this resulted in Nadia being given an afternoon to catch up, which she was grateful for, further support was not provided:

"It wasn't until this term, when I said to my year lead I don't think I can do this anymore, I think I might have to pause everything and just leave. I'm starting to recognise it's deeply affecting me...there was something this year and this term where I didn't even have that energy to keep going. So he went and spoke to my deputy, who said 'we could not tell that's how you were feeling. What can we do?'. So then I was given one afternoon to catch up with work. And that was pretty much it".

Finally, Tanie admitted she was prepared to move schools to find the right 'fit' for her and was at the stage of considering it at the end of year one, However, the issue of having to learn 'new routines' in a different school was a deterrent. In addition, unlike in many professions, she was not able to just apply for other jobs without getting time out of school for interviews. These factors made her realise she might have to be prepared to leave, without a job to go to, and for her, that made teaching stressful. Whilst not all of the participants discussed this theme, it was interesting to the study as it provided an insight into the way the participants felt during year two, in light of the existing literature and the

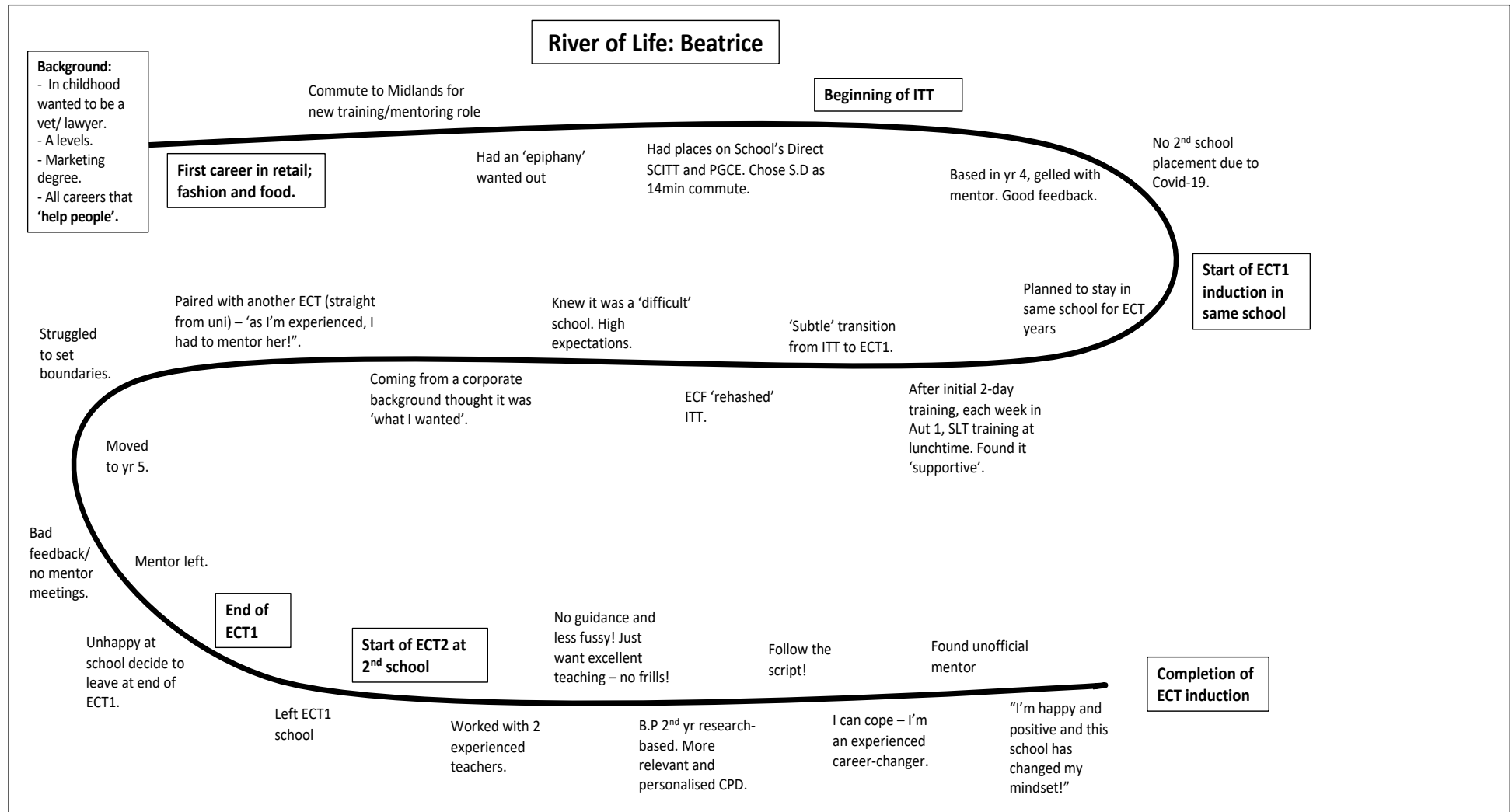
support the ECF (DfE, 2021) provides to encourage retention of ECTs in the first few years.

As discussed at the start of the chapter, the year two findings conclude with an individual visual data representation of each participants' individual journey. The next section provides this, and a summary of how they were created.

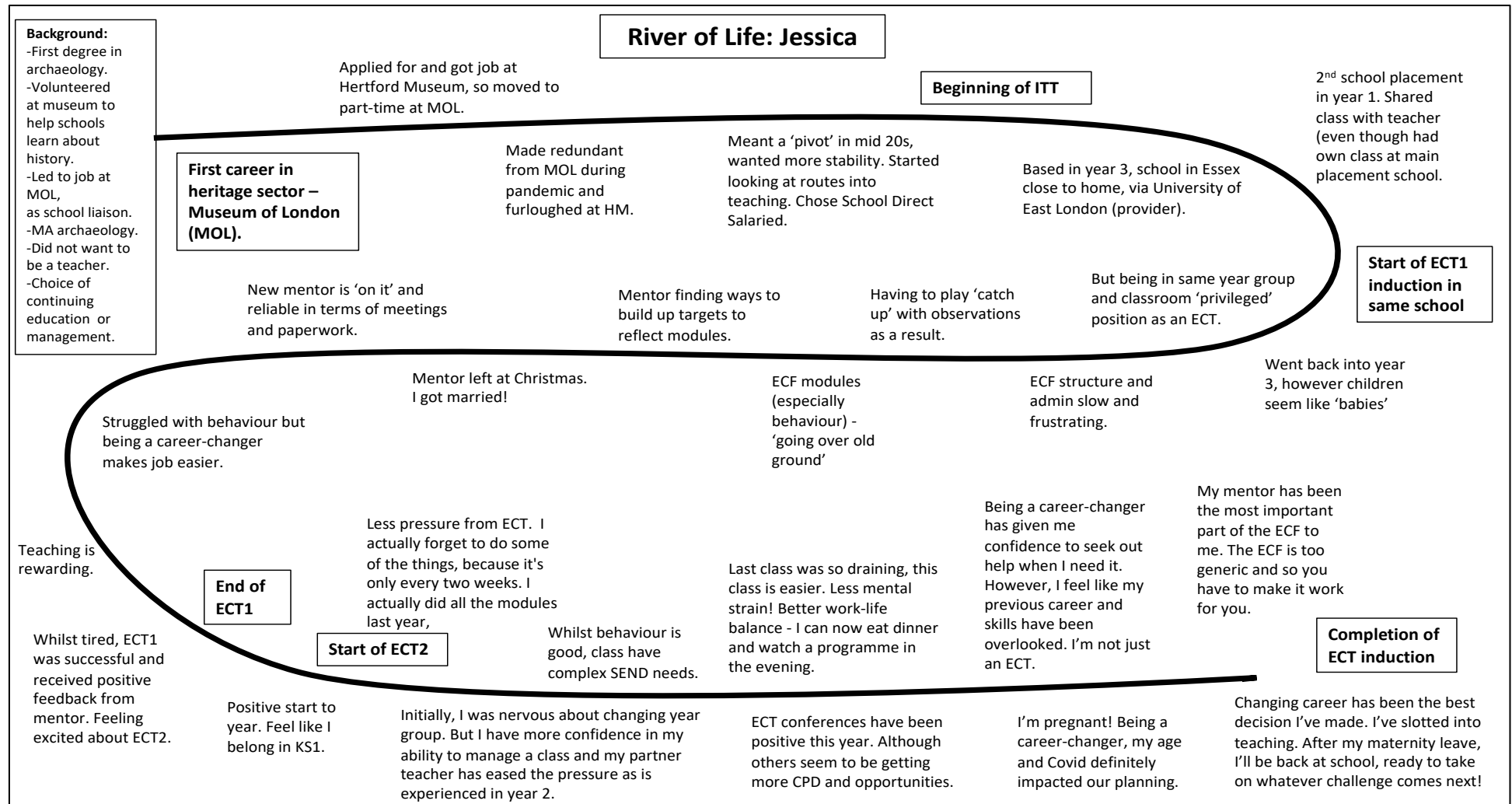
6.6 'River of Life' Data Representation

At the conclusion of the data collection period, data for both years were overlaid on the chronological timelines and then used to represent the data visually to create an individual 'River of Life' (Denicolo & Pope, 1990) for each participant. Whilst the broader themes discussed earlier in this chapter were applicable to more than one participant, this more 'individualised' visual represented the journey each participant had made; from childhood, first career, to initial teacher training and the completion of the two-year ECT induction. The critical incidents for each participant have been plotted, as per the findings already discussed, along with the stage at which they were experienced. However, they will be analysed in detail in the next chapter.

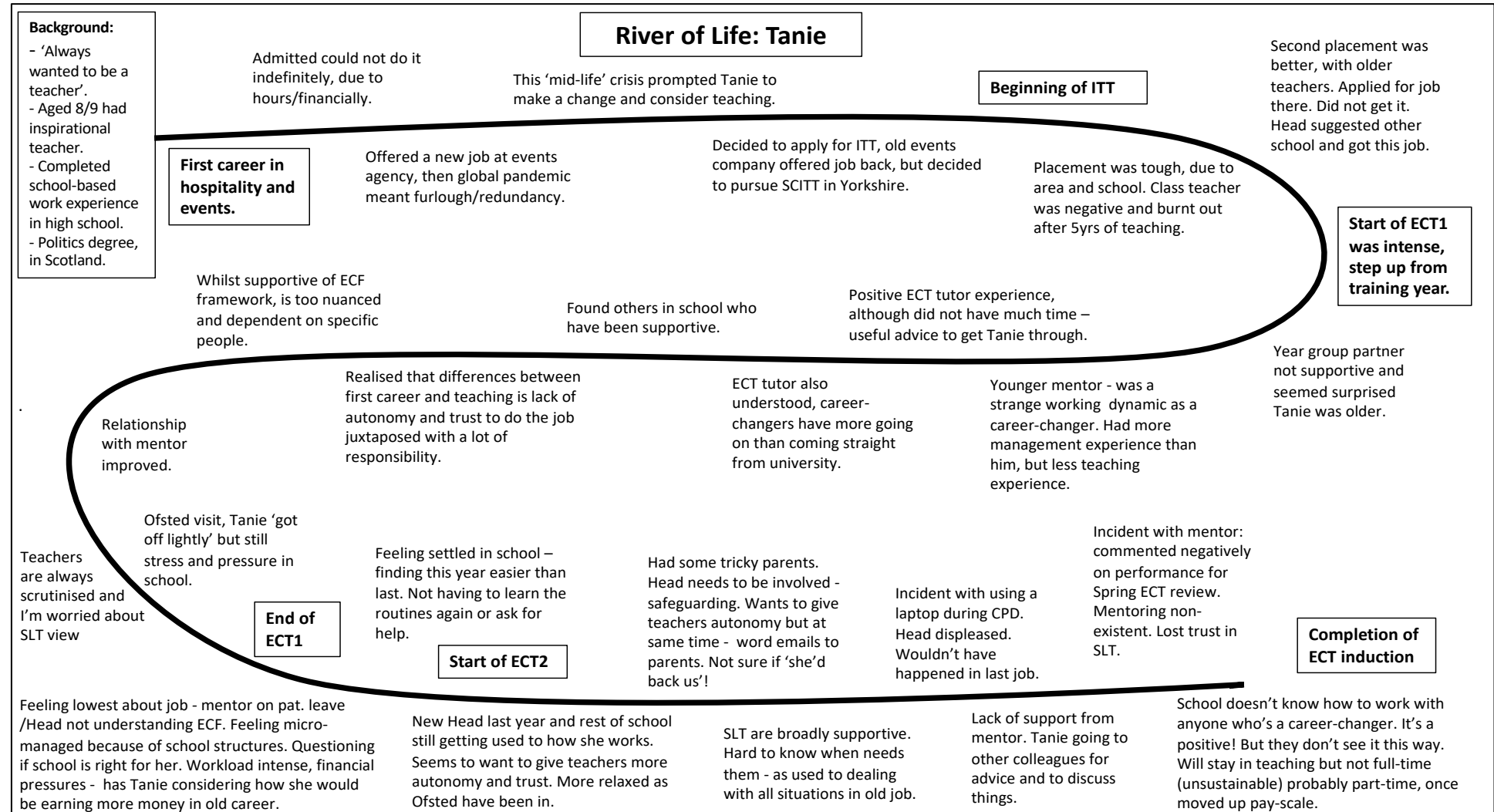
Beatrice:



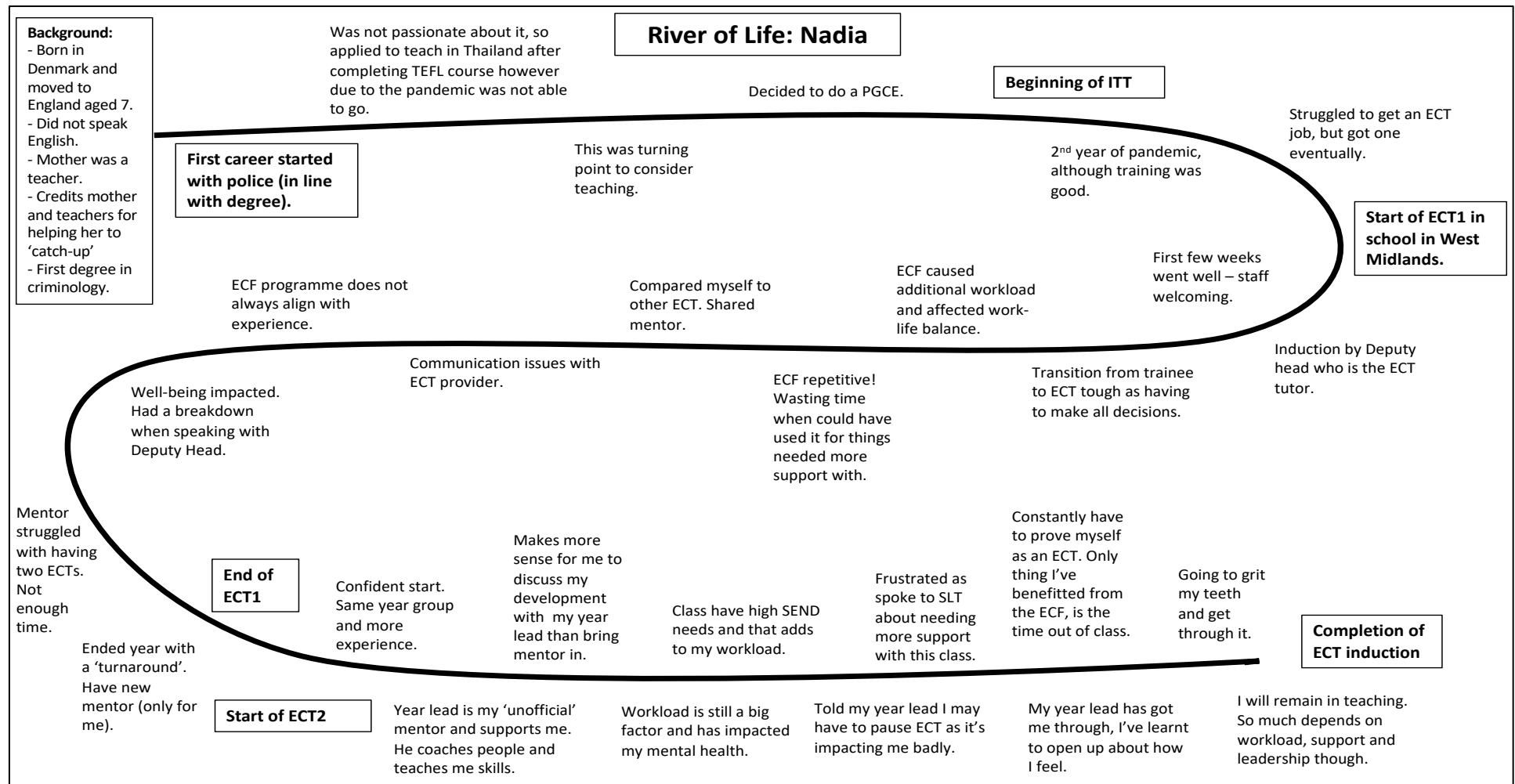
Jessica:



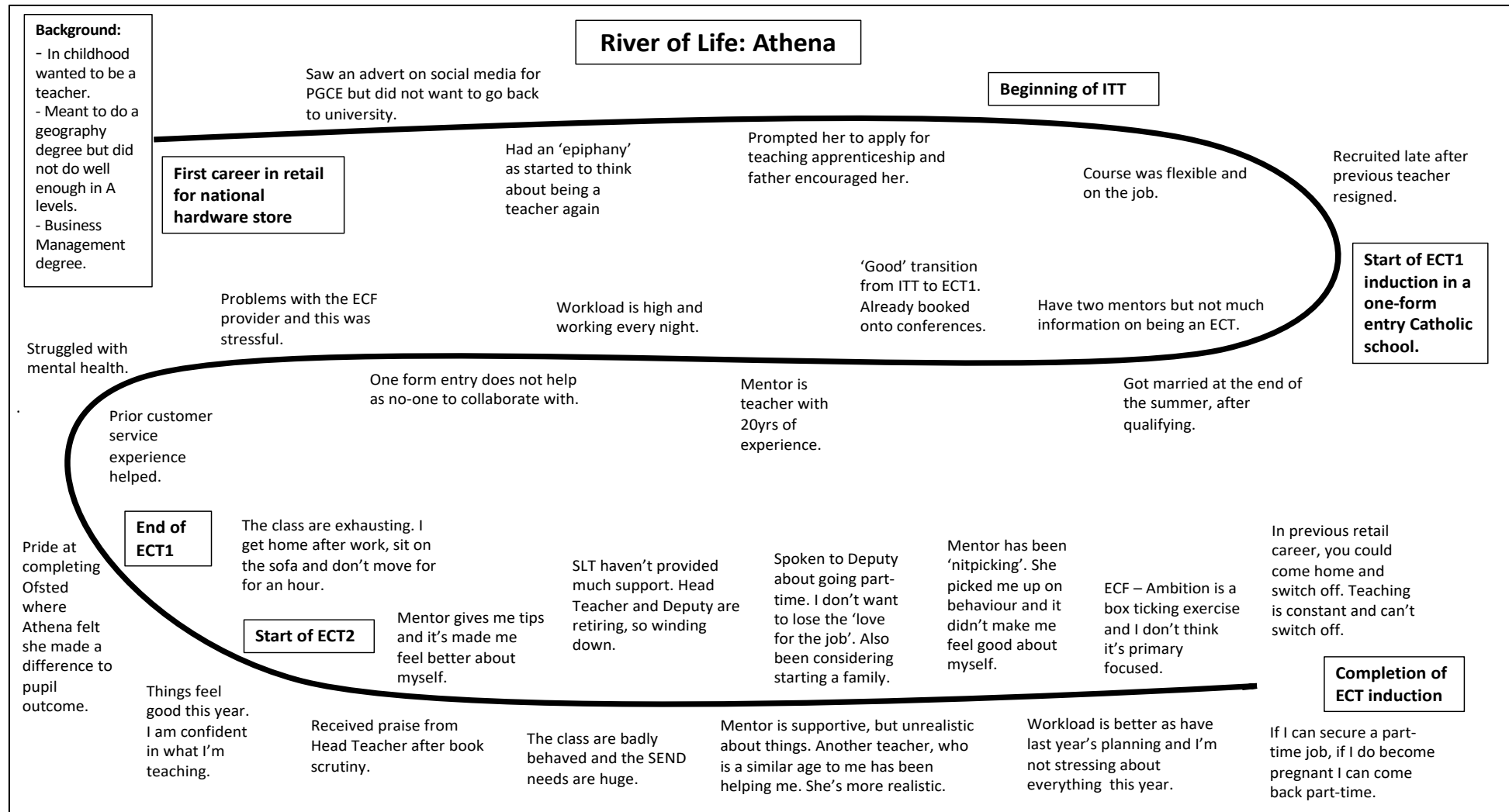
Tanie:



Nadia:



Athena:



Whilst these representations reflect the participants' journey visually, the researcher also saw the value in summarising the 'story' within these data sets (see appendix 9) to ensure that at analysis stage the story remained 'whole'. This approach is called 'Pen Portrait Analytic Technique' (Sheard & Marsh, 2019) and the primary purpose of using it, is to document a story narratively over the duration of a study. A pen portrait is an analytical technique for condensing and depicting qualitative data that can combine themes (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013) and the main aim is to write something to bring the person alive to the reader (*ibid*) by describing and providing sufficient information so that subsequent interpretations could be assessed. Sharif *et al.*, (2014, p.396) simplify this further by suggesting that 'pen portrait is like a story book which tells the story from the very beginning to its climax'. Researchers using this approach aim to present a holistic representation of the participants' account (Blundell & Oakley, 2023). One of the main benefits is that it draws from all of the methods used in a study, whilst also narrating interactions, which – in this study, includes the critical incidents, across a timeframe and describes the changes to produce a holistic account.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has reported the findings and interactions with the data, during ECT2, and presented the final visual representations of the participants' individual journey throughout the two-year study, which provide a summary of their 'stories'. It also acknowledged that despite a variation in the number of oral history recordings, participants provided greater insights during the interviews. All participants reported an easier transition from ECT1 to ECT2 and most saw an increase in their wellbeing, offset against the perceived decrease in the ECF

(DfE, 2021) CPD. The most surprising driving force was participants seeking out 'unofficial' mentors, and this was a result of a number of factors - some of which related to their perception of their mentor/mentee relationship. All but one participant found that being a career-changer impacted them both positively and negatively, but the advantages outweighed the limitations in most cases. A decrease in perceived efficacy of the ECF (DfE, 2021) was frequently mentioned, as were frustrations over a lack of autonomy and balancing roles between school and home. Whilst the data collection methods allowed for detailed reflections of the narrative, as viewed through the perceptions held by the participants (and the researcher in telling their stories), the next chapter will provide analysis of the findings, across both chapters five and six, to consider the main insights and contribution of the study to the existing literature.

Chapter 7 – Discussion and Analysis

7.1 Introduction to Discussion and Analysis

The chapter begins with a brief summary of findings from both years, and reflection on the conceptual framework, before an analysis of the study is discussed in relation to existing literature. For the purpose of clarity around chapter content, it is worth noting that the implications, limitations and recommendations for the study will be made within the next chapter.

7.2 Summary of Key Findings

This section summarises the key findings for both years of the study. In addition, it offers an overview of the themes and a synopsis of the ECT induction.

7.2.1 Summary of Year One Findings

The themes to emerge from year one of the findings were based around the role of the mentor (Curtis *et al.*, 2024), the transition from trainee to ECT, the impact of the ECF (DfE, 2021, 2022), workload (DfE, 2017; Ingersoll, 2015) and being a career-changer (Newman, 2006; Troesch & Bauer, 2017). Furthermore, themes were reported as both driving and restraining forces, using the adapted 'Early Career Teachers Force Field Analysis' conceptual framework (Lewin, 1948), and could mostly be classified under 'Completing the ECT induction' and 'Integration within the setting' (see chapter three, figure 3.1). In addition, whilst these common themes were identified as being important during ECT1, each participant also experienced their own journey which challenged them in slightly more nuanced ways, including mental health and family, which fell under 'Support at home' on the framework.

The common challenges for the participants during ECT1 were: the workload (DfE, 2017) associated with the role, the additional pressure of completing the provider CPD content (DfE, 2022; Gatsby/Teacher Tapp, 2022) and, to a lesser extent, the level of in-school support received. Returning to the adapted conceptual framework (figure 3.1), it was interesting to see that the restraining forces of mentor support and workload, outweighed the driving forces present. Being a career-changer, the transition from trainee to ECT and the impact of the ECF (DfE, 2021) were in equilibrium, suggesting that year one of induction was a challenge for all participants and they were not able to tip these key factors over into being a driving force for change. In addition, whilst all five participants successfully completed ECT1, one participant left her school after completing the first year as she did not feel valued; citing negative feedback and lack of in-school support. This highlighted that the restraining forces involved with 'Integrating within the setting' outweighed the driving forces for this participant. A summary of the main findings in year two will now be considered.

7.2.2 Summary of Year Two Findings

During year two, similar main themes arose around the role of the mentor (official and unofficial), the transition from ECT1 to ECT2, the advantages and limitations of being a career-changer (Cherrstrom, 2014; Newman, 2006) the impact of the ECF (DfE, 2021) and workload (DfE, 2017). Like in year one, these can be mainly classified as 'Completing the ECT induction' and 'Integration within the setting', within the conceptual framework (figure 3.1). In addition, two new themes were discovered, the dual role of women (Pixley & Moen, 2003) and autonomy in teaching (NFER, 2020). The former was located within the conceptual framework, but appeared as a restraining force which

suggested that these participants were finding it hard to balance their professional roles with family commitments. As before, in year one, the role of the mentor and workload (DfE, 2017; Ingersoll, 2015) were reported mainly as restraining forces, as was a lack of autonomy in teaching. However, the remainder of the main themes were in balance, meaning that participants were not fully able to effect change in dealing with the challenges of being a career-changer, integrating within the Community of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), mentor support and in completing the ECF (DfE, 2021). In contrast, the findings did reveal an increase in driving forces in regard to the transition from ECT1 to ECT2, in well-being (due to a perceived reduction in the amount of ECF CPD) and, perhaps the most surprising result, of 'unofficial mentor' support. This demonstrated that participants were able to effect change in terms of completing induction and partially integrate within the setting. The evidence suggests that this may have been significant enough for the participants to 'tip over' into completing three out of five facilitating forces required for change (figure 3.1).

These findings culminated in the 'River of Life' (Denicolo & Pope, 1990) visual representations of the two-year individual participant journeys. Whilst they built on the experiences from the first year, there was more focus across the impact of the ECF (DfE, 2021) and relationships with mentors. Most participants were glad to have completed the full ECT induction and felt empowered by a combination of the ECT teaching experience, seeking out unofficial mentor support and being able to draw from past career experiences.

After summarising the findings, the following sections analyse the results in relation to the existing literature. This will start with an overview of the transition stages of induction, and then be organised by the main themes identified, which are as follows: being a career-changer, in-school support, ECF (DfE, 2021), workload and well-being, autonomy and the dual role of women. Whilst the main findings were clustered around these overarching themes, the individual experiences of each participant will also be reflected upon, using the visual data in chapter six, as they offer important insights into their stories.

7.3 Overview of Transition Stages

The study focused on two transition stages, from trainee to ECT and between ECT1 and ECT2, which refers to 'Completes ECT induction' being a facilitating force required for change on the framework (figure 3.1). The findings provided greater insight into the first transition and that is where the overview will begin. During the transition from trainee to ECT, some participants mentioned that they struggled with particular elements of teaching, including: hours worked (NFER, 2020; UCL, 2019), classroom management, parental relations and the SEND needs of pupils. However, one participant found the tacit and unspoken rules at their school difficult to navigate, daily routines in particular, and this echoed the findings from Moran (1997) who stated that newcomers have to conform to the rules of the new environment. Mentor support (DfE, 2022) was a key driving force for some participants, as they made the transition from trainee to ECT, with two participants stating that their mentors were experienced and supportive. These results reflect those of Auletto (2021) and Collie & Perry (2019) who suggest that the role of the mentor is important for ECT well-being and job satisfaction. However, not all participants agreed, whilst others were

disappointed with how little time mentors spent with them or having to share mentor meetings with another ECT. This suggests that some schools were unable to facilitate the time required for mentors to spend with ECTs (DfE, 2022) and one solution for this was to 'double-up' the meetings with more than one ECT. All participants felt the demands of the ECF (DfE, 2021), in terms of the provider materials, and they were deemed excessive (DfE, 2024; Gatsby/Teacher Tapp, 2022). This impacted negatively on both workload and wellbeing. Some participants also registered their dissatisfaction with signing up to the provider CPD, stating that it took too long to access the resources and was an overly complicated process. In regard to the support they offered, one participant reported that a provider insisted her mentor 'stick to the script' of the materials, during the mentor meetings, and this resulted in little, to no nuance within her starting position as an ECT. Overall, it was felt that the content across the different provider materials was repetitive of the initial teacher training year and this frustrated the majority of participants (DfE, 2022). Initially, in regards to being a career-changer, most felt that little consideration had been given to their past career experience or transferable skills, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Turning now to the transition from ECT1 to ECT2, all of the participants agreed it was easier than the transition from trainee to ECT. Most of this perception stemmed from having already completed the first year and familiarity with school routines and expectations, assimilating to the Community of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). However, one participant changed schools between ECT1 and ECT2. Whilst at first, she struggled from a lack of clear guidance from the school and SLT, she soon found that this was partially due to expecting the same rigid expectations she had experienced at her previous

school. Although mentors played a vital role for the participants during year one, only two participants reported being completely satisfied with the support received from them in year two. Some of this stemmed from a change in dynamics in the relationship between the ECTs and mentors which, initially, indicated the participants' growing confidence as teachers and becoming less reliant upon mentors, which encompassed the facilitating force required for change (figure 3.1). However, the findings also suggested that the participants no longer felt that the mentor was the best source of advice for the stage of development they were at. This was an interesting turn and indicated that the perception they had of their mentors changed, which is consistent with Curtis *et al.*, (2024) who discussed the issues arising when there are differences between an ECT's and mentor's perceptions on the mentoring role. Participants reported that mentors were either unavailable, unsuitable or that they themselves required less 'mentoring' and more of a 'coaching' model to support them during ECT2. This resulted in them proactively seeking out other colleagues to discuss situations with and ask for advice.

Now an overview of the two transition stages has been provided, the main common themes will be analysed and discussed next, beginning with being a career-changer.

7.4 Being a Career-Changer

Participants found that experience gained from their previous careers gave them more confidence when dealing with certain situations at school, for example, when communicating with parents or mentors. However, there was a collective belief that the participants' schools had not considered or

acknowledged such transferable skills during their ECT induction. Despite this, the participants appeared to possess a greater sense of agency in their teaching roles, meaning they were more likely to ask colleagues for advice; particularly when seeking a 'second opinion' if they were dissatisfied with advice from their mentors. They were also more able to demonstrate tenacity when navigating challenging situations in school. This finding is consistent with Troesch & Bauer (2017) who argued that second-career teachers are likely to be more resilient than those for whom teaching is first career. On the other hand, Tanie mentioned the differences from her past career and teaching, in terms of autonomy, and that as a career-changer it was challenging to reconcile the fact that she did not feel as trusted to do her job. Tanie also referred to her mentor being younger than her, and this had resulted in a difficult dynamic as a career-changer. The combination of these factors resulted in Tanie considering whether the school was the 'right fit' for her, which refers to 'Integration with the institute setting' being classified as a restraining force to effect change (figure 3.1). This finding broadly supports the research conducted by Johnson & Birkeland (2003) that second-career teachers are more likely to change jobs or careers if the environment is not compatible with their expectations. Now the discussion moves onto being a female career-changer.

7.4.1 Being a Female Career-Changer

As previously discussed within the literature review, in chapter three, the existing research into the reasons why women may decide to change career is somewhat limited. However, it seemed to suggest that there are certain times when women are more likely to change careers. Bahr (2009) specified this is between the ages of thirty-five to fifty years old. However, the findings of this

current study challenged this notion, showing that the age range of women who had a first 'career', and retrained for a second career in teaching, can begin earlier than thirty-five years old. For this group of participants, this was from mid-to-late twenties to mid-thirties. Whilst there seem to be few definitive reasons for why people in this age group might want to change career, the time in a women's life and external factors can impact on the decision of making a career change. This current study offers useful insights into the catalyst for participants changing career and concurs with the existing research on 'transition theory' (Schlossberg, Waters & Goodman, 1981, p.2) which discusses the moment where life reaches a cross-roads can result in life altering transitions. The findings demonstrate that for these participants, the timings of decisions were just as important, and a result of their own life experience and/or circumstances outside of their control. Such as the Covid-19 global pandemic, which may have caused the participants to reevaluate their lives, at a younger age, particularly in regard to job security. This supports research by Cao & Hamori (2022), and in the current study, two participants had been furloughed or made redundant from jobs in the events and heritage sectors. Therefore, teaching may have appealed as a more 'secure' profession to enter, which the next section discusses.

7.4.2 Career-Changers who Become Teachers

Existing research (Pomson, 2003; Spencer, Gould & Lee, 2000) suggests three main reasons for wanting to change career and become a teacher: (1) altruism, (2) the desire to work with children and (3) the status of being a teacher.

However, this current study has identified that it could be a more multi-faceted decision. Whilst three of the participants had certainly considered teaching for

altruistic reasons, other factors such as working in adjacent professions (within museums or TEFL), life-stage and external circumstances (like the Covid-19 global pandemic), made teaching a more attractive proposition. Furthermore, whilst Kelly withdrew from the research in the early stages, the background information provided showed that 'life stage' was a key reason; her children attending school meant that she was able to pursue a new career in teaching (after a first successful career in retail management). This corresponds with what Spear, Gould and Lee (2000) stated about life stage being important for career-changers. Recent data (DfE, 2022) shows that trainees aged twenty-five years and over were slightly less likely to apply to teacher training (than those under twenty-five) but that female applicants had edged ahead by two percent; demonstrating an uptick in females entering the profession during the pandemic but a downturn in more mature trainees. Whilst this current study correlates with the uptick in females entering teaching during the pandemic, the findings offer contrasting evidence as four out of five of the participants were aged twenty-five years and over. Once again, the data may be an anomaly due to the impact of the pandemic.

This study examines an under studied area of research and contributes to our understanding of why female career-changers choose to become teachers and their experiences of ECT induction. Findings concur with prior research conducted by Cherrstrom (2014) who noted that 'second career' teachers were in part motivated by their work experiences and had made a choice to work with children. The participants were also successful in their previous careers, for example Beatrice who had been promoted in retail management and had been working in a training role, but had become dissatisfied with her work and the

travel involved. This corresponds with research into one of the largest studies into career-changing teachers in the last twenty years, in the UK.

Priyadharshini and Robinson Pant (2003) studied secondary trainee teachers who had been dissatisfied in previous careers, despite being considered 'high fliers' with economic stability, as they moved into the teaching profession. Whilst that research did not equate to the experiences of career-changing primary teachers, this current study broadly highlighted who might fit this profile, as it did include successful careerists, such as Beatrice, who wanted to move into a more 'moral' career that held greater meaning for her. However, not all of the participants fitted this profile – for example Jessica, who had moved from job-to-job in the heritage sector, and who wanted a more stable career. This supports another of the profiles identified by Priyadharshini and Robinson Pant (2003), career-changers who wanted a more secure career.

Within the 'River of Life' (Denicolo & Pope, 1990) visual data representations (figure 6.6) there was evidence of two participants fulfilling the 'dreams of the past'; in wanting to be teachers since childhood (Lortie, 1975). This concurs with an established theory that career-changers moving into teaching do not start this journey as adults, but instead harbour the idea from an early age (*ibid*). From the background information, the findings of this current study suggest that these participants had certainly considered becoming a teacher and had reflected on what it would mean to change careers and move into teaching. This is something Jessica discussed as being a key benefit of being older, and a career-changer, she expressed that she knew her own mind and did not enter into teaching lightly or without a great deal of consideration. This concurs with research by Cole & Knowles (1993) who suggested that even before one even

considers becoming a teacher, one has pre-conceived ideas about what this entails. The findings of this current study also tend to reflect those of Bahr (2009) who suggested that these participants had actively chosen to change career as a result of their collective experience; both at work and in wanting to give back to the next generation. Troesch and Bauer (2017) considered the training journey of career-changers, alongside those for who teaching was their first career, and suggested trainees for whom teaching was a second career, were less likely to leave teaching. However, this current study found mixed evidence of this. Whilst having a previous career had empowered them, three participants spoke of not being sure about whether they could remain in teaching. This agrees with research by Johnson & Birkeland (2003) who state that career-changers are more likely to switch careers again if working conditions do not meet their standards. Furthermore, the current study suggested that the retention of career-changers was dependent upon receiving the required support in school, in order attain the 'Complete ECT induction years' and 'Integration with institute setting' facilitating forces required for change (figure 3.1), as well as perhaps the route they trained through, which concurred with Zuzovsky and Donitsa-Schmidt (2017) who discussed other factors including the nature of teaching training, as being key. The next section considers the impact of the Covid-19 global pandemic on the likelihood of people changing careers and how this may have had a 'knock-on' effect for those interested in the teaching profession.

7.4.3 Global Pandemic and Changing Careers

This current study revealed that two of the participants decided to change careers and retrain as teachers as a side effect of the Covid-19 global

pandemic. In the background data (section 6.6), both Jessica and Tanie spoke about being furloughed or made redundant from their previous roles. For Jessica, it had resulted in her wanting a career with more stability, whilst for Tanie it caused a 'mid-life' crisis where teaching became an attractive proposition. It has been acknowledged that the pandemic caused 'life altering shifts' globally (Autin *et al.*, 2020, p.497), Cao & Hamori (2022) discussed that priorities shifted from job 'content' to those related to security, lifestyle and health. The perceived job security that teaching offered, was a deciding factor for these participants and also part of the process of re-evaluating insecure careers, which concurs with the research conducted by McKinsey (2020). It also chimed with the poll of over 4,000 UK workers, conducted by Aviva (2021) where three out of five were planning to change their career as a result of Covid-19 and, it was those aged between twenty-five and thirty-four years of age who were most likely to retrain or pursue a different career. This aligned with the age profile of all of the participants in this current study and linked to the uptick in teacher training recruitment figures (NFER, 2021). The global pandemic caused an unprecedented upturn of trainees to over thirty-five thousand; up six-thousand on the previous year (DfE, 2022). Whilst not a focus of the study, the background data provided was useful as it helped to explain some of the motivations for two of the participants in changing careers and retraining as teachers. This may suggest another reason for changing careers to become teachers, to the three already suggested by existing research (Pomson, 2003; Spencer, Gould & Lee, 2000), (4) job security, during a time of uncertainty.

The next section moves the analysis on to the in-school support received, once participants had qualified and become ECTs. This encompassed the role of the ECT mentor and the additional ways the ECTs received support in school, including from 'unofficial mentors'.

7.5 In-school Support

The findings, across both years, revealed that participants were supported by a number of colleagues in-school, in addition to their ECT mentor. This section begins with the role of the ECT mentor, before moving on to other colleagues who supported them, including unofficial mentors.

7.5.1 The Role of the ECT Mentor

Mentors have the role of ensuring that ECTs are able to successfully navigate the often-turbulent waters of transition into the profession (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Several factors are known to impact the successful induction of an ECT and a recent study by Curtis *et al.*, (2024), to understand the perspective of both ECTs and mentors, highlighted that mentoring has been credited for increasing ECT retention (Maready *et al.*, 2021). It also suggested that the role of the mentor is as important for ECT well-being and job satisfaction (Collie & Perry, 2019; Auletto, 2021). Whilst previous research has been focused on the positive benefits of mentoring, the current study highlights that when the perspectives of the mentors and ECTs differ, on what the role of the mentor is, it can result in less than positive outcomes. This concurs with an earlier study, conducted by Hobson (2002), that raised the idea that mentors did not always succeed in creating effective conditions for teaching learning. In fact, despite the importance of the mentor, many ECTs have a varying experience with them

(Aderibigbe *et al.*, 2022; Burger *et al.*, 2021) and some of this can be attributed to the mentor possibly not being aware of what the role entails (Clarke *et al.*, 2013). Lack of mentor support was a prevalent theme within the findings, impacting three out of the five ECTs, and was a restraining force for 'Completes ECT induction years' and 'Integration with institute setting' change (figure 3.1), causing two to move either school or year group. Participants used negative words to describe their mentoring experience and when discussing mentor availability, stated that they would have liked more mentor support, but their mentors were already over-stretched in school. Establishing professional relationships is fundamental to the success of trainees (Kelly *et al.*, 2019) and ECTs, but the findings from the current study suggest that not all ECTs feel accepted or welcomed into their induction school; which undermines the development of professional relationships. A supportive mentor, who can provide excellent practice and constructive feedback can help an ECT to become a reflective practitioner. Some of the participants in the study felt that their mentors were either not the 'right fit', or relationships with them were strained; meaning they were classified as restraining forces. However, not all participants felt that their mentoring experiences were negative. Jessica felt positively about her mentor's support and stated that she felt 'comfortable' within the mentee/mentor relationship and saw her mentor as a known and trusted person, who she felt comfortable going to for advice. This is broadly in line with the prior research of Auletto (2021) which linked the impact of a mentor on job satisfaction.

7.5.2 Availability of ECT Mentors

As discussed previously, in detail within the policy context chapter, the role of the mentor was re-formalised as part of both the CCF and the ECF (DfE, 2019, 2021). To recap, the in-school mentor provided the regular guidance, observations and feedback required for a trainee teacher to develop their practice and achieve QTS. Whilst the ECT mentor role was less time intense, certainly in terms of observations which is now the remit of the ECT induction tutor, it still required a weekly meeting during ECT1 and fortnightly meeting during ECT2. This was in addition to the time required for completion of the 'mentor' modules of CPD, part of the ECF (DfE, 2021). The recent publication of the report on the ECF progress so far (DfE, 2024) suggests that much of the ECF (DfE, 2021) has increased the workload on both ECTs and mentors and the importance of a suitable mentor (and time off timetable for them to perform the role) raised as one of the fundamental benefits of the induction programme. However, the findings of this current study contradict this data for the participants involved. Two were left disappointed at the amount of time their mentors could spend with them. Furthermore, the participants stated that the weekly meetings stipulated by the ECF (DfE, 2021), were not taking place. From this, it can be implied that their mentors may have also found the mandatory elements of the programme prohibitive. Both of these are restraining forces when 'Completing ECT induction years' and so may jeopardise the conditions required for change (figure 3.1). Likewise, in another recent study of mentors supporting ECTs in secondary schools, in England, Murtagh *et al.*, (2024) suggested that the dichotomy between the prescribed government programme and the more nuanced school environment, had resulted in mentors having to balance the demands of both. It reiterated that

despite the significance of the mentor (Butler *et al.*, 2010) they are 'often selected for the role based on the assumption that anyone who has taught can effectively mentor' (Murtagh *et al.*, 2024, p.2) and that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to mentoring was restrictive. In this timely study, Murtagh *et al.*, (2024) highlighted the additional layer of complexity to the mentoring role, since the introduction of the ECF (DfE, 2021). This concurs with the findings from this study, where one participant summarised that their mentor was chosen because it was simply the next stage of his career development. It was interesting that during ECT2, the majority of the participants actively chose to circumnavigate their 'official mentors' and seek support from 'unofficial mentors'. Bypassing this part of the ECF (DfE, 2021) provision may have made sense for participants at the time, but this has revealed similar flaws in the ways in which mentors and schools may be supporting ECTs. However, the next section discusses the positive impact of unofficial mentors and how the participants sought them out in the first place.

7.5.3 Unofficial Mentor Support

The most unexpected finding to emerge from year two of the study, was the importance of 'unofficial mentor' support; which helped the professional development of the participants and compensated for the restraining force impact of their official mentors support. With the exception of Jessica, who had a positive mentor relationship, the remainder of the participants discussed how they had proactively sought these 'unofficial' mentors' out, as opposed to fully utilising the mentor support set out for them by the school and ECF (DfE, 2021). When discussing the process, Athena rationalised her decision due to this particular teacher being more 'realistic' about expectations than her mentor.

Whereas Nadia discussed proximity and availability being the key factors in her choice of 'unofficial mentor'. However, Tanie offered a more multi-faceted view, explaining that she needed support from colleagues who she perceived as being more reflective than her mentor, as he had a tendency to just 'tell her what to do' if she raised an issue, rather than discuss possible solutions. Finally, Beatrice alluded to the fact that going to one person (her mentor) was not always the best idea for her and that she preferred to 'check with different people'. There was an interesting correlation across the board, in that nearly all of these colleagues had either taught the same set of children or in the year group/key phase that the ECT was in, so were familiar with the expectations. In summary, participants were actively choosing a colleague that they trusted, had access to and felt would support their professional development needs as understood the year group or pupils. Most participants were able to proactively affect this change, and therefore this facilitating force tipped them towards successfully achieving the 'Completes ECT induction years' stage on the framework (figure 3.1). Schools aware of this, may be able to select a more appropriate mentor based on this need for proximity or experience.

The role of 'unofficial mentor' could be broadly located within the Community of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It was an interesting theme, in terms of informal workplace learning, as the 'unofficial mentor' could be classified, to a certain extent, as a more experienced teacher who supported the ECT to better integrate into the school environment. The support received extended to encompass the term 'helpful others', coined by Eraut *et al.*, (2004), to describe those colleagues who provide additional support to newcomers, as was the case for these four participants, who were reliant upon the advice of these

colleagues. Furthermore, the findings highlighted the importance of these 'unofficial mentors', during ECT2, and suggested that these colleagues were as instrumental in the induction of these ECTs (Eraut *et al.*, 2004) as the mentors themselves. The next section expands to consider the impact of the school culture and rest of the community of practice.

7.5.4 The Community of Practice and School Culture

Part of the journey as an ECT, is navigating the culture of a new school. As already mentioned, this is partially reliant upon the existing staff acknowledging the newcomer and they in turn, participating in the culture that creates acceptance. The dimensions of the 'Community of Practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) explore the ideas that represent this beginning relationship. This includes mutual engagement and interaction, a shared way of working, including routines, and joint enterprise. Newcomers absorb the idea of what the Community of Practice is (Lave & Wenger, 1998). For career-changers, this may involve a 'shedding' of their past career identities, to assume one that fits more with their new community. Wenger (1991) views identity and practice acting as a mirror for each other and that people define themselves by the community in which they find themselves. Therefore, in the context of ECTs entering the teaching profession, the community is a school full of existing teachers and teaching staff. This is not without issue, as the community learning style of a school can be very different from the previous place of work and some ECTs may struggle to cross over and be accepted. Reconciliation for both newcomer (and to a certain extent the community) can be a challenge. Whilst feeling 'accepted' was a driving force for three of the participants, overall, this was mainly due to the expectations of the school seeming clearer to them in

year two. Beatrice commented that she 'had found her feet' and that her school had an environment that encouraged the process of learning how to teach. She also credited her positive mindset to feeling valued as a teacher. Whilst Nadia spoke about how understanding the expectations had reduced the pressure during ECT2, and made her feel more 'aligned' with the school. However, Tanie mentioned how understanding routines seemed to be amplified in teaching and this felt different in comparison to starting other jobs. It was interesting to note that Tanie then went on to mention 'schools' in general, as well as her school, as withholding tacit information from newcomers. The examples given were based around school routines and the expectations during staff meetings. This corresponds to research by Nias (1996), who discussed the importance of belonging largely depending on understanding the community of practice and having a frame of reference by which to identify (Newman, 2006). Moran (1997) goes further to say that any newcomer has to conform to the unwritten or 'hidden' rules, such as school routines or expectations. Considering it might take some time to learn them, if you are not explicitly told, this is not as easy as it sounds and something Tanie struggled with. The idea that newcomers also need to be sponsored by the 'old timers' was proposed by Newman (2006) and the research showed that when this did not happen, they could remain on the periphery of the school, as an outsider. This corresponded with Athena's experience, she used the word 'cliquey' to describe her perception of the teachers in her school and revealed she did not feel as if she could always join in with conversations at her school, as was not a parent, and she felt most of the conversation revolved around this topic. On balance, three participants were able to achieve the 'Integration with institute setting' facilitating force required for change (figure 3.1).

Now that analysis from in-school support has been discussed, the next section moves on to the impact of the ECF (DfE, 2021) and provider CPD, on the study.

7.6 Early Career Framework

7.6.1 Introduction of the Early Career Framework

As discussed previously, the ECF (DfE, 2021) was introduced in 2020. Key findings from the national roll-out stated that forty-five percent of the ECTs surveyed were 'still finding it difficult to manage to spend time on the provider-led ECF training programme alongside their teacher workload' (DfE, 2022, p.14). This correlated with the data in the current study, as four out of five participants raised the issue of not having enough time to complete the ECF (DfE, 2021) modules. These results were similar to Gatsby/Teacher Tapp (2022) who stated that sixty-five percent of the five-hundred mentors surveyed said that 'the ECF adds too much to the workload of the ECT' (p.3). The most recent evidence seems to suggest that this has not changed two years later (Gatsby/Teacher Tapp, 2024). Furthermore, there was a perceived lack of flexibility in the provider-led content, with twenty-seven percent of ECTs rating the tailoring of the training to their school context as poor (DfE, 2022). Similarly, Gatsby/Teacher Tapp (2022) indicated that just two percent of the five hundred mentors and four percent of the three-hundred ECTs surveyed said that the materials used have been useful to their phase of subject. It has been well-documented (Ovenden-Hope, 2022; DfE, 2023) that the ECF (DfE, 2021) was created to form an overlap between the existing CCF (DfE, 2019). This repetition was also discussed, with fifty-six percent of the Gatsby/Teacher Tapp (2022) mentors saying that it repeated too much. So, the appearance of the word 'repetitive' in the current study was not a surprise. Whilst Nadia discussed

this as a negative experience for her, as the content was repeated from the PGCE year, Beatrice used the word ‘disengagement’ to describe a feeling of the ECF (DfE, 2021) being too generalised to resonate with her setting and experience. Similarly, Tanie commented that it was too ‘nuanced’ and specific in places and did not translate into every setting. Meanwhile, Athena mentioned that the amount of work involved with it was ‘consuming’; explaining the content was heavy and laborious to complete. This corroborates recent research (DfE, 2023), it is not just ECTs that find it time-consuming, mentors also did not have enough time to complete it and felt overburdened. During the current study, participants were asked how they felt the ECF (DfE, 2021) had supported them during ECT1. Jessica acknowledged that having a ‘one size fits all’ programme meant that it could be quite general and the frustration this caused. However, she also stated that it cannot provide more specific guidance as each ECT’s setting could be different. Jessica was pragmatic about the limitations of the ECF (DfE, 2021), and explained that whilst the mentor role is incredibly important in contextualising the training, having a mentor that could help with specific class-based requirements required time and a mentor that was prepared for and welcomed the role. Reinforcing the idea that mentor support was key to her success rather than the ECF (DfE, 2021) itself. The next section expands on the provider-led content and the role it played during induction.

7.6.2 Early Career Framework and Provider-led CPD

There was a marked difference between how the participants felt about the ECF (DfE, 2021) and the provider CPD in ECT1, compared with ECT2. The general consensus was that there was less pressure during ECT2 and that the format of the provider course materials allowed for a more ‘open’ enquiry-based research

projects. Three participants referred to the change in requirements as being more suitable, in comparison to the mandatory modules in year one. Beatrice explained that when the programme changed to more enquiry-based content it seemed more personalised and, as a result, she had engaged with it more. Nadia added that there were less tasks to complete and that the format was more 'open'. Whilst Jessica admitted that because she had completed the mandatory content during year one, that she sometimes forgot about the ECF requirements completely.

However, these findings revealed a discrepancy in the time participants chose to allocate (or were allocated) to the CPD during year two. Nadia acknowledged this and explained that the provider materials seemed more necessary for her during ECT1, and in the second year she did not have as much time to focus on the 'research-based' format. Explaining that it was a combination of 'not having the mindset', as well as a lack of time; stating that the five percent non-contact time was only an hour and that was insufficient time to conduct research.

Jessica echoed that she found the first year more helpful too and stated that she felt she could have completed induction in a year. She explained that she felt it was partly due to the route she had completed her initial teacher training through, feeling it had prepared her sufficiently well. This correlated with existing research into the efficacy of the first year, where ECTs felt 'ready to move on before the end of the two-year period' (DfE, 2024, p.15). Another aspect Jessica discussed, was that the ECT (DfE, 2021) conferences had given her an opportunity to speak with others to ascertain what additional support they received from their schools. Which led her to say that she did not have as many opportunities for training, and that other schools seemed more proactive about continuous professional development opportunities. This highlighted that

schools and providers interpreted the continuous professional development in their own way, despite the ECF (DfE, 2021) guidelines. Which corresponded with the second-year findings of a similar study, on the implementation of the ECF, which ‘saw increasing complexity in schools coordinating and supporting the ECF-based induction programme’ (DfE, 2024, p.4). Overall, despite the cumulative restraining forces experienced, the perception of the reduction in CPD during ECT2 meant that most participants tipped over to successfully achieve the ‘Completes ECT induction years’ required for change (figure 3.1).

The next section discusses the impact of workload within the study, which encompasses both the day-to-day role and that required for the ECF, and how this impacted on participants’ well-being.

7.7 Workload and Well-Being

7.7.1 Workload

In the current study, workload generally referred to the overall volume of work to be completed; where the two areas of the teaching ‘role’ and ‘ECF’ (DfE, 2021) CPD overlapped. Workload divided the participants, as some felt that they had managed to find a good balance between work and life. One participant stated that she could enjoy a social life and not worry about school tasks, such as planning, by limiting the amount of time she gave to the role outside of school. However, two other participants felt ‘drained’ by the day-to-day job (DfE, 2017); leading to one stating that she was not sure that she could complete ECT2 and another that she wanted to move to a part-time teaching role once she qualified. Athena found it ‘difficult’ to get all of the work assigned to her done and it left her feeling exhausted, which is something that Nadia agreed with, in fact using

the same word to describe the struggle and how difficult it made maintaining a work-life balance. These results seemed to be consistent with the key findings of the national ECF roll-out, (DfE, 2022), which stated that forty-five percent of the ECTs surveyed were 'still finding it difficult to manage to spend time on the provider-led ECF training programme alongside their teacher workload'. This might suggest that some ECTs are better at enforcing stricter boundaries around workload. Finally, when Athena discussed the issue of 'workload' she linked it to the impact on her mental health. She explained that she was not able to lead her normal life and it had left her feeling 'burnt out' (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). Which relates generally to the next theme of well-being and how this fluctuated across the two-year study.

7.7.2 Well-Being

A perceived decrease in the ECF (DfE, 2021) requirements, during year two, had a positive impact on participants' workload in comparison with ECT1. Most participants reported an improvement in their well-being and mental health during ECT2. Beatrice commented that she had a more 'positive mindset' as a result. Athena acknowledged that her well-being had improved and Nadia echoed this, explaining that she was 'handling' the workload better. However, Athena also mentioned the stress resulting from an impending Ofsted visit. Troesch & Bauer (2017) claimed that second career teachers (SCT) had higher self-efficacy beliefs than first career teachers (FCT) and that SCT reported higher job satisfaction as a result. Whilst this would suggest that self-efficacy is relevant to job well-being, it is not clear whether this is true within the findings of the current study. Self-efficacy derived from being a career-changer, may be negated by an increase in stress or pressure, as experienced by Athena, and

this may impact on well-being. Suggesting that not all SCT experiences are positive and some career-changers may become frustrated if they have underestimated the demands of the role or do not get the support that they require.

The final two sections address themes that appeared within the existing literature and the current study, but were not experienced by all participants. Beginning with a discussion of autonomy, then moving onto the multiple roles of women.

7.8 Autonomy

Existing research (NFER, 2020) stated that the average teacher, in England, reported a lower level of autonomy over task completion and hours worked. Teachers also had the second lowest autonomy of eleven professions surveyed (Tes, 2020), including lawyers, scientists, librarians and architects. Only healthcare professionals ranked lower than teachers. Therefore, some career-changing ECTs may have been used to a higher level of autonomy in past roles, and this might prove difficult to reconcile when entering the teaching profession. The current study confirmed this, with three participants finding the lack of autonomy in teaching particularly challenging. It was mentioned as a restraining factor by Tanie, who referred back to her old role where she was 'trusted' to do her job. She also discussed having to 'second guess' whether she was allowed to carry out parts of her role autonomously, such as emailing parents, without seeking prior approval from her Head Teacher. Whereas Jessica mentioned that she was dissuaded from applying for a humanities co-ordinator role, utilising the skill-set developed in her previous career in the

heritage sector, as her SLT stated that she was still an ECT. Beatrice linked the lack of autonomy, in her own professional development, to the prescriptive CPD modules during ECT1. She stated that she felt 'tied' into the ECF (DfE, 2021) programme and that it did not develop her as a teacher or enable her mentor to utilise their experience.

In certain professions, the longer a person spends in role would usually increase the amount of autonomy they were afforded. However, for teachers, time spent in the classroom may not increase levels of autonomy. Teachers who stayed in the profession after five years, felt no difference in autonomy (NFER, 2020). Only those who have entered leadership reported higher levels, this may therefore be an ongoing challenge for the three participants to navigate. It also suggests that despite these career-changing ECTs feeling a lack of autonomy as they enter the profession, that it impacts all teachers in the early stages of their career. Teacher autonomy is also associated with higher job satisfaction and impacts retention (*ibid*), suggesting that more teachers leave the profession as a direct result.

Now that autonomy in teaching has been discussed, the final section discusses the multiple roles of women, before the chapter concludes.

7.9 The Multiple Roles of Women

Two participants discussed the impact starting a family would have on their careers. During ECT2, Jessica revealed that she was pregnant but stated that it was perfect timing for her professionally, as she would get to complete induction and would be taking maternity leave at the right stage of her teaching career.

Whilst Athena admitted that part of her desire to work part-time, after completing induction, was so that she and her husband could start a family and then, after having a baby, she could come back as a part-time teacher. She did however question how other teachers managed to balance both roles. Gender inequality at work and at home can cause a 'double whammy' for women (Orgad, 2009), who are generally the foundation parent and do the greatest share of childcare and domestic work. Even in cases where women have reasonable/flexible working hours and a supportive workplace, the considerations of their partner's job may force them to leave their own. Conflict occurs when the demands of family life are incompatible with the those of work, resulting in them leaving the workforce (Coontz, 1992; Higgins, Duxbury & Lee; 1994; Marshall & Barnett, 1994; Roehling, Moen & Batt, 2003). Whilst an individual's personal circumstances will have an impact on their career trajectory, some researchers have argued that female teachers have a significantly higher chance of 'exit' attrition compared with men (Kelly, 2004; Kirby & Grissmer, 1993; Stinebrickner, 1998). This is as a result of leaving the profession, or having a career break, to become the primary caregiver after having children. Conversely, the current study indicated that Jessica was keen to return to teaching and many other investigations have shown similar, (Boyd *et al.*, 2005; Strunk & Robinson, 2006; Dolton & Van der Klaauw, 1995), suggesting that females are more likely to continue to teach, but in a reduced capacity and so pushing up the demand for part-times roles or 'job-shares'. It also suggests a tentative link between female teachers and their capacity to balance multiple roles at work and home. In the current study, whilst they were able to overcome the restraining forces pertaining to the 'Dual role of women' required for change (figure 3.1), this is something that might pose a challenge

for Jessica and Athena in the future and may also depend on the forces experienced for 'Support at home' (figure 3.1). Finally, both spoke about how being a career-changer meant they entered the profession at a different stage of life and that it meant making decisions about having a family whilst still ECTs. This may be an important finding for policymakers when actively recruiting career-changers (School's Week, 2024) into the teaching profession.

Now that the analysis and discussion of the study has been explored, the next section concludes this chapter.

7.10 Chapter Conclusion

The final section of the discussion chapter will offer a brief recap of the key findings that directly address the research questions, in addition to providing the value of this study and what implications it has within the existing literature.

The main findings of this two-year study into the experiences of female career-changers during their ECT induction, were based around the role of the mentor, in-school support, the impact of the ECF (DfE, 2021), workload, the multiple roles of women, autonomy and being a career-changer. Each participant also experienced their own journey which challenged them in slightly more nuanced ways. Including leaving, or wanting to leave, a school that did not support them as an ECT, struggling with mentor relationships, considering leaving during ECT2 or moving to a part-time teaching role at the end of induction. The study revealed greater compliance of the ECF (DfE, 2021) and increased importance in the role of the mentor during ECT1, but by ECT2 participants were choosing not to complete the research-based CPD, nor utilising official mentor support.

Instead they enjoyed greater levels of well-being from the 'perceived' reduction in CPD, which resulted in lowered workloads, and sought the support of 'unofficial' mentors'. Whilst this suggested that a certain amount of agency was gained, in part as a result of being a career-changer, some participants struggled with the lack of autonomy in role or having their previous career skill-set devalued. However, most agreed that being a career-changer empowered them when dealing with difficult situations. Three of the five participants spoke of their doubts about remaining as full-time teachers, due to the pressures of workload, wanting to start a family or the sustainability of the role for them. Additionally, two participants mentioned the possibility of going part-time. Whilst this was a small-scale study and did not directly consider the retention of ECTs, the findings add further validation to the previous research into why teachers leave the profession (House of Commons Library, 2019) and suggested that, despite the implementation of the ECF (DfE, 2021), the same issues were still affecting ECTs and some of these participants may choose not to remain in the profession as a result.

The implications of these findings, recommendations for those involved with ECT induction and limitations of this study will be discussed next, in the final chapter.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

8.1 Introduction to the Conclusion

The previous chapter explored, through discussion and analysis, the findings of this study and located it within the existing literature. The key findings outlined the experiences of female career-changers during their ECT induction and were based around the evolving role of the mentor (including unofficial mentors), compliance and resistance within completion of the ECF (DfE, 2021), fluctuating workloads, the impact of the dual-role of women and a perceived lack of autonomy in teaching. The advantages and limitations of being a career-changer were also of paramount importance to the participants and this study.

This chapter provides a conclusion to the thesis, beginning with a summary of the study, restatement of the research questions and what each sought to identify. After which, the responses to the research questions are derived from the major findings. Then the implications of the study are discussed, in relation to implementation suggestions for school leaders, mentors, and wider policymakers, before the limitations are outlined. The chapter ends with recommendations for future study and some final reflective thoughts from the researcher (written in the first person).

8.2 Summary and Restatement of Research Questions

8.2.1 Summary of the Study

This thesis sought to explore the relatively under-researched area of 'female career-changers' who retrain as primary school teachers during their ECT induction. The study highlights a gap in the current understanding of such

women, and also reveals the impact of the ECF (DfE, 2021) during these participants' two-year induction. Earlier in this thesis (in chapters one, two and three), the background to the topic was explored, together with a review of the policy context in which early career teacher induction is set, and a review of the existing literature of which this study will contribute knowledge. In chapter four, the methodological considerations were discussed, including the importance of using data collection and analysis methods that enabled the stories of the participants to be heard and privileged. Later, in chapters five and six, the findings across both years of the study were presented and as previously mentioned, chapter seven provided the discussion and analysis, located within the existing literature.

This study has adapted Lewin's Force Field Analysis model (1948) to create a new conceptual framework, 'Early Career Teachers Force Field Analysis' (see figure 3.1), to identify the driving and restraining forces for these participants; via the critical incidents they experienced during ECT induction. These forces were then used to identify the factors that had the greatest impact on them, as both career-changers and ECTs. The methodological choice of using narrative inquiry to ascertain the experiences and capture the authentic voices of the participants, meant that self-recorded oral histories were used as a basis for the chronological logging of these critical incidents. These were then followed-up with semi-structured interviews to probe these incidents and expand the details of their experiences. Finally, the River of Life chronological plotting tool (Denicolo & Pope, 1990) was used to visually represent the participants' data and create individual journeys for analysis purposes. Over the course of the two-year study, six participants were recruited and took part in pre-study

background interviews. After which, five participants were fully involved with the research (one withdrew) and the data collection comprised of twenty-two self-recorded oral histories, ten semi-structured interviews and five visual individual data representations of their journey.

8.2.2 Restatement of the Research Questions

The overarching research question (RQ), '*What are the experiences of career-changing female primary school teachers, in England, during their Early Career Teacher induction?*' has guided the study and was concerned with finding out what the overall experiences of these participants were, as both career-changers and ECTs, during their induction to the teaching profession. The three subsidiary research questions (SRQ), sought to further understand the factors that impacted them most as female career-changers, including; the support they received from the school induction programme, ECT mentors and the ECF (DfE, 2021):

SRQ1) Do school induction programmes, and the ECT mentors, fully support career-changing females to succeed as teachers?

SRQ2) What are the most important forces that support or hinder career-changers in adapting successfully to teaching careers?

SRQ3) How does the Early Career Framework directly impact these ECTs, specifically during the transition from induction to early career?

Now that a summary of the thesis and restatement of the research questions has been made, the next section turns to the responses.

8.3 Responses to the Research Questions

Whilst this section reviews the responses to the research questions, it is important to clarify that, due to considering the multi-faceted aspect of five individual participants and their varying experiences, only the major findings will be discussed. The data highlighted that whilst the participants shared the common identity of being female career-changers who retrained as primary schools teachers, not all experiences of their induction into the profession were the same. It is important for this study to reflect on the individual journeys that these ECTs had, both in their life before teaching and reasons for changing career. In particular there was a split between the participants who had always held the idea of teaching in mind since childhood (Lortie, 1975) and those whose motivations for changing career may have been impacted by an external force, such as the Covid-19 global pandemic, dissatisfaction with their previous career or reaching a crossroads in life (Schlossberg, Waters & Goodman, 1981). However, common themes arose in the findings during induction, including the advantages and disadvantages of being a career-changer, fluctuating workloads, the importance of the mentor in the first year and a resistance to some of the ECF (DfE, 2021) components in the second year. There were also other 'niggling' issues for individual participants around the themes of the dual role of women; considerations for starting a family, and a lack of autonomy in comparison to their previous roles. By adapting Lewin (1948) to create the 'Early Career Teachers Force Field Analysis' conceptual framework (see figure 3.1) to identify the driving and restraining forces that impacted them, this study has been able to examine what was important to these female career-changing ECTs during induction. It has also highlighted what other female career-

changers might find helpful to support them to make a successful transition into the teaching profession.

RQ 1: 'What are the experiences of career-changing female primary school teachers, in England, during their Early Career Teacher induction?'

In order to effect change, and become fully inducted members of the profession, the ECTs in this study had to overcome the forces that pushed back on them.

As suggested by Lewin (1948, p.47) '...the balance between the forces which maintain the social self-regulation at a given level has to be upset'. Lewin speaks of 'positive' forces for change and 'restraining' forces for change, in order to reach the 'desired' state. As previously discussed, the school is the Community of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) that these ECTs had to assimilate to, in order to fully step into the profession. In addition, these career-changers had concerns, outside of the community of practice, as a result of moving into the profession after a first career. The ECTs had little control over some of these key factors, including the provision of support that they received in school during their two-year induction. As discussed previously, in the policy context chapter, the ECF (DfE, 2021) provision of continuous development that an ECT receives also depends on the scheme to which a school signs up to. Finally, whether these ECTs were able to fully integrate within the school setting depended on a number of factors. This included the level of in-school support received, how they were seen and valued as career-changers, with a wealth of hard and soft skills, the impact of being a female with roles outside of school and their own reasons for changing careers and wanting to become a teacher in the first place.

There were tensions, for all participants, around being a career-changer and yet being treated the same as ECTs who had entered teaching straight after university. However, the majority stated the advantages being a career-changer afforded them outweighed any limitations. Most of the participants explained their previous careers, although very different, had provided them with a professional attitude which helped when dealing with difficult situations (with colleagues or parents) and also meant they were able to cope with the stresses of the job. However, two participants felt prior experience was not acknowledged at all and, despite being qualified or having an appropriate skill-set, they were passed over for opportunities due to being 'just an ECT'. This was an interesting finding, as it suggested that some of those in SLT roles may have limited-to-no-experience of a career outside of teaching, and therefore not able to recognise the value of these transferable skills within teaching. It also adds evidence that some schools and SLT may view all ECTs as homogenous, something that the ECF (DfE, 2021) has encouraged, with its 'one-size-fits-all' CCF (DfE, 2019) starting point (Lofthouse, 2021; Faultley, 2021; Ellis, 2022). In addition, the reference to a lack of autonomy in their teaching role, in comparison to their previous career, suggests that career-changers may struggle with the amount of control and decisions that they are responsible for, despite having the responsibility of a class. Tanie in particular brought this up, throughout the two-year study, and struggled to reconcile the fact that so many decisions were made by either the Head teacher or the SLT, whilst in her previous career she had greater autonomy. This is even more compelling as, despite considerable previous career experience, the general lack of autonomy in teaching, in England, has taken many opportunities away from the teacher (NFER, 2020). In addition, in England, this starts prior to induction and, with the

implementation of the CCF (DfE, 2019) and ECF (DfE, 2021), we have one of the most tightly regulated teaching professions in the world (Ellis *et al.*, 2023) which impacts on the initial teaching training and induction of all new teachers.

SRQ1: Do school induction programmes, and the ECT mentors, fully support career-changing females to succeed as teachers?

This question considered some of the in-school factors that may have impacted the success of the participants across the two-year induction. It has been broken down into three main factors and two of these were solely reviewed at school level; how supportive mentors were and how they viewed the participants; firstly as females and secondly as career-changers. During ECT1, participants' experiences with mentors were broadly similar and they felt the advice and support provided was good and helped them to succeed as teachers. However, there were still issues with mentor availability; due to the mentor schedule, not as a reflection of their commitment. As the first report into the efficacy of the ECF (DfE, 2023) suggests, the time that mentors have to spend with ECTs is one of the biggest challenges of the programme. In addition, one participant discussed how their mentor was having to combine their meetings with another ECT, in order to facilitate them. This would suggest that despite the 'mentor' protected time that the ECF (DfE, 2021) programme was meant to create, it has, in practice, not always been possible nor realistic for schools or mentors to adhere to. Athena discussed her own experiences of this, saying that her mentor was too thinly stretched across other school commitments to provide her with the time needed. Whilst this could be an example of an individual school selecting a mentor that does not have time for the role, the government's own report (DfE, 2022) suggests that this is a more widespread problem and something mentors themselves had reported as a

concern. When mentors do not have sufficient time, then the needs of ECTs may well not be met and neither will the successes be celebrated.

The findings from the current study did not suggest that being female had a particular impact (either positively or negatively) on the success of these participants as teachers. As the teaching profession (especially primary) is predominately staffed by a female workforce, being 'female' only seems to be a disadvantage when it is in conjunction with wanting to start a family and then balancing career growth (Pixley & Moen, 2003) with the multiple roles at home and work may prove challenging. So, whilst the majority of participants had not reached this life stage yet, it does suggest that the two participants may face similar challenges when they become mothers. Taking a broader perspective, some participants felt more excluded from the Community of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), due to their stage of life or being an ECT, stating they were not able to integrate as easily with experienced teachers or those with families.

In regard to being a career-changer, the majority of the participants felt that in school little consideration had been given to their past career experience or transferable skills and this was both frustrating and surprising to them. This was not just how mentors perceived them, but more broadly at SLT level and Jessica spoke about the limitations placed on her despite her qualifications and prior experience, and being viewed as just an 'ECT'. However, Tanie, did speak about how she thought her male mentor treated her less favourably as a career-changer and that the dynamic was even more challenging as the mentor was younger, with less life or work experience but more teaching knowledge than herself. This suggests that the choice of a mentor for a career-changer can

affect the dynamic, where it has not been carefully considered. In further reflections, towards the end of the two-year study, Tanie stated that this is something she wished that schools and the government were more aware of, that career-changers have more to offer and should not be treated the same as ECTs for whom teaching is a first career, and that the choice of mentor could be an important component of this. However, findings from across the study suggests that some schools may not have the luxury of selecting mentors and in some cases it is who is available, not most suitable.

The third factor was not solely reliant upon the school induction programme, as this experience was also influenced by the external CPD providers the schools had chosen to utilise, and to what extent the school followed or adapted the support according to the ECF (DfE, 2021) recommendations. The participants registered their dissatisfaction at the onboarding process by the providers (and there was a broad mix across the provider programmes available) and once on the programme, reported little flexibility for mentors to adapt resources for their ECT's needs. Beatrice explained that, at first, the provider insisted that her mentor 'stick to the script' of the materials provided during mentor meetings. Resulting in little to no acknowledgement of the participant's starting point as an ECT, and also negated the wealth of experience that a mentor may have to offer.

Whilst the experiences of the participants were broadly similar during the first year, by the second year they varied more greatly and were dependent upon the individual ECT's circumstances. This was seen, in particular, in the relationships between the participants and their mentors. Whilst two participants

were satisfied and felt well-supported by their mentors throughout ECT2, by this stage the remaining participants had, to a certain extent, bypassed their mentor's support and were utilising other colleagues, which the findings refer to as 'unofficial' mentors. This may have been, in part, due to the unrealistic demands of the ECF on mentors' time to support ECTs (DfE, 2022), and the reduction of the weekly meetings in ECT1 to fortnightly meetings in ECT2 and so, in the interim, the participants sought out other colleagues to discuss their concerns.

SRQ2: What are the most important forces that support or hinder career-changers in adapting successfully to teaching careers?

Whilst the findings revealed that ten forces impacted on the participants in total, the five main forces to impact them as career-changers were around the following areas; mentor support, workload, the ECF, being a career-changer and the community of practice. These were classified as both driving and restraining forces. Participants had broadly similar experiences of the ECF (DfE, 2021), saying that it added further workload during ECT1 and did not take into account their own starting position or existing skill-set. An interesting contrast arose between workload and the ECF (DfE, 2021) in the second year, as a perceived reduction in the CPD meant that the participants felt workload had lessened. The support provided by mentors in the first year, whilst inconsistent for some, was more about the availability of mentors and despite the fact that ECF (DfE, 2021) is meant to help enable mentors to support ECTs, this was not always happening, and over half of the participants felt that this had dwindled to nothing by the second year. Being a career-changer was a positive force for most participants and the ability to cope with the situational demands in school was closely related to experience gained in their prior careers. Whilst previous

studies have indicated that second career teachers (Troesch & Bauer, 2017) are likely to have greater resilience, there is also evidence to suggest that they are also more likely to leave if the conditions do not meet their needs. The current study demonstrated that this was the case for one participant in particular, Tanie, who found adapting to the profession and the tacit knowledge in-school settings more of a challenge. A lack of autonomy, combined with the differences between feeling more trusted in her previous career, made it difficult to cross the divide into teaching (Crow *et al*, 1990). However, Tanie herself acknowledged that this might also be due to the individual school itself, rather than the teaching profession.

SRQ3: How does the Early Career Framework directly impact these ECTs, specifically during the transition from induction to early career?

The majority of the participants felt that the first-year content of the ECF (DfE, 2021), across all the different provider materials, was repetitive of ITT. This proved frustrating for both ECTs and mentors; as the latter could not start from where the ECT needed the most support. Most participants did see value in the ECF (DfE, 2021) support package and much of the offer was well-received, including access to a mentor in the first year and a ‘stepped’ down approach to being an ECT in the second year. However, most participants felt that after completing the mandatory modules in ECT1 that the second year was not as beneficial. This was for a number of reasons and whilst the research-based modules in ECT2 were deemed more useful and appropriate for their own starting point, not all participants felt that they had enough time to complete them. Nadia explained that the additional five-percent off timetable provision in the second year was taken up with the tasks associated with the day-to-day

role. In addition, reducing mentor meetings to fortnightly meant that most of the participants did not see the benefit, preferring to consult their 'unofficial' mentors for guidance. The CPD providers themselves had a mixed bearing on the participants across the two years. Some participants felt that there was little flexibility and too much content. This had an impact on the overall workload during ECT1. Athena in particular found the way that the provider managed the reminders of content completion made her feel stressed, as emails were sent repeatedly with the percentage completed, and her school was also advised on how she was doing. In addition, whilst the in-person sessions held more value for some participants, Jessica felt that having both primary and secondary ECTs attend these sessions made them less applicable, as they were more generic and did not take into consideration the differences between the two settings. Beatrice mentioned that her mentor was instructed by the provider to use the scripts provided for mentor meetings, rather than adapting for her needs and starting point. In addition, this highlights that the role of the mentor can become deskilled as their experience and advice cannot be utilised from a 'one-size-fits-all' programme EEF, 2020. In the end, the mentor approached the provider and was permitted to adapt the materials so that they were more suitable for use.

Finally, the findings revealed that the provider materials in the second year were perceived as optional by the ECTs and they seemed to suggest that only the first year had mandatory modules. Whilst it was not possible to find out that this was how the mentors or schools viewed the materials, the fact that it was mentioned by all participants suggests that this was a fairly commonplace assumption. This could be considered a wasted opportunity for continuous professional development, and expense attributed to the ECF (DfE, 2021)

running costs, if providers are producing materials that are not utilised. In addition, whilst the participants felt that the research-focused format required too much time, they all agreed that it would have been more suitable for their individual starting points and development and could be considered for later in ECT1.

8.4 Limitations of the Study

Although this study provided valuable insights into the experiences of female career-changers during their ECT induction, this section acknowledges the main limitations of the study, from the perspective of the sample size, data collection methods and conducting research immediately after a global pandemic, to identify what improvements could be made.

8.4.1 Sampling

The sampling of participants required a specific criteria, females who had changed careers and retrained as primary school teachers who were beginning their ECT induction, in England, during the time at which the study was taking place. Therefore the availability of participants who met this criteria was reduced by the combination of these factors. In addition, the participants self-identified as career-changers but there was a variation in the time spent in a previous career, prior to beginning ITT. Furthermore, whilst their perception was that they had been in a previous 'career', no age limit, occupation or length of career criteria was stipulated, therefore a different study which specified these factors could generate different results. In addition, whilst the participants were female primary ECTs completing induction, within the parameters of the ECF (DfE, 2021), the generalisability to other female ECTs, who enter primary teaching as a first career, will not be as relevant. However, other studies have

already considered the differences between those who enter teaching as a first career, in comparison to those for who it is a second career (Newman, 2006; Troesch & Bauer, 2017). To add a more current layer of understanding, it would be valuable to compare the two again, in light of the ECF (DfE, 2021) reforms. Widening the sample set, by gender, in further research could provide more nuanced data, building upon the work of Newman (2006). In summary, this research has provided a rich and detailed overview of female career-changers who retrain as primary teachers during their ECT induction and is well-placed to add to the existing wider research areas of career-changers who move into teaching, but also contribute new knowledge to the more nuanced area of females career-changers entering primary schools.

8.4.2 Data Collection Methods

As there was a reduction in the number of oral history recordings provided during the second year of the study, the results were more reliant upon the interviews. Due to the fact that these were 'one-off' events in the second year, the participants may have wanted to present themselves in a 'favourable light' (Sikes, 2000, p.264) and only reveal what they wanted to discuss. However, as Convery (1999) argues, when listening to the stories of teachers, the narrative does have a performative function and their preferred identity could be considered more important than 'recovering a single truthful version of events' (p.141). In addition, as this study was conducted over the period of two years, the misrepresentation through interviews may have been minimised to a certain extent, as the data collected via other oral history recordings and first year interview, provide a 'a better understanding of the individual, if not the 'truth' of that person' (Thomson & Holland, 2003, p.238). Following these ECTs in real-

time during the induction may have also contributed to a more complete and holistic picture.

8.4.3 Covid-19 Global Pandemic

Conducting research into career-changers in the aftermath of a global pandemic was both insightful, of how career decisions can be impacted at a time of uncertainty, but also revealed a change in the data for teacher training recruitment (spoken about in more depth in chapter three). Therefore, data has undoubtedly been impacted by these factors. As such, its reliability may be indicative of a snapshot in time, rather than the normative during more settled times. However, the data records the motivations for entering the teaching during an unsettling time - as it was perceived as a secure profession, (Priyadharshini & Robinson Pant, 2003), and this was important for at least two of the participants. Therefore this is a key record and reflection of the time period in which the study was conducted.

8.5 Contribution to Knowledge

This study has used a methodology that puts female career-changer voices at the forefront, and this is important as this subset of ECTs have been overlooked to date. It offers crucial insights into their experiences of ECT induction and specifically, the forces that impact them as female career-changers, as they navigate induction and join the teaching profession. It is important that those who are responsible for designing and implementing educational policy, at national and local level, consider the factors that impact female career-changers moving into teaching; in order to better accommodate their past career experiences and offer a more suitable level of support. This study has shown

that career-changers' motivations, identities and perceptions of teaching have been heavily influenced by their previous careers and that is not always straightforward for them to adapt to a new profession, but that their experiences during induction may impact upon their decision to remain in the profession and in what capacity. It has shown that, despite their individual journeys, that there is some common ground in supporting career-changers during induction. As a result, school leaders and policy makers need to acknowledge these differences and offer more considered, nuanced support to ensure that female career-changers are able to succeed in the teaching profession.

Whilst not solely related to career-changers, the study has also shone a light on some broader aspects of ECT induction. Including repetition and inflexibility in the ECF (DfE, 2021) provider CPD, a deeper understanding of some of the current issues within the mentoring of ECTs and highlighted a lack of autonomy in teaching.

8.6 Implications for Future Implementation

The intention of this section is to map the study results to see how they fit with existing knowledge, then ascertain what new insights they contribute. After which, practical implications are considered for each of the key findings, in regards to future implementation.

8.6.1 Career-Changers

The results build on existing evidence of career-changers deciding to enter the profession in accordance with the transition theory (Schlossberg, Waters & Goodman, 1981) whereby life reaches a cross-roads and can result in life

altering transitions. This was seen in Kelly's journey whose children starting school was the catalyst for her pursuing a new career in teaching. However, the findings also demonstrate that timings were important and not always as a result of participants' own decisions. Instead events outside of their control, such as the Covid-19 global pandemic created a need for greater job security and this impacted their decision making. In addition, whilst existing research (Pomson, 2003; Spencer, Gould & Lee, 2000) suggests that career-changers may become teachers for altruistic reasons, this study showed that it is more multi-faceted and can also include stability and financial security.

Whilst a similar study (Newman, 2006) stated that career-changers found integrating within the Community of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) a challenge, the current study balances this against the perceived agency gained from prior career experience. These results should be taken into account by schools when they are recruiting career-changing ECTs as the transferable skills can ease the transition from trainee to ECT, as well as enable these teachers to deal more competently with difficult situations, particularly with parents and colleagues.

Recommendation 1: Schools and induction staff to consider the prior experiences of career-changing ECTs, to map existing soft and hard skills to utilise past experiences/current skillsets; particularly if linked to teaching practice or related opportunities. ECTs to disclose these within the career-entry development plan produced at the end of ITT, and discuss key strengths with the mentor in advance.

8.6.2 Early Career Framework

Whilst the results generally fit with what has been reported by the Department for Education (DfE, 2022), in their interim year one findings, this does not include the efficacy of the second year CPD. This is due to the perceived 'optional' completion of the research-led project and this provides a new insight into whether the provider-led modules are even necessary in the second year. It would certainly seem that, from the data, neither schools nor providers are enforcing this. Aside from the enormous cost to the Department for Education for these provider-led materials, one assumes that providers are still incurring costs associated with this part of the programme that does not seem to be having the desired impact. In fact, the participants in this study have stated that they have not felt any additional benefit to having a second year of induction, beyond the access to a mentor, and that instead of supporting them, it has actually made them feel 'trapped' and resulted in the attitude of 'just getting through the second year'.

Recommendation 2: The Department for Education should redesign the way the ECF (DfE, 2021) CPD resources are utilised; in light of an ECT's individual needs. This would allow for greater personalisation from the starting point, whilst maintaining the structure of the provider-led approved materials to avoid the current inefficient 'one-size-fits-all' approach. This could be assessed against an ECTs career entry development plan, then a more bespoke path created based on strengths and areas for development. The provider CPD already exists and can be repurposed to accommodate greater flexibility. Additionally, there are opportunities for greater autonomy for ECTs who have previously demonstrated competence in mapped areas for development. Some

of these areas may have been achieved through past career experience and could be reflected in career-changers' individualised CPD.

Recommendation 3: The Department for Education should reconsider how the second year of ECT induction is structured. This would include revising the existing programme of 'research-led' content (and provider resources) for both mentors and ECTs, based on need. Opportunities for more knowledgeable and experienced ECTs to be signed off within the first year, mapped against their career entry development plan, but given an optional 'self-led' developmental log to complete in the second year, from observing and speaking with colleagues (similar to how this is recorded during ITT). This would not be monitored or officially documented, but would provide those ECTs who would like to continue their CPD opportunities to learn from and draw from the support of 'unofficial' mentors who are more experienced practitioners.

8.6.3 Mentor Support

These results build on the existing evidence that the role of the mentor is essential to the support and positive outcomes of ECTs in the first year (Maready *et al.*, 2021). However, the data contributes a clearer understanding of what these career-changing ECTs required in terms of support in the second year. The results demonstrated that not all participants fully utilised their mentor during ECT2, due to either a lack of availability (DfE, 2022) or the perception of unsuitability. Instead, most of the participants revealed that they were actively seeking out other colleagues to discuss concerns with. These 'unofficial' mentors were akin to 'coaches' not mentors and this coincides with the first iteration of the ECF (DfE, 2019) which used language around coaching

as well as mentoring (Ovenden-Hope *et al.*, 2020). In addition, whilst prior research has stated that mentors have an important part to play in retaining ECTs, (DfE, 2022) the data in this study suggests that the choice of mentor is the key factor and that not all mentors are suitable for the role. Some mentors may feel ‘forced’ into taking the role and not enjoy mentoring.

This study has provided a new insight into the relationship between career-changing ECTs and their ‘unofficial’ mentors, despite the re-formalisation of the mentor role after the creation of the ECF (DfE, 2021). The data shows that these participants have enjoyed a greater sense of agency and self-sufficiency, outside of the mentor, by actively seeking out colleagues that can offer help, support and guidance. One participant said that in her experience, these colleagues have a more realistic approach to teaching, whilst another appreciated the discussion with this colleague, instead of a mentor just telling her what the solution could be. These results build on Lave and Wenger’s (1991) Community of Practice theory that novice teachers require assistance from existing members of the school community in order to feel as if they have integrated. In summary, these ‘unofficial’ mentors had more of an impact in supporting the ECTs, during year two of induction, than either the mentor or SLT.

Recommendation 4: Schools should select mentors taking into account the existing development needs and experience of the ECT concerned, particularly if they are a career-changer, and the expertise of the mentor; rather than by who is available or needs a ‘mentoring’ role for their own professional development.

Recommendation 5: Mentors have the choice of whether to mentor or not, and are compensated financially for the time (which will be a small amount of the payment the government makes to schools for allocated mentor time) they spend on the additional remit of the role.

8.6.4 Workload

These results build on existing evidence that workload is a key restraining factor in job satisfaction of ECTs (House of Commons, 2019). In fact, the workload caused by a combination of the day-to-day role, together with the additional high level of provider-led CPD meant that several participants, in the current study, struggled during ECT1. This challenges the argument made by the Department for Education that the objective of the ECF is to support and retain ECTs (DfE, 2019).

Recommendation 6: The Department for Education, together with CPD providers, to offer a more tailored programme to schools in year one of induction. Schools are allowed to match the needs of the ECTs with the most appropriate selection of mandatory modules, to ensure that ECTs only complete the modules that are necessary for their professional development. Thus reducing unnecessary workload.

8.6.5 The Multiple Roles of Women

The results in this study suggested that teaching is not always a career that is conducive to females who would like to start a family. The need to balance the demands of the role with family responsibilities has meant that one participant recognises that she would need to move to a part-time teaching role in order to

even consider it. This correlates with what existing literature argued (Coontz, 1992; Higgins, Duxbury & Lee; 1994; Marshall & Barnett, 1994; Roehling, Moen & Batt, 2003), that conflict occurs when the demands of family life are incompatible with those of work, resulting in women leaving the workforce.

Recommendation 7: The Department for Education, in liaison with individual schools, to promote 'job sharing' and part-time roles to schools; by implementing further SLT CPD on the benefits of retaining staff with families to encourage greater flexibility in the workforce. This could be accompanied by a small financial uplift to schools who meet targets on these demographics.

8.6.6 Autonomy

Whilst prior research (NFER, 2024) has focused on the fact that teachers have less autonomy now, it does not take into account the additional reduction of autonomy faced by career-changers entering teaching from a first profession. The data from this current study contributes a clearer understanding of how rigid the school culture can be, when compared with other professions. One participant struggled with being micro-managed when communicating with parents and also raised the idea that she was not trusted to do her job as a teacher; despite managing her own time and projects in her previous event management career. A specific example of this was not being allowed to take her 'off timetable' time at home.

Recommendation 8: Whilst much of the accountability for ECTs in school is interlinked with the ECF (DfE, 2021), schools could consider allowing ECTs to have greater ownership over the day-to-day classroom management, where it is

clear that the ECT is particularly able to take such ownership. They could also offer ECTs the option of taking their 'off timetable' time at home, to imbue a greater level of autonomy and trust.

8.7 Recommendations for Future Research

Some consideration has already been given (within the limitations section) to how this study fits alongside existing research findings. It is also important to acknowledge areas in which a wider research base could further support findings. Recommendations for future research could include the following: (1) A more up-to-date comparison of those entering teaching as a first career, against those for whom it is a second career, might offer a broader view of the ECT induction and how the ECF (DfE, 2021) is supporting different types of ECTs. (2) As the study did not fully explore female career-changers who enter the profession as parents/carers, this may be an area in which the results can be developed and built upon. Therefore, further research would be needed to establish and consider both of these aspects, to understand how different ECTs are impacted and their career trajectory within the profession. With this knowledge, school leaders and policymakers would be able to offer more bespoke support for career-changers with family commitments.

8.8 Researcher's Final Reflections

As this thesis concludes, I reflect on my role as a 'researcher' of female career-changers and how it once again converges with my own lived experience. Whilst over a decade, and numerous policies, spans the distance between my own experiences of being a female career-changer entering the teaching profession and those of the participants, in some ways the experiences are similar. Previous initiatives to attract and encourage career-changers into

teaching have, in my mind, focused on the initial teaching training stage of the journey, with little to no allowances made for what career-changers may need in way of support or what to expect from a second career in school. Whilst this is disappointing in many ways, including career-changers being seen as 'plugs' to fill the labour shortage, I am hopeful that this study goes some way towards highlighting the experiences and needs of female career-changers and also illuminates the ways in which they can be supported as ECTs during induction. This may involve more careful selection of mentors and an acknowledgement of their prior career experience, rather than treating them the same as ECTs who complete ITT straight after university. I am filled with hope that being a career-changer has meant these participants have found it easier to navigate the terrain of life in school, by using their previous experience, and that this greater sense of empowerment will imbue them with the self-belief that they do have a place in teaching and that this will result in a long and satisfying career. Finally, it is my unwavering belief that the schools and pupils, which they serve, will benefit greatly from having teachers with such rich and varied prior career expertise.

Having now completed a Professional Doctorate in Education, the benefits to be gained within a Higher Education setting are wide and varied. However, within ITE, I now have a better understanding of how to support career-changing ECTs, the nuanced ways in which they experience induction and how prior career experience can change the ways in which they enter the profession. The eight recommendations from the findings will drive the ways in which I work with all stakeholders, in my latest role as Deputy Head of School (Education) at Anglia Ruskin University, to lead change at both local and national level. In my role as a Senior Lecturer, who will both undertake and supervise further

research projects, around the areas in which this study has explored, the insights gained will no doubt have an impact on future research that I would like to conduct and the ways in which I continue to support both undergraduate and postgraduate students with their own research.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Indicative interview questions

Question	Rationale/RQ answered
<p>1. I am particularly interested in how you found the transition from trainee teacher to early career teacher. How has the first/second year been for you?</p>	<p>Establish rapport.</p> <p>Help participant relax by asking an open question about their first/second year as an ECT. A question that they can answer how they choose, without too much input from me (following on from what they have said in the oral histories).</p> <p>When participants are interviewed in the second year, they may make a comparison of how they have found year 1/2.</p> <p>Overarching RQ</p>
<p>2. In your oral histories recording, you spoke about (induction/having responsibility for your own class/your mentor/the ECT training) – as appropriate to each individual participant. Could you please tell me more about why you have identified this as a key incident in your year?</p> <p>3. How do you think that the ECT training or your school/mentor has prepared you for this?</p>	<p>Ensure I reflect back to the most important incidents they have raised in their oral histories and clarify the meaning of the incidents to them and how that has impacted on their year as an ECT and how their school/mentor/ECF has supported them to deal with it.</p> <p>RQ 1 & 3</p>
<p>4) How do you think that the ECT training or your school/mentor has prepared you for this?</p>	<p>Ensure I reflect back to the most important incidents they have raised in their oral histories and clarify the meaning of the incidents to them and how that has impacted on their year as an ECT and how their school/mentor/ECF has supported them to deal with it.</p> <p>RQ 1 & 3</p>

5) Can you recall or describe a particular time or times when you have struggled to cope during your first/second year?	Begin to explore RQ2
6) How have these situations made you feel about the teaching profession?	Begin to explore RQ2
7) Can you describe how the ECT training you have received has prepared you for these situations? (time off timetable in both years/having a mentor for both years/having an induction/ECT training over two years).	RQ 3
8) Do you think being a career-changer has made your ECT experience more or less intense? Why do you think this might be the case?	Overarching RQ/RQ1/RQ 2
9) Do you think being a female has made your ECT more or less intense? Why do you think this might be the case?	Overarching RQ
10) Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experience?	Overarching RQ

Research Questions:

Overarching RQ: *'What are the experiences of career-changing female primary school teachers, in England, during their Early Career Teacher induction?'*

There will also be three subsidiary questions in order to further unpack the phases of their early career and how they feel at each juncture:

- 1) Do school induction programmes, and the ECT trainers, fully support females to succeed as teachers?**
- 2) What are the most important factors that support or hinder career changers in adapting successfully to teaching careers?**
- 3) How does the Early Career Framework directly impact these ECTs, specifically during the transition from induction to early career?**

N.B. Appendices 2-7 are exemplars of the data collected. As discussed within the main body of the thesis, all oral histories are partial transcripts and interviews are transcribed in full. Full appendices are available.

Appendix 2 - Oral histories (partial transcripts)

Below is an exemplar of the oral histories partial transcripts for the first year:

TANIE

Name of participant: Tanie

ECT year: 1st Yr ECT

Date oral history recorded (term/year): Aut 1/2022

Number of recordings: 1

First recording (length 11:14 mins):

Time	Comment summary/quote/transcribed sentences
0:25	"Found first half-term really intense and real difference from training year."
0:32	Hear mixed things about which year is worse. "Found this really different – step up from being in charge of everything, without having class teacher support."
0:57	"Feels like support in my school hasn't really been thought through" – other year 5 teacher is very vocal and clearly not happy being in year 5, doesn't want to be teaching anymore.
1:31	"Not the most supportive person" – I've been honest (and careful) about what I've said about this in school, to others. If I were a younger ECT, straight from university – I'd find it really challenging. "I have got that work experience, worked with difficult people before and learnt ways not to take things personally – with a pinch of salt."
2:15	"Found that's what got me through, would've been very difficult."
2:29	"Strange choice from the school to put an ECT with someone like that."
2:32	"Don't know if this is the case in other school" – everything is go and ask her.
2:45	"Expectation is, she is the one who guides me through things – it just doesn't feel it. Is the best fit."
3:00	Found a way of making it work. Start of year she was very unimpressed that she'd been put in this position.
3:17	"Strange reaction to finding out I'm older" – seven years older, think that's made her realise she shouldn't assume the worse.
3:34	"We've found a way to work."
3:37	Quite challenging – negative attitude. Don't know if her answer is correct, as so negative.
4:10	Mentor, team leader yr 5/6 – new to it, trying best. Haven't had trainee teachers in school.
4:47	"Hasn't learnt monitoring things" – doesn't understand where I am, that I've already had that year [training year]. Sometimes he's talking to me as if I've not taught before – like the support I received last year. Then other times, forgetting I'm new to school.
5:21	He has been there since he qualified, doesn't understand schools do things differently.
5:44	"Not most supportive set of circumstances."

5:53 Doing best, not most approachable.
 6:07 He's younger than me, difficult dynamic "as I'm coming in as a career-changer, with lots of experience on one hand, but no experience of school and teaching."
 6:30 Other, older really experienced year 6 ECT tutor – one step to the side/above mentor role. Part-time, really busy but observes once a half-term. "She's said right things, supportive and helpful when others don't know how to be."
 7:28 "Made me feel better when I was struggling mid-way through first half-term."
 7:35 "Just getting by day-today, so much to do...intense."
 7:53 Good, high standards, reassuring "do that until you find your feet".
 8:21 "Seemed to understand a lot more going on, being older and a career-changer, inevitably more life stuff going on than some teachers straight out of uni."
 8:54 Have move, stress and she was really helpful. Most helpful conversation I had.
 9:27 Also found – new Head. Really busy, getting to grips, shorter conversations.
 9:50 People who are supposed to be supportive day-to-day haven't been. Managed to find a few people in school who have been supportive. Not always around.
 10:27 "Benefits of having life/work experience – I'm able to get through that a bit better" – with that experience wouldn't have known what to do/how to deal with it."
 10:43 Feels like getting into swing of things. Good place now.

-END-

Name of participant: Tanie

ECT year: 1st Yr ECT

Date oral history recorded (term/year): Aut 2/2022

Number of recordings: 1

First recording (length 6:02 mins):

Time Comment summary/quote/transcribed sentences

0:08 Two things that I want to talk about that have come up in conversation and are relevant to your research.
 0:23 First thing, both as a career-changer and in general. Teachers aren't left to manage their own time and development. "Almost as if we are not trusted" – but are with the children's development.
 1:05 Directed time – kept on track, just in general - "everyone knows teachers don't just work directed hours, they do loads of extra, necessary things".
 1:40 "I've come from a role where I managed myself" – nobody [was] telling me, "I was trusted I would do my job".
 2:06 Could work from home, but as a teacher "they need to account for all of your time".
 2:30 Relatedly – at my school, ECTs can't do PPA at home.
 2:48 School have reasons – supportive, but we should be trusted – ECT working at home, for headspace, get away from madness of school. I would prefer PPA in school, but now and again – if I could do that from home – better way.
 3:44 "Feels like you're not being trusted as an adult."
 4:01 Second thing – in training year and ECF, doesn't give enough time or weight to assessment.
 4:21 Being asked to make assessment – never experienced, never taught year 5, never taught independently.

- 4:51 Being asked to make an informed judgement – but haven't done it before.
- 5:14 Training can't cover this in each independent [individual?] school but "really should be something on how to assess things" – definitely a gap!
- 5:50 "Something I found daunting – nothing to base judgement on."

-END-

Appendix 3 - Interview transcripts from Year 1 (transcribed in full)

Below is an exemplar of the interview transcript, in full, for the first year:

ATHENA:

PD 0:02

Perfect. So I'm going to ask a couple of questions that you brought up in your oral histories, and obviously give you an opportunity to expand on things. And obviously, your oral histories came throughout autumn one and Autumn two. So things may well have changed in spring one, and so you can update me. But to get started, actually, if you go right back to the beginning, one of the things that you mentioned at the very start on your first oral history was how positive it was that you could go in before the summer holidays to get things organised, such as your laptop, DBS, ID, and how meeting the deputy in the head, they were really welcoming. So I just wondered if you could tell me a little bit more about that.

Athena 0:56

Yeah, so when, obviously, I'd been good, they'd offered me the job, they'd already sent me emails the same day to obviously, because it was quite a late job opening. So they'd had all of that ready prepared. But when I'd got there just before it was a few days before the it was the teacher days before we officially started, they'd given me everything I needed. They give me checklists, with all the training all the safeguarding everything that they required. My laptop was there available. They went through everything with me, it was mostly the deputy head that did that. But yeah, it was it was really organised. And they'd already booked me on ECT conferences, they'd already set me up on that, they'd set me up because it's a Catholic school as well, I had to do Catholic ECT training as well. So they pretty much got me all sort of have that. So it was a really good transition straight into it.

PD 1:52

That's so great. And then the other thing you said, which I picked up on, as being really positive was your ECT coach. And obviously, they've completed their ECT A few years before, and so they kind of understood the process. So that, and the staff being very welcoming. So I just wondered if you could just explain a little bit more about both of those things for me, please.

Athena 2:16

Yeah, so I've got my official mentor who's she's the one that's doing all the online sort of ECT things with me. She's an experienced teacher, she's been 20 years teaching. She's so supportive, she really does like anything on it, because she's here for next door to me. So if I need any help, she'll be there to guide me. So I've got coach who's the year six teacher. She's very support, because she's literacy lead. But she gives me tips on how to not necessarily cut corners, but don't spend the excess amount of time that ectcs probably spend on things that won't really make that much of a difference.

PD 3:07

Professional tips that hopefully make it easier because as a novice, it's really hard to know the stuff that to cut out and the shortcuts.

Athena 3:20

Yeah, exactly that, and I think because she's a few years, she's been teaching now seven years. It's nice to know, because a lot of the teachers there are experienced, it's nice to know someone who's who's been through it recently. Because sometimes if I say, my mentors, great, but 20 years of teaching, things have changed since that, and it's nice to have a fresh face to it, I guess.

PD 3:45

Definitely. And then you mentioned that staff were really welcoming. I mean, how important was that for you?

Athena 3:52

It was extremely important, because the thing was, is that I was so nervous. And it's so because it was literally I was dropped into it. There you go. There's your class. And all of them are because it's a one form entry school, they're all pretty much subject leads. So I know that I could go to any of them. Any time if I needed help with my planning or my lessons or anything like that? They are they're very welcoming. They always say come knock on the door, or come ask me if you if you've got anything so and they've been really friendly. And I must admit, because I've been so busy. Sometimes I don't have time to see them, like every day. Yeah. But if I needed anything at all, they'd all be there for me.

PD 4:32

That's so nice. It's so important, isn't it to feel kind of welcome and part of the staff. And now obviously, I'm particularly interested in how you found the transition from trainee to ECT. And there are a few things that you kind of mentioned. So, one was the fact that you've never taught you five before and you found making decisions at the very start where really overwhelming. And I just wondered if you could tell me a little bit more about that as well.

Athena 5:06

I think, because the two placements I had, I had year three and EYFS, which is obviously lower key stage two, and then obviously the beginning of the school, year five was difficult to be dropped into, because there's this, there's such a change from lower Key Stage Two to upper key stage two. And to have no experience that I mean, I know I observed lessons, but until you actually teach it doesn't, you don't realise it. And I felt for me, I was concerned about my own subject knowledge, rather than because I've been so used to teach in the year threes and two placements and knowing that curriculum to then all of a sudden be doing what did I do at the beginning and maths can't remember now, but things like fractions, how much more difficult it was, but also, you know, the language in teaching literacy, making sure they're using better language and all the different that I think that was the main thing. And in terms of being in a Catholic school as well, the RA is so heavy. And for me to not also be because I'm not I don't have that subject knowledge as strong in obviously have been in there. That was the hardest, I think definitely.

PD 6:24

Yeah, that's really interesting it so it's those sort of things that you don't know we're going to be a problem until you're in the job. Yeah. The other thing. So in

your all histories, you spoke about, obviously, workload. So you talked a little bit about being an ECT, obviously, you're with Ambition and Step Lab, and doing all the stuff you needed to and I think you said like there's not enough hours in a day. And I just wondered if you could tell me, has that been like a key incident for you like at this job? Because it's it's, it sounds as if actually, it was a lot?

Athena 7:01

Yeah. I think the thing was, is that even though my, the staff members are so supportive, when I first got there, the previous year five teachers gave me some planning, they gave me some planning for the RA. And I think they gave me one for literacy. But everything else I had to plan, do myself with a completely new school. And even though it's a city, it's linked with the placement school I was in and they do things very different there. So I think that's the initial thing, having to start from scratch in a completely new curriculum just took so much time. So yeah, that was that was difficult. And I think workloads getting better. Because I have to keep telling myself, when I get to next year, it will be fine. Because I can adapt the planning. I think it's starting from scratch. That's the that's the killer. And the minute. The workload is hard, it is hard. I mean, the good thing about this school is that the marking policy is nothing like what I had to do previous I don't have to sit hours after school marking. Because it's true, what they say is not you know, every time you have to write things down, but they're not really going to read it anyway. So there is that side of the workload, it's good that can live mark in class.

PD 8:25

The other thing I was going to say is how are you finding completing the ECT training, all the stuff that you have to do on Ambition on top of your, your workload as a class teacher?

Athena 8:40

I'll be honest, it's difficult, I can't get it done. I cannot get it done. And it has to catch up. And I get obviously, we get weekly messages to say you've completed 0% Or you've, you've not done this, and the thing is fine. I'm in half terms, I'm literally, but the thing is, it reminds me so much of FutureLearn ambition reminds me of future but it it doesn't it's not. I would prefer Future Learn over ambition, or really worse, because I find that ambition is just so it's so heavy. It's one screen full of read, and then you have to do quizzes, get them correct, then, obviously with the videos, the model in the model into an empty classroom, and it's not really an I think it's more secondary base. Actually, there's something I'd like to explain sorry, I know this is a lot!

PD 9:35

Yes, please go ahead.

Athena 9:37

I'd like to add about ambition. My mentors. We have had the last week I've had so many problems with the provider. That first of all, they kept emailing me so we're not on ECT manager. So even though we've inputted my details in four times from the beginning of the year, that's only just been resolved. I attended a conference in so basically they gave me an email with lists, I could either attend one day, one conference all day, and then two virtual ones that catch up in January and a catch up in May. And I know the days because I've made sure

both of them. Anyway, I had an email last week saying, you've missed conference too, and you've missed clinics. And I thought, what I've got the dates here, they're straight there. They were even on the email. And I called them I actually called them up because it got me so wound up. And I was just, I would never miss anything like that. And yeah, they said, Oh, you've it's, Oh, it's okay. Sometimes we miss these things. I might, but I've not been contacted. I've not even had a reminder, anything like that. Or Long story short, there's been a couple of emails have been going to my junk email. But then they actually sent me a list with all of the dates. Now, that was not what they sent me in the beginning. I've had so many problems over the last three weeks with ECT stuff. So I have to attend a catch up virtual and mop up session. They called it the last week of term. I've had to book him with other stuff. My mentor has been having, we found out that my mentor has not been put down. She's been put down as a coordinator on step lab. And it's not showing anything, even though we've been doing weekly meetings. It's it's caused me so much extra stress. Yeah, the email thing go going to the head teacher saying I've not been attending.

PD 11:35

The other thing I wanted to ask you about is obviously it sounds as if your mentor and your relationship with your ECT coach, as it were, is going really well. But you did mention that you don't feel or you felt like this at the time that you hadn't really had any check ins from the SLT. And I just wondered if you could kind of update me, is that still the case? Have things changed? And like how do you think you're kind of ECT training is prepared you for some of the challenges like that.

Athena 12:35

So they are sorted. So they are there. If I ever need to go there door is open, which is fantastic. I can literally just go I could leave me to go to them and ask a question and get it sorted. In terms of check ins from them. I don't feel that it is a lot. I have it. There has been one time recently where the deputy head has actually sat down and said, How are you? And I said in all honesty, I'm overwhelmed and exhausted. And she said it may it didn't happen. But she offered to do an afternoon for me as an extra last term. We've just we just didn't get round because I was gonna do I'm gonna do some other recording because we've had Ofsted as well.

PD 13:23

to the to the to the builder, then that leads me on to my next question, actually. So obviously, you talked about and again, if you can think as an ECT in your training or your school or your mentor have they prepared you for Ofsted? Because you talked about book scrutiny, the stress of book scrutineers learning walk. So do you think as an EC t that your school and ECT training or your mentor has prepared you to kind of deal with that scenario?

Athena 13:54

I don't feel like anything from the ECT training has prepared the books routine. I don't feel that at all. Which maybe, obviously, I might not have got to that point yet. My mentor, not so much my coach, I would say she's helped me because she's the literacy lead. And she's got such a big part in that. So I've been speaking to her that it does help but I don't feel like I feel like you have to kind of go through it to know what happens in it what's expected what I should be doing

what I shouldn't be doing, because I then just read it from their comments that they put on a on a file.

PD 14:37

Yes. And then the other thing you said that was a little bit that you hadn't really had much of this in your training. And so far we already see training hasn't mentioned it but you talked about the stress of not knowing how to assess and you mentioned about target tracker and that so I wanted you to talk me through Do that bit, I suppose. Having in mind, how is your ECT training prepared you for that situation? So time off timetable sitting down with a mentor? Anything? Was there anything about assessment in your ECT training so far? Or has it been a case that you've just had to deal with it yourself?

Athena 15:24

Well, I mean, you heard obviously, we mentioned that target tracker and how I literally do it on the last day. I don't feel like in terms of my mentor, my coach, the they've really gone through assessment with me, I've put it down, we because we completed this report late that meant to do we didn't know from ambition, or anything we didn't know. I've put it as a thing to focus on for next term. Because I just feel that there's just I understand the importance of assessment, but it just feels like I do the assessments, and then what next? How does that inform my planning? So for me, I'm still struggling with it. And I don't, in my ECT training and things from there, I don't think I've got to that point yet. I think we've been more focused on how I've moulded sort of my class, the delivery of lessons, and I feel like that's been the more important thing. So I'm hoping in this next phase, from next term onwards, we'll focus on the assessment things because I do struggle with that. Yeah.

PD 16:29

The other thing you said, and I'm using your words now. So you were saying about, you know, the pressure and the stress and the workload and the overwhelm grinds you down, and how it left you feeling a little bit kind of emotional, physically, and sort of mentally, and you've lost your weekends. And I just wondered if you could tell me how feeling like that has made you feel about the teaching profession.

Athena 16:59

So this is actually a point I've written down to talk about, I feel that this workload and this stress has actually really affected my mental health. Like, before all of this, I was so independent, I'd go out all the time, and go and do things. And now I'll be honest with you, I've struggled with the anxiety, I struggle with it. And I've never, ever been like that. I never really thought much of it. Until now that I suffer with it. And it's got to the point now it's procrastination. I know I've got work to do at the weekend. But I'm either so exhausted, or I just don't want to do it. And the thing is, I don't want to fall out of love with teaching, because you know what, there's some days I've go in there. And I just think absolutely love my class. Like I love teaching them. I love making them happy and love them, their love of learning. But it is that's what everybody said, it's not the teaching, it's the admin side of things. It's all the extra things. And I've just, I have been open with my my mentor about I'm not necessarily the mental health side, because I don't, it's difficult, my TA knows. But my mentor has just literally, she told me just to do what needs. Well, sorry, was my coach that said, just do for

the next day, don't worry about it. So I think that's what I'm having to I'm getting better at it. But I just need to try and like I say, I think just need to get through this year. And then once it gets the next year, I won't have to plan from scratch all the time, I'll know what my curriculum is.

PD 18:36

I think it's really hard. And you know, I speaking about my own NQT years it was known then, I think it was such a perpendicular learning curve. So the things that I was really great at, because I did a School Direct kind of training programme. So it's great behaviour management, you know, great with the parents great, kind of with everything super classroom planning and assessment, I had none of the pedagogical theory knowledge that you would have had throughout, you know, due to our sessions and FutureLearn. And that, for me, made me doubt myself as a teacher. And so I think whilst we sound like we had different challenges, for me, it all added up to this kind of a new use where it grinds you down, you know, the workloads and not knowing how to switch off or having too much to do. And what I guess, I guess the only thing that I can, the only advice I can give you is very much like take each day as it comes. So exactly as your coach has said, because otherwise, teaching will literally take as much time and as much of your life as you allow it to. And that's hard because when you read ECT you're really keen you just want to do stuff, right? You worry about it all. And so it sounds as if having that coach...

Athena 20:36

Yeah, no, I definitely agree. And that it is helpful, definitely what you've said, and I know, I know, in my head, just like, say, take it as each day comes. And I think I've kind of realised that, you know, I need to, even though I've got all this work to do, it will get done. And I know that teaching is just forever chasing the tail light, it's, it's fine. I think.

PD 20:59

As long as you recognise that you're never going to get everything done, and you get the must, you must you've done. And anything that impacts on like the children, and then everything else you can kind of catch up. But you know, I think that sounds really sensible. And it sounds like you've been really pragmatic. So next question. We're on Question six. Now, there's only 10. So we're almost in June, think being a career changer has made your ECT experience more or less intense? And why do you think that might be the case?

Athena 21:59

I think less intense. And I've actually had this conversation with my TA, if I was fresh out of university, say 21/22 years old, I don't think I would have been able to cope with the workload or the demand, I think because in my previous roles, obviously I've had customer service experience, I've had management experience, things like that. And I feel that that is what you kind of have to be as a teacher, this sounds bad. But you have to kind of be the customer service person for the parents, because obviously they've got their own judgments and what they want. But then also, it's about managing the fact that adults are in your room as well. So I've got two TAs one in the morning, one in the afternoon, and it's making sure that I manage them correctly, so that I can get the best for

the children. So having no skills before and being the age and been through things. In previous roles dealing with people, I think it's really helped me and I feel I genuinely feel that if people, young, younger students, so like being 21/22, straight into teaching, I think it would be so difficult without any previous work experience like like, well, previous career or something like that.

PD 23:16

So one of the things that I wanted to ask you was how do you think teaching compares with your first career? What are the differences? How would you compare it to what you were doing before as a manager, for example?

Athena 24:00

Oh, that's that's difficult question. I think it's hard to compare, because obviously, they're completely different sectors. But I feel like I feel this is more serious. I feel that it's, whereas my previous roles, I could literally just turn up to work, go and go home and not have to think about anything. This is more, it's definitely a more caring role as well. You can't just be someone to go into work and not care about others. You have to obviously think about the children that and I think that's the biggest thing for me, I actually care more about this, not that I don't care about my jobs, but there's more at stake with this job I feel and the reason that makes me keep going is think if I don't do a good job, then that can affect their education. So I feel like it's more serious and more meaningful. That's probably the word more rewarding. I think this job is so rewarding, it's hard. But at the end is the rewards are endless. So that's probably the biggest difference. Yeah.

PD 25:07

I mean, I totally agree. I mean, it's one of those things that I noticed from moving from advertising into a role that actually made a difference. And I felt as if actually, I was having a real impact, whereas before it felt it was a bit like, monetary, you know, I was making money for companies. And whereas this one, so I totally understand. And next question, and I understand, obviously, you've just got married last year, and might be thinking about making plans for family at some stage or not, as the case may be. But I'm interested in how, or whether you think being a female, maybe having other responsibilities or thinking about other responsibilities has made you feel about being anything?

Athena 25:55

Oh, tricky. To being, I think it's, I think, especially with the age I am, and just being just recently being married, I think it's difficult because obviously, if I'm, now that I'm new to teaching, I feel like I've got I need to get these years of experience under my belt to make sure that I can provide obviously the best that I can do my job. But me being turning 27 In a couple of months. So I need I'm thinking in myself that actually, I've got a body clock, and I want to do, it's not about I do want to start off on I'm not ready for that yet. But in a few years, I will be. But I think that is one of my concerns that when I decided to have family, that it's going to be tricky to take that break, come back into it and only have what, three, four years? And yeah, experience. So I think that is that's one of the downsides to obviously starting later and not coming straight from finishing uni. And I think it is one of our concerns, actually, how will I cope? Because

there's some full time tip my mentors full time she's got two kids, and I just don't know how she does it.

PD 27:12

Yeah, that's interesting. My last question, really, I suppose before I asked you if you've got anything else to add? Do you think teaching is supportive of of parents? Like? Are you looking thinking well, actually, other people have made it work?

Athena 27:55

Yes, because there's quite a few. So for example, a year, yes, near three, they've got to teach their job share. And they've both got kids. They still have a high workload. But it seems to work. And I think that probably I mean, I've discussed this with my husband, they'll probably be that once I have children. I can see myself doing part time. I'd love to stay full time. I would but I just feel like the challenges to do full time and have children as well. I don't know if it's going to be too great. I'm not going to say anything. Yeah, I want to see how it goes. Yeah, absolutely. They manage it and they're happy. So yeah, it looks like it gives me like you say hope.

PD 28:42

That's pretty good. Is there anything else that we haven't covered either today or in your all histories that you wanted to tell me about?

Athena 29:29

So I mean, I've because I've been away the last couple of days what I was planning to do send some more recordings of this term. Today the biggest one I'll be given more information about is Ofsted because we had this big Ofsted it was only two days and one inspector but I will be dropping you quite a few I've got notes pages of it. So I'll be giving you a couple of recordings for that. Just to give you obviously my view from it.

Appendix 4 – Padlet Chronological incident timelines (Year 1)

Below is an exemplar of the chronological timelines for year 1:

Beatrice 1 of 2:

Timeline of critical incidents - Beatrice

Younger self/aspirations ?

Parents divorced when I was 16 - very tumultuous period as I moved schools, did A-levels. I primarily moved schools as I wanted to do Psychology A-level, which mine didn't offer. Really gelled with 2 of my teachers who really supported me, but I put me off psychology completely. Felt like I was at a crossroads with education and no longer wanted to go to university! Persuaded to - decided on Marketing to give me transferrable skills for a future career. In childhood, I had aspirations of being a lawyer or vet, which progressed into something psychology based. NB all my careers/interests have been involving people/helping people - psychology, marketing, retail, teaching

First Career

- Studied Marketing at uni, went into retail sector (fashion and food), spent 10yrs at 2 companies.
- Took on mentoring/training role, was promoted well/pay rises but "unhappy".
- Friend left to become primary teacher.
- In 2016, promoted and managing a team but "hating job, didn't want to commute".
- Took on project management job, but. Male dominated workplace, living part of the week in Midlands, long commute home. Had an epiphany, wanted out.

ITT

- 2 places ITT - SCITT (School Direct) or PCGE at uni - both in Hertfordshire.
- Chose SCITT, moved, 14 min commute.
- Based in yr 4, gelled with mentor, training year okay - good feedback.

ECT 1:

- Transition from SD trainee to ECT, in same school.
- 0:40: No second school experience due to Covid - but allowed to move key stage. Teaching key workers children in bubbles, across 3 year groups.
- 10:4: Strong mentor, pushed me - feedback I got was positive.
- 1:15: Reflecting on practice, observed by Head - positive feedback.
- 1:37: So, I was pleased to stay in the same school for ECT year.
- 1:45: Original plan was to do training and two ECT years in one school, then move on to get different experience.

Interview

POSITIVE - ECT transition/induction/support:

Beatrice 0:35
Yes. So they kind of have a standard induction programme for all new staff. So it's a school that regularly has a high turnover of staff. So a lot of new staff starting. So each July, they have new starters into the school for two days during that transition week. And they kind of go through literally everything like marking policy, expectations, behaviour, policy, enter anything and everything that you can imagine those first two days, which for me, I already am trained in that school, so I kind of knew that. But other people did find it quite overwhelming. So I found it fine, because I was used to that environment. So I found it supportive going through everything again.

Beatrice 1:15
And then each week, in that first autumn term, a member of SLT actually kind of did like a little training session at lunchtime or straight after school, to go through different things like display expectations, and just different things that crop up like language to use in the school or yeah, just any any little thing, which was good for me then to kind of hear again, so I found that really supportive.

Beatrice 2:02
I think because I finished my course at the end of June. And then I was still in school until the end of term. So I kind of still immersed in that environment. But because I was still in that setting, I knew I had consistent expectations. I've been teaching right up until the end.

Beatrice 2:30
For me, it wasn't a huge transition into that first year of teaching. I was staying in the same classroom. So I knew everything was I'd like

Critical incident 1, Year 1 (whole year)

NEGATIVE: ECT TRANSITION/CAREER CHANGER

- "I knew it was a difficult school to work at". No one had been shy in saying that. High expectations.
- 2:04: "Coming from a corporate environment thought that was what I wanted from my teaching journey."
- 2:15: I liked that they had clear expectations and processes.
- 2:23: Kind of environment that I would like to work in.
- 2:27: Moving into my ECT year, my first year, paired with another ECT.
- 2:34: "I was told I was an experienced member of staff, so I could support another ECT" - which is not the case.
- "I struggled with setting boundaries with her."
- Main sticking point in our early relationship because "although I used to manage a team in my old career, I didn't feel that it was my job to manage her as well."
- 3:06: "Her first job out of uni really" - I took it upon myself to help her - rightly or wrongly.
- 3:27: Made working relationship easier and smoother, but made mine harder - "lot more work to do".
- 3:41: "Maybe different if she had been a career-changer, had more experience?"

Critical Incident 2, Year 1, Autumn 1: Interview

POSITIVE - school culture:

Beatrice 4:34
But yeah, as I've said the my new school really focuses on, I would say well being of teachers and advocate for just prioritising what you can do just getting the most important things done. And I was lucky that I worked with two experienced teachers in the first term that really helped me to understand what the priorities were because in my previous school last year, everything was a priority. And nothing nothing could be left. Otherwise you were really that teacher.

Beatrice 5:01
So yeah, for me, that's kind of been the main understanding of that first term kind of understanding what is the priority and what can be left until tomorrow? What doesn't even need to be done. And it's a nice to get to if I can. That's interesting. So actually, even though in the first school in the first year, they might have been better prepared to receive you, but actually, perhaps from what you're saying, summarising they put maybe emphasis on the wrong thing, whereas the second school wasn't as not, not it wasn't that wasn't organised. But actually, their focus was on the things that matter. And obviously, that works for you more now.

Critical Incident 3, Year 1, Autumn 1: Interview

NEGATIVE - ECF:

Beatrice 6:19
I think it's something as I've gone through, I understand it more, that it needs to be just a generic programme to make sure that everyone's supported. And I do kind of understand that now. But I felt at the time, it was really frustrating, because I was just rehashing things that I had already learned or that I thought I was quite strong in and my mentor agreed. And we just felt like we were recovering ground that didn't need to be covered. Whereas other aspects weren't really covered, or I felt things like assessment weren't even covered until after Christmas. And that would have been really useful to cover before Christmas and have a dedicated time to actually go through it with my mentor and find out how that school does it even though I already knew. But how and like, I don't know, the benefits of doing it in the way that they did it. Having a conversation with other people who've done assessment differently. And because every school is different at my current school now is completely different. So just having that time, and I felt it wasn't really sequenced in the best way.

Beatrice 7:57
It was kind of we were all following it very prescriptively for that first term, until we had conversations, and the facilitators had conversations with Best Practice and said, we're not really getting on with this. And best practice actually said, you can tailor it a little bit more. So after that, we started to tailor it a little bit more to what I needed, while keeping the same, I'll just take assessment as the focus, keeping that as the focus, but adapting it to what I needed to do and to practice within that rather than following the materials like to the tee.

Beatrice, 2 of 2:

Timeline of critical incidents - Beatrice

Interview
POSITIVE - ECF

Let's discuss it at the beginning. We'll review it over a couple of weeks, and then let's see your evidence at the end to see if it's made a change or not. And if not, it's not a big deal. Could you have done something differently? Or is that was that the best question to kind of reset to? So it was it was more suitable for your own kinds of classroom needs, and also encouraged that reflective practice? So that's really Yeah, definitely. And I think what I've liked is that I could have done anything really. Yeah. So it was to show people progress. So I could have picked anything that would have shown people progress. But I just picked that because that was an issue that I had at that time.

Critical incident 4, Year 1 (whole year)
POSITIVE: PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITY

- Oct half-term, asked to move year groups in January - as ECT had left year 5.
- 4:16: I had challenging class and "jumped at the chance" - got my old class back.

Critical incident 5, Year 1 (end of term 1)
POSITIVE: COLLEAGUES/SUPPORT

- Positive, weight-lifted off shoulders. Working with experienced teacher and student. Shared workload.
- 5:37: "Learn on her for support and advice."
- 5:40: She was guiding the planning, "breath of fresh air". Felt really supported by her - more than school.
- 5:50: Make that difference "wasn't induction tutor, mentor - wasn't people should have been supporting me" - she stepped up.
- 6:17: Best Practice facilitator for training.
- 6:39: "This is how you teach, this is what you need to do" - get on, really positive.

Critical incident 6, Year 1, term 2
NEGATIVE: LACK OF SUPPORT/NEGATIVE FEEDBACK/MENTOR

- Still having observation, no acknowledgement "I'd been through a traumatic first term".
- 6:55: I started to get really negative feedback, complete opposite to the experience I'd had at the same school the year before.
- 7:21: "Felt like they were doing it to make me better, but doing it the wrong way" - no positive feedback from induction tutor in first year.
Joint mentor meetings - didn't have own mentor. Sometimes worked well, but didn't have someone dedicated to me.
- 8:33: "Used as an example of what to do for ECT, rather than developing me."
- 9:00: I decided to leave school February half term.
- 7:50: Easter - ECT mentor left. "I had been reluctant to leave, invested in the school."
- 9:25: Hadn't got what I expected/deserved at the school. Didn't want to give up, show "I couldn't hack it" and things like that.
- 9:39: Thought about it for a term.
- 9:50: Their way of motivating and feedback didn't align with me. "Not why I'd left a corporate job to be treated in that way."
- 10:01: They backed off.
- 10:16: Felt like I could relax, "I didn't want to work there and they didn't want me working there".
- 10:29: How I ended the year.
- 10:32: Still with Best Practice.

Interview
NEGATIVE: School culture/SLT:

Beatrice 24:08
I think it's just been kind of how I felt where I'm working. And I think that's been the most important takeaway for me, for me. So, I was kind of probably at the worst point that I'd felt, which I guess term one of your first ECT is probably always gonna be the worst point. But I had I kind of had way out I had somewhere else to go. And then coming up to this point last year, was actually when I told my school that I wasn't going to be staying. I didn't want to stay for this year. And I'd gone through so many observations and been told that I wasn't a good teacher, and I wasn't up to scratch and just really kind of not knocked down knocked back. I had no confidence, someone would walk into my classroom. And I'd like flinch because I thought I was being observed. And just like just a really, really horrible feeling. And I just couldn't wait to get to July and just be out, just be out of that environment.

ECT Year 1 Review
NEGATIVE: ECF

Reflections on year 1:

Thoughts on Best Practice.
- 0:13: First year - scripted, specific modules. Each half term a new module.
- 0:46: High expectation and routines (plus behaviour).
- 1:03: Lots of reading, as a group - didn't have relevance, more for secondary/subject specialists not primary.
- 1:31: Role plays and mentor meeting - scripted. Good for first week, set expectations.
- 1:54: Became obvious that what I needed to work on, not the same as other ECTs in school.
- 2:06: "Not flexible enough" - that is the downfall of a national programme like this.
- 2:20: PGCE/SD so personal and positive.
- 2:38: Understand brought in for consistency.
- 2:42: Lots of people doing it already had classroom experience "making them go over this and go over this" doesn't develop them as a teacher.
- 2:58: "Leads to disengagement" - don't see the benefit in it.
- 3:00: Very well facilitated - yr 5 - positive facilitator.
- 3:18: No personal input, hearing more experienced teachers to have input and not BP script asks them to say. Strange.
- 4:08: Each half term, new topic, no assessment but stuff to discuss with mentor who feeds back to induction tutor on how engaged you've been.
- 4:35: Heard other providers requires essays.

ECT 2:

Left old school and started at new school. Moved to new school over the summer.

Beatrice 18:11
But it definitely made me realise that that isn't where I want to be, and facilitated me moving schools definitely. And now I'm in a much more positive school, I can see that all the experiences that I've had have definitely, even my training and my first year ECT have definitely helped me this year, as well.

Interview
NEGATIVE - ECT 2/move to new school:

Beatrice 2:59
Yeah, so to start off with the transition, I actually felt a little bit more unsettled moving, because they didn't have anything in place. And there was kind of not really a lot of communication I could go in in the summer. But I didn't have a clue what my classroom should really look like there was not really any guidance about things that I was used to having really clear boundaries and guidance for.

Beatrice 3:47
But I quickly learned that. And reflecting back on the first year, I think I was kind of worried about things that don't really necessarily matter in day to day teaching. It was all the extra frilly bits that my previous school loved. And they were really kind of hot on making sure that everyone did it consistently.

Interview
POSITIVE - School culture:

Whereas my new school is much more focused on excellent teaching. And all the extra bits are a nice to get to rather than a half to get to. And I think that's where I struggled kind of knowing the boundary of what I should keep doing. And what was just a nice to get to. So I think that's what I originally struggled with.

It was all the extra frilly bits that my previous school loved. And they were really kind of hot on making sure that everyone did it consistently. Whereas my new school is much more focused on excellent teaching. And all the extra bits are a nice to get to rather than a half to get to. And I think that's where I struggled kind of knowing the boundary of what I should keep doing. And what was just a nice to get to. So I think that's what I originally struggled with.

Appendix 5 - Oral histories partial transcripts (Year 2)

Below is an exemplar of the oral histories partial transcripts for the second year:

Name of participant: Jessica

ECT year: 2nd Yr

Date oral history recorded (term/year): Aut 1/2023

Number of recordings: 1

First recording (length 10:21 mins):

Time Comment summary/quote/transcribed sentences

0:04 When I think of this year – it's been incredibly straightforward.
0:15 I've moved – gone down to year 2.
0:23 All new children, all new faces.
0:35 Full 30, behaviour is lovely but complex SEN needs.
0:58 2 children – different timetable, as can't access mainstream curriculum.
1:24 Adjustment to KS1 – not difficult. Hasn't been any support (asked for or offered).
1:48 Close enough – Yr 3 to Yr2.
2:06 Teaching English – my favourite thing to plan.
2:35 Using Read, Write, Ink.
3:00 School play – instead of full curriculum (so only doing core subjects). This has taken the pressure off a new year.
3:46 Feel like I belong in KS1.
3:56 Partner teacher, I worked with in my first year of teaching (training year) and this has eased transition.
4:12 ECT Conference – been positive this time as sometimes they can feel 'contrived'. Trying to do too much in one day to be meaningful to all key phases – special schools up to A levels.
4:56 Sat on a mixed table – having conversations about how to apply what we've learnt and what's relevant.
5:17 Makes you reflective on the level of support and pro-activity maybe you have.
5:35 Do I feel like I'm getting all that I need and are they pushing me?
5:42 Opportunities others have for CPD/training. Not broached in my setting.
5:58 Other ECTs that are doing this, that and the other and is there a reason that we can't do that and be more proactive as a school?
6:16 ~~Doesn't sound like~~ Magnifying ideas that can be implemented in your classroom.
6:25 Having it at the end of half term is not ideal.
6:40 Planning on their part wasn't sure about.
6:51 Last day with the children on a Thursday, so don't know what I'll be walking back into. So I'm going have to go in to tie up loose ends.
7:22 Class dojo – starting using – positive relationships with parents and wished I'd implemented earlier. Build positive relationships – as before I dreaded going into the playground.
8:13 Positive start to the year.
8:24 Getting settled – how much last class were difficult to manage caused 'mental load' – left me drained.
8:52 Been a revelation at home; had dinner, watched a programme.
9:04 Doesn't sound like much but when last class – quite an achievement to have energy to do this.
9:20 Haven't had mental strain – a real change!
9:34 "Is it cohort or Yr 3 to Yr 2?"
9:45 Positive about change and class.
10:01 Mentioned at ECT conference – how you use your time?
10:13 Spend a couple of days in holiday to get everything ready – have evenings and weekends free as possible.

-END-

Appendix 6 - Interview transcripts transcribed in full (Year 2)

Below is an exemplar of the interview transcript, in full, for the second year:

Beatrice

PD 0:02

Here we go. So, thanks so much for your time. We're going to start off with the questions. But first of all, you mentioned that actually, at the start of year one, the support from the school was really positive. And I just wanted you to sort of explain a little bit more about that for me, please.

Beatrice 0:35

Yes. So they kind of have a standard induction programme for all new staff. So it's a school that regularly handle I'm not sure if you can still see me. But yeah, has a high turnover of staff. So a lot of new staff starting. So each July, they have new starters into the school for two days during that transition week. And they kind of go through literally everything like marking policy, expectations, behaviour, policy, enter anything and everything that you can imagine those first two days, which for me, I already are trained in that school, so I kind of knew that. But other people did find it quite overwhelming. So I found it fine, because I was used to that environment. So I found it supportive going through everything again.

Beatrice 1:15

And then each week, in that first autumn term, a member of SLT actually kind of did like a little training session at lunchtime or straight after school, to go through different things like display expectations, and just different things that crop up like language to use in the school or yeah, just any little thing, which was good for me then to kind of hear again, so I found that really supportive.

PD 1:50

Yeah. Sounds really, really useful. And I mean, I'm particularly interested in how you found the transition from trainee teacher to obviously ECT. But it sounds as if (I don't want to put words into your mouth)..but it sounds as if the transition was made easier because of the school setting that up for you.

Beatrice 2:02

Yes, definitely, I think because I finished my course at the end of June. And then I was still in school until the end of term. So I kind of still immersed in that environment. So I found, I would say quite easy. Honestly, I don't have anything to compare it to. But because I was still in that setting, I knew I had consistent expectations. I've been teaching right up until the end.

Beatrice 2:30

For me, it wasn't a huge transition into that first year of teaching. I was staying in the same classroom. So I knew everything was I'd like cleaned it out, set it all up before the summer holidays. So for me, it was quite a subtle transition. I think.

PD 2:47

That's really good. And it's interesting, because obviously, I've been listening to your recording of the second year term too. And actually, you've been very positive. And I wondered if you could perhaps compare the second year with the first year because you have seemed to be and to kind of quote you the workload is manageable and moving schools helped with this. Your new school advocating for live marking, it was a game changer. So can perhaps you summarise for me why it felt so positive?

Beatrice 2:59

Yeah, so to start off with the transition, I actually felt a little bit more unsettled moving, because they didn't have anything in place. And there was kind of not really a lot of communication I could go in in the summer. But I didn't have a clue what my classroom should really look like there was not really any guidance about things that I was used to having really clear boundaries and guidance for.

Beatrice 3:47

But I quickly learned that. And reflecting back on the first year, I think I was kind of worried about things that don't really necessarily matter in day to day teaching. It was all the extra frilly bits that my previous school loved. And they were really kind of hot on making sure that everyone did it consistently. Whereas my new school is much more focused on excellent teaching. And all the extra bits are a nice to get to rather than a half to get to. And I think that's where I struggled kind of knowing the boundary of what I should keep doing. And what was just a nice to get to. So I think that's what I originally struggled with.

Beatrice 4:34

But yeah, as I've said my new school really focuses on, I would say well-being of teachers and advocate for just prioritising what you can do just getting the most important things done. And I was lucky that I worked with two experienced teachers in the first term that really helped me to understand what the priorities were because in my previous school last year, everything was a priority. And nothing, nothing could be left. Otherwise you were really That teacher.

Beatrice 5:01

So yeah, for me, that's kind of been the main understanding of that first term kind of understanding what is the priority and what can be left until tomorrow? What doesn't even need to be done. And it's a nice to get to if I can. That's interesting. So actually, even though in the first school in the first year, they might have been better prepared to receive you, but actually, perhaps from what you're saying, summarising they put maybe emphasis on the wrong thing, whereas the second school wasn't as not, not it wasn't that wasn't organised. But actually, their focus was on the things that matter. And obviously, that works for you more now.

PD 5:38

And in your oral histories, and you spoke about this in year one and year two, so actually, it's probably chance to reflect on both of them about how the, you know, the early career framework, and the ECT induction materials. And obviously, you know, you're with best practice. So just looking for my notes. You felt that in year one, it really wasn't tailored to you as an individual. I just wanted

you to tell me more about that, why you identified this as a key incident in your in both years. So I think,

Beatrice 6:19

I think it's something as I've gone through, I understand it more, that it needs to be just a generic programme to make sure that everyone's supported. And I do kind of understand that now. But I felt at the time, it was really frustrating, because I was just rehashing things that I had already learned or that I thought I was quite strong in and my mentor agreed. And we just felt like we were recovering ground that didn't need to be covered. Whereas other aspects weren't really covered, or I felt things like assessment weren't even covered until after Christmas. And that would have been really useful to cover before Christmas and have a dedicated time to actually go through it with my mentor and find out how that school does it even though I already knew. But how and like, I don't know, the benefits of doing it in the way that they did it. Having a conversation with other people who've done assessment differently. And because every school is different at my current school now is completely different. So just having that time, and I felt it wasn't really sequenced in the best way.

PD 7:23

Yeah, that actually rolls into my next question. And I was just gonna say, you know, do you think that your school or your mentor kind of prepared you for that? Was that what you were expecting? And could they pivot? at all from what sounds like quite a prescriptive kind of programme? Yes. So in the, I mean, to be honest, going into it, I don't think either of us knew what to really expect, because it was kind of getting just thrown at us as we were going along. But

Beatrice 7:57

it was kind of we were all following it very prescriptively for that first term, until we had conversations, and the facilitators had conversations with Best Practice and said, we're not really getting on with this. And best practice actually said, you can tailor it a little bit more. So after that, we started to tailor it a little bit more to what I needed, while keeping the same, I'll just take assessment as the focus, keeping that as the focus, but adapting it to what I needed to do and to practice within that rather than following the materials like to the tee.

PD 8:13

And as you said, obviously, this term, so the recording couple of weeks ago that you found the second year more adaptable to your needs. And so actually, whilst it is a nationwide study, but the case studies don't always fit in one way, for example, and could you tell me more about how you've managed to adapt it to follow because I quite like the idea of you doing your pupil voice and your questionnaire and your and you're kind of small little studies. So could you just unpack that a little bit for me, please? Yeah. So in the first term,

Beatrice 9:03

I think we've got like, I remember, it seems like longer. I think we did, we looked at two different modules. So again, it's like a spring curriculum. So it goes back to the same modules as we did in year one, which is really good, but kind of takes a different, different view of them. So we kind of looked at little mini research. I mean, it's not a research project, but little mini research project to really understand an element of our practice, which I found really useful

because it was specific to me and what I needed to work on and what I could actually impact.

Beatrice 9:37

So I think I missed I think I missed the first one, because my mentor wasn't set up. So we kind of just had conversations around the topic. The second one I looked into how can I promote boys reading within my classroom?

Beatrice 9:54

I looked at kind of what their interests were and What the books on offer in the library were and kind of asked their opinions on what they'd like, brought some books in and their reading went up. So I was able to see the impact from the changes that I could make in my classroom, which I feel like last year.

Beatrice 10:17

It was just learning and kind of reading case studies and putting little bits into practice, but it wasn't really, I don't know, I found this much more beneficial to be able to actually make an impact and see the impact and track it, if that makes sense.

Beatrice 10:33

Totally. So it's more like actual research that had an impact, it was more theory. So it was just repeated theory. Yeah, I think so. I think there were aspects last year, but it was because it was moving on each week.

Beatrice 10:52

And you had a different thing to look at each week, it was just right, let's go and try this this week. Let's try this this week. And there wasn't really a sustained period that you could see changes over. Whereas this is a lot more kind of we have we've had half a term.

PD 11:06

Moving on to Question three, can you recall, and I think I know what you're going to, you're going to say, but I want to see whether this is the one that I've picked out from your histories. But can you recall or describe a particular time when you've struggled to cope during your first year, and then now during your second year?

Beatrice 12:07

Um, so I think during the first term, when I worked with another ECT was probably one of the biggest times just the pressure that that put me under to make sure that everything was planned and resourced. And I wasn't feeling supported. At that time. I think, strangely, I'm going through a bit of the same situation now as well. Which I didn't I didn't expect. But again, I've got a part time member of staff who isn't necessarily doing their fair share of planning. So I'm, again having to support that. But I don't feel as under pressure, because I think I feel more confident that I can do it. And also, I feel more confident saying that that isn't actually my whole responsibility. So I'm not sure if it's that I feel confident in my own ability, or that I feel confident that the school will support me more. Because I definitely feel that if I went to my induction tutor or the head teacher, that they would support me with that.

Beatrice 13:20

Whereas I didn't, I felt like I was quite isolated last year.

PD 13:33

So yeah, because actually, it's almost as if the same thing has happened. But you're different now. And so because you're different. It's impacted you in a different way, which is my next question. So how are both of these situations made you feel about the teaching profession.

Beatrice 13:44

when I was going through it last year, I never felt that I wanted to quit. I never felt that this wasn't something I wanted to do. I just felt that I didn't want to be situation.

Beatrice 13:59

This time, again, like it's, I feel like it's fine. I feel like it's just something that you're I feel like it's something that most teachers will come across at some point in their teaching career.

Beatrice 14:13

Yeah, I don't know, I feel a lot more positive about it this year. And I feel like that's because that's my mindset this year, I just feel a lot more positive and that I can cope. Whereas last year, it did get me a little bit down, although I never got to the stage that I thought I would quit teaching.

Beatrice 14:32

And I feel that last year I was looking for a solution. So my solution was to move classes. Whereas this time I'm perfectly happy where I am. And I feel just that it's something we're going to need to work through.

PD 14:48

Interesting and I'll come on to our to another question about why that might be slightly later because I have my own theories. But really, I wanted to sort of ask you if you could describe on how the CT training you've received prepared you for these situations. So I'm talking about time off timetable having a mentor, you know, having an induction tutor having the CT training over two years, has that helped with dealing with these situations?

Beatrice 15:21

Um, I think genuinely No. I think from, it's probably completely different for other people, but I'm someone who, I don't just always just go to my mentor for advice, I've got a like having a wide support network that I can go to different people. And I would feel confident, and even last year, I would feel confident talking to other people, not just my mentor about how to deal with those situations, because I think everyone comes at it differently as well. And I think one person telling you how to deal with that situation isn't always how you would feel comfortable dealing with it, and someone else may have different advice. So I think it's always useful to check with different people.

Beatrice 16:09

So I think having a mentor did help. But I felt like if I didn't have one, say, for example, this year, I haven't really spoken to my mentor about it at all. I've spoken to, like other teachers who've been in similar situations.

Beatrice 16:25

So that hasn't been something that I've found helpful for dealing with that situation. What did help? I mean, what did help was the extra time out of class, because it's given me more time to plan and catch up on those things. But I think that that hasn't helped in the way that it should have helped. It's not given me more experience, and made me more prepared. It's just been time for me to catch up on things that other people haven't done. If, if that makes sense.

PD 16:57

Yeah, totally. So I wanted to know, actually, so it sounds as if you grabbed it with both hands, but actually you're, you're kind of backfilling. Yeah. All right. Next question. Do you think that being a career changer has made your ECT experience more or less intense? And why do you think this might be the case?

Beatrice 17:21

I think genuinely, even including my training, I think it's made it easier than it would have been, I think the previous career that I had, it was so that such high speeds, such high pressure, I was used to dealing with crazy situations and confrontation and things not going my way and listening to feedback. And I'd have regular feedback meetings with managers. So that environment that I'd moved into teaching from, I think, had really prepared me for it, definitely. And I feel that if I had gone even if I was kind of working in retail, but in like a shop environment, or even straight out of uni, I wouldn't have had those skills and those experiences to help me with this.

Beatrice 18:11

I think it's definitely, probably not so much last year, because I felt that it was quite completely different, but very similar culture and environment that I was in. But it definitely made me realise that that isn't where I want to be, and facilitated me moving schools definitely. And now I'm in a much more positive school, I can see that all the experiences that I've had have definitely, even my training and my first year PCT have definitely helped me this year, as well.

PD 19:00

It's interesting, because you pretty much answered my next question. How does teaching compare with your first career? And, and I think you've sort of alluded to the main things. And I just wanted you to kind of reflect on the differences now in the second year. So obviously, being a career changer and this came up really strongly in your history is a theme seems to have really supported you would you say that you feel more confident? Knowing how to deal with those scenarios. So with the less experienced ECTs, for example, as a result of being a career changer?

Beatrice 19:27

Yeah, I would say definitely, I went on a management training course or I can't remember what it was called, I think it was called Managing difficult situations or something. Something along those lines last year, and everything that the man was saying about how to deal with tricky parents or tricky situations with

colleagues was things that I was already confident doing from the situations that I'd already been in. So it was good to have gone on the training, but also I felt like I didn't really need it because it was already how I would approach those situations. I think

PD 20:00

Think dealing with parents has been something that lots of the ECTs I've spoken to have dreaded or not really known how to deal with. Whereas that's never been something that I've been worried about. Or maybe I've been lucky. And I haven't had crazy parents or ridiculous situations that I've needed to tell them about. But that's something that I genuinely feel quite relaxed and open to. And I definitely think that's because of the experience I've had. Interesting is now I certainly would concur of me coming from advertising and a really similar kind of, you know, intense and pressured environment made the transition easier. Okay, next question. She said that being a female, or perhaps having other responsibilities has made your AC t years, more or less intense?

Beatrice 20:51

Um, I don't know, really. The I don't have any children. So I've just I've got a partner who does shift work. So that's been quite hard. But my other responsibilities are quite small, which I guess I was lucky with. So yeah, I'm not quite sure. Yeah, I suppose you know, in terms of not having any, any children about having a partner.

PD 21:33

And being female, I suppose though, there might be a tendency for you to still continue to do like more around the house. Like the lion's share of, you know, chores and things like that. I just wondered whether you were finding that hard to then balance?

Beatrice 22:04

Yeah, I think last year, definitely. Because I was working such long hours. And we do split most things. We do most things. So yeah, not hugely, but I think it was just the long hours last year, and my mindset was just I need to be working. I don't need to be cooking like, even if, yeah, so I think a little bit of that. But because where I'm at shift work. It was normally just me cooking for myself. And then he would cook for himself. So it was it was quite split. I think this year. I'm actually doing a Masters as well. And I feel like I'm actually working less this year and doing a master's than it was last year. So Right. Yeah. For me, I think that's really positive.

PD 22:50

You can find time and I waited until kind of I've been in teaching for kind of, you know, four years before doing a master's. So I'll take my hat off to you.

Beatrice 22:59

But yeah, I'm finding it absolutely fine and juggling. And again, I'm not sure if that's me being more confident with what I'm doing me being quicker with marking or prioritising more effectively, or just that I feel that my school is supporting me with it.

PD 23:41

Is there anything else that you wanted to tell me that has been important to you in terms of?

Beatrice 24:08

I think it's just been kind of how I felt where I'm working. And I think that's been the most important takeaway for me, for me. So, again, at Christmas last year, I was well, just before Christmas, before I moved classes, I was kind of probably at the worst point that I'd felt, which I guess term one of your first ECT is probably always gonna be the worst point. But I had I kind of had way out I had somewhere else to go. So that was fine. And then coming up to this point last year, was actually when I told my school that I wasn't going to be staying. I didn't want to stay for this year. And I'd gone through so many observations and been told that I wasn't a good teacher, and I wasn't up to scratch and just really kind of not knocked down knocked back, I had no confidence, someone would walk into my classroom. And I'd like flinch because I thought I was being observed. And just like just a really, really horrible feeling. And I just couldn't wait to get to July and just be out, just be out of that environment. And then coming into this year where I've had 123 formal observations. And it's just all the feedbacks been so positive. And everyone's been so welcoming. I think that's been my real game changer into how the teaching should be and how it should make you feel. I feel just really relaxed. And like looking back now to last year, it just feels like a completely different person. And I am going to put that primarily down to the environment, because I don't think my confidence has grown that much in a year. I feel like I'm still

Beatrice 26:00

I'm teaching in the same ways I'm teaching. I don't know, I just feel it sounds to me like because I kind of feel like you had the rug pulled out from underneath you. Yeah. Because at first in the first go, it was, you know, great observations doing really well. And then all of a sudden you start, yeah, journey, and then it goes down. And then actually, it sounds as if you're sort of coming back up the other side now? Yeah, definitely. And I don't feel there's ever been a time that I've been in this school that I felt anywhere near veering towards how I felt last year. I'm just I think that's also because I'm more conscious of it. Yeah, no, I don't want to feel like that. And I think I'd recognise anything that made me started to feel like that, if that makes sense.

PD 26:45

Yeah, it sounds as if although you work in a very autonomous way. Perhaps the infrastructure of the school suits you better, would you say? Would you say that you see more visible support? Or would it just be about you feeling more comfortable?

Beatrice 27:08

I think it's a complete mix of everything. To be honest, I think I think I am feeling more confident, and comfortable. I think I am feeling more experienced. I am knowing what I need to prioritise more. And I think obviously, I've had a year of teaching under my belt. So I would feel all those things, hopefully more naturally.

Beatrice 27:25

But also, I feel that the support, and again, I'm not, it's not even I feel there's less support in some areas, but more in others. And it's it just it's just very different. I feel that the whole cult, I think it's the school culture, really, that has kind of changed my mind helped to change my mindset, because everything they do is really positive. And I feel that I wouldn't be working there if they didn't think I was a good teacher, and they didn't want me to work there. Whereas at my previous school, I felt like they felt they were doing me a favour by me working there, if that makes sense. So I think I think it's just a complete mind change, like mindset change.

Appendix 7 Padlet Chronological incident timelines (Year 2)

Below is an exemplar of the chronological timelines for year 2:

Nadia 1 of 4:

Timeline of critical incidents - Nadia

Critical Incident 1, Yr 2, Edit

POSITIVE - CONFIDENCE/SUPPORT IN-SCHOOL/WORKLOAD:
0:04 This year has been a different start to last year. Can't pinpoint if it's been easier or harder.
0:14 Definitely feel more confident this year. I know the school, the policies, who to go to if I'm not sure about anything.
1:14 Year lead is supportive and I'm starting to feel confident.
1:34 The AHT is the year lead - and that has changed a lot from last year - I'm not worried about this year.
1:52 Organisation of the team is better.
2:03 Stress levels last year high - feel like I'm handling the workload much better.
2:11 Found ways of going about things differently, that has been helpful.
2:20 Realised important to make year leads know how I'm feeling/struggling.

Interview Edit

POSITIVE - CONFIDENCE/SUPPORT FROM SLT/EXPECTATIONS CLEAR
Nadia: Yeah, I think it was because I was in the same year group. I was confident because I have the assistant head with me now, and it sort of all aligned and I know the routine now, I know the expectation. So that sort of pressure was gone.
Nadia: I think at the beginning, you're new to the field of teaching, you're new to the school, so the way I trained doesn't necessarily fit with the school. So it was a lot of factors like that. I didn't have it this time, at the beginning of ECT2. And I knew exactly what the school expected. (1:01)
Nadia: And, you know, I've had more experience now...I think one of the things I mentioned was - parents were a worry. And I've had my fair share of experience with parents. So small factors that helped me feel confident right at the beginning than compared to last year. (1:29)

Interview Edit

POSITIVE - 'UN-OFFICIAL' MENTOR SUPPORT
Nadia: Actually, we joke about this... I call him my year lead. But I work very closely with him, that it doesn't make sense for me to reach out to my actual mentor, who's not even in the same year group. And our timing just doesn't align. Whereas my year lead knows exactly the support I need, knows exactly what's happening. He knows my class really well. So he, you know, he worked day to day, side by side with me. So it makes sense for me to go to him, rather than my actual mentor, who I will see the odd amount. (3:06)
Nadia: And he is aware, but I think my year lead knows me more. And he knows my strengths, he knows my weakness, he knows how I'm feeling compared to my mentor. But yeah, it's true. (3:21)
Nadia: Whereas (4:24) this year, although my year lead isn't my mentor, we have a mentoring relationship where he's... and you can argue because he's an assistant head, he has a lot more time than my year lead. And I don't know if time plays a factor. But we he spends a lot more time mentoring me this year, whereas I feel like last year, I didn't get that mentoring feeling. (4:48)
Nadia: So I suppose it's kind of both because he's there, I don't think I would seek and approach him if he wasn't my year lead. But I think it is he's accessible to me compared to everybody else. And so yeah, I suppose that's why I go to him first.
And I feel like he would also prefer that I go to him because I'm part of his team. And therefore, I think it makes sense for all of us to just be on the same line. Whereas if I go to my mentor, who's in a different year lead, it's bringing another person to the team. (5:23)
Nadia: And I don't think that would quite work well. (5:37)

Interview Edit

NEGATIVE - LACK OF MENTOR SUPPORT/TIME:
Nadia: Well, it's interesting, because my last year, my year lead was also my mentor. But it didn't quite work out because I don't think she quite, well... she didn't have time for me, because she had another ECT. And I think she, she was struggling herself with coping with [every other work plus mentoring me. So we didn't really have that mentor relationship. (4:17)
Nadia: I mean, speaking to my year lead, he wants that kind of a role. And you can tell, because he puts that back on me, whereas last year, I could tell my year lead was wasn't in the position to mentor someone. And so I can see the experience of someone who has the, you know, wants it and has the skills compared to someone who hasn't. (6:27)
Nadia: And I'm with best practice, my ECT programme - and I know they [mentors] attend one session, but I don't think that's quite enough for someone to mentor someone. (6:42)
Nadia: I think last year, I sort of... I think it was... I didn't want people to think it's her first year and she can't even cope with the first year of teaching. And I think maybe that was why I kept it all in. But then it had a bit of a bigger effect. Whereas this year, I sort of realised it's okay for me to open up and say it because that's just how I feel. (15:57)
Nadia: I think sometimes everybody gets assigned a role and you're the mentor, you're the ECT. But I don't think that necessarily means we're fulfilling our roles properly. I think on paper, it just looks good that I have a mentor and I have my year lead. But actually, we as an ECT have to show that we are doing things but my mentor doesn't have to. (22:24)
Nadia: And I think sometimes, as a result, things don't technically happen...the weekly or termly meetings. (22:40)

Interview Edit

NEGATIVE - WORKLOAD/WELL-BEING/BURN-OUT/CONSIDER LEAVING PROFESSION:
Nadia: Yeah, workload is still a big factor. And it's affecting my physical and mental health at the minute. (8:01)
Nadia: And I think this year, I had... so our school changes who plans everything. And so last year, I did foundation subjects. This year, I've been given the task of planning English. Now that equates to... I think... I'm doing about 13 lesson plans. Plus, I think it was because the school didn't have a specific structure. And so I started to already feel the pressure of trying to accommodate to the school's view, school's way of planning English. (8:40)
Nadia: And then I also this year the class I have currently are very SEND heavy. I've got two EHCP children, I've got one potential for EHCP. And then plus, I've got eight SEND, other SEND children. And that has been really difficult in trying to, I've got a lot more forms to fill out, in terms of planning. I'm constantly having to think about adaptation. (9:15)
Nadia: So, all of that has sort of increased my workload from last year. (9:24)
Nadia: And, and that has had an effect on my mental health and my physical health. I think I'm... I don't have time to do anything else, because I'm fully just focusing on my work. (9:33)
Nadia: So yeah, I don't think I've sort of improved in terms of workload. (9:44)

Interview Edit

NEGATIVE - LACK OF SUPPORT/WELL-BEING/BURN-OUT/CONSIDER LEAVING PROFESSION:
Nadia: To be honest, no. It wasn't until this term, when I said to my year lead, I don't think I can do this anymore, I think I might have to pause everything and just leave because I'm starting to recognise it's deeply affecting me. (10:31)
Nadia: And I'm not... I'm not someone who just... I had a tough first year start with my team. And I kept going and going. But there was something this year and this term where I didn't even have that energy to keep going. (10:44)
Nadia: And I sort of went to him, it was very casual, I said to him I don't think I can do this any longer. And I think he, because he knows me so well now, he sort of... I think that was an alarm bell from him. So he went and spoke to my deputy, who's also my induction tutor. And that's when she approached me and she said - no, we know how you are. And we've seen your observations - we could not tell that's how you were feeling. What can we do? So then I was given one, I think one afternoon to catch up with work. And that was pretty much it. (11:20)
Nadia: I mean, I was grateful for that support. But I think how I feel currently is I've been told that I will be supported. But then that support just isn't visible for me. (11:30)
Nadia: And the only reason I got this amount of support was because I decided to speak out for the first time. I just, I knew if I was heading the same path, I'd be honest with you... I don't think I would have made it to the end of this half term. And that was very out of character for me. (12:00)
Nadia: I'm someone who just keeps on going. I don't fuss around. And I spoke to my deputy about it and said... you know how I am - I've never directly spoken to the deputy or the head teacher about the

Interview Edit

NEGATIVE - BEING AN ECT:
Nadia: I know that it's different factors. For me this year, my class has played a lot of a big factor on the way I'm feeling. And I realised this term that if I need things to change, I need to start speaking up more. But I think for me, sometimes I feel as an ECT, that can be quite difficult, because I think there's this stereotype, maybe, oh, you're an ECT... you know... you're in second year of ECT, you should be a bit more confident now. (16:39)
Nadia: And I don't think anyone's said that to me. But I think sometimes, having the ECT label has been nice in some occasion, I think first year was quite nice. People are accommodating, people are understanding. I think, when you go into second year ECT, it's sort of... I think you have the conversation, oh... years ago, it was only one year. And now it's two years. (17:06)
Nadia: I think hearing those things... I should know this by now, I should be confident, I shouldn't feel like I'm in the first year of ECT. So I think having that ECT label has its benefits, but it also comes with a consequence. (17:19)

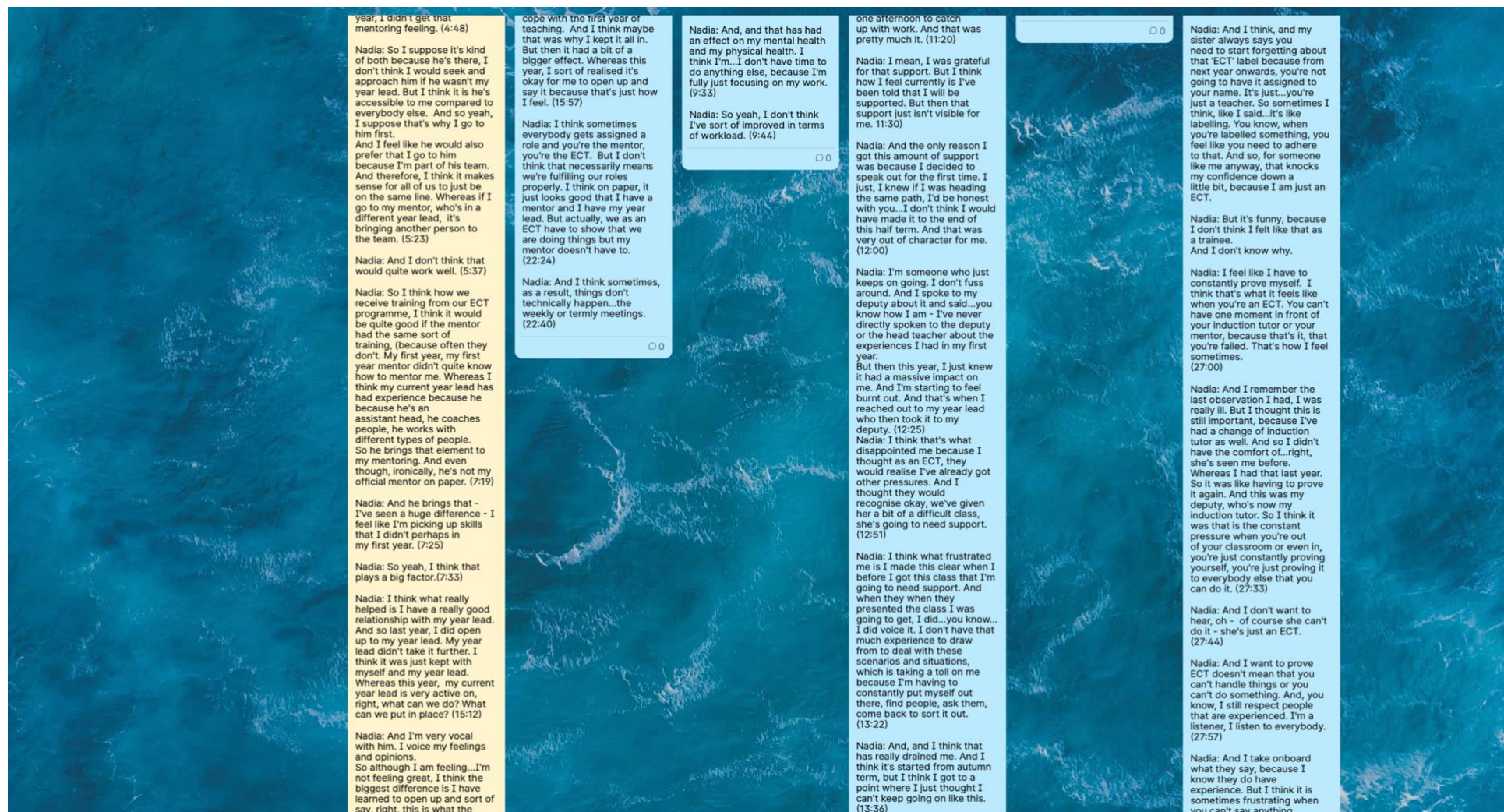
Interview Edit

NEGATIVE - COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE/ JUST AN ECT
Nadia: I think most of the time, I feel integrated. I think there are moments that you can feel the sort of segregation between teachers that are early in their careers compared to teachers who have been there while/are experienced. I think it often comes with during when we have coaching or observations... always ECT first, the ECT needs it. And so I think it's when conversation like this happens... and that's when... it's always very subtle. It's never direct. It's always very subtly, oh, you're an ECT, you need this. (23:59)
Nadia: I take the quiet route. I'm not very vocal. But I have another ECT who came in at the same time, and we're quite good friends. And she's very vocal compared to me. But sometimes, you know, people will make comment, oh, you know, she is an ECT. She's very confident for an ECT. (24:30)
Nadia: And so when you hear that, you sort of go, oh, okay... I think that knocks my confidence down. I'm always worried about overstepping my boundary. And I'm very conscious of that. (24:48)
Nadia: And I think, and my sister always says you need to start forgetting about that ECT label because from next year onwards, you're not going to have it assigned to your name. It's just... you're just a teacher. So sometimes I think, like I said... it's like labelling. You know, when you're labelled something, you feel like you need to adhere to that. And so, for someone like me anyway, that knocks my confidence down a little bit, because I am just an ECT.
Nadia: But it's funny, because I don't think I felt like that as a trainee. And I don't know why.
Nadia: I feel like I have to constantly prove myself. I think that's what it feels like when you're an ECT. You can't have one moment in front of your induction tutor or your mentor, because that's it. that

Critical Incident 2, Yr 2, Edit

NEGATIVE (LAST YEAR) - PARENTS:
0:27 I feel like the last year I struggled in terms of having confidence to deal with parents and situations that involve them.

Nadia 2 of 4:



year, I didn't get that mentoring feeling. (4:48)

Nadia: So I suppose it's kind of both because he's there, I don't think I would seek and approach him if he wasn't my year lead. But I think it is he's accessible to me compared to everybody else. And so yeah, I suppose that's why I go to him first. And I feel like he would also prefer that I go to him because I'm part of his team. And therefore, I think it makes sense for all of us to just be on the same line. Whereas if I go to my mentor, who's in a different year lead, it's bringing another person to the team. (5:23)

Nadia: And I don't think that would quite work well. (5:37)

Nadia: So I think how we receive training from our ECT programme, I think it would be quite good if the mentor had the same sort of training, (because often they don't. My first year, my first year mentor didn't quite know how to mentor me. Whereas I think my current year lead has had experience because he because he's an assistant head, he coaches people, he works with different types of people. So he brings that element to my mentoring. And even though, ironically, he's not my official mentor on paper. (7:19)

Nadia: And he brings that - I've seen a huge difference - I feel like I'm picking up skills that I didn't perhaps in my first year. (7:25)

Nadia: So yeah, I think that plays a big factor. (7:33)

Nadia: I think what really helped is I have a really good relationship with my year lead. And so last year, I did open up to my year lead. My year lead didn't take it further. I think it was just kept with myself and my year lead. Whereas this year, my current year lead is very active on, right, what can we do? What can we put in place? (15:12)

Nadia: And I'm very vocal with him. I voice my feelings and opinions. So although I am feeling...I'm not feeling great, I think the biggest difference is I have learned to open up and sort of say, right, this is what the

cope with the first year of teaching. And I think maybe that was why I kept it all in. But then it had a bit of a bigger effect. Whereas this year, I sort of realised it's okay for me to open up and say it because that's just how I feel. (15:57)

Nadia: I think sometimes everybody gets assigned a role and you're the mentor, you're the ECT. But I don't think that necessarily means we're fulfilling our roles properly. I think on paper, it just looks good that I have a mentor and I have my year lead. But actually, we as an ECT have to show that we are doing things but my mentor doesn't have to. (22:24)

Nadia: And I think sometimes, as a result, things don't technically happen...the weekly or termly meetings. (22:40)

Nadia: And, and that has had an effect on my mental health and my physical health. I think I'm...I don't have time to do anything else, because I'm fully just focusing on my work. (9:33)

Nadia: So yeah, I don't think I've sort of improved in terms of workload. (9:44)

one afternoon to catch up with work. And that was pretty much it. (11:20)

Nadia: I mean, I was grateful for that support. But I think how I feel currently is I've been told that I will be supported. But then that support just isn't visible for me. (11:30)

Nadia: And the only reason I got this amount of support was because I decided to speak out for the first time. I just, I knew if I was heading the same path, I'd be honest with you...I don't think I would have made it to the end of this half term. And that was very out of character for me. (12:00)

Nadia: I'm someone who just keeps on going. I don't fuss around. And I spoke to my deputy about it and said...you know how I am - I've never directly spoken to the deputy or the head teacher about the experiences I had in my first year. But then this year, I just knew it had a massive impact on me. And I'm starting to feel burnt out. And that's when I reached out to my year lead who then took it to my deputy. (12:25)

Nadia: I think that's what disappointed me because I thought as an ECT, they would realise I've already got other pressures. And I thought they would recognise okay, we've given her a bit of a difficult class, she's going to need support. (12:51)

Nadia: I think what frustrated me is I made this clear when I before I got this class that I'm going to need support. And when they when they presented the class I was going to get, I did...you know...I did voice it. I don't have that much experience to draw from to deal with these scenarios and situations, which is taking a toll on me because I'm having to constantly put myself out there, find people, ask them, come back to sort it out. (13:22)

Nadia: And, and I think that has really drained me. And I think it's started from autumn term, but I think I got to a point where I just thought I can't keep going on like this. (13:36)

Nadia: And I think, and my sister always says you need to start forgetting about that 'ECT' label because from next year onwards, you're not going to have it assigned to your name. It's just...you're just a teacher. So sometimes I think, like I said...it's like labelling. You know, when you're labelled something, you feel like you need to adhere to that. And so, for someone like me anyway, that knocks my confidence down a little bit, because I am just an ECT.

Nadia: But it's funny, because I don't think I felt like that as a trainee. And I don't know why.

Nadia: I feel like I have to constantly prove myself. I think that's what it feels like when you're an ECT. You can't have one moment in front of your induction tutor or your mentor, because that's it, that you're failed. That's how I feel sometimes. (27:00)

Nadia: And I remember the last observation I had. I was really ill. But I thought this is still important, because I've had a change of induction tutor as well. And so I didn't have the comfort of...right, she's seen me before. Whereas I had that last year. So it was like having to prove it again. And this was my deputy, who's now my induction tutor. So I think it was that is the constant pressure when you're out of your classroom or even in, you're just constantly proving yourself, you're just proving it to everybody else that you can do it. (27:33)

Nadia: And I don't want to hear, oh - of course she can't do it - she's just an ECT. (27:44)

Nadia: And I want to prove ECT doesn't mean that you can't handle things or you can't do something. And, you know, I still respect people that are experienced. I'm a listener, I listen to everybody. (27:57)

Nadia: And I take onboard what they say, because I know they do have experience. But I think it is sometimes frustrating when you can't say anything

Nadia 3 of 4:

official mentor on paper. (7:19)

Nadia: And he brings that - I've seen a huge difference - I feel like I'm picking up skills that I didn't perhaps in my first year. (7:25)

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Nadia: I think what really helped is I have a really good relationship with my year lead. And so last year, I did open up to my year lead. My year lead didn't take it further. I think it was just kept with myself and my year lead. Whereas this year, my current year lead is very active on, right, what can we do? What can we put in place? (15:12)

Nadia: And I'm very vocal with him. I voice my feelings and opinions. So although I am feeling...I'm not feeling great, I think the biggest difference is I have learned to open up and sort of say, right, this is what the issue is. This is how I'm feeling. So, I don't keep it in me anymore. I do let it out. So that's the biggest difference. (15:35)

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other pressures. And I thought they would recognise okay, we've given her a bit of a difficult class, she's going to need support. (12:51)

Nadia: I think what frustrated me is I made this clear when I before I got this class that I'm going to need support. And when they when they presented the class I was going to get, I did...you know... I did voice it. I don't have that much experience to draw from to deal with these scenarios and situations, which is taking a toll on me because I'm having to constantly put myself out there, find people, ask them, come back to sort it out. (13:22)

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Nadia: And I don't want to hear, oh - of course she can't do it - she's just an ECT. (27:44)

Nadia: And I want to prove ECT doesn't mean that you can't handle things or you can't do something. And, you know, I still respect people that are experienced. I'm a listener, I listen to everybody. (27:57)

Nadia: And I take onboard what they say, because I know they do have experience. But I think it is sometimes frustrating when you can't say anything because you haven't got experience. (28:15)

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Nadia 4 of 4:

Critical Incident 3, Yr 2, . Edit

POSITIVE - ECF:

4:36 ECF - similar - quite nice, not as many modules or tasks to do. It's quite open and research based.

4:56 Easier than last year - amount of tasks.

5:00 Research is open and I want to focus on SEN - as it's appropriate for me and current.

Interview Edit

NEGATIVE - ECF

Nadia: I'll be honest, I think the only thing that I've benefited from second year ECT is having the extra time out, even though it's only 5% of my timetable, but everything else is... it hasn't made a difference in my experience of teaching. (18:18)

Nadia: I think first year was much more needed, you know - reinforcing theories and aspects such as, how do I deal with certain encounters? But this year, I haven't had time to focus on my ECT because there's so much going on, you know, with the planning, with my class, that I haven't had the mindset to sit through my ECT. (18:47)

Nadia: And this year it's research-based and we've got a question to look at. And I would absolutely love to put my mind to it and focus a lot on that. But I just physically, I don't have time to...the time we get is 5%, - it's an hour. In that hour, I don't have time to sort of research and put things together. (19:14)

Nadia: So I haven't seen another benefit of two years ECT. Other than that, I don't think it makes a difference. (19:21)

Nadia: If anything, it's more pressure because part of me thought I can't keep going on. But then my year lead was going, I'm not letting you go now, you've made it this far. And if you, you know, if you stop here, then that means you haven't completed the ECT. And so if anything, it's an added pressure sometimes. (19:34)

Nadia: Yeah, I think adding to that - I think sometimes it feels like you're trapped because it's that concept of if I didn't have that second year ECT, I think I would have looked for an alternative. I would have had thoughts of maybe trying somewhere new. But because of that and having to find a school that then accepts an ECT, halfway across - it's not even an option. (21:30)

option. (21:30)

Nadia: And so I sort of thought, it's true - I think I just have to grit my teeth and get through. And I am lucky, I think my deputy sort of realised I got to a point and now, every time she sees me, it's...you know...are you okay. It would have been nice if we had that prior to, you know...me having to feel like this and go to them, it would be nice for a bit more frequent check-ins with teachers that are in the early years of their career. (21:58)

Final ECT Reflections - Oral History

0:02 I've officially completed my ECT induction.

0:05 Reflecting on my ECT journey - parts helped me prepare for the profession - being given extra time. That was useful, particularly in the first year.

0:23 When you're new to the profession, there's lots of information to take in. Especially in a different school to the one you've trained in. Need time to process information.

0:35 Given time to reflect and improve skillsets.

0:49 Programme I was part of was not too useful for me in the two years.

0:56 Often the module did not link to my current situation.

1:18 Lot of the module felt repetitive of training year.

1:30 A lot of factors affect the likelihood of me staying in the profession. The support network. I had strong leadership in year 2 and this had a positive impact, especially on my mental health. It was still hard at times, but I was able to cope. Whilst in the first year I didn't have a support network and it made it difficult.

2:21 This will impact on how long I'll remain - and the workload is a lot!

2:30 Teachers have to work outside of work, I talk about this with friends outside of teaching. I'm always thinking about me consistently having to work.

2:59 I am remaining though and I hope for the next five years, I'd like to think.

3:03 Factors such as mental health, workload, support networks can make a difference.

3:13 Last two years - been on a big journey and started off wobbly. Workload was a big factor. Not having a strong team either.

3:45 Second year - having a team made a huge difference, especially on my mental health. Had a better work-life balance.

4:21 Lead up to Ofsted inspection especially can be draining.

4:44 Thinking now ECT is completed - I am left by myself?

5:04 I guess it depends on the school.

5:10 To reflect on whole journey, things that would've improved my ECT experience are: a good support network, good leadership and continuous conversations with a mentor. Over the two years, I haven't had a strong mentor relationship but felt like it's so important - especially in the first year - to develop as a teacher. It's about lack of time.

6:02 As a trainee [mentor meetings] happen but as an ECT it's more difficult.

Appendix 8 - Driving and Restraining Forces Data (Year 1 and 2)

Year 1

DRIVING FORCES

Driving Forces and evidence identified from oral history partial transcripts:

Driving Force	Evidence found
Mentor/induction tutor support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beatrice, recording 1 (1:04): <i>'Strong mentor, pushed me – feedback I got was positive'</i>. - Nadia, recording 1, Aut 1 (0:41): <i>'Sat with the deputy head who is my ECT tutor and supportive'</i>. - Athena, recording 1, Aut 2 (2:31): <i>'Mentors are very supportive and give advice'</i>. - Athena, recording 9, Aut 2 (9:34): <i>'Have support of induction mentor and coach...they're always checking in with me'</i>. - Tanie, recording 1, Aut 1 (6:30): <i>'Other, older really experienced year 6 teacher - ECT tutor – one step to the side/above mentor role. Part-time, really busy but observes once a half-term. She's said right things, supportive and helpful when others don't know how to be'</i>.
Support from wider staff including SLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nadia, recording 1, Aut 1 (0:06): <i>'School welcoming, staff supportive'</i>. - Athena, recording 1, Aut 1 (0:45): <i>'Deputy and Head were very eager and welcoming'</i>.
Mentor knowledgeable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, recording 1, Aut 1 (0:57): <i>'I have two mentors, an ECT training mentor [induction mentor] and then a 'coach' [ECT mentor]. The coach is a similar age to me and was an ECT seven years ago – so understands the recent process.'</i>
Being a career-changer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beatrice, recording 1, Aut 1 (2:04): <i>'I knew it was a difficult school to work at. No one had been shy in saying that...but coming from a corporate environment thought that was what I wanted from my teaching journey'</i>. - Tanie, recording 1, Aut (2:15): <i>'If I were a younger ECT, straight from university – I'd find it really challenging. I have got that work experience, worked with difficult people before and learnt ways not to take things personally – with a pinch of salt. Found that's what got me through, would've been very difficult'</i>.
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jessica, recording 1, Sum 1 (7:20): <i>'My ECT supervisor observed me last week and it was really positive'</i>.
Transition from ITT to ECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beatrice, recording 1, Aut 1 (0:10): <i>'Transition from SD trainee to ECT, in same school'</i>.
Experienced colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beatrice, recording 1, Aut 2 (5:25): <i>'Positive, weight-lifted off shoulders. Working with experienced teacher and she was guiding the planning, "breath of fresh air". Felt really supported by her – more than school'</i>.

Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, recording 5, Aut 2 (0:17): 'I want to talk about the children – “everyone says I have the nicest year group’. - Jessica, recording 1, Aut 1 (7:23): <i>‘Adjusting to needs, interests, “lovely bunch”’.</i>
Job satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, recording 6, Aut 2 (0:12): <i>‘Really enjoyed first half-term – it’s everything I wanted. I’m happy in role’.</i> - Athena, recording 1, Sum 2 (3:18): <i>‘One thing I was happy with after Ofsted – one child said to the inspector “Whenever my teacher reads to me – it takes me to another world” [pride is palpable in Athena’s voice]. It appeared in the Ofsted report and I thought – yes, that’s me!’.</i>

RESTRAINING FORCES

Restraining forces and evidence identified from oral history partial transcripts:

Restraining Force	Evidence found
Being a career-changer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tanie, recording 1, Aut 2 (1:40): <i>‘I’ve come from a role where I managed myself – nobody [was] telling me, I was trusted I would do my job’.</i> - Beatrice, recording 1, Aut 1 (2:50): <i>‘Main sticking point in our early relationship (another ECT) because although I used to manage a team in my old career, I didn’t feel that it was my job to manage her as well’.</i> - Beatrice, recording 1, Yr 1 (9:50): <i>‘Their way of motivating and feedback didn’t align with me. Not why I’d left a corporate job to be treated in that way’.</i> - Tanie, recording 1, Aut 1 (6:07): [Mentor] <i>‘He’s younger than me, difficult dynamic as I’m coming in as a career-changer, with lots of experience on one hand, but no experience of school and teaching’.</i>
ECF/CPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jessica, recording 1, Aut 1(2:14): <i>‘Learnt this from last year...it can be a bit ‘slow’ and ‘guess work’. Long time to set up Ambition and Step Lab accounts. Frustrating it took a month’.</i> - Jessica, recording 1, Aut 1(4:37): <i>‘I have covered this and yes, I did have to deal with them all last year.’</i>
Workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, recording 2, Aut 1 (4:47): <i>‘Whilst I had so much university work when I was doing my PGCE and knew I had to do some work for my ECT (I’m doing it with Ambition/Step Labs) – didn’t realise it would be so much – vidoes, reading – quite time consuming’.</i> - Nadia, recording 1, Aut 1 (2:37): <i>‘Then hard to balance reading BPN material, PPA being used for planning, heavy planning guidance, lots of guidance of what is expected’.</i>
Work-life balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nadia, recording 1, Aut 1 (3:23): <i>‘I was constantly reminded of work-life balance and it was difficult to fit that all in, and not take it home’.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, recording 2, Aut 1 (3:14): <i>'Staff meetings are two hours long and I'm working every night, doing the bare minimum done as I'm working until 9pm at night and also working weekends'.</i> - Nadia, recording 1, Aut 1 (3:02): <i>'At my school, can't stay later than 5.45pm. "Every day I start at 7.30am and leave at 5.45pm, it started to take a toll, but as a 1st year ECT I didn't want to complain'.</i>
Mentor support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, recording 1, Aut 2 (2:31): <i>'Mentors are very supportive and give advice, but not much time with me'.</i> - Nadia, recording 1, Aut 1 (6:31): <i>'Felt I wasn't be mentored'.</i> - Athena, recording 7, Aut 2 (5:52): <i>'I hoped for a little bit more in terms of check-ins – what mentor is for, but she can't do that every week, she has too much extra-curricular'.</i> - Beatrice, recording 1, Aut 1 (2:34): <i>'Moving into my ECT year, paired with another ECT. I was told I was an experienced member of staff, so I could support another ECT – which is not the case'.</i> - Beatrice, recording 1, Yr 1 (8:01): <i>'Joint mentor meetings – didn't have own mentor. Sometimes worked well, but didn't have someone dedicated to me. (8:33): 'Used as an example of what to do for ECT, rather than developing me'.</i> - Jessica, recording 1, Aut 1(5:29): <i>'Only hiccup is mentor leaving after Christmas. Interesting to see how I can build up new mentor relationship'.</i> - Beatrice, recording 1, Yr 1 (7:50): <i>'Easter – ECT mentor left'.</i>
Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jessica, recording 1, Aut 1 (1:08): <i>'last year's class felt like teenagers and this year like babies'.</i> - Athena, recording 5, Aut 2 (3:13): <i>'Behaviour changing – group chat on phones, nasty messages'.</i> - Jessica, recording 1, Sum 1 (2:14): <i>'Harder to focus on positives when you're faced with 3/4 children that make life difficult as a teacher. Why are you doing that? Starting to get difficult'.</i> - Beatrice, recording 1, Aut 1 (4:16): <i>'I had challenging class'.</i>
Dual role of women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jessica, recording 1, Aut 1(8:02): <i>'Got married in September, pressure off – freed up time at home. But will see if additional family responsibilities and how I manage those. Personal challenge'.</i>
Lack of autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tanie, recording 1, Aut 2 (0:23): <i>'First thing, both as a career-changer and in general. Teachers aren't left to manage their own time and development. Almost as if we are not trusted – but are with the children's development'.</i>
Negative feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beatrice, recording 1, Yr 1 (6:55): <i>'I started to get really negative feedback, complete opposite to the experience I'd had at the same school the year before.</i>

	<i>Felt like they were doing it to make me better, but doing it the wrong way – no positive feedback from induction tutor in first year’.</i>
SLT support	- Athena , recording 9, Aut 2 (9:34): <i>‘the ‘higher ups’ have left me on my own’.</i>
Well-being	- Athena , recording 8, Aut 2 (0:10): <i>‘I didn’t mention/realise the stress I feel at home. I’ve painted a really good picture of first term. Staff and children have been amazing, something I missed discussing before is the stress at home – “my inability to relax at home, I’m having dreams and nightmares’.</i>

Year 2

DRIVING FORCES

Driving Forces during year two of the study, with examples of evidence found:

Driving Force	Evidence found
Mentor support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (4:39): <i>'My mentor's the year below me...she's the year four teacher - she's already had them from last year...and she gives me these tips on what to do. I think that because of the support...it's made me feel better about myself.'</i> - Jessica, interview, Spr 1 (4:39): <i>'My mentor has taught year 2 before...so even though she has been in key stage two for three years...we get on and I'm going to ask for her opinion. Because...who am I going to feel most comfortable being the most honest with ...this is exactly the thing that I'm struggling, what would you do?'</i>
SLT support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (4:14): <i>'Governors, R.E lead and the HT looked in my books and commented how beautiful they were and that they were "giving year 6 teacher a run for their money". So grateful and glad. The HT is a devout Catholic. That's all that matters to me.'</i> - Nadia, oral history, Aut 1 (1:14): <i>'Year lead is supportive and I'm starting to feel confident. The AHT is the year lead – and that has changed a lot from last year – I'm not worried about this year...organisation of the team is better.'</i> - Tanie, oral history, Aut 1 (2:00): <i>'Part of the difference [is the] new Head – her way of doing things is...more relaxed about small details. Doesn't micro-manage – gives teachers more trust and ownership.'</i> - Tanie, oral history, Aut 1 (5:00): <i>'Tricky situation with parents. I'm getting used to it...but I was in a job where I was managing all situations. Now, it's nice to have knowledge and back up of SLT. It's a strange balancing act...to figure out what I can deal with on my own and what SLT will do. The SLT are broadly supportive'.</i>

<p>'Unofficial' mentor support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (9:39): <i>'My mentor [has] been a teacher for 20 plus years, and she's great and she gives good advice. But there are some things...[she's] very nit-picky. So, that's why I go to the other one [unofficial mentor] the year six teacher, who's not my mentor, because she's sort of a similar age around me. She's been in teaching for nine years, but she's more realistic about things. Whereas the mentor [is] unrealistic, I believe.'</i> - Beatrice, interview, Aut 1 (15:21): <i>'I don't just always just go to my mentor for advice, I've got a wide support network that I can go to...because I think ...one person telling you how to deal with that situation isn't always how you would feel comfortable dealing with it...so I think it's always useful to check with different people'.</i> - Nadia, oral history, Aut 1 (3:06): <i>'Actually, we joke about this...but I work very closely with him - that it doesn't make sense for me to reach out to my actual mentor, who's not even in the same year group. And our timing just doesn't align. Whereas my year lead knows exactly the support I need...he works day-to-day, side by side with me. So it makes sense for me to go to him, rather than my actual mentor'.</i> - Nadia, oral history, Aut 1 (3:21): <i>'And he is aware [mentor], but I think my year lead knows me more...my strengths, my weakness...how I'm feeling compared to my mentor.'</i> - Nadia, oral history, Aut 1 (4:24): <i>'We have a mentoring relationship where he's...and you can argue because he's an assistant head, he has a lot more time than my year lead. And I don't know if time plays a factor. But he spends a lot more time mentoring me...whereas I feel like last year, I didn't get that mentoring. I've seen a huge difference - I feel like I'm picking up skills that I didn't perhaps in my first year.</i> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (9:40): <i>'Last year, I was just getting by – I need support from someone more reflective [than mentor]. Colleagues talk about things – offering alternative ideas (conversations about ideas). It becomes tricky if [the mentor] just gives advice of 'how to do it'.</i> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (25:10): <i>'...so I've actually kind of got more support from the teacher who had my class last year. Last year she was an ECT2...but we're on the same page about and she's been really supportive, because she understands the class. She tries to help - whereas my mentor especially...I can tell (he's never said it) but I can tell it's the classic, oh they would be fine with me.'</i>
<p>Being a career-changer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (21:59): <i>'...if I was fresh out of university...I don't think I would have been able to cope with the workload or the demands. I think because in my previous roles, I've had management experience. I feel that that is what you kind of have to be as a teacher...to kind of be the customer service person for the parents. But then also...I've got two TAs and it's making sure that I manage them correctly, so that I can get the best for the children'.</i> - Beatrice, interview, Aut 1 (17:21): <i>'I think it's made it easier than it would have been. I think the previous career...was so high pressure...I was used to dealing with crazy situations and confrontation and things not going my way and listening</i>

	<p>to feedback. So that environment that I'd moved into teaching from...had really prepared me for it. And I feel that if I had gone...straight out of uni, I wouldn't have had those skills and those experiences to help me.'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jessica, interview, Spr 1 (10:07): 'I think because I'm a career changer, a bit older, I'm kind of aware of... well, actually, if you're not going to help me, I'll just go find the person that will.' - Jessica, interview, Spr 1 (10:23): 'And there's kind of a sense of...I don't have to just stick with what you're telling me...I think there's a bit more of a confidence of...I'm just gonna go and ask. Like...now with this class - I'm having issues with SEND...well I'm going to go to the SENCO. I think you get a bit of oomph when you're...[a career-changer]. If I think back to coming out of uni, starting my first job...you're probably not going to do that...I'll just do what I'm told.' - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (27:31): 'I wouldn't have had the confidence to seek it [mentoring] out elsewhere. Having that sort of [prior career] experience, lets me know that actually he's not a very good mentor for me...because it's just not a great fit. I feel like we kind of got it to work... more from me, and I don't want to say managing the situation - how I knew how to interact. I wouldn't have questioned it as much, if I wasn't a career changer, and didn't have that experience. I would have probably just thought that it was me.'
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<p>Transition from ECT 1 to ECT2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (2:10): <i>'...I just look back at my work and although there's still loads of things...I'm going to change...it's a base. So, it's not taken me forever to think of ideas and to research everything I need to include. And it's just so easy now.'</i> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (12:47): <i>'And actually this year, I just...try not to take everything so seriously. And just do what I can do, because there's only so much we can do.'</i> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (29:57): <i>'... I don't feel more supported, but I do think it's helped. I do think that it's good, that it sort of steps down, but... still acknowledging that you're new to this. I know a lot of the criticism from the framework is you're repeating things, and you're doing things again, but... I don't have a problem with that. I don't mind being reminded. So, I do like the two-year thing. I do like it stepped-down a bit.'</i> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (10:45): <i>'I've realised with teaching that...you have to have the confidence to go to people and be honest. Otherwise...if you don't have that support or don't have those conversations...you'll just crumble. I didn't, last year...I don't think I had any confidence to talk to anyone. I was so afraid.'</i> - Beatrice, interview, Aut 1 (18:11): <i>'And now I'm in a much more positive school, I can see that all the experiences that I've had have definitely, even my training and my first year ECT have definitely helped me this year, as well.'</i> - Nadia, oral history, Aut 1 (0:14): <i>'Definitely feel more confident this year, I know the school, the policies, who to go to if I'm not sure about anything.'</i> - Nadia, oral history, Aut 1 (1:29): <i>'And, you know, I've had more experience now...I think one of the things I mentioned was - parents were a worry. And I've had my fair share of experience with parents. So small factors that helped me feel confident right at the beginning than compared to last year.'</i> - Jessica, oral history, Aut 1 (0:04): <i>'When I think of this year – it's been incredibly straightforward. Partner teacher, I worked with in my first year of teaching (training year) and this has eased transition.'</i> - Jessica, interview, Spr 1 (3:51): <i>'...initially, I was a bit nervous, because I've moved year group...and I was a bit like...am I kind of going back to square one? But all of the planning is there from last year, because my partner teacher has been in year two for a very long time. I'm much more confident in my own ability to manage a classroom and be quite adaptable. I think I've got an air now, for better or for worse, of what's the worst thing that can happen if I go into school?'</i> - Tanie, oral history, Aut 1 (0:10): <i>'So, I'm finding this year easier in comparison to last year. I'm finding it's a huge difference just knowing how everything works in school. Not learning all those routines again from scratch. That's particularly relevant to my school – because I now realise getting used to the staff and the fact that you're not a trainee that's with another teacher to tell you about those things as you go along.'</i>
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Well-being/mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, interview, Aut 2 (1:24): <i>'I made a promise to myself over the summer that I won't suffer again. It was making me really ill...a couple of weeks in – feeling dizzy/tired. Something's changed for the better though. I'd never suffered with mental health before. I don't know if it was the combination of like the training and the wedding? But I've come out the other end.'</i> - Beatrice, interview, Aut 1 (14:13): <i>'I feel a lot more positive about it this year...that's because that's my mindset this year, I just feel a lot more positive and that I can cope. Whereas last year, it did get me a little bit down.'</i> - Nadia, oral history, Aut 1 (2:03): <i>'Stress levels last year [were] high – feel like I'm handling the workload much better...found ways of going about things differently, that has been helpful...realised [it is] important to make year leads know how I'm feeling...[he] is very active on what can we do? What can we put in place?'</i> - Jessica, oral history, Aut 1 (8:24): <i>'Getting settled...last class were difficult to manage [and] caused 'mental load' – left me drained. Been a revelation at home; had dinner, watched a programme. Doesn't sound like much but when last class – quite an achievement to have energy to do this. Haven't had mental strain – a real change!'</i> - Jessica, oral history, Aut 1 (19:18): <i>'Is it a work-life balance? Or am I actually just normal. And I am really trying this year, to just do things. I'm a bit more busy on my weekends. Part of me is ...but what about your planning? And I'm like, well...I will get it done. And I think it's...kind of prioritising that side of your life.'</i> - Jessica, oral history, Aut 1 (21:32): <i>'...it's meant [an] adjustment of it's fine...so stop panicking, you can go and do that thing. You can go out for dinner...you're basically becoming normal. But it's like bizarre that it's taken me three years to be normal.'</i> - Tanie, oral history, Aut 1 (2:34): <i>'Also, I'm aware – Ofsted last year has taken the pressure off. Didn't feel more relaxed straight away – but I am attributing it partially to why I'm feeling a bit more relaxed.'</i>
ECF/CPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beatrice, interview, Aut 1 (7:00): <i>'ECF [year 2] programme changed to more enquiry questions, personalised for development...could choose from two areas of research-based development. Learning [in a] research-based [way] has worked for me...better structure and use of time...working on something can improve on to change practice. I'm engaging more with it.'</i> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (5:00): <i>'ECF...not as many modules or tasks to do. It's quite open and research based. Easier than last year – amount of tasks. I want to focus on SEN – as it's appropriate for me and current.'</i> - Jessica, interview, Spr 1 (7:01): <i>'...there's less pressure from things like your ECF...and because I actually did all the modules last year...sometimes I completely forget...so...almost feels like I'm not doing ECT anymore.'</i> - Jessica, oral history, Aut 1 (16:27): <i>'But elements are helpful...we've had someone in [on] a longer module CPD about scaffolding and that I find more useful.'</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jessica, interview, Spr 1 (29:35): <i>'I have enjoyed the opportunities of having the conferences and the online ones...I find those useful...as extra CPD.'</i> - Jessica, interview, Spr 1 (30:54): <i>'I appreciate my mentor having that protected time... knowing I'm going to see her...I can ask specific questions - that I find it more useful. I think the online modules can be useful, but sometimes it can feel a bit generic...or like...I've covered that bit – so that can be a bit hit or miss. But overall it has been positive.'</i>
Community of Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beatrice, interview, Aut 1 (9:27): <i>'More confident asking anyone for help and advice - settled into school and found my feet...environment encourages learning how to teach.'</i> - Beatrice, interview, Spr 1 (27:25): <i>'I feel that the whole school culture, has helped to change my mindset, because everything they do is really positive. And I feel that I wouldn't be working there if they didn't think I was a good teacher, and they didn't want me to work there. Whereas at my previous school, I felt like they felt they were doing me a favour by me working there. So it's just a complete mindset change'.</i> - Nadia, oral history, Aut 1 (1:01): <i>'I was confident because I have the assistant head with me now, and it sort of all aligned and I know the routine now, I know the expectation. So that sort of pressure was gone. I think at the beginning, you're new to the field of teaching, you're new to the school, so the way I trained doesn't necessarily fit with the school. So it was a lot of factors like that. I didn't have it at the beginning of ECT2...I knew exactly what the school expected.'</i> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (0:57): <i>'I hate that first bit of a job where you don't know how anything works - you don't know routines and things. I just think all that's so amplified in teaching and in a school, because usually (in other jobs)... you'll be shadowing somebody or you're going in at a junior level, so you're not expected to know and do everything. I've just felt like this year, I vaguely know what I'm doing, in terms of like the routines. I've done every one before, which I think is a big part of it.'</i>

RESTRAINING FORCES

Restraining Forces during year two of the study, with examples of evidence found:

Restraining Force	Evidence found
Being a career changer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (18:01): <i>'...when I was in management, I'd be doing...39 hours a week. The difference was that you'd go in and you'd come home, you'd switch off. Okay, we have the occasional bad day, fair enough, but that's it. Whereas I've noticed...Sunday night, you get those jitters...probably from about three o'clock onwards for me...I can't stop thinking. Also working hours, I try and leave school when I can - but it's not just the hours you do in the school, it's hours out of school, putting all the time in at the weekend. But it's all of the different, the extra paperwork, as we say, the responsibilities, that is a worry.'</i> - Jessica, interview, Spr 1 (23:16): <i>'I think sometimes, what is overlooked is the potential that you have to be useful...they overlook the fact that you've got experience of things that could be helpful. And you don't always feel comfortable saying, 'Oh, do you know that I have a master's in archaeology? And actually, do you know that I worked at these museums and have contacts in these places?'</i> - Jessica, interview, Spr 1 (24:17): <i>'And I think in terms of support...it's almost like they look at you and go 'No, but you're just an ECT'. I'm not just an ECT. I am an ECT that has done this, this, this, this, this, and this. I've got experience of balancing my time like this, I can organise myself like this.'</i> - Jessica, interview, Spr 1 (24:46): <i>'It really bothered me, when I was finishing my ITT and I was going into ECT1, they were advertising in my Trust that you can do professional development. Where you got to put together something that you wanted to run. And then you got like a kind of a managing type thing - where you could like run it yourself. And I said, 'Oh, I'd love to do this'. And they told me I couldn't because I was an ECT...'Oh, you won't have time'. You just want to say, I can manage my time. I worked four days a week and did a full-time masters at the same time, I actually can do that. But it was kind of...don't just tell me I can't. Why don't you tell me how you're going to help me to do it? Because you can clearly see that I want to.'</i> - Jessica, interview, Spr 1 (6:03): <i>'...but I still think it's because the head and my mentor are both people that have been teachers straight from university, so I'm not sure they have that perspective of, like, knowing the things that I've got and I can handle, and then knowing the things that I need that guidance on.'</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (18:34): <i>'...in no situation I've ever been in would anybody have been told off for using their laptop in a meeting. Maybe if they were very obviously doing something that wasn't work-related, but it wouldn't have been handled like that either, it was really quite a stark way.'</i> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (34:33): <i>'If you ask the lawyers at the law firm, where I worked in marketing if they're paying people hundreds of thousands pounds a year, they would have said that it's a hell of a lot more important, than you know [finding the right teacher]...it's perspective. Then it's the process of it...the routines to get used to in a new school...how much that all changes.'</i>
Mentor support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (8:32): <i>'...my mentors have changed - I was meant to have a different one originally, but this year four teacher has actually taken that role over. So, she's been more pushy about being my mentor.'</i> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (22:26): <i>'I felt a lot of people have commented, like my TA, that when she's observing me...they say, oh, how did your observation go? And I said, oh, great. I've just got to focus on this, this, and this. And even they're... it almost feels a bit like, I don't know...it came across as like jealousy for me. Because obviously I'm having this class and she couldn't, because she was more of a shout at them[teacher], whereas I'm not that way.'</i> - Beatrice, interview, Aut 1 (8:40): <i>'One downside has been no-one has been a second year ECT mentor, my mentor was new when we signed-up...missed the training...still feel like he's the mindset of "let's follow the script". BP did communicate could 'go off-piste' and tailor it...back to square one" to tick this off'.</i> - Beatrice, interview, Aut 1 (12:07): <i>'I think during the first term...when I worked with another ECT... I wasn't feeling supported. I think, strangely, I'm going through a bit of the same situation now as well. Which I didn't expect. I've got a part time member of staff who isn't necessarily doing their fair share of planning. So, I'm (again) having to support that.'</i> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (5:23): <i>'I don't think I would seek and approach him [unofficial mentor] if he wasn't my year lead. But I think it is he's accessible to me compared to everybody else. And so yeah, I suppose that's why I go to him first. I feel like he would also prefer that I go to him because I'm part of his team. And therefore, I think it makes sense for all of us to just be on the same line. Whereas if I go to my mentor, it's bringing another person to the team. And I don't think that would quite work well.'</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 1 (7:19): <i>'So I think how we receive training from our ECT programme, I think it would be quite good if the mentor had the same sort of training. My first-year mentor didn't quite know how to mentor me. Whereas I think my current year lead has had experience because he because he's an assistant head, he coaches people, he works with different types of people. So he brings that element to my mentoring. And even though, ironically, he's not my official mentor on paper.'</i> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (4:17): <i>'Well, it's interesting, because my last year, my year lead was also my mentor. But it didn't quite work out because I don't think she quite, well...she didn't have time for me, because she had another ECT. And I think she, she was struggling herself with coping with. So we didn't really have that mentor relationship.'</i> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (6:42): <i>'I mean, speaking to my year lead, he wants that kind of a role...and you can tell, whereas last year my year lead was wasn't in the position to mentor someone. And so I can see the experience of someone who wants it and has the skills compared to someone who hasn't. And I'm with best practice, my ECT programme – and I know they [mentors] attend one session, but I don't think that's quite enough for someone to mentor someone.'</i> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (22:24): <i>'I think sometimes everybody gets assigned a role and you're the mentor, you're the ECT. But I don't think that necessarily means we're fulfilling our roles properly. I think on paper, it just looks good that I have a mentor...but actually, as an ECT, have to show that we are doing things but my mentor doesn't have to...sometimes, as a result, things don't technically happen...the weekly or termly meetings.'</i> - Tanie, oral history, Aut 1 (7:10): <i>'This year, although I get on well with mentor and he's more comfortable with the mentor role...I am sort of feeling that as I get more experienced and confident – he can't help me as much. Don't want to sound arrogant – like I've done the job a year and know what I'm doing, but I think – his way of doing things is different.'</i> - Tanie, oral history, Aut 1 (8:34): <i>'Shouldn't always keep up with fads, but I'm feeling less like I can get help with my daily practice. I'm getting more comfortable with what kind of teacher I wait to be. I'll always ask for advice but certain things are never going to be comfortable or natural for me.'</i> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (19:48): <i>'...I feel like in teaching that a 'mentoring/ team leading' role is just given to people as a career development step, it's not given because you're the best person to mentor.'</i>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (20:01): <i>'I really don't want to be just slagging off my mentor - because he's great in lots of ways, and he's got a lot on his plate, but he's not the best person to be a mentor. It was the next step in his career development and somebody didn't go - okay, so we have this new teacher coming, who's best to mentor them? It was, he needs this career development.'</i> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (20:53): <i>'I think that I can understand that, and it happens to a degree in other jobs, but if the new framework and the mentor thing is supposed to be at least largely about keeping teachers and supporting new teachers, then I don't think that's the way of choosing mentors.'</i> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (21:07): <i>'It's not, because of where I'm at, going to make me leave teaching, but it's not keeping me there - and it's not supporting me in that way. I mean, this year, it's just non-existent and it's partly that I'm not going to him for things, because I know that he's got too much on his plate, and that is partly his personal circumstances. But basically, I've gone to him a few times for things and got a really unhelpful, really unsupportive response, so now I just don't.'</i>
Workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (9:24): <i>'Workload is still a big factor. And it's affecting my physical and mental health at the minute. This year, I've been given the task of planning English. Plus, I think it was because the school didn't have a specific structure. So, I started to already feel the pressure of trying to accommodate to the school's view...way of planning English. Also this year the class I have currently are very SEND heavy. So, all of that has sort of increased my workload from last year. And, and that has had an effect on my mental health and my physical health. I think I'm...I don't have time to do anything else, because I'm fully just focusing on my work. So yeah, I don't think I've sort of improved in terms of workload. And I'm starting to feel burnt out.'</i> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (0:09): <i>'3 weeks left of term and the goal is to make it until the end of term...we've either got a deep dive from the MAT or R.E. Ofsted inspection. Why do it now? This is a 9-week term – we're absolutely dying here, the children are knackered. Why do it now? It's so tough and there's so much pressure and stress. We're all trying the hardest for the children...I'll have to prep for this over the weekend.'</i> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (3:13): <i>'Do you know what? It's exhausting. I think being in a one form entry school as well, you're the only class teacher of that year group. I think that's the key point. It is draining.'</i>

Community of Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (25:48): <i>'....even though we're a small school, it's cliquey... they're all mums with children. So, they talk about their kids and things like that. That's something I can't discuss.'</i> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (23:59): <i>'I think most of the time, I feel integrated. I think there are moments that you can feel the sort of segregation between teachers that are early in their careers compared to teachers who have been there while/are experienced. During coaching or observations...always ECT first, the ECT needs it. And so I think it's when conversation like this happens...and that's when...it's always very subtle. It's never direct. It's always very subtly, oh, you're an ECT, you need this.'</i> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (24:48): <i>'I take the quiet route. I'm not very vocal...I'm always worried about overstepping my boundary. And I'm very conscious of that.'</i> - Tanie, oral history, Aut 1 (0:50): <i>'[Not feeling accepted]...now realise that's what made things harder last year. Underestimated that before.'</i> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (1:53): <i>'...when I was new, there wasn't much of...so here's the routine for this, and we're really big on timings for that. All schools have very set routines but I just found that like...if you forgot about something, people were funny about it, and people wouldn't remind you, and there was all sorts of things you're expected to know, and there's no way that you would know without somebody telling you.'</i> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (2:23): <i>'I found myself saying that a few times last year, like I don't know what I don't know! I think schools, or this school in my experience, is particularly bad with that, so I think that's a big part of it.'</i> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (7:22): <i>'So, yeah, it's things people expect you to know that...it's the end of the world if you're two minutes late for assembly. Whereas, you know when I've been in meetings - if you're two minutes late for a meeting...sorry, I was caught up in something else - people kind of expect it.'</i> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (8:16): <i>'I remember ...early last year, I'd taken my class down for lunch on time - I was bang on time. I then had the lunchtime supervisor say has the bell rung? As if I was a naughty child...it was my second or third week, and I know it sounds like a really small thing, but I was like, oh god, is this what kind of school this is?'</i> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (36:09): <i>'...knowing how a school works...it's the biggest thing. Getting used to everything and knowing the routines and the politics and knowing what are those things? Those are not standard things that people know. It's a lot.'</i>
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Behaviour/SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (1:08): <i>'The class are exhausting.'</i> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (3:54): <i>'It's so tiring. And the thing is my new class, they are the naughtiest and have the baddest behaviour class of the whole school. They're that class and they're a bad COVID class as well. So the need is huge. I must have seven on my SEN register, but probably half the class at least are SEN, just undiagnosed. And it's the constant, it's behaviour mainly and the constant need.'</i> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (9:15): <i>'I've got two EHCP children, I've got one potential for EHCP. And then plus, I've got eight SEND, other SEND children. And that has been really difficult in trying to, I've got a lot more forms to fill out, in terms of planning, I'm constantly having to think about adaptation.'</i> - Jessica, oral history, Aut 1 (0:35): <i>'...behaviour is lovely but complex SEN needs...two children [have a] different timetable, as can't access mainstream curriculum.'</i>
Dual role of women	<p>PD: Congratulations on the baby news - when are you due? (0:16)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jessica, interview, Spr 1 (0:23): <i>'Well, [I'm] about 12 and a half weeks...so due in August. My Head Teacher was quite pleased because I get to finish the year. And then I get you know, I can take the whole year, off next year.'</i> <p>PD: And do you think that you are in a different position being a career-changer? (1:06)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jessica, interview, Spr 1 (1:43): <i>'Definitely. I think it did effect our planning...if I hadn't have changed career...it wouldn't have even been a consideration of how many years do we need to wait ? As an ECT do we need to try and plan a certain month for... my holidays and things like that. So I think it does, it has made a difference.'</i> - Jessica, interview, Spr 1 (2:07): <i>'I think at my age - COVID had a massive impact, especially around our wedding, because we got engaged in 2020. So I think that coupled with like, changing career was a massive influence. And I do think if I hadn't have been a changer, we probably would have been in this position earlier.'</i> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (15:43): <i>'...one of the things I mentioned today in this meeting, I'm turning 28 in a couple of months. And the thing is, we've been married and it won't be anytime soon, but within the next year, it's likely that me and my husband, we're going to want to start thinking about having</i>

	<p><i>children...if I secure myself as part-time now, and say if I do end up pregnant next year, then I can come back into a role that's part-time, which is what I want for when I have children.'</i></p>
Lack of autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (6:16): <i>'One example of that is... my mentor would always ask me if I wanted him to draft messages to parents. Now and again when there's something tricky, I want to make sure that I'm wording it [right]. I feel completely confident in talking to people. There's the odd thing with schools where you have to be careful, but I feel fine with that. I've got lots of experience of how to draft messages to people, but then I feel that...I've had that with my mentor and with the head - the head more because she's quite particular about how she likes certain things done.'</i> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (10:00): <i>'So, for instance, I've got a couple of kind of tricky parent situations, and there's one set of those that is really tricky. The head's involved, there's safeguarding and complicated things related... so I get, like, she wants me to go to her with, absolutely everything related to that. I can completely understand that she wants oversight but I've got mixed messages from her. Sometimes she wants to word the messages and she'll be like, "Oh, I wouldn't say that". I feel like there's a bit of a situation that makes me think that our head is doing all this because she wouldn't necessarily back you if she didn't completely agree with how you'd worded something.'</i> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (11:30): <i>'...on some things she seems to want to give us autonomy, but then she's quite particular and specific about things with parents.'</i>
Teaching is unsustainable/considering leaving the profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (6:10): <i>'...I'll be honest, actually I've had a conversation today with the deputy head about going part-time. I'm that drained. And I was honest with her and I said, I feel upset with myself. I've always worked full time...I don't want to give the job up, but right now I'm losing the love and I don't want to lose that love.'</i> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (10:44): <i>'It wasn't until this term, when I said to my year lead I don't think I can do this anymore, I think I might have to pause everything and just leave. I'm starting to recognise it's deeply affecting me...there was something this year and this term where I didn't even have that energy to keep going.'</i> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (11:20): <i>'I said to him I don't think I can do this any longer. So he went and spoke to my deputy, who said 'we could not tell that's how you were feeling. What can we do?'. So then I was given one afternoon to catch up with work. And that was pretty much it.'</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (12:00): <i>'I was grateful...but then that support just isn't visible for me. And the only reason I got this amount of support was because I decided to speak out for the first time. I just, I knew if I was heading the same path, I'd be honest with you...I don't think I would have made it to the end of this half term. And that was very out of character for me.'</i> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (32:52): <i>'I was always prepared to move around a lot to find the right school, because of what I'd heard. I haven't done that and I was almost like, at the end of the first year, I was at the stage of if it doesn't change...I will leave after my second year. But I'm not there now...we'll see how next year goes. It's a bit of that thing...all those new routines and the fact that you're in charge of everything is such a big undertaking.'</i> - Tanie, interview, Spr 1 (32:52): <i>'If you're not happy in your school, you can't just apply for other jobs and see how it goes – like you would in other industries. You have to say if you're leaving, because you have to get time off for interviews. So, you have to be really sure. In a lot of cases you have to be prepared to leave and not get a job. I think that makes it stressful. I don't technically buy what people say about 'oh but it's so important to get the right person in teaching'.</i>
SLT support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (5:05): <i>'my TA made them[SLT] aware of how bad the class can be. So, anyone that was misbehaving, they'd get a warning. And then if that warning's gone, they go down to [SLT]. But it's not solving the issue. They're still the same. My mentor is really concerned about things, but I feel like the other thing is that the head teacher and deputy head have announced they're retiring. So it changes everything. And I feel like now they are supporting me, but they're winding down now.'</i> - Beatrice, interview, Aut 1 (2:59): <i>'I actually felt a little bit more unsettled...because they didn't have anything in place. And there was kind of not really a lot of communication...there was not really any guidance about things that I was used to having really clear boundaries and guidance for...reflecting back on the first year, I think I was kind of worried about things that don't really necessarily matter in day-to-day teaching...it was all the extra frilly bits that my previous school loved.'</i> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (13:22): <i>'...that's what disappointed me - because I thought, as an ECT, they would realise I've already got other pressures. And I thought they would recognise okay, we've given her a bit of a difficult class, she's going to need support. I think what frustrated me is I made this clear when I before I got this class that I'm going to need support. I don't have that much experience to</i>

	<p><i>draw from to deal with these scenarios and situations, which is taking a toll on me because I'm having to constantly put myself out there, find people, ask them, come back to sort it out.'</i></p>
ECF/CPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (18:47): <i>'I think first year was much more needed, you know - reinforcing theories and aspects such as, how do I deal with certain encounters? But this year, I haven't had time to focus on my ECT because there's so much going on, you know, with the planning, with my class. I haven't had the mindset to sit through...and this year it's research-based and we've got a question to look at. And I would absolutely love to put my mind to it and focus a lot on that. But I just...don't have time to...the time we get is 5%, - it's an hour. In that hour, I don't have time to sort of research and put things together.'</i> - Jessica, oral history, Aut 1 (5:58): <i>'Sat on a mixed table – having conversations about how to apply what we've learnt and what's relevant. Makes you reflective on the level of support and pro-activity maybe you have. Do I feel like I'm getting all that I need and are they pushing me? Opportunities others have for CPD/training...other ECTs that are doing this, that and the other and is there a reason that we can't do that and be more proactive as a school?'</i> - Jessica, oral history, Aut 1 (16:15): <i>'And it sounds as though they're still getting more out of it than we do sometimes, because sometimes we get that CPD where you're like, could you not have just emailed me that information? Why did I have to come and sit here for an hour? But yeah, I think it's partially, perceived injustice, where I'm like, how come you get to do this?'</i> - Jessica, interview, Spr 1 (28:58): <i>'I think last year, I found it more like consciously positive, like consciously helpful, because I think it was more present, because it was like every week I was doing something. And it was always new, because I hadn't done the modules before.'</i> - Jessica, interview, Spr 1 (30:25): <i>'But in terms of like my own progression...last year, I found it much more helpful than this year. And I think that's because obviously, I'd finished my training year. And it was almost like a stepping stone. Weaning you off does work and this year, definitely does help. But you do forget because you're not doing it consistently.'</i> - Jessica, interview, Spr 1 (30:25): <i>'Part of me does think that I could have done it in a year. But I think that's because of the way I came through...because I did School Direct salaried and I was straight into teaching in my training year – I felt like almost that was my first year... this t feels like almost unnecessary...but there are elements that are helpful, even if I didn't use it all. And I think sometimes there's an assumption that you can do things when maybe you don't have the experience. And there's</i>

	<p><i>an assumption that you can't do things when you do have the experience. So it kind of swings both ways. I can see because they have to, to a certain level, treat everyone the same, because you can't necessarily do it all completely tailored. But there are some things where I have to sit and do a whole thing on when that was my job. Like questioning...at the museum all we did was ask questions. They'll be like, your questioning is really good...and I guess I know, because I did it for four years. And then it's like a surprise that you can do it...I'm not just an ECT. I'm not just someone who doesn't know what they're doing.'</i></p>
Induction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athena, interview, Spr 1 (34:59): <i>'So I'll be finishing ECT2 and as I've had a conversation about part-time...I want a better work-life balance. I don't think I'd make this decision unless I knew I was fully qualified and [had] passed my ECT. I mean, it's personal reasons as well...but that's the main factor in it because then once I've done that qualification, I can officially say I'm a full-fledged teacher and that can lead me anywhere. But this year is about getting through, day-by-day. I'm over half way now and I just need to carry on'.</i> - Beatrice, interview, Aut 1 (16:25): <i>'I mean, what did help was the extra time out of class, because it's given me more time to plan and catch up on those things. But I think that that hasn't helped in the way that it should have helped. It's not given me more experience, and made me more prepared. It's just been time for me to catch up on things that other people haven't done.'</i> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (16:39): <i>'...sometimes I feel as an ECT...there's this stereotype, you're an ECT...you know... you're in second year of ECT, you should be a bit more confident now. And I don't think anyone's said that to me. But I think sometimes, having the ECT label has been nice in some occasion, I think first year was quite nice. People are accommodating, people are understanding. So I think having that ECT label has its benefits, but it also comes with a consequence.'</i> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (27:00): <i>'...my sister [a teacher] always says you need to start forgetting about that 'ECT' label because from next year onwards, you're not going to have it assigned to your name...it's you're just a teacher [now]. When you're labelled something, you feel like you need to adhere to that. So, for someone like me anyway, that knocks my confidence down a little bit, because I am 'just an ECT'. But it's funny, because I don't think I felt like that as a trainee. And I don't know why. I feel like I have to constantly prove myself. I think that's what it feels like when you're an ECT. You can't have one moment in front of your induction tutor or your mentor, because that's it, that you're failed. That's how I feel sometimes'.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (27:33): <i>'And I remember the last observation I had, I was really ill. But I thought this is still important, because I've had a change of induction tutor as well. And so I didn't have the comfort of...right, she's seen me before. Whereas I had that last year. It was like having to prove it again...the constant pressure...you're just constantly proving to everybody else that you can do it.'</i> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (18:18): <i>'I think the only thing that I've benefited from [the] second year of ECT is having the extra time out, even though it's only 5% of my timetable. But everything else is... it hasn't made a difference in my experience of teaching.'</i> - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (19:34): <i>'If anything, it's more pressure because part of me thought I can't keep going on. But then my year lead was going "I'm not letting you go now, you've made it this far". If you stop here, then that means you haven't completed the ECT. I think sometimes it feels like you're trapped because if I didn't have that second year [of] ECT, I think I would have looked for an alternative. I would have had thoughts of maybe trying somewhere new. But because of that, and having to find a school that then accepts an ECT, halfway across - it's not even an option.'</i> (21:30) - Nadia, interview, Spr 1 (21:58): <i>'And so I think I just have to grit my teeth and get through.'</i> - Jessica, interview, Spr 1 (2:22): <i>'But...I just need to get this ECT out of the way. Because I was like, I don't want to leave [maternity] like part way through and then come back and still have it hanging over me that I've got modules or like a conference. And I was like, I just need to get it out of the way.'</i>
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Appendix 9 - Pen Portraits

Beatrice:

Beatrice's Story

Beatrice began her account by detailing her childhood and education. She shared an interesting insight about wanting to be a vet or lawyer, when she was younger, to *'help people'*. After completing her A levels, she decided to do a marketing degree as it had transferable skills. After university, Beatrice went to work in retail – describing the sectors she worked in as *'fashion and food'*. She spent ten years in retail, taking on additional *'mentoring and training roles'*. Whilst she spoke of promotion and pay rises, she was ultimately unhappy in her role. She explained that *'a colleague leaving to become a primary school teacher'* was a *'significant'* event for her. Then stated *'in 2016, I was promoted to managing a team, but this required me to work part of the week away from home, in the Midlands'*. Beatrice reflected that she was travelling a lot and *'realised that she hated her job'* despite having had a successful career thus far. Shortly afterwards, she had an *'epiphany that she would retrain to become a primary school teacher, like her'*. She considered whether her previous role in *'mentoring/training and wanting to work in a profession that helps people'*, was part of that decision.

Beatrice then spoke about researching routes into teaching, and that a factor for consideration *'was the distance from her home'*, perhaps after that caused unhappiness in her last career. She *'chose the School Direct route, due to the 14min commute to the school she would be placed in'*. Beatrice offered several insights into her training year, explaining that although it was impacted by the pandemic, she received *'good feedback from her 'supportive' mentor and the head teacher'* and planned *'to do training and both ECT years in her placement school and then move schools to get different experience'*.

ECT1

At the start of induction, Beatrice stated that although she *'knew it was a difficult school to work in, with high expectations...but coming from a corporate environment, I thought that was what I wanted from teaching'*. She liked that they had clear expectations and thought it was the *'kind of environment I wanted to work in'*.

Beatrice continued to reflect on being *'paired with another ECT'* and said she thought it was because *'I was told I was an experienced member of staff, so I could support another ECT' but that 'this wasn't the case'*. When discussing the impact of the ECF during her induction, Beatrice rationalises that it needed to be a generic programme, but explained that *'at the time, it was frustrating, because I was just rehashing things that I had already learned – or that I thought I was quite strong on – and my mentor agreed'*. However, by term two, the relationship between Beatrice and her mentor had broken down. Beatrice continued to explain that she had *'joint mentor meetings and didn't have her own mentor'*. She reflected that whilst it *'sometimes worked well, she didn't have someone dedicated to me. I was used an example of what to do for an ECT, rather than developing me'*. Beatrice decided to leave the school at the end of the first year. She explained *'I had been reluctant to leave there, as I had been invested in the school'*. But also realised that she *'hadn't got what I expected or deserved'*.

Reflecting on the ECF during the first year of induction, she stated the ECF was *'...not flexible enough'* and *'whilst her School Direct training had been personal and positive, making [her] go over this or that doesn't develop me as a teacher'*. She concluded that she thinks it *'leads to disengagement and doesn't see the benefit in it'*, however said that it was well-facilitated in school.

ECT2

After deciding to leave her first school, Beatrice got a job in another school to complete her ECT2 year. Whilst initially she found the *'no frills'* approach a step-change from what she was used to, she explained the school just focused on *'excellent teaching'*. This, together with working alongside two experienced teachers, allowed Beatrice to settle, *'I am feeling more confident, and comfortable. I think I am feeling more experienced. I am knowing what I need to prioritise more'*. Whilst Beatrice found the second-year structure, of the research-led ECF (DfE, 2021), offered a more *'personalised' approach*, the Best Practice Network provider advice to her mentor was still based on using a prescribed *'script'*. This lack of personalisation meant that the mentor was not able to meet Beatrice's individual development needs. However, being a career-changer empowered Beatrice to seek out an *'unofficial mentor'* to support her and also gave her the confidence to cope with the day-to-day job and being an ECT.

Overall, Beatrice finished her ECT2 year feeling *'confident'* and explained that her new school had *'changed her mindset'* and she felt valued as a teacher, *'I feel that I wouldn't be working there if they didn't think I was a good teacher, and they didn't want me to work there. Whereas at my previous school, I felt like they felt they were doing me a favour by me working there'*. Although being a career-changer, with prior experience and expectations, may have initially challenged Beatrice's ideals of how a work environment should be, it did provide her with the confidence to perform the day-to-day teaching role and seek out the support she needed from an unofficial mentor. In addition, whilst elements of the ECF did not always suit Beatrice, in particular the mentor support received and being paired with another ECT, the second-year research-led approach was welcomed. However, the most important factor in completing her induction was finding a school that offered Beatrice a supportive and positive environment, and developing confidence as a teacher. Beatrice seems to be thriving in her current school setting, and intends to continue teaching. She has also got married and started a Master's degree in Education, researching *'well-being'* in early career teachers.

Jessica's Story

Jessica began her account by explaining how her first degree in archaeology resulted in her becoming *'a volunteer for a year at museums, helping schools learn about history'*. The combination of her degree and volunteer experience meant a move into the *'heritage sector and getting a job at Museum of London'*. After which, she *'completed an MA Archaeology'* and despite *'continuing as a school liaison'* that she *'never wanted to be a teacher'*. Jessica expands on her career development as a *'choice of continuing with education or moving into management'*. She then decided to *'apply for and get a job at Hertford Museum'* so moved to part-time at the Museum of London but, during the pandemic, was made redundant. This, combined with the new role *'not being all it was cracked up to be'*, meant Jessica had to pivot when she was furloughed. Jessica reflected on *'being mid-20s, with life stress but wanting stability'* and stated that she decided to *'start looking at potential teaching roles, but there were some misconception over the relevance of my degree'*. Jessica then researched routes into teaching, and *'applied for 3 teacher training roles, including Schools Direct'*, and she confirms that she got the salaried route.

Jessica's training year was *'at a school in Essex, close by'* and *'because I was on the School Direct route, I was teaching from the start'*. Jessica then reflected on her alternative placement in a year one class, where she *'shared class with teacher, even though I had own class at my main placement school'*. She states that *'it was a good, but different school. I took on more of a TA role, but actually this was valuable time - as got to observe more'*. She calls this a *'readjustment period'* but points out that it was *'a challenging class, with SEND/behaviour issues'*.

ECT Year 1

At the start of her ECT year, Jessica explained that she was *'going back into year three'*. When she reflected on the benefit of staying in the same year group, she stated it *'Doesn't feel new, however adjusting to my new class is an eye-opener compared to last year'*. She makes an interesting observation that whilst the pupils are *'Fairly comparable...last year's class felt like teenagers and this year like 'babies' and there are some real characters'*. When discussing her transition from trainee to ECT, Jessica considered the difference between the two years and says:

'I think what I found this year is I've probably had a bit more flow with my lessons, because I'm in the same year group as I was for my training. So a lot of my immediate worries, that I had last year, I don't necessarily have this year, because I'm not starting from square one.'

Jessica discussed the ECF structure and admin as being *'slow getting off the ground'* and said that *'It was frustrating that it took a month to set up Ambition and Step Lab accounts'*. This meant that whilst she *'wasn't able to tick anything off, it gave me time to really focus on class and classroom – you know the practical side of teacher development'*. Jessica seemed quite pragmatic about this and despite *'playing "catch-up" with observations and things like that, I had no control over it – as I couldn't sign myself up, had to wait for the "powers that be" to do that'*. She then started to consider the ECF programme as a whole:

'because it's such a national thing, it is by nature very general, which sometimes can be a bit frustrating. Because of that you'll sit in a conference. And it's about adaptive teaching or whatever. But then it's like, you have to do the work... well, how does it apply? And I think having the kind of mentor system, that's when that can become more helpful.'

Jessica reiterated that the mentor relationship is key:

'...it relies on the relationship between you and a mentor. But I think in terms of the actual programme and ECT training, a lot of it relies on her being engaged and wanting to help and being available. And me being able to have a relationship with her, so I can just go and say, I'm doing history this afternoon and concerned about this, what would you recommend?'

Jessica also reflected on the benefits of being a career-changer when deciding to enter the teaching profession, stating that *'I think in many ways, I think it has been easier. Because I think when you are a career changer...you've already reflected and decided to change your whole trajectory'*. Summarising ECT1, Jessica said that *'When I look back at the whole year, I do have to look at it as a success. I'm still able to make good connections with the pupils...and I've got to grips with the whole ECF/training, got the right amount of observations'*. She continued that *'My ECT supervisor observed me last week and it was really positive. It's all coming together, I'm fatigued but I'm excited about ways to grow and develop into the next year'*. During ECT1, Jessica shared that she was getting married and had been considering starting a family.

ECT Year 2

Jessica described the start of ECT2 as *'incredibly straightforward'*, and although she had changed year groups, and was initially nervous about this, she felt like she *'belonged in KS1'*. She explained she had gained confidence in her *'own ability to manage a classroom'* and that having a planning partner with experience in year two had helped. Jessica commented that the behaviour of the pupils was better this year, despite the class having complex SEND needs, and this *'reduction in mental strain meant she was able to watch a programme and eat dinner' as there was an improvement in her energy levels'*. This reflection linked with what Jessica had learnt during an ECT conference about *'managing her time'*. She continued that whilst she found these conferences useful, they also made her realise that other ECTs' schools were being more proactive with CPD/training.

Towards the end of ECT2, Jessica revealed that she was pregnant. Reflecting on this, she stated that the pandemic and being a career-changer *'did kind of affect our planning, because if I hadn't have changed career, it wouldn't have even been a consideration of how many years do we need to wait?'*. However, Jessica felt the timing suited her, as *'I'm leaving on a very positive note, because I feel really confident'*. Another reason for being more confident was also related to being a career-changer, *'because I'm a career changer, a bit older, I'm aware of...well, actually, if you're not going to help me, I'll just go find the person that will'*. However, Jessica also spoke of the close relationship she had forged with her mentor, stating that she appreciated and valued her support, explaining *'who am I going to feel most comfortable being the most honest with'* in regard to advice.

The only downside of Jessica's ECT2 experience was in relation to feeling her previous career experience had been overlooked, *'they overlook the fact that maybe you have done things and you've got experience of things that could be helpful. And then that's not necessarily explored'*. She also expressed that she *'likes to think about my development and professional things like that. And I want support in that but...it's almost like...they look at you and go, 'No, but you're just an ECT'. I'm not just an ECT'*. Jessica explained how she would like to be considered for opportunities such as curriculum lead and felt frustrated by the limitations placed on her. Overall, when concluding her ECT induction experience, Jessica stated that she felt that the *'biggest support has been the school setting and the people...the human element. The support received is the difference between success and failure. Frameworks are only as strong as the people putting them in place. I feel fortunate that the mentors I've had – been human and personalised. I feel supported'*. Summarising her decision to change careers, Jessica stated that *'I think it's the best decision I've ever made'*.

In summary, mentor support and the community of practice was the overriding factor that helped Jessica to successfully complete her ECT induction. Whilst frustrations at her prior career experience being overlooked and the ECF being generic were the two restraining forces that she found challenging.

Tanie:

Tanie's Story

Tanie began her account by explaining that *'I always wanted to be a teacher'* and infers that it's partly because she *'had an inspirational teacher aged 8/9'*. She continued that she completed *'school-based work experience during high school'* and has *'lots of friends who are primary school teachers'*. However, she explained that her first degree and career were not teaching related, *'I completed a Politics degree at uni, in Scotland, but didn't really have much interest in the subject. So, I spent a year abroad in USA, travelling around and then moved into a career in hospitality and events'*. She added that *'I couldn't really do it forever – financially or with the working hours'*. In February 2020, Tanie was offered an exciting new job working in events, but was first furloughed and then made redundant during the global pandemic. When Tanie reflected on this time, she explained that she *'had a 'pandemic mid-life crisis' – I felt had to make [a] change to life, but I was still questioning teaching and did not tell anyone'*. By April 2021, Tanie decided to apply for ITT. Shortly afterwards, her old company got in touch to offer her old job back. However, Tanie decided to pursue teaching and *'considered doing a PGCE or School Direct (salaried)'* as a route into ITT.

Discussing on her training year, Tanie explained that she *'...decided to do the School Direct [programme] in Yorkshire and my first placement was very tough; the area and school. The class teacher was very negative - she was 30yrs old and on the SLT but after 10 years of teaching seemed burnt out'*. Tanie's second placement was better and she applied for a job at this school, but the interview did not go well. Her Head Teacher suggested another school and she got a job there. Reflecting on the year, Tanie said *'I had two very different experiences, because the first mentor – I think she felt more awkward than I did about the fact that I was nearly 10 years older. But then I had a job share for my second placement and they were older, more experienced teachers. And that was really good, and just really different'*.

ECT Year 1

At the start of ECT1, Tanie said that she *'found the first half-term really intense - and a real difference from training year'*. When reflecting on why, she considered that it felt like *'support in my school hasn't really been thought through, the other year 5 teacher is not the most supportive person'*. When considering why, she explained *'it's a strange choice from the school to put an ECT with someone like that'*. Tanie continued, *'If I were a younger ECT, straight from university – I'd find it really challenging. I have got that work experience, I've worked with difficult people before and learnt ways not to take things personally – with a pinch of salt.'* Tanie then discussed how her previous career and experience has impacted the working dynamic:

'I'm coming in as a career-changer, with lots of experience on one hand, but no experience of school and teaching. My mentor, because he's a bit younger than me, has never been a mentor before but he has way more teaching experience, obviously. But I actually have more experience of managing people and of mentoring like adults...because I did that bit in my old job'.

She was however positive about the ECT tutor, *'Yeah, that was such a positive...you don't get much of her time, but the time that you do have with her has really worked'*. Tanie expanded on this, and said that she *'seemed to understand...I've a lot more going on, being older and a career-changer, inevitably more life stuff going on than some teachers straight out of uni'*. She summarises the support she has received has not been from *'people who are supposed to be supportive day-to-day... but I've managed to find a few people in school who have been supportive'*.

Tanie then considered the difference between her first career and teaching *'First thing, both as a career-changer and in general, teachers aren't left to manage their own time and development. Almost as if we are not trusted. I've come from a role where I managed myself – nobody [was] telling me. I was trusted to do my job'*. However, when talking about how being a career-changer has helped in teaching, Tanie reflected, *'I feel that my experience has really helped. If I hadn't done any other job...I would think that this was normal. I now know that this is not normal'*.

When discussing the ECF and provider CPD, Tanie explained that:

'we're following the Teach First programme and I am with the same training providers I trained with, but obviously they didn't deliver the Teach First material last year they had their own, and I thought that theirs was much better and much more targeted, actually to the classroom last year than the stuff this year'.

Tanie acknowledged that *'it's hard to do in a weekly seminar. I think I know a lot of people [who] are critical of the framework and how it's delivered in the two-year thing. And I think I actually, I really like the, the weekly and revisiting stuff and the fact that it's two years and all that. I just think the seminars are a waste of everybody's time'*. She continues, *'I think the framework only goes part of the way to like developing you as a teacher... much of the rest is too nuanced and dependent on specific people'*.

Reflecting on ECT1, Tanie added that although *'I feel that the working relationship with my mentor has really improved...I'm at my lowest. Feeling micro-managed and wondering if the school is right for me'*.

ECT Year 2

At the start of year two, Tanie reported that she felt more settled and was finding it easier. Part of this was due to not having to learn the routines again, *'I just found that...if you forgot about something, people were funny about it'*. However, she stated that the new Head Teacher *'...gives teachers more trust and ownership'* and that this, and the completed Ofsted inspection, had made Tanie feel more relaxed. However, later in the year she was concerned that the Head teacher was starting to ask Tanie to *'...go to her with everything related...to tricky parent situations'*. By contrast, Tanie felt supported by the wider SLT.

When discussing her relationship with her mentor, she stated that although it had improved, *'...as I get more experienced and confident, he can't help me as much'*. As a result, she found herself more open to seeking advice from other colleagues, explaining that *'I need support from someone more reflective...I'm seeking out colleagues to talk to'*. Tanie concludes that she did not think she would have had the confidence to do this, if it were not for her previous experience as a career-changer. Commenting on the ECF (DfE, 2021), Tanie stated that she did not *'feel more supported, but I do think it's helped'*. Acknowledging the *'...criticism of the framework is that you're repeating things, but I don't mind being reminded'*. However, she did not feel like the school fully embraced the programme. In addition, during the spring review with her induction tutor she felt as though her mentor had *'provided feedback that I questioned things rather than thinking about the class...and it [was] not supportive or what the mentor relationship should be'*. Tanie admitted that *'As an ECT – it bothered me. It may be that I need to find a better situation...the school doesn't know how to work with anyone who's been a career-changer...treated the same as an ECT straight out of uni. Not helpful for me or the school'*. Tanie alluded to the induction being a stressful time but that she was looking forward to the next stage and glad that the ECT years were over. She also explained that she may need to change schools at some stage, and that after moving up the pay scale, moving to a part-time teaching role might be a more sustainable way of remaining in the profession.

In summary, prior experience as a career-changer, SLT support and seeking the advice from 'unofficial mentors' were the driving forces that helped Tanie to successfully complete her ECT induction. Whilst frustrations with the Head Teacher, mentor support and the wider school finding career-changers a challenge were the three restraining forces that she had to overcome.

Nadia:

Nadia's Story

Nadia began her account by speaking about her childhood experiences, *'I was born in Denmark and moved to England when I was seven years old. When I first arrived, I didn't speak any English. My mother taught and she, together with the teachers, helped me achieve and catch-up to age related expectations'*. She went on to say that she completed a *'first degree in Criminology, commuting from the family home to university in the Midlands and, in the final year, I volunteered with the police (to start a career in line with degree studies) but it did not sit right. I wasn't passionate about it'*. So, Nadia completed a course that enabled her to teach English as a foreign language. She was meant to go to Thailand to teach, however due to the pandemic was unable to go. Here Nadia infers that this was the turning point to deciding to become a teacher and undertake a PGCE. In the second year of the pandemic, Nadia completed her training and stated that although *'...my training year was good, I struggled a bit towards the end to get a job, but did get one in a school in the West Midlands'*.

ECT Year 1

At the start of ECT1, Nadia commented that she *'received minimum details re ECT training, but I have been allocated a mentor'*. She continued positively however:

'...the school have been welcoming and the staff supportive. I've been given ECT time, sat with Deputy who is ECT tutor and is supportive. And right at the beginning, in my induction by the Deputy, we had a little meeting, just so he could get an understanding of how I was feeling. So in that, in that sense, I felt really supported by the school'.

Nadia then spoke about the transition from trainee to ECT, *'when you're a trainee, you're constantly you're working with someone...but when you're then put into your own class, and you have to make those fundamental decisions, I found that really tough'*. She then reflected on the ECF, and the impact this extra load had on her *'work-life balance, I was constantly reminded of work-life balance and it was difficult to fit that all in, and not take it home'*. She continued by voicing her frustration around the repetitive nature of the ECF, *'It sometimes felt like I was wasting time that I could put into reading about something that actually I needed more support with or, you know, needed to broaden my knowledge. So in that sense, I found it quite unusable and heavy workload-wise'*. Nadia then spoke about the realisation of not being able to keep up *'I think it was at some point, I [realised] I wouldn't be able to read all that material and go through the questions in the ECT time, and often I would bring the reading at home to do it'*. She also discussed the different ways in which she had to attend the sessions with the provider.

During the first term, Nadia talked about how her well-being was impacted by a lack of mentor support and that her family *'noticed my mood because when I came home, I thought about work, and I just spoke about work. And I think, you know, my family started recognising I'm leaving early, coming home late'*. She went on to explain that *'One Friday I went into school to speak with Deputy...and 'broke down' – it felt like I was struggling...it felt I wasn't be mentored'*. When Nadia reflected on what the main issue was, she explained that *'I don't think her as a mentor was the issue. I think, time management was, was the biggest barrier for all of us in that in that team. And I I don't like to bother people. And I started to get that feeling that every time I did go for advice it, you know, took more time from her. So then I start bottling things up and going try to figure things out by myself.'* She concluded *'...that's when I realised that it actually wasn't quite working with my mentor it...it's the way that the system is set up, and the mentors not having enough allocated time'*. Nadia then voiced her frustration with the ECF overall, *'I feel that it is there to support me. But practically, it doesn't work - the framework does say, you know, give mentors the allocated time and ECT are meant to get the allocated time. But in a practical setting of the school, it becomes difficult'*. However, Nadia did acknowledge that she's benefitted from the ECF in one aspect *'one thing that I think is really useful with the ECT framework is we do get to meet other teachers and it is quite nice to share our experiences and our knowledge and our skills that we can then bring to schools. And so I'd say in that sense, it does have some positive impact'*.

Nadia concludes her ECT1 year by stating that she has had, *'a bit of a turnaround. So now I've got a mentor who is only going to mentor me. So that's made a huge difference, because we've sat down and gone through my skills and how I'm feeling so I'm feeling much more stable'*.

ECT Year 2

Nadia explained that she had made a confident start to ECT2, *'I know the school, the policies, who to go to if I'm not sure about anything...feels like I'm handling the workload much better'*. In addition, working alongside the Deputy Head made Nadia feel more supported *'I work very closely with him...it doesn't make sense for me to reach out to my actual mentor, who's not even in the same year group. And our timing just doesn't align. Whereas [he] knows exactly the support I need'*. She continued that it had made a difference and that she was *'picking up skills that I didn't in the first year'*. Nadia also mentioned that she did not have regular meetings with her official mentor and commented that she felt the Deputy Head was fulfilling the role 'unofficially'.

Initially, although Nadia said that she was coping better with workload pressures, this changed part-way through the year, due to the SEND needs of her class *'the class I have currently are very SEND heavy'*. She continued to explain, *'So...that has sort of increased my workload from last year...and had an effect on my mental and physical health. I don't have time to do anything else, because I'm just focusing on my work'*. This continued throughout the year, and led to Nadia going to the Deputy she considered her 'unofficial' mentor, to say *'I don't think I can do this anymore. I think I might have to pause everything and just leave because I'm starting to recognise it's deeply affecting me'*. At this stage she states that she felt disappointed, that as an ECT, the SLT would recognise she had additional pressures but that had not been considered with the class that she had been given. The final challenge Nadia faced towards the end of induction, was having the ECT 'label'. She clarified that it had resulted in her *'constantly having to prove herself...that you can't have one moment in front of your induction tutor or mentor...because, that's it...you've failed'*.

When speaking about the impact of the ECF on her induction, Nadia explained *'I'll be honest, I think the only thing that I've benefited from second year ECT is having the extra time out... but everything else...it hasn't made a difference in my experience of teaching. I think first year was much more needed.'* When considering the two-year period, she added *'I think sometimes it feels like you're trapped because if I didn't have that second year'*. Nadia then stated that she just had to *'...grit her teeth to get through the year'*.

Overall, having more confidence in her teaching and support from her 'unofficial' mentor were the driving forces that helped Nadia to successfully complete her ECT induction. Whilst frustrations with the SEND needs of her class, SLT support in recognising this and dealing with workload pressures were the most challenging restraining forces that she had to overcome.

Athena:

Athena's Story

Athena began her account by explaining that she had *'wanted to be a teacher since she was a young child'*. She reflects on volunteering at a Brownie group and said *'I was meant to do Geography degree, but didn't do as well as I hoped in my A levels. So, I did a degree in Business Management'*. Whilst she *'loved'* her degree, Athena *'didn't want to be at uni anymore, so I got a job at a national hardware chain and also worked in a leisure centre'*. Athena continued that she *'then started a career at a national hardware store as duty manager'*. She then talked about *'seeing a PGCE advert come up on Facebook, at same uni where I did [my] first degree. I started to think again that I would have liked to have been a teacher, but I did not want to go back to uni though'*. This prompted Athena to apply for *'teaching apprenticeship and I found a course that was flexible/on the job'*. She explained that her father *'pushed her to do it'*.

ECT Year 1

At the start of her induction, Athena explained that she was working at a *'one form entry, Catholic school in rural area in Leicestershire'*. She expanded on being *'recruited late, after the previous teacher resigned and that she had two mentors, but was still trying to get more information about the ECT programme'*. Athena went on to reflect on her first impressions of the school:

'Before the summer holidays I was able to go into my new school and collect my laptop, sort out my DBS and I.D. The Deputy and Head were very eager and welcoming. Felt at ease straight away. I have two mentors, an ECT training mentor [induction mentor] and then a 'coach' [ECT mentor]. The coach is a similar age to me and was an ECT seven years ago – so understands the recent process.'

She seemed positive that the school had *'already booked me on ECT conferences, they'd already set me up on that, so it was a really good transition straight into it'*. Regarding her mentor, Athena talked about how *'She's an experienced teacher, she's been 20 years teaching. She's so supportive. So if I need any help, she'll be there to guide me'*. She added that *'I've got coach who's the year six teacher. She's very support, because she's literacy lead...and gives me tips on how...not necessarily cut corners, but don't spend the excessive amount of time that ECTs spend on things that won't really make that much of a difference'*.

Discussing the transition from trainee to ECT, Athena found *'making decisions myself felt overwhelming'* and that the *'first few weeks were a bit of a blur'*. But that by *'the end of the first half-term – enjoyed it and my confidence is growing'*. She mentioned a child had commented *'...you don't seem as nervous anymore'*. During the first term, Athena explained that her workload was heavy, *'Staff meetings are two hours long and I'm working every night, until 9pm, and also working weekends. All the other teachers sending stuff to help, but it's a different curriculum'*. Continuing to discuss workload, Athena stated:

'I have so much ECT work as well...didn't realise it would be so much – videos, reading – it's quite time consuming. I'll be honest, it's difficult, I can't get it done. I find that Ambition is just so heavy and I think it's more secondary based.'

During the second term, Athena talked about the level of SLT support she received, *'Whilst I love the school and team that I'm in, the SLT have not checked in with me'*. This tied into her well-being, Athena admitted she has *'Felt a bit upset and frustrated in the last few weeks – although have supportive people – expected to know everything, when I've only been in schools for a year'*. She continues that *'I cried in front of my TA. She told the Deputy and Head'*. Concluding that *'I haven't enjoyed last few weeks – it grinds you down – it's tiring and overwhelming and I "stress-out"'*. Athena returned to this point and made an oral history recording specifically to discuss *'well-being'*, *'I feel that this workload and stress has actually really affected my mental health'*.

When reflecting on being a career-changer and any advantage that might offer, Athena said *'...if I was fresh out of university...I don't think I would have been able to cope with the workload or the demand, I think because in my previous roles...I've had management experience...I feel that that is what you kind of have to be as a teacher...it's about managing the fact that adults are in your room as well'*. She also acknowledged that being new to teaching and recently married had made her feel like she had to get years

of experience under her belt, but that she wanted to start a family, 'So, I think that is that's one of the downsides to obviously starting later and not coming straight from finishing uni'.

ECT Year 2

Athena discussed she felt more confident at the start of year two and attributed this to making better decisions and also having existing planning to use. She continued to explain that a positive Ofsted visit and being praised by the Head Teacher during a book scrutiny had made her feel 'grateful and glad'. In addition, Athena stated her mentor was offering her 'tips on what to do...to deal with her class' and that discussing things with her had helped build confidence. However, later in the year, a lack of support from the SLT made Athena feel as if she had to deal with behaviour issues alone:

'In terms of senior leaders, it's actually been my TA that's made them aware of how bad the class can be. So, the result was that anyone that was misbehaving, they'd get a warning. And then if that warning's gone, they go down to her [SLT]. But that's great, but it's not solving the issue. They're still the same.'

This seemed to have further impact on Athena's well-being and she admitted she had been to speak to the Deputy Head, 'I've had a conversation today...about going part-time. I'm that drained'. She made connections between how she felt, and the lack of support she had received from the SLT:

'I don't think they were as lax as 'someone's got to teach them'...however, they were probably like, well, she'll get support... the year below teacher will help her as a mentor. But I don't think there was that much thought [put] into the impact.'

Support from Athena's mentor seemed to compound the way she felt, as the mentor started to 'nitpick' over her targets. Which led to Athena seeking support from another teacher who 'is a similar age... she's been in teaching for nine years, but she's more realistic about things'. This approach enabled Athena to feel like she was more able to cope.

The final challenge for Athena, was in regards to wanting to start a family, 'I'm turning 28 in a couple of months. And the thing is...we've been married...and it won't be anytime soon, but within the next year, it's likely that me and my husband - we're going to want to start thinking about having children'. Athena then continued that teaching part-time would '...set me up for the future...if I secure myself as part-time now, and say if I do end up pregnant next year, then I can come back into a role that's part-time, which is what I want for when I have children'. It also linked with Athena wanting to achieve a better work-life balance. Ultimately, Athena spoke of having to 'get through' her ECT induction, so she could move to working part-time.

Overall, having more confidence in her teaching and support from her 'unofficial' mentor were the driving forces that helped Athena to successfully complete her ECT induction. Whilst frustrations with the behaviour of her class, a lack of SLT support with this and the work-life pressures were the most challenging restraining forces that she had to overcome.



Participant Information Sheet

Aims and objective of the project

This is a small-scale exploratory study, to consider the experiences of newly qualified career-changing female teachers, in England, during their two-year primary induction and how the government's 'Early Career Framework' ('ECF', DfE, 2021) reforms may impact their journey as Early Career Teachers (ECTs). It focuses on the 'stories' of eight ECTs and the broad aim is to find out what their experiences are, as career changers and females (who may have other roles and responsibilities as parents or carers outside of school) and what factors impact them during the induction period. As the ECF (DfE, 2021) was only implemented in September 2021, there is no existing research following the journey of first *and* second year ECTs), and therefore this research will provide a nuanced look at the journey and contribute new knowledge of the field.

Methodology for the project

The methods of data collection are interpretivist in nature. The first, of three methods, is the collection of self-recorded oral histories (Armitage, 2011), which will provide participants with the opportunity to tell their story or experiences in their own words. The second is semi-structured interviews and will follow up on the issues they have raised in the oral histories about the factors that have impacted them, during their induction, and take place online (using Teams) at a convenient time for the participant and allows for engagement in uncertain times caused by the pandemic. Finally, their journeys will be documented using a tool for plotting chronological incidents called 'The River of Life' (Burnard, 2012) and participants will be given the opportunity to review it for accuracy. Participants will be chosen using an 'purposive' sample - selected by the inclusion criteria that I am interested in researching; newly qualified, career-changing female ECTs who are embarking on the two-year ECF (DfE, 2021) in English state primary schools. Secondary to this, participants may also have other responsibilities outside of school, as parents or carers. I will be recruiting ECTs who are in the first or second year of induction and follow them until the end of the two-year ECT period. The 8 participants may be known or unknown to me, recruited through social media and my professional contacts advertising the research within their network on LinkedIn. As those recruited will likely be from different geographic areas and school settings across England, their experiences may vary and that is interesting to the research, as the ECF guidance (DfE, 2021) can be interpreted differently by schools. The participants will only speak with the researcher on a 1:1 basis, as I am only interested in their individual experiences of their induction, not group discussions of ECT life in general. Every care will be taken to minimise participant awareness or prior knowledge of each other (as peers or acquaintances). This will be part of the initial recruitment process stage, the researcher will ensure that all participants are from different geographic areas and school settings, in order to minimise incidental peer group interaction. All participants agree to anonymise their setting/school and/or ITT provider during all stages of data collection (both self-recorded oral histories and interviews). Research findings and analysis will be deciphered using holistic-content analysis (Lieblich *et al.*, 1998) to form an interpretivist narrative inquiry to gain an insight into what factors impact ECTs during induction.

Participant recruitment

How will participants be recruited?

1. Via an advert on my own social media.
2. Via my professional contacts advertising the research within their network/ on LinkedIn.

How long will participants be required for the project?

12-16 months

Risk

1) Oral Histories – Participants may not feel comfortable/have the potential to get upset at discussing their induction experiences. The researcher will brief the participants during consent and again before data collection that they only have to discuss what they feel comfortable sharing about their experience of induction. Before, during and after participants have the ability to withdraw from the next stage (interviews) or from the research completely – without prejudice. The researcher will be available for debrief before, during and after the data collection stage and provide a participant leaflet – which signposts participants to specialist support available if they have found the experience upsetting.

2) Semi-structured interviews – Participants may not feel comfortable/ have the potential to get upset at remembering potentially painful events from their induction experiences. Participants informed before and during the interview that they can refrain from answering any follow-up questions, terminate the interview at any time and withdraw from the project right up until the data is analysed. The researcher will be available for debrief before, during and after the data collection stage and provide a participant leaflet – which signposts participants to specialist support available if they have found the experience upsetting.

3) River of Life – critical incident charting – Participants may not feel comfortable/have the potential to get upset at having their induction experiences presented in chronological order/detail. Participants informed before and after the charting stage that they can refrain from having their chart included within the research, make changes or clarify researcher's understanding or withdraw from the project right up until the data is analysed. The researcher will be available for debrief before, during and after the data collection stage and provide a participant leaflet – which signposts participants to specialist support available if they have found the experience upsetting.

Debriefing protocol

1) Before and after the oral histories being recorded, participants will be made aware that they only record what they feel comfortable doing so and can decide to withdraw from the research, without having to provide a reason, without prejudice. The researcher is available for debrief afterwards (and every 2 months) and will share a participant leaflet – which signposts specialist support available (as well as their own ECT trainer) – as the researcher cannot offer any professional advice.

2) Before and during the interview stage, participants made aware that they can remove or refrain from answering any follow-up questions and terminate the interview or withdraw from the research completely without having to provide a reason or prejudice. The researcher is available for debrief afterwards (and every 2 months) and will share a participant leaflet – which signposts specialist support available (as well as their own ECT trainer) – as the researcher cannot offer any professional advice.

3) During and after the critical charting each participant can clarify or ask to remove sections or have their chart removed/withdraw themselves from the research completely, without prejudice. The researcher will be available for debrief during and after the data collection stage and provide a participant leaflet – which signposts participants to specialist support available (as well as their own ECT trainer) – as the researcher cannot offer any professional advice.

Confidentiality and anonymisation

Where possible, participants' confidentiality will be maintained unless a disclosure is made that indicates that the participant or someone else is at serious risk of harm. Such disclosures may be reported to the relevant authority. Participants will be anonymised at source (data de-identified) and from the transcript stage onwards, pseudonyms will be used. Participants will not have the option of being identified in the research project and dissemination of research findings and / or publication.

Data security

The data generated in the course of the research will be retained in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy. The research data will be stored safely on a password protected computer. The raw data will not be shared with individuals outside of the research team. Participants will be audio and/or video recorded. The audio and video recordings of oral histories/semi-structured interviews will be stored on UEL One Drive, shared drive. After being transcribed, they will be deleted. (NB. All videos that download locally to my laptop in Microsoft Teams stream will be deleted when uploaded to UEL One Drive). Hard copies of the data will not be retained. How long will the research data that details personal identifiers be stored? Until the data analysis stage (in case a participant wishes to withdraw). After which, this data will be destroyed.

Dissemination

The results will be disseminated in: Dissertation / Thesis, Peer reviewed journal, Conference presentation, Presentation to participants or relevant community groups, Books or chapters, UEL Research Repository, Blogs

Disclaimer

Your participation in this research project is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time during the research. Should you choose to withdraw from the research project you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason. Please note, that your data can be withdrawn up to the point of data analysis.

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the research in which you are being asked to participate, please contact:

Catherine Hitchens, Ethics, Integrity and Compliance Manager
Office for Postgraduates, Research and Engagement
University of East London, Docklands Campus, London, E16 2RD
Telephone: 020 8223 6683. Email: researchethics@uel.ac.uk.

For general enquiries about the research project, please contact the Principal Investigator:

Name(s): Mrs Paula Daines

UEL email address: u1234250@uel.ac.uk

Consent Form: Consent to Participate in a Programme Involving the Use of Human Participants.

Please tick as appropriate:

	YES	NO
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I have read the Participant Information Sheet relating to the above research project in which I have been asked to participate and I have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research project have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.		
I consent to my participation being audio or video recorded.		
I understand that my involvement in this project, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential as far as possible. Only the researchers involved in the research project and will have access to the identifiable data.		
I understand that maintaining strict confidentiality is subject to limitations if the sample size is small or focus groups are used and that this may have implications for confidentiality/anonymity. As stated in the participant sheet, I agree to anonymise my setting/school/ITT provider during all stages of data collection (both self-recorded oral interviews and interviews).		
Where possible, participants' confidentiality will be maintained unless a disclosure is made that indicates that the participant or someone else is at serious risk of harm. Such disclosures may be reported to the relevant authority.		
Participants will be anonymised in publications that arise from the research.		
I give my permission for anonymised quotes from my responses to be used in publications resulting from the project.		
The results will be disseminated. Dissertation / Thesis, Peer reviewed journal, Conference presentation, Presentation to participants or relevant community groups, Books or chapters, UEL Research Repository, Blogs		
I understand that the data collected for the research project will be anonymised/pseudonymised before it is published.		
I understand that the University's lawful basis for processing my personal data collected, used and retained for research purposes is the 'public task' condition and the University does not rely on consent to process my personal data.		
I understand that the published results of the research project will be accessible in the public domain and may be deposited in an open access data repository.		
I understand that the published results of the research project will be accessible in the public domain and may be re-used, republished or reanalysed by others in future research.		
I give my permission for the research team to use the data that I have provided in future research projects which may be made publicly available.		

I give my permission for the research team to retain my personal contact details and contact me regarding participation in future research projects.		
It has been explained to me what will happen once the research project has been completed.		
I understand that my participation in this research project is entirely voluntary, and I am free to withdraw at any time during the research without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give a reason. I understand that my data can be withdrawn up to the point of data analysis, and that after this point it may not be possible.		
I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the research project which has been fully explained to me and for the information obtained to be used in relevant research publications which are publicly available.		

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Participant's Signature

.....

Investigator's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Investigator's Signature

.....

Date:

Research Integrity

The University adheres to its responsibility to promote and support the highest standard of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research; observing the appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks.

The University is committed to preserving your dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing and as such it is a mandatory requirement of the University that formal ethical approval, from the appropriate Research Ethics Committee, is granted before research with human participants, human data, human material, personal and/or sensitive data, or non-human animal commences.

The purpose of this Participant Information Sheet is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this research project.

Title of research project: *What are the experiences of career-changing female primary school teachers, in England, during their Early Career Teacher induction?*

Principal Investigator/Director of Studies

Name(s): Dr John Macklin

UEL telephone/email address: j.macklin@uel.ac.uk

Student researcher

Name(s): Mrs Paula Daines **Location:** Essex, England

UEL telephone/email address: u1234250@uel.ac.uk

In compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) the University's lawful basis for the processing of personal data collected, used and retained for research purposes is the 'public task' condition. Therefore, the University does not rely on consent to process your personal data. However, the University will seek your consent to participate in this research project. Please see the following link for more information: [Data protection – University of East London \(UEL\)](#)

Appendix 11 – Ethical approval

Dear Paula,

Application ID: ETH2324-0273

Original application ID: ETH2122-0127

Project title: The stories of female career-changers who retrain as primary school teachers in England: their experiences of Early Career Teacher induction.

Lead researcher: Mrs Paula Daines

Your application to Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee (EISC) was considered on the 24th June 2024.

The decision is: **Approved**

The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation.

Your project has received ethical approval for 4 years from the approval date.

If you have any questions regarding this application please contact your supervisor or the administrator for the Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee.

Approval has been given for the submitted application only and the research must be conducted accordingly.

Should you wish to make any changes in connection with this research/consultancy project you must complete 'An application for approval of an amendment to an existing application'.

The approval of the proposed research/consultancy project applies to the following site.

Project site: The researcher is based in Essex, England (all research will be conducted remotely via Teams and participants will be located across England).

Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator: Mrs Paula Daines

Approval is given on the understanding that the [UEL Code of Practice for Research](#) and the [Code of Practice for Research Ethics](#) is adhered to.

Any adverse events or reactions that occur in connection with this research/consultancy project should be reported using the University's form for [Reporting an Adverse/Serious Adverse Event/Reaction](#).

The University will periodically audit a random sample of approved applications for ethical approval, to ensure that the projects are conducted in compliance with the consent given by the Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee and to the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

Please note, it is your responsibility to retain this letter for your records.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of the project.

For further guidance and resources please check our [Research Ethics Handbook](#).
