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**Teachers and multi-agency working: a  
study of secondary school teachers'  
engagement with multi-agency work in  
the context of the Every Child Matters  
agenda**

**Rebecca SOMERFIELD**

**Professional Doctorate in Education**

**Keele University**

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## **Abstract**

*This thesis seeks to uncover how teachers engage with multi-agency working within the context of the Every Child Matters agenda (DfES, 2003) and how this impacts on their sense of identity. To do this it provides an account of a qualitative study of ten teachers at a mainstream secondary school. The study uses data from interviews and observations of multi-agency work, which were analysed using a framework drawing on identity and sensemaking.*

*My focus is on teachers' subjective experience of multi-agency work as they attempt to make sense of policy requirements and implement change whilst subjected to a range of conflicting policy drivers which they have to negotiate in order to decide where best to employ their attention. To achieve these aims, I use a Sensemaking theoretical paradigm in order to facilitate analytical focus on links with prior experiences and my respondents' understanding of who they feel they are as teachers - rather than in relation to an a-priori scheme. Through drawing on semi-structured interviews with these teachers, this study finds that despite multi-agency working becoming a policy directive, these teachers showed limited engagement with multi-agency principles or ways of working.*

*This study finds dissonance from increasing pressures to ensure students perform academically, and perceptions that engagement with multi-agency teams does not form part of teachers' role as educationists. The resulting difficulties faced by teachers when making sense of multi-agency work creates barriers in the negotiation of teachers' understanding of their role, thus potentially limiting future engagement with such work. At a time when teachers are expected to enact additional safeguarding roles, the ability to collaborate with multiple professionals remains critical. Therefore, this study has relevance for policy makers and educationists in considering how multi-agency policies are enacted in schools today.*

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Multi-Agency Work

Multi-agency work involves professionals from different agencies working together collaboratively (Cheminais, 2009). The advantages of collaborative working include the promotion of joined-up thinking between agencies and the bringing together of skills of different professionals, providing more responsive support to ensure the needs of the whole child are met (Coleman, 2006a).

History has shown that despite multi-agency work being a policy imperative in the UK (Department for Health, 1997; DfES, 2003), the impact of collaboration has been limited as professionals have maintained their desire to preserve their traditional roles rather than engage in joined-up working (Atkinson et al, 2001). My own observations as a teacher within the school of study have seen similar limitations in the effectiveness of multi-agency work despite the requirement for all teaching staff to take part in multi-agency activities, for example, through safeguarding procedures (DFE, 2016).

The specific form of multi-agency work that this thesis engages with developed from the publication of *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003), forming the policy context for my study being the key multi-agency policy at the time of data collection. *Every Child Matters* saw a change in focus for multi-agency work as the expectation on teachers was extended to include the promotion of children's welfare as the remit for child protection work widened (Parton, 2011). A mandatory framework for the well-being of students was developed, creating new professional expectations (Mead, 2011). Such expectations meant that teachers needed to develop new skills (Harris & Allen, 2009), such as the ability to communicate with non-educational professionals (Roche & Ticker, 2007), thereby having the potential to have a vast impact on the working lives of teachers. For this impact to be realised, teachers need to do more than simply perform an activity but

instead interpret, make sense of and enact policy (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012), having a potentially transformational effect on each teacher's identity (Corley & Gioia, 2004).

The requirement to engage with multi-agency work continued post *Every Child Matters* with the publication of policies including *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DFE, 2014b; 2016) and the *Prevent duty* (Home Office, 2009). This continuing requirement for teachers to collaborate with other professionals gives validity to my desire to research ways in which teachers engage with multi-agency work and factors influencing the extent to which such policies impact on the working lives of teachers. Most studies of how schools engage with multi-agency work have focused on the collection of quantitative data looking at the success in meeting outcomes (Ofsted, 2006), rather than the collection of qualitative data, looking at teacher's subjective experiences of multi-agency work as a result of the influence of their identity. This makes this thesis an original contribution to knowledge around how teachers engage with multi-agency work and the factors which influence their ability to make changes in their working lives. As the requirement to engage with multi-agency work continues, studies such as this which consider how professionals engage with and shape multi-agency activities within their workplace provides valuable knowledge around the factors which influence the success of multi-agency work.

### **Teachers' Professional Identity**

A key concept of my thesis is the role that teachers' professional identity, a concept contested in itself (Ozga & Lawn 1981; Helsby 1995), plays in influencing the processes involved in professional development (Canrinus, 2011), including those needed to engage with policy change. People develop a series of beliefs about themselves as identity develops (McCutcheon, 1992). These beliefs shape what people pay attention to and how they take action (Corley & Gioia, 2004), making teachers' views of who they think they are important to understanding how they take action when presented with multi-agency work.



When there is a mismatch between who teachers believe they are and the roles they engage with, the accompanying tensions make it likely that individuals will change their beliefs about themselves, transforming their identity (Pratt et al, 2006). In this way, identity can be thought of as fluid, transforming as a result of environmental demands to ensure that an individual's identity labels and meanings reconfirm their sense of who they are (Corley & Gioia, 2004). Environmental change for teachers as a result of government reforms, have seen a heightened need for schools to achieve good results (Williamson & Morgan, 2009). How multi-agency work sits within teachers' understanding of what it means to be a teacher in light of such reforms, draws my work into discussions of teacher professionalism.

Government reforms have resulted in teachers feeling a need to engage with cultures of compliance (Ball, 2003), yet welfare discourses, which can include multi-agency work, have been superseded by those linked to accountability (Toynbee & Walker, 2015). Accountability can lead to uncertainty and a sense of being judged (Ball, 2003), creating a high risk, low trust culture with potential negative effects on teachers' ability to form professional relationships with other professional groups (Troman, 2000). It is this link between who teachers think they are, how they make sense of and take action toward multi-agency policies and factors impacting on their ability to respond to change which I seek to investigate. I do not aim to contribute to theory on teacher professional identity here, but rather, through considering how multi-agency work impacts on this, I seek to answer how teachers conceptualise and engage with change, specifically how they balance professional expectations and their own individual interpretation of professional identity.

To do this, while drawing on professional identity theory, I also draw heavily on sensemaking theory, especially as developed by Weick (Weick, 1993; 1995; 2001), rather than one grounded in

more traditional education discourses, to rationale my working premise that teachers' understanding of policies inevitably influences how they engage with multi-agency work.

### **Research Questions**

1. How are multi-agency working policies enacted within teacher's individual practices?
2. How does teacher professional identity affect engagement with such multi-agency agendas as *Every Child Matters*?
3. How do teachers make sense of the requirement to work in multi-agency teams?
4. How does teachers' ability to make sense of multi-agency work affect their professional identity?

The research questions reflect the key issues I felt, based on my experiences in school as a teacher, influenced teachers' engagement with multi-agency policies, including action taken in response to policy demands, identity and how individuals make sense of change. My starting premise was that in order for policy change to be reconciled with teachers' identity, it needs to be made meaningful through sensemaking processes of interpretation and enactment (Drake & Sherin, 2006). If teachers' sense of who they are crumbles following engagement with multi-agency work, they are likely to lose their ability to reconcile change within their identity and make order of their world (Weick, 1993). Sources of resilience have been identified which, if accessible to teachers, support sensemaking processes and the reconciliation of change (Weick, 1993). Without this reconciliation of change within teacher identity, it becomes more likely that changes resulting from multi-agency policies will be resisted or performed in a limited manner (Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2009).

## **Chapter 2 Teachers and Multi-Agency Work**

The aims of this thesis are to explore how teachers engage with multi-agency policies, capturing their lived experiences of multi-agency work and the influence of factors such as identity on how they make sense of the policy requirement to collaborate with professionals from outside of education. Aspects of teacher identity are explored with the aim of identifying those aspects which teachers feel are most important to them and their role, shedding light on how individual ways of making sense of multi-agency work impacts on teacher's sense of their professional self and their beliefs and values as teachers.

Chapter 2 explores definitions of multi-agency work and key concepts which literature has shown impacts on teacher's ability to engage with new aspects of their role. Definitions of teacher professional identity are reviewed looking at how the qualities and beliefs contained within definitions impact on how teachers behave within a multi-agency team. A review of multi-agency policies is included, starting with *Every Child Matters*, looking at the policy knowledge required by educationalists and the changes suggested to their roles which teachers need to make sense of and reconcile with their professional self. As policy enactments are fragile social constructions, grounded in time and place, (Maguire, Braun & Ball, 2015), I consider how the changing policy background impacts on teacher's desires about who they want to be as professionals and the impact on how they engage with multi-agency working policies.

### **2.1 Teachers' Professional Identity**

Teacher identity is connected to their sense of their professional selves (Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2009). Definitions of what is encompassed within the concept of professionalism are debated (Helterbran, 2008), with definitions shifting over time to include strategies and rhetoric employed by members of an occupation in seeking to improve their status, salary and conditions (Hoyle, 1974), expertise needed for work (Swann et al, 2010) including specialist knowledge and

qualifications and ability to self-regulate and achieve a high level of autonomy (Osgood, 2006). These features within definitions of professionalism are contested for teachers as government reforms undermine teachers' autonomy and position (Swann et al, 2010; Whitty, 2006). Debates around teacher professionalism led me to question who teachers need to become in order to be considered professional and whether taking action as defined by others is considered an important facet of professionalism or whether enactment through individual interpretation of policy, utilising teacher professional identity, is what defines professional engagement.

Qualities commonly seen as essential to concept of teacher professionalism include the achievement of quality teaching (Johnston, 2014), associated with the expectation of improved teaching standards (Dalli & Urban, 2013; Lynch et al, 2014; Urban, 2010). Other qualities include having a societal purpose and ethical foundation, a degree of regulative autonomy, accretion of content knowledge, agreed standards for the entire profession (Riley, 2003), and personal and professional expertise which are particular to teaching (Baggini, 2005).

Whilst definitions of teacher professionalism are usually left to the policy makers (Swann et al, 2010), when teachers' views are sought they refer to being professional in terms of the quality of what they do, the conduct and standards which guide them (Helsby, 1995) and how they are seen by others in terms of their status and regard (Hargreaves, 2000). As multi-agency work involves working with others outside the profession, teacher's perceptions of how they are regarded is likely to play a significant role in how they behave professionally within a multi-agency team.

Teacher's beliefs about the concept of teacher professionalism are said to include an inner core of shared beliefs, an intermediate layer and disputed outer elements (Swann et al, 2010). Shared beliefs include the need for trust both by the government and the public, and expertise to teach (Swann et al, 2010). Teachers moderately agreed about the role of professional development,

collaboration with others and autonomy (Hargreaves et al, 2006). The outer, disputed layer includes a focus on raising standards and the external monitoring of teachers (Swann et al, 2010). At a time where there is increasing prescription of teachers' work with a greater focus on raising standards, the dissonance between what teachers' value and government ideas of professionalism has triggered debate about what should be the primary focus of teachers' work (Swann et al, 2010).

The increasing influence of the state has resulted in conflicting pressures leading teachers to re-evaluate their professionalism as they are expected to do more and work more compliantly as their work becomes categorized into checklists of performance standards (Hargreaves, 2000). The effect is to return teaching to a de-professionalized craft (Hargreaves, 2000), where teachers feel obliged to enact policies that they do not believe in (Moore & Clarke, 2016), performing them in ways set out by policy makers as their beliefs about who they are as teachers become managed through policy and reform (Olson, 2002; van Veen & Slegers, 2006). Desires not positively embedded within discourse become pathologized as damaging (Moore & Clarke, 2016). So, if teachers are on a personal level unhappy with certain policy directives, they may feel they have no option other than to perform them as instructed.

The UK government's desire to redefine teacher professionalism (Whitty, 2000) can be seen through the narrowing of the educational field resulting from a heightened need for teachers to help their students achieve good results (Williamson & Morgan, 2009). Yet it is this aspect of teacher professionalism which is most disputed by teachers (Swann et al, 2010), as concerns have been raised about how the increasing value given to the academic potential of students reduces the space for consideration of their moral and interpersonal needs (Fielding, 1999). As teachers are expected to do more (Hargreaves, 2000), they need to decide where best to allocate their time, raising important questions about how they respond to policies that conflict with their

personal beliefs and the impact on engagement with policies which sit outside of dominant government discourse. In consideration of how teachers engage with multi-agency working policies, consideration is needed as to whether policies are embedded within dominant educational policies in such a manner that can elicit a positive orientation or whether roles beyond the academic will be marginalised.

## **2.2 Multi-Agency Working: Policy Developments**

### **2.2.1 The Context and Background for Multi-Agency Work**

The principles of multi-agency working have been a priority of UK governments since the turn of the last century (Department for Health, 1997; DfES, 2003), with widespread agreement for inter-professional collaboration in order to focus on the needs of children (Shaw et al, 2009). In the context of *Every Child Matters*, it was Lord Laming who highlighted the need to improve multi-agency working stating that:

*“I am in no doubt that effective support for children and families cannot be achieved by a single agency acting alone. It depends on a number of agencies working well together. It is a multi-disciplinary task”.* (Laming, 2003:6)

The continued need for multi-agency ways of working has been re-emphasised in successive reports post *Every Child Matters* such as that by Munro (2011). Yet it is widely acknowledged that difficulties remain (Holmes et al, 2012), leading to frequent policy changes with implications for teachers’ practice as existing professional cultures are challenged (Sloper, 2004). This lack of coordinated multi-agency work (Sloper, 2004) suggests barriers to the implementation of multi-agency practices.

### **2.2.2 *Every Child Matters*: Its development and political and theoretical context**

*Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003) was written and implemented by the Labour party who had been elected to UK government in 1997. It was seen to form part of their legacy, pivotal in their preparedness to re-address social welfare (Parton, 2009). The policy developed from inquiry conducted by Lord Laming into death of eight-year-old Victoria Climbié in 2000 (Maynard, 2007) and the subsequent Laming report (Laming, 2003). Climbié's death highlighted a continuation of the failings of previous child protection systems, mostly notably a lack of inter-professional working resulting from poor communication and weaknesses of a non-specialised approach (Community Care, 2005; Laming, 2003), resulting from what Laming termed '*widespread organisational malaise*' (Laming, 2003:16).

The reforms which followed *Every Child Matters* were designed to put an end to disjointed services and to achieve better outcomes for all children by making organisations involved with children work better together (DfES, 2003). The terminology commonly associated with the child protection landscape changed with a shift in the overriding safeguarding vision '*to prevention whilst strengthening protection*' (DfES, 2004b:3). The newly defined safeguarding agenda saw the broadening of concerns from protecting children from abuse to include promoting their welfare through ensuring that all children had the chance to '*maximise their potential*' (DfES, 2005a:5). Teachers became pivotal in this new safeguarding landscape, shifting from social workers the responsibility for maintaining lines of communication between services (Parton, 2009).

As teachers became pivotal within the newly widened safeguarding landscape, critiques of policy emerged including the forced compliance with performance indicators within schools (Harris & Allen, 2009), and the role played by an inquiry in shaping policy with a focus on individual blame and local failures (Masson, 2006). The focus on the negative aspects of policy is common to schools with low rates of policy implementation especially where a focus on individual blame

makes delivery more difficult if through engagement there is the potential for criticism (Harris & Allen, 2009). As the reconstruction of teacher professionalism has meant that teachers are expected to engage with policy even if they are on a personal level unhappy with its principles (Morgan & Clarke, 2011), I question whether engagement with *Every Child Matters* will be superficial, being tailored due to the potential for professional harm.

If teachers only engage with policy because they feel they have to, as the political landscape has changed following the election of a coalition government in 2010, it may be that uncertainty in the value of continued engagement with *Every Child Matters* will function. An example of this uncertainty can be found in the dialogue emerging from the new coalition government following their election to power. The day after coming into office the government placed a ban on the phrase *Every Child Matters* as part of a widespread change in terminology, effectively banning the policy with the Education Secretary Michael Gove describing the '*Every Child Matters agenda as meddling*' (Jones, 2012). A further example of the change in political prominence can be found in changes made to the school inspection regimes post 2010 as the duty by Ofsted to assess a school on how they promote aspects of student's well-being was removed (Jones, 2012). In an era of increasing prescription of teacher professionalism (Swann et al, 2010), it may be that teachers align their desires about who they want to be as teachers with current policy discourse and, now that *Every Child Matters* has fallen from prominence, their desire to engage with its principles becomes pathologized as damaging, marginalizing multi-agency work.

This interplay between policy and teacher professionalism has been identified as impacting on policy implementation (Harris & Allen, 2009), with the likelihood of change reduced if teachers feel disempowered with little control over implementation (Webster et al, 2012). Research into school change following *Every Child Matters* identified that schools with a high degree of control saw greater levels of implementation as they felt that they could manage the changes internally



rather than merely responding to external influence (Harris & Allen, 2009). This makes the degree of control over policy implementation important in consideration of whether teachers engage with multi-agency work as autonomous, self-actuating practitioners or as unquestioning technicians who only engage because they have to and are less likely to maintain engagement once the duty to do so has been removed.

### **2.2.3 The Post *Every Child Matters* Era**

Post *Every Child Matters*, the duty to engage with multi-agency work has continued through the publication of a wave of policies which include *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government, 1999; 2006; 2010; 2013; 2015a; 2016; 2017), the *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice* (DFE, 2014a) and the *Prevent Strategy* (Home Office, 2009).

Safeguarding agendas have seen an increased need for multi-agency working as *Working Together to Safeguard Children* made clear that ‘safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility’ (HM Government, 2015a: 9), with responsibility being defined to include the timely sharing of information, contribution to actions needed and awareness of roles of others including the need to collaborate (HM Government, 2015a). Procedures for multi-agency working, for example through Early Help Assessments, are outlined yet evaluations have found that there are still serious weaknesses with the current system with two thirds of plans written being ineffective (Ofsted, 2015).

Counter-terrorism forms part of teachers’ safeguarding duties following the publication of *Prevent* (Home Office, 2009). The mandate of the *Prevent* strategy is directed towards radicalisation, addressing why and how people become radicalised (Home Office, 2009). Through the *Prevent* strategy school staff have a legal duty to identify children at risk of being radicalised and collaborate with police, social services and other agencies to take appropriate action to protect

children from harm (Prevent Strategy, 2011). Multi-agency work is central to the strategy as schools need to evidence productive co-operation with local Prevent co-ordinators, the police and local authorities (HM Government, 2015b).

The publication of documents such as the *Prevent* duty is resulting in the context for multi-agency work becoming more complex and challenging for teachers as they have to respond to a much wider remit of safeguarding concerns and work in productive co-operation with a greater number of partners (HM Government, 2015b). Compliance with the duty is measured by Ofsted, identifying how schools keep children safe from radicalisation and extremism (HM Government, 2015b). Teachers have voiced their concerns about their positioning within the strategy as they fear not being able to create safe spaces in schools leading to a more restrictive school environment (Parliament, 2016), and insufficient training on how to implement the strategy (The National Association of Head Teachers cited in Parliament, 2016).

In addition to safeguarding agendas, multi-agency work forms a central part of support for students with special educational needs (Barnes, 2008), evident when considering the range of complex needs of children requiring professionals to not only co-operate but to coordinate their services so that children can meet their educational potential (Roaf, 2002). In 2014 the government republished the *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice* strengthening the requirement for services to work together (DFE, 2014a).

### **2.3 Every Child Matters: The Policy Context for Teachers**

*Every Child Matters* developed four key themes around which the subsequent reforms were based, aimed at supporting children's ability to maximise their potential (DfES, 2005a). These were:

1. Families are a crucial influence in children's lives and services should be provided to effectively support them;
2. Interventions should take place before a crisis point is reached;
3. Urgent resolution of the weak accountability and poor relationships between services;
4. All those working with children should feel valued and supported.

(Hoyle, 2008)

These themes formed the fundamental principles through which multi-agency work at the time of *Every Child Matters* functioned and aimed to ensure that children and families were central to any planned changes and all professionals working with families did so collaboratively with joint aims and values.

Through the inclusion of ensuring children are supported in maximising their potential, life chances became incorporated into teacher's widened safeguarding duties and from which the five outcomes of the agenda developed (Harris, 2006). These outcomes are:

1. To ensure children's and young people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being;
2. Protection from harm and neglect;
3. Education, training and recreation;
4. The contribution made by them to society;
5. Social and economic well-being.

These are often summarised as: Being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution to society and achieving economic well-being (DfES, 2004a).

The requirement for teachers to work collaboratively with others grew as their role within the newly widened safeguarding agenda increased (Her Majesty's Government, 2006). Schools had to reconsider the ways in which they operated (Coleman, 2006b), developing strong partnerships

with external agencies (NCSL, 2006; DfES, 2005b), moving away from single compartmentalised approach to one where the needs of the individual are paramount (Roche & Ticker, 2007). Yet, despite public service awareness of shared responsibilities, this collaborative approach was not always reflected in local policies or practice (Hoyle, 2008). The lack of transference of multi-agency principles from government policy to local services suggests that the changes needed to implement reforms within schools requires more than just awareness of policy.

Literature has shown that for teachers to be able to engage with and enact changes to their roles they need not only an awareness of policy but to actively reconcile policy with their own narratives (Williamson & Morgan, 2009). This reconciliation requires policy knowledge and an understanding of what it means to their daily routine, forming '*scripts of reprofessionalisation*' (Williamson & Morgan, 2009:288). The questioning of teacher's knowledge and experience of multi-agency work during interviews should reveal if they have reconciled within their narratives their understanding of their professional self with all aspects of their newly widened role. For example, discourse around the traditional role of protection should include the duty to identify and report abuse as well as new duties showing an increased awareness of multi-disciplinary work including reviews of child protection plans (Her Majesty's Government, 2015a) and a greater obligation to gather, share and analyse data and to intervene in children's lives (Penna, 2005).

## **2.4 Definitions of Multi-Agency Work**

In order to develop an awareness how teachers engage with multi-agency work consideration is needed of what multi-agency work encapsulates with regard given to the complexity of the term. Cheminais in her book on multi-agency work defined the term as:

*'[W]here practitioners from more than one agency work together jointly, sharing aims, information, tasks and responsibilities in order to intervene early to prevent problems arising which may impact on children's learning and achievement.'* (Cheminais, 2009:4)

In the analysis of Cheminais' (2009) definition, for me the use of the word 'jointly' is ambiguous in that it could be interpreted as two professionals working on a core project whilst each maintaining their own roles and responsibilities opposed to developing a shared understanding and re-allocating newly defined roles. I situate my concern within Cheminais' (2009) own five-point scale of collaboration where she described how at stage one professionals could simply co-exist whilst at the other end of the scale there is full collaboration resulting from organisational change with staff working together each contributing to shared goals. The use of the word 'jointly' does not for me clarify where on the scale professionals would position themselves with regard to how they would expect to engage with others.

Taking into consideration my uncertainty I suggest a better definition of multi-agency work would be:

Where professionals from more than one agency work collaboratively within a shared culture enabling aims, information, tasks and responsibilities to be shared in order to have a positive impact on the lives of children and their families.

Whilst agreeing with Cheminais' (2009) inclusion of joint aims, tasks and responsibilities in her definition, my experience within schools leads me to develop a widened understanding of multi-agency work as a remit for not only intervening early but also in response to problems after they arise. For example, multi-agency working is expected for all those working with a child on a child protection plan (Her Majesty's Government, 2015a). This leads onto the drivers for multi-agency work. For Coleman (2006a) there are three drivers which include not only early intervention but also the need for responsiveness to children's needs. These are:

1. Promoting the interests of the child, for example, meeting the needs of children who are looked after by the Local Authority or who have a disability;

2. Promoting joined up thinking and by ensuring the needs of the whole child are met through responding to *Every Child Matters'* five outcomes;
3. Collaborative advantage where the skills and expertise of professionals working in a multi-agency team are brought together to add value and be more responsive to meeting children's needs.

Prior to data collection I had expected the drivers for multi-agency work to feature in teacher's narratives if asked to explain the reasons for working with other professionals and definitions of what multi-agency work means for their practice. The language used by Coleman (2006a) is common to *Every Child Matters* and subsequent multi-agency policy documents such as *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (Her Majesty's Government, 2015a) and *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DFE, 2016). The repetition of language and themes in addition to the requirement for school staff to have read and understood *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DFE, 2016), developed my expectation that the drivers described by Coleman (2006a) would feature in teacher's talk, highlighting their responsiveness to policy change through its impact on their conceptions of teacher professionalism.

## **2.5 Teachers and Multi-Agency Work within the context of *Every Child Matters***

Following *Every Child Matters*, teacher's role evolved from protecting children from abuse to promoting the welfare of all children (Parton, 2009), widening their traditional boundaries of professional responsibility (Her Majesty's Government, 2006). Schools, having the greatest contact with children, are suitably placed to play a key role in safeguarding. Documents such as *Working Together to Safeguard Children* reflect the centrality of schools within multi-agency work:

*'Staff within schools are seen to have a vital role to play in 'helping identify welfare concerns, and indicators of possible abuse and neglect, at an early stage .... Contributing*

*to the assessment of a child's needs and where appropriate ongoing action to meet those needs'. (Her Majesty's Government, 2006:38-40)*

As the onus of responsibility on teachers for safeguarding has increased following *Every Child Matters* (Parton, 2009), consideration is needed of how individuals implement national policies as legislation alone cannot bring about the changes needed to deliver promises outlined in policy (Ozga, 2000). Local implementation will reflect evaluations of local need, so to ensure different professionals develop joint interpretations rather than working towards different priorities, a common core of skills and knowledge for the children's workforce was developed (DfES, 2005a).

The areas of expertise included:

*'the development of effective communication skills; an understanding of child development; promoting children's welfare and safeguarding them; supporting transitions; multi-agency working; the sharing of information'* (Roche & Tucker, 2007: 220)

These new skills were seen as vital in increasing communication between agencies and allowing the interchange of expertise, supporting teachers' engagement with their newly widened roles (Tucker et al, 2002). Yet traditionally teachers work individually within classrooms focusing on the academic progress of children (Mirel & Goldin, 2012). For teachers to be able to engage with collaborative work and embrace these new skills, significant changes are needed within schools allowing the refocusing and restructuring of their roles so they are able to work beyond their traditional areas of expertise (Harris & Allen, 2009). However, change is challenging and policy change can pose a significant professional challenge to teachers as they attempt to make sense of changing expectations (Corley & Gioia, 2004).

Responding to change becomes more challenging considering the rapid rate of change in schools today (Connolly & James, 2014). During such times it is social interactions alone that are able to adapt quickly enough to enable individuals to make sense of changes to their role (Weick, 1993). Literature on multi-agency work has identified how it is the relationships between different professionals as they form shared partnerships that play a key part in the success of multi-agency work (Broussine et al, 2004).

Key to the development of shared partnerships is a need for a shared understanding and culture between professionals, supported by individual personal qualities such as commitment, drive and mutual respect (Atkinson et al, 2001). Shared partnerships support role release where individuals share expertise and skills as traditional professional boundaries dissolve and newly defined roles are allocated (Lacey & Ouvry, 2000). The redefinition of new roles or '*blurring the edges*' of professional boundaries (Atkinson et al, 2001:123), makes it less likely that individuals will resist new practices emerging from engagement with multi-agency work (Hamill & Boyd, 2001). Without the development of this shared understanding, individuals are more likely to reject multi-agency work as they may feel engagement with such places their values and beliefs under the spotlight and intrudes on their existing culture (Atkinson et al, 2001).

To cope with the challenges presented by role release, adequate lead-in time is vital (Sloper, 2004), supporting teacher's ability to make sense of changes to their work and reflect on new professional identities (Frost & Lloyd, 2006). As teacher identity is fundamentally constructed from subject and pedagogical knowledge (Castañeda, 2011), attempts to move their practice towards roles not traditionally associated with teaching presents challenges if teachers feel that their work is being downgraded (Geppert, 2003). Without adequate lead-in time to allow for sense to be made of new working conditions, teachers may not be able to adapt their



understanding of who they are (Cheminais, 2009) and may experience a sudden loss of meaning if they find multi-agency work too dissimilar to their traditional role in the classroom.

Cheminais' (2009) definition of multi-agency work (see page 14) does not reflect the need for role release (Lacey & Ouvry, 2000) and acquisition of new skills (Harris, Allen & Goodall, 2009). In her definition, multi-agency work is not described as a collaborative effort with joint aims but where non-educational professionals support children with roles '*outside of the realm of school staff expertise ... allowing them [teachers] to focus on their core role of teaching*' (Cheminais, 2009:5), suggesting that teachers have a deficit in knowledge with regards to their wider responsibilities and need to focus on their traditional role in the classroom. This seems far from *Every Child Matters*' desire for professionals to share knowledge and develop new skills in order to protect and promote children's well-being (DfES, 2003). What this suggests to me is that there are multiple interpretations of multi-agency work, leading to variations in ways in which policies are engaged with based on each individual's expectations of what such work should look like as a result of who they believe they are as a professional.

Role release or the redefinition of professional boundaries forms a vital component of collaborative work, supporting the emergence of mutual respect and trust (Atkinson et al, 2007), resolving issues over role boundaries and hierarchy within teams as individuals develop a clear understanding of other's responsibilities (Atkinson et al, 2007; Frost & Lloyd, 2006). Respect and trust are a necessary component in the development of partnerships between individuals and agencies (Percy-Smith, 2006), supporting individual's response to change and local implementation of multi-agency working policies (Allnock et al, 2006; Carpenter, Griffin & Brown, 2005).

Differences in how multi-agency work is interpreted can function from the maintenance of traditional professional boundaries seen as teachers, whose identity is heavily tied to one service (Atkinson et al, 2001), interpret multi-agency work through their desire to focus on '*learning outcomes*' (Robinson & Cottrell, 2005: 183) and sustain their '*very particular roles*' (Atkinson et al, 2001: 82). This maintenance of professional boundaries has resulted in teachers being seen as resistant to multi-agency work and has commonly preceded its failure (Atkinson et al, 2001). When asked to engage with roles beyond that traditionally expected, without identity work to redefine professional boundaries, teachers can experience the feeling that their identity is being diluted and experience tensions and anxiety, posing a significant professional challenge as they attempt to engage with multi-agency work (Atkinson et al, 2001)

A lack of identity work and redefinition of professional boundaries may result in wider roles being seen as a way of offloading responsibility for roles which teachers feel unqualified to take on (Atkinson et al, 2001), leading to a reluctance to engage with multi-agency work if it is seen as taking them away from their key role in education (Pettitt, 2003). As teachers are increasingly having to do more whilst complying with increasingly challenging performance standards (Gray & Whitty, 2010), it is questionable whether they will prioritise multi-agency work allocating time and energy to the redefinition of their role.

Challenges to the redefinition of professional boundaries during multi-agency work include the maintenance of traditional views of professionals and a lack of understanding of roles beyond an individual's own profession (Atkinson et al, 2001). For example, doctors are perceived to be unapproachable whilst teachers are felt to be uncommitted to multi-agency work as professionals failed to consider teachers' working constraints (Abbott et al, 2005) such as limited opportunities for communication whilst teaching. The maintenance of such views can cause conflict between professionals, doing little to support the development of trusting and respectful relationships.

## 2.6 Implementation of Multi-Agency Working Policies by Teachers

The reforms which have seen teachers having to interpret and implement multiple and sometimes contradictory policies, are written by others outside of education, with little known about how teachers respond (Braun, Maguire & Ball, 2010). Yet policies can be responded to and interpreted in original and creative ways (Ball, 1997; 2008), impacting on levels of engagement. Engagement can function from simple implementation to policy enactment where text is translated into the school environment (Braun, Maguire & Ball, 2010), as policies are negotiated, contested and struggled over by different groups (Ozga, 2000:113).

Policy enactment starts with an initial reading and sensemaking of text, followed by a process of translation where policies are re-read and enacted through talk, plans and meetings (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012). A framework is suggested by Ball, Maguire and Braun (2012) which considers how context shapes the enactment process through four overlapping and interrelated contextual dimensions. These are:

*‘situated contexts (e.g. locale, school histories and intakes), professional cultures (e.g. values, teacher commitments and experiences and ‘policy management’ in schools), material contexts (e.g. staffing, budgets, buildings, technology, infrastructure), external contexts (e.g. degree and quality of LA [Local authority] support; pressures and expectations from broader policy context, such as Ofsted ratings, league table positions, legal requirements and responsibilities)’.* (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012:21)

These contextual dimensions of policy enactment suggest that policies are open to individualistic interpretation, leading to varying levels of engagement as a result of different subjectivities. This individualistic interpretation of text renders policy enactment a fragile and unstable process (Maguire, Braun & Ball, 2015). Recognising that enactment is both multi-layered and messy may

help in understanding the complicated relationship between making policy and practising policy (Colebatch, 2006), and how multi-agency working policies may be interpreted and translated differently by individuals as a result of contextual dimensions.

It has been argued that the subjective process of policy implementation involves sensemaking as policy actors '*use the lenses they have developed through experience to filter their awareness*' (Spillane, 2004:7). As individuals, as a result of experience, will filter and interpret signals in unique and creative ways, the subjective nature of policy interpretation will function in differences in how individuals engage with policies. It is therefore likely that individuals belonging to the same professional group will have greater commonalities in ways in which they interpret policies than with those belonging to different groups.

If, as research suggests policies are made sense of in unique and original ways as a result of contextual factors (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012) and prior experiences (Spillane, 2004), policies such as *Every Child Matters* are open to dualistic interpretations. On the surface *Every Child Matters* functioned as a welfare policy through its attempt to protect children. Being developed from the tragic case of Victoria Climbié, to begin with few people were publicly prepared to take issue with a policy which aimed to protect children from harm (Stewart, 2012). This functioning of *Every Child Matters* as a welfare policy can be seen in the foreword to the green paper where the use of emotive language linking policy to protection of children is used to convey the welfare interpretation to readers:

*'For most parents, our children are everything to us: our hopes, our ambitions, our future. Our children are cherished and loved. But sadly, some children are not so fortunate. Some children's lives are different. Dreadfully different. Instead of the joy, warmth and security of normal family life, these children's lives are filled with risk, fear, and danger: and from*

*what most of us would regard as the worst possible source – from the people closest to them.... More can and must be done.'* (Blair cited in DfES, 2003:1)

Within my own context staff have received training on the messages contained within *Every Child Matters* and implications for their practice. The same emotive language seen in Blair's foreword was used to convey the key policy messages including reasons why staff needed to engage. Following the training staff were encouraged to read the policy for themselves making meaningful its demands, leaving space for individual methods of policy interpretation.

As Ball, Maguire and Braun (2012) suggested in their work on contextual dimensions, policy interpretation is influenced by the highlighting of the political background in which *Every Child Matters* developed. Interpretation through a political lens places *Every Child Matters* within the realm of economic accountability, with a focus on prevention of problems such as poor educational attainment, unemployment, crime and anti-social behaviour (Parton, 2011). Such interpretations change the scope of the policy from having an altruistic aim of protecting children to being seen as an attempt to protect children as workers for future (Parton, 2009), which can result in differences in how individuals filter and respond to policy signals (Spillane, 2004).

My own reading highlights the dualistic nature of *Every Child Matters*. On face value its laudable to safeguard all children, ensuring that they are protected and able to thrive. A deeper reading raised questions about the policy's focus with the reoccurrence of themes around educational achievement, prosperity, reduced public spending and improved outcomes (DfES, 2004a). The policy language seemed reminiscent of evaluation measures and economic accountability rather than protecting children from harm. Informal talk with colleagues within my workplace suggested similar interpretations as my own, as talk focused on the role of policy acting as a backdoor measure in ensuring educational accountability.

As seen with my own interpretations of *Every Child Matters*, policies can be interpreted differently being dependant on the perspectives, values and positions of policy actors, suggesting that policy enactments are fragile social constructions, grounded in time and place, (Maguire, Braun & Ball, 2015). In this way, how individuals situate multi-agency working policies within their own values has consequences for how they are interpreted and enacted, with interpretation through welfare filters being likely to result in differences in enactment compared to interpretations of policies as a political tool designed to raise standards and ensure economic viability.

As pointed out in literature, policy enactment is grounded in time (Maguire, Braun & Ball, 2015), so ways of interpreting policy may change with context. The political context in the UK has changed since *Every Child Matters* was published in 2003 as the ruling Labour party lost power to a coalition government between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats in 2010 (Wintour, 2010). As one government succeeds another, political priorities change, generating uncertainty as to whether the policies of previous governments will still be valued. For example, the Conservatives believe in reduced welfare expenditure (Shorthouse & Kirkby, 2014) and minimum intervention by the state (Ferguson, 2014). The change in political focus was reflected in the reforms experienced within the educational system (Vaughan, 2011), with an increased emphasis on testing and accountability (the House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee, 2008). Teachers interpreted this as a sign that education was to function through '*a business model ... where we are merely numbers in the machine,*' and where '*everything is about test results*' (Hutchings & Kazmi, 2015:10).

As the government in the UK changed, *Every Child Matters* was removed from the foreground (Stewart, 2012), exemplified by the replacement of language common to policy with phrases such

as '*help children achieve more*' (Puffett, 2010), and the removal of the link between multi-agency work and school inspections (Jones, 2012; The Key, 2012). Inspections sit within measures of teachers' accountability so the removal of *Every Child Matters* from inspections takes the focus off schools in ensuring that children's needs other than academic achievement are prioritised. As welfare discourses are superseded by those linked to accountability within government discourse (Toynbee & Walker, 2015), it is a logical presupposition that teachers will interpret multi-agency work through a lens of accountability and only engage as a result of increased surveillance of compliance. Literature has highlighted how in response to the increased demands for accountability, teachers have organised their work in such a way to meet targets imposed on them whilst not focusing on the elements that are of most benefit to children (Levitt, Janta & Wegrich, 2008). Within this culture, if compliance with multi-agency working policies such as *Every Child Matters* is removed as the horizon of educational policy is narrowed (Walsh, 2006), I question whether teachers will engage with policies which add little value to their professional worth or whether they will prioritise aspects of their role with links to accountability measures, namely the teaching of subject knowledge.

If teachers' notions of what it means to be professional are decided within policy through accountability measures, research suggests teachers will align their desires about who they want to be as teachers with the desires embedded within discourse and feel an obligation to enact policies that they do not believe in (Moore & Clarke, 2016). This obligation, termed '*procedural illusions of effectiveness*' (Bishop & Mulford, 1996), results in the micro-management of teachers and has been criticised for returning teaching to a de-professionalised craft (Hargreaves, 2000). Teacher compliance with policies they do not believe in marginalises roles beyond the academic which, without being embedded within regimes of accountability, are deemed to be pathologised as damaging with potential impact on teacher's investment of time, effort and ultimately changes to their professional practice (Moore & Clarke, 2016).

Variations in how policies are enacted has been highlighted by Maguire, Braun and Ball (2015) as they explained how not all policies are adopted in the same way as each policy carries different significance for different people. They found that issues of power and positionality influenced the way in which policies were performed into existence. For example, high-stakes policies such as those around the 'raising standards' agenda were seen as being more visible and therefore more prominent, whilst other policies were left to one side as time and space constraints influenced their enactment (Maguire, Braun & Ball, 2015). If multi-agency working policies are seen as less high profile by their removal from government discourse, their visibility is reduced resulting in enactments which '*may be less high profile, contradictory and sometimes hardly in evidence at all*' (Maguire, Braun & Ball, 2015:492).

As *Every Child Matters* becomes less visible within British politics (Stewart, 2012), there is a potential impact on the development of interprofessional relationships due to questions about the longevity and sustainability of resources (Harris & Allen, 2013). As described earlier on page 17, it is social interactions alone that are able to adapt quickly enough to enable individuals to make sense of change (Weick, 1993). Yet it takes time for trust, honesty and self-respect to develop (Asch, 1956), allowing intersubjectivity to emerge and support the development of new ways of working (Campbell, 1990 cited in Weick, 1993). Examples illustrating issues around sustainability can be found within my own Local Authority. Following the publication of *Every Child Matters*, Early Help Coordinators were employed to support multi-agency work, completing paperwork and liaising with professionals. A few years later these roles were disbanded, leaving teachers to navigate the new and sometimes chaotic world of multi-agency work without any additional sources of guidance and resilience. The lack of sustainability of roles associated with multi-agency work may be interpreted by teachers as reflecting issues of prominence leading them to make judgements as to the importance of multi-agency working policies.



## **2.7 The Dichotomy of Teachers' Roles**

Multi-agency work is only one of many changes that the teaching profession in the UK has undergone since the turn of the century (Whitty, 2006). Situating multi-agency work within this change context creates a dichotomy for teachers as they have to do more whilst engaging in roles which sit outside the machinery of accountability and testing, leaving less time for teachers to focus on their subject knowledge and develop pupil's cognitive skills (Esteve, 2000). As expectations on teachers have increased, many cite feelings of overload as a result of insufficient time and resources (The Guardian, 2014).

Within this context of overload, the emphasis on student results has increased (Williamson & Morgan, 2009), with teachers expected to reorient their teaching methods to cope with a more complex and challenging student body. The heterogeneous nature of today's schools comes as more students with special educational needs are educated in mainstream schools (Paton, 2009) requiring teachers to adopt more complex teaching methods (Esteve, 2000). In addition to the work inside the classroom, teachers are expected to attend to administration tasks such as planning, meeting parents, organising extra-curricular activities and attending meetings (Esteve, 2000). Increasing pressures and limited resources poses dilemmas for teachers as to where to direct their time and energy, raising questions around which demands will take precedence.

Literature suggests that teachers will prioritise tasks linked to externally measured achievements (Adams et al, 2004), feeling pressure to comply and prove their competence or face difficulties during school inspections (Ballet & Kelchterman, 2009). For example, primary based teachers prioritise tasks related to literacy and numeracy as it is these which are measured by the government (Adams et al, 2004). Increasing accountability and pressure to perform undermines

teachers' self-confidence and can lead to a loss of professional skills (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2009).

Teacher professional self-confidence is further eroded by the increasingly negative public judgement of teachers as they are seen as the scapegoats for all that is wrong with the educational system, which can trigger a crisis of identity if this leads to the questioning of their role (Cole, 1985). Teachers sit within a widened societal role being seen as the panacea for all the ills of today's society (Bassey, 2005). As multi-agency work can be seen as forming part of this wider role, it may be that teachers link engagement with multi-agency work with the potential for blame if it does not result in the achievement of outcomes desired by society, further eroding their confidence and ability to perform.

An example linking wider aspects of teachers' roles to societal blame can be found in the response from Margaret Thatcher, who was British Prime Minister at the time of the 1985 Heysel stadium football riots, who cited the cause of the vandalism as being the abandonment of traditional values of British education by teachers (Cole, 1985). A more recent example followed the UK riots in 2011 where gangs of youths stalked the streets, looting and setting fire to buildings and vehicles. In the subsequent debates into the causes of such behaviour, teachers accrued much blame for their failure to educate young people into active citizens with '*responsibility [being put] at the doors of schools and their leaders*' (Sellgren, 2012). Recommendations from the Riots, Communities and Victims panel report included fining schools that failed to raise pupil's literacy rates and ensuring that schools act to develop the character of young people (BBC News, 2012). If blame is apportioned to teachers for wider aspects of their role resulting in a questioning of their professionalism, reduced engagement with aspects beyond the academic may result as teachers attempt to shield themselves from further attacks.

Links between teachers and societal issues have functioned in motives for engagement with multi-agency work. For example, Payne in his article about joined-up thinking, linked wider societal issues with the need for a multi-agency response seen in the extract below:

*'[T]he case for treating social problems in a holistic fashion is overwhelming. People know, in a simple everyday fashion, that crime, poverty, low achievement at school, bad housing and so on are connected.'* (Payne, 1998:12)

I question whether the use of societal issues within justifications for multi-agency work will trigger feelings of unease for teachers expected to engage with collaborative working as crime and poverty are linked by society to poor achievement in school. This is true for teachers who, following links being made between schools and the 2011 riots, reacted with disappointment and dismay (Sellgren, 2012). As links are made between societal issues and teachers' widened role, I suggest it is not a big jump to take this blame and put it on the shoulders of teachers for failures which have resulted in the need for multi-agency work. If teachers associate multi-agency work with the accrument of blame there are potential consequences for teacher engagement with multi-agency ways of working as they may seek to avoid roles which do not add value or may result in a negative public judgment.

The potential for negative public judgement is increased as a result of time restraints in which teachers operate as they are expected to do more (Hargreaves, 2000), yet engagement with multi-agency work takes them away from their traditional role as educators developing student's subject knowledge. If engagement with multi-agency work results in teachers finding themselves less able to respond to the increasingly challenging student body in the classroom, this may impact on achievement of grades, which the 2011 report into UK riots stated that schools should be fined for (Singh et al, 2012). If this is the case and through engagement with multi-agency work teachers are opening themselves up to derisions of blame, I argue that they are more likely to

openly resist or engage with multi-agency work in a passive manner rather than making changes to their understanding of their professional selves.

## **2.8 Multi-Agency Work and Teacher Professionalism**

Teachers' feelings of derision may develop out of the UK government's agenda for redefining teacher professionalism (Hargreaves et al, 2007), as teachers are told that they need to accept accountability, work in partnership with others (DfES, 1998; Whitty, 2006) and remodel teaching in order to ensure that they '*measure up to and surpass our [governments] ideals for what a profession can be*' (Morris cited in DfES, 2001:3). Statements such as these create the impression that teachers are failing to measure up to '*new government ideas of professionalism*' (Swann et al, 2010:568). Earlier in this thesis (see pages 5-7) I described how government conceptions of professionalism lie within the idea of teachers forming a partnership with the government (DfES, 2001), with the government setting the rules determining the different aspects which make up teacher professionalism and the apparent disconnect of this with teachers' views (Swann et al, 2010). If teachers are not in agreement with government expectations, I question how they will align their desires as a teacher with the increasing demands placed upon them (Esteve, 2000), and whether they will situate multi-agency work within these desires or only engage in a bid to measure up when government rules dictate the need to do so.

As reforms have strived to redefine teacher professionalism, what it means to be a teacher is decisively changed in the process (Ball, 2003), as new cultures develop in schools with a loss of professional autonomy and increased teacher compliance with aspects of their role which is counter to their ideals of professionalism (Swann et al, 2010). The accomplishment of this culture is through a loss of capacity for self-definition (Gerwitz et al, 2009), reducing teachers to the status of specialised technicians (Hudson, 1999), delivering a prescriptive set of government

initiatives delimiting space for autonomy for teachers to continue to engage with aspects of their work beyond the government's narrow vision.

In a culture of coercive compliance, teachers have to take responsibility for their employment security through delivery of state-imposed initiatives (Wilkins & Wood, 2009), changing teacher identity (Bernstein, 1996) as they strive to add value to their professional worth by engaging with those aspects of their role which represent worth within their institution. It is argued that in the era of new professionalism, '*specialization is still the dominant source of prestige*' (Hoyle, 2001:141), leading to questions as to whether teachers seeking to add value to their professional worth will do so through engagement with policies which emphasise roles specialist to teaching, the achievement of academic benchmarks, rather than engaging with non-specialist multi-agency tasks as roles are shared between agencies. This leads me to question how teachers will engage with multi-agency policies and whether this will be done through accountability measures with teachers merely performing roles, acting as unquestioning technicians rather than as self-actualising professionals (Hall & Schulz, 2003). If teachers are no longer encouraged to have a rationale for practice but to simply implement state initiatives, Ball (2003) suggests that this leads to inauthentic practice. I argue that combined with the sacrifice of traditional professional values such as collaboration, trust and integrity (Swann et al, 2010), inauthentic practice reduces teachers' capacity to respond to events encountered through multi-agency work.

In a culture where '*beliefs are no longer important- it is output that counts*' (Ball, 2003:223), are the demands for academic outcomes going to outweigh beliefs with teachers investing their time in those tasks which are more easily measurable and most likely to improve output? The phenomenon of results and outcomes within education is characterised by data-driven audit cultures and inspection regimes (Hutchings & Kazmi, 2015), and leads me to question teachers' willingness to engage with roles peripheral to those linked to externally measured achievements.

It has been argued that in education '*value replaces values*' (Bernstein, 1996:169), as the need of individuals to add value to their own/institutions worth succeeds teachers' value of caring. This view about the succession of data driven value over teacher derived values has been cited in literature as resulting in the marginalisation of emotionality and caring aspects of teaching (O'Connor, 2008).

The result of the disconnect between the government's and teachers' definitions of professionalism is a culture of uncertainty, instability and a sense of being constantly judged (Ball, 2003). Within this high-risk culture, where teachers are publicly accountable for students' achievements, feelings of low trust develop as teachers' roles became increasingly prescribed and audited (Troman, 2000). This prescription impacts negatively on teacher's physical and emotional well-being and importantly, when considering the impact on multi-agency work, their ability to form professional relationships as teachers cite feelings of being undermined and the creation of a critical atmosphere during multi-agency work (Troman, 2000).

This potentially damaging culture in schools has, through its impact on teachers' ability to form positive working relationships, implications for multi-agency work. Trust is a pre-requisite for effective and meaningful collaborative working relationships (Nias et al, 1989), and without trust the bonds of solidarity between professionals are broken (Misztal, 1996). As the new government ideals of professionalism (Swann et al, 2010) remain with increasing prescription and accountability within teachers' roles, I question teachers' ability to contribute within multi-agency teams as their ontological insecurity makes it likely that they will compare themselves unfavourably to other members of multi-agency teams limiting their ability to contribute and challenge the ideas of others.

## 2.9 Summary: Teacher Professionalism and Engagement with Multi-Agency Working Policies

In summary, *Every Child Matters*, and subsequent multi-agency working policies, aimed to reduce the fragmentation of services (Laming, 2003) through collaborative working (Cheminais, 2009). Definitions of collaborative work include developing shared aims and responsibilities (Cheminais, 2009), acquisition of new skills and interchange of expertise (Tucker et al, 2002) as professional boundaries become blurred (Atkinson et al, 2001). For teachers used to working individually in classrooms, significant changes to their professional practices are required (Sloper, 2004), made especially challenging when considering the current context of rapid educational policy change (Malnick, 2015).

There are variations in the process of policy implementation (Ball, 1997), for example individuals implement action that has been pre-defined by others (Maguire, Braun & Ball, 2015) or reconcile policy with their teacher identity through the processes of interpretation and enactment (Drake & Sherin, 2006). Policy interpretation is dependent on individual subjectivities influenced by a framework of contextual dimensions which include school context and individual experiences (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012). One way in which *Every Child Matters* can be interpreted is through a safeguarding lens (Parton, 2009) with the aim of protecting children from harm. A second method of interpretation can be through a political lens of economic accountability (Parton, 2011).

Differences in interpretation affect how individuals filter and respond to policy signals (Spillane, 2004) and their longevity of influence (Harris & Allen, 2013) when they are no longer part of dominant educational discourse. The political landscape has changed since *Every Child Matters* was published with the raising standards agenda moving into the foreground (Swann et al, 2010), whilst policies sitting outside of accountability measures have become less high-profile and thereby less visible within the policy enactment environment (Maguire, Braun & Ball, 2015). As

welfare discourses are superseded by those linked to accountability within government discourse (Toynbee & Walker, 2015), I question whether roles beyond the academic will become marginalised within schools.

As teachers' work has become increasingly prescribed with the expectation of compliance with high-stakes and high-profile policies, a new era of teacher professionalism emerges (Hoyle, 2001). In this new era, teachers are expected to unquestioningly implement policies in order to add individual self-worth (Harris & Allen, 2009), engaging with roles which act as a source of prestige whilst sacrificing traditional professional characteristics, such as ability to collaborate (Swann et al, 2010). This impacts on teachers' ability to reconcile change, making it more likely that changes, including those within policy, are resisted or performed in a limited manner (Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2009).

As expectations on teachers increase and their relationship with the government and the public change, I question whether teachers will have the ability to utilise their professional characteristics to engage with roles which no longer are seen to add value to who they are as teachers. Instead it may be that they prioritise aspects of their role which though association with accountability measures are seen as adding greater professional self-worth, marginalising and limiting the scope of multi-agency work.



## **Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework and Research Questions**

### **3.1 Theoretical Framework: Who teachers think they are affects how they engage with policy**

#### **Introduction: Performance or Enactment?**

My theoretical discussion centres around the role of teachers' professional identity through its influence over the process of how teachers engage with policy. Teacher professional identity has received increasing research interest in the last twenty years (Clarke, 2008; Day *et al*, 2006) due to the concept addressing the complex nature of the profession. Through doing so it brings together the personal and professional and exerts influence over the processes involved in professional development (Canrinus, 2011), including that involved in engaging with new policy requirements.

Schools and teachers now expected to be familiar with, interpret and implement multiple and sometimes contradictory policies (Braun, Maguire & Ball, 2010). There are variations in the process of policy engagement including performance of a policy through the completion of an activity rather than bringing that policy into being, or enactment (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008).

Enactment, unlike policy performance, is a dualistic process whereby policies are interpreted and translated into action (Braun, Ball & Maguire, 2011). I am interested in how teachers engage with multi-agency working policies and whether they engage through performing its principles or whether, as a result of who they think they are as teachers, they bring that policy into being, creating its boundaries and properties through individual ways of interpretation and translation.

Ball, Maguire and Braun in their 2012 book explored how schools enact rather than perform policy. They talked about the stages of policy enactment including interpretation, involving the initial reading of the policy text, and ways in which the policy is made sense of through re-reading and literal enactment of text in and through talk, plans and meetings. Ball, Maguire and Braun (2012) note how attention in literature is usually given to how well schools implement or perform

policies with less attention given to how policies are enacted through creative processes where they are interpreted and translated into practice. As my study is one looking at how multi-agency working policies are subjectively interpreted and translated by individual teachers and the transformational effect this may have on professional identity, I am favour policy enactment over performance as there is a '*profound connection between identity and practice*' (Wenger, 1998: 149), and set out to consider ways in which teachers engage with multi-agency texts and enact their principles.

In the way described by Ball, Maguire and Braun (2012), policy enactment requires individual methods of interpretation and translation where individuals make order out of experiences, converting the confusing into something intelligible in a process of sensemaking. I draw on Weick's (1995; 2001) sensemaking theory where sensemaking is described as being based on the notion that an individual's actions enable an enhanced understanding of their environment which influences their future actions. Using Weick's theory I suggest that how teachers make sense of the environment of a multi-agency team bears influence on how they engage with multi-agency working policies such as *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003), and their subsequent actions within that team. Research into educational reform has shown how before adopting a reform, teachers need to make sense of it, interpreting its key principles and finding it meaningful before being enacted into being (Drake & Sherin, 2006). Whilst if policy engagement is through performance, where activities are completed in a limited manner, actions which would allow an enhanced understanding of the environment are less likely to be taken than if policies are enacted, as through such their principles and boundaries are brought into being in relational, situated and temporal ways (Hafermalz et al, 2016).

Teachers' understanding of who they are as teachers influences their response to reform due to uncomfortable nature of identity ambiguity which creates the context for its own resolution

(Corley & Gioia, 2004). In a similar way as described by Corley and Gioia (2004) in their paper about identity change following a corporate spin-off, how teachers engage with multi-agency work is a consequence of the distance between themselves and policy as people individually or collectively ask the question '*who are we?*' (Pratt & Foreman, 2000). In turn an individual's identity will affect their engagement with policy through acting as a constraint or enabler of sensemaking (Ketelaar et al, 2012). If changes within policy are to become reconciled within a teacher's professional identity, they must make sense of reform, interpreting it and find it meaningful (Drake & Sherin 2006), thus enacting the reform. If, as a result of continual change within education (Connolly & James, 2014) and the perception that change presents an identity threat, multi-agency work cannot be reconciled with teacher's professional identity, the likelihood of multi-agency work being enacted within teachers' roles is lessened. If change is not enacted then it more likely that roles will be resisted or performed in a limited manner (Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2009) as teachers decide where to direct their time and attention to.

Before engaging with policies and enacting new roles as prescribed in multi-agency working policies, teachers need to be able to make sense of what is being expected of them, negotiating, influencing and capitalising on their conditions to achieve their goals (Tan, 2016). Drawing on Weick's (1979; 1995) sensemaking theory, the process of sensemaking draws on what teachers have made sense of previously and the values and beliefs which form their professional identity. The message given to schools and therefore what has born influence on previous sensemaking activities is one dominated by targets and accountability (Meirerdirk, 2012). If multi-agency policies disrupt teachers' current understanding of their role, one which is commonly associated with targets and results, then sensemaking occurs (Weick, 1979). Utilising Weick's (1979; 1995) concept of sensemaking I suggest that this disruption will set into motion meaning making processes allowing individuals to make order of their world and reconfirm their sense of identity whilst enabling the embodiment of multi-agency principles in teacher's practice.

Wick (1993) described a second sensemaking possibility developed through the loss of organisational structure and stability, where individuals experience a loss of sensemaking which he termed a 'Cosmology Episode'. Weick (1993) began his work on cosmology episodes by describing the Mann Gulch disaster of 1949 in Montana, USA and the response by authorities to put out a fire which resulted in the loss of many of the lives of the smoke-jumpers who responded to the emergency. He described how individuals tried to make sense of events through the emerging organisation which was formed as the smoke-jumpers came together for the first time.

I argue that multi-agency work can be seen as an attempt to build an emerging organisation, an organisation being a series of interlocking routines which result in the habituated action that brings people together at the same time and place (Westley, 1990). People working within this emerging organisation are confronted with difficulties as they face developing new structures whilst attempting to maintain their existing knowledge of structural systems within their original organisation. Weick (1993) explained how the development of new organisational structures is vital so that in times of crisis when one organisational structure collapses, a substitute might be invented immediately. Without the development of new structures Weick (1993) argued that people become unable to make-sense of events and are left with little sense of who they are. Weick (1993) applied his theory for the loss of sensemaking to everyday situations such as that encountered by teachers engaging in multi-agency work. Application of Weick's concept of cosmology episodes (1993) to everyday situations creates the possibility that through engagement with multi-agency work teachers may experience the same loss of structure and stability as the smoke-jumpers, leading to similar experiences of a loss of meaning.

Through drawing on the concepts developed by academics such as Weick (1979; 1993; 1995), Braun, Ball and Maguire (2011), and Corley and Gioia (2004), I argue that enactment of multi-

agency principles is dependent on previous identity work and sensemaking activities. Chapter 2 of this thesis (see pages 5-35) identified difficulties faced by teachers within schools at the time of this study, as they attempted to make sense of their ever-changing world whilst maintaining a positive conception of their own professional identity. Teachers need to navigate this rapidly changing educational policy context (Malnick, 2105), deciding where to direct their attention so to enable the comprehension of changes being presented through policy. Around the time of the publication of *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003), the policy which provides the context for this study, it was argued in literature that teachers were coming under increased scrutiny and pressure to perform to prescribed ideals (Sachs, 2001). Within this context I question whether teachers situated within regimes of accountability will enact the principles of policies which may be interpreted as adding little professional worth even if agreement is found with them or whether they will engage with policies only if they conform to their current beliefs about themselves as teachers.

### **Sensemaking and Identity**

Sensemaking as defined by Weick involves the conversion of '*a world of experience into an intelligible world*' (Weick, 2001:9), being how individuals '*construct, filter, frame ... and render the subjective into something more tangible*' (Weick, 1995:14). Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld (2005) described how efforts at sensemaking tended to occur when the current state of the world is perceived to be different from that which is expected by individuals meaning that the flow of experience becomes unintelligible in some way. In the process of making sense of the disruption, people look for reasons pulled from previously developed frameworks such as institutional constraints, expectations, acceptable justifications and inherited traditions that will enable them to resume the interrupted activity (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005). Drawing on the theories developed by Weick (1988; 1993; 1995; 2001), I suggest that if multi-agency work provides the

disruption of normal activities for teachers, ambiguity will develop for which individuals will seek resolution through the process of sensemaking. Using previously developed frameworks teachers will seek to convert the confusing and uncertain into something which becomes intelligible and enacted, enabling the resumption of activity (Weick, 1993).

Weick (1995) described the centrality of the identity in ways in which people make sense of events as who people think they are in their context shapes what they enact and how they interpret events (Pratt, 2000; Currie & Brown, 2003; Weick et al, 2005). Thus, Weick's theory of sensemaking (1995) suggests that the world is constructed by each individual in it and this construction is a result of who they think they are and how they interpret events. Gioia (2006) explained how Weick's sensemaking theory draws on constructivism in that *'it is about the process of becoming' rather than the 'states of being'* (Gioia, 2006:1711), moving away from static, fixed beings to viewing reality as ever-changing entities as sensemaking is grounded in identity construction. It is possible to see the role of action in the process of becoming in Weick's core sentence *"How can I know what I think until I see (hear) what I do?"* (Weick, 1995:25), where action precedes understanding and once sense has been accomplished it is impossible to step out of it except by taking further action (Langernberg & Wesseling, 2016). It is this role of action which makes Weick's sensemaking theory distinct from phenomenology in that it is an active process in that it does *'not simply describe the social world, but categorise[s] it . . . [and] bring[s] phenomena into sight'* (Parker, 1992:4).

Weick's theory looks beyond identity construction to consider ways in which identity shapes individual interpretations of experiences, as people do not set out to construct meaning, rather they discover meaning through making sense of a world on which they have already imposed what they believe (Weick, 1995). The basic presumption is that sensemaking is self-referential in that the 'self' and not the 'environment' is the text that asks for meaning, as the person making

sense redefines himself in an attempt to lift tensions and come to a sense of identity (Langenberg & Wesseling, 2016). If identity is not affirmed, that tension will give rise to renewed sensemaking which unfolds again and again in the creation and recreation of a renewed understanding of one's own identity.

The link between this form of sensemaking and who people believe they are was drawn upon by Ketelaar et al in their 2012 study of teachers' responses to educational innovation. They found that teacher's identity affected sensemaking activities when they were expected to implement an innovation in the same way that teachers in this study are expected to implement multi-agency work. For example, those teachers who had a high degree of correspondence between their identity and the innovation found that they were able to adopt new ideas into their existing identity. Those whose identity didn't correspond either adopted new ideas at the same time as maintaining their current identity resulting in differing perceptions within one individual or rejected the situational demands and continued to draw upon their previously developed identity without any transformational effect.

Sensemaking around an educational innovation has been more specifically defined as the interaction between a teacher's own frame of reference or their identity and the perception of the situational demands that are inherent to the innovation, resulting in a personal interpretation of the innovation (Luttenberg et al, 2009). Following the same principle multi-agency work is the innovation in this study and so how teachers engage with and make sense of multi-agency principles is dependent on their professional identity and the situational demands placed on them including the high degree of policy change that is common within UK schools (The Economist, 2014). In this way as a result of the interplay between an individual's identity and the event being experienced, Weick's sensemaking theory is more than simple interpretation of the message and

instead involves the active reconciliation of new information presented into an individual's existing knowledge and beliefs.

In seeking to uncover teacher's sensemaking activities around multi-agency work I needed an awareness of factors which form part of the sensemaking process. Thought is divided as to whether the process of interpretation and reconciliation which makes up sensemaking is a social or cognitive one. Ketelaar et al (2012) are clear that sensemaking is an active cognitive process and this view has been developed by others such as Hill & Levenhagen (1995), postulating that sensemaking is how people develop a mental model of how the environment works linking the process with cognition as individuals develop schemas based on their interpretations of their environment. Other theorists stress the social aspect of sensemaking which occurs between people who are embedded within a sociomaterial context where thoughts, feelings and behaviours are influenced by the presence of others (Allport, 1985).

Identity provides a link between the cognitive and social in that it involves the integration of various roles, experiences and values into a coherent image of self (Epstein, 1978) and is influenced by how individuals are viewed by others (Danielwicz, 2001). The link between identity and sensemaking is drawn upon by Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld (2005) as they explained how our identity shapes what we enact and how we interpret events which affects what outsiders think we are and how they treat us, which in turn stabilises or destabilises our identity. In other words, it is the identity that provides an understanding of who we are and who we are to others (Danielwicz, 2001).

As people develop an identity, they develop theories of action about themselves (McCutcheon, 1992) or a series of beliefs, images and constructs. These constructs are self-referential and link the cognitive meaning-making process involved in understanding who we are with our



interpretations of the context in which we are placed (Weick, 1995). Our interpretations are seen through the lens of the constructs we develop thus we don't see a world of raw experiences but instead one shaped through our own understanding of how things should be (Weick, 1995).

Drawing on the work of Weick I suggest that the identity can be key to understanding how individual teachers interpret and comprehend policies within their social environment as a result of its influence in what teachers find important in their work.

Weick developed his understanding of how individuals make sense of their world in his book *Sensemaking in organisations (1995)*. Here he explained how '*people make sense of things by seeing a world which they have already imposed what they believe*' (Weick, 1995:15). Thus, sensemaking is not about interpreting events but discovering the meaning that is imposed as a result of how the world is viewed as a consequence of people's pre-determined beliefs. These beliefs form part of their identity therefore identity determines sensemaking activities and in turn how people's identity is enacted shapes an individual's identity (Weick, 1995). Put simply sensemaking is both shaped by and shapes identity.

Identity and therefore sensemaking are social processes which occur between people as individuals making sense of their environment do so embedded within a socio-cultural matrix (Allport, 1985 cited in Weick, 1995). Within this matrix the thoughts and actions of others, whether imagined or real, are projected on individuals embedded within the culture. It is through discourse with others that people's constructs of themselves are developed (Brown & Phua, 2011) and become embedded within their culture as the stories they tell are communicated to and negotiated with others.

Sensemaking unfolds as a sequence in which meaning is made of unfolding events in an ongoing process in which past experiences are projected upon possible futures (Hernes & Maitlis, 2010).

As individuals seek to understand events, they take action to make-sense of the situation, which in turn enacts the environment they seek to understand (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Maitlis (2005), in her study of the social processes of organisational sensemaking, argued that sensemaking creates rational accounts of the world that enables action as unfolding events undergo cycles of interpretation and action resulting in the enactment of a more ordered environment. In other words, sensemaking is authored in such a way to permit the prediction and comprehension of unfolding events, creating for individuals inter-subjective meaning through continual cycles of interpretation and action.

A summary of Weick's sensemaking theory is provided in his 1995 book on sensemaking in organisations. The summary points are described below followed by a discussion of what this may mean for teachers engaging with multi-agency work.

1. Identity: People's identity and their ability to identify with those around them is central. Who people think they are in their context shapes what they enact and how they interpret events (Currie & Brown, 2003). When an individual's identity is threatened their ability to understand their reality is lessened.
2. Social context: Sensemaking is influenced by the presence of others as it is through the stories told that individuals develop an evolving sense of what is happening. When these social anchors disappear, this ability to make-sense of reality is diminished.
3. Retrospective: Retrospection provides opportunity for sensemaking. Sensemaking is a retrospective activity as people can only understand what they have done once they have done it. What people choose to pay attention to affects their ability to make-sense of events therefore the point in time when retrospection occurs affects their attention and interpretation.
4. Cues: People extract cues from their environment to help them decide what is relevant and acceptable (Brown, Stacey & Nandhakumar, 2008). The cues that people extract

allows them to link their ideas of what is happening to broader networks of meaning allowing people to develop a larger sense of what may be occurring (Weick, 1995). When these cues become unstable, ambiguous or contradictory, as a result of changing preferences or situations, people begin to lose their understanding of what is happening.

5. Sensemaking is ongoing: Experience flows continuously as people both shape and react to their environment. As an event happens people are forced to act. As they do, they observe the consequences and in doing so learn about their identity. During this feedback process people deduce their identity from the behaviour of others towards them whilst also trying to influence this behaviour.
6. Plausibility: People favour plausibility over accuracy as they interpret events (Currie & Brown, 2003). When an event occurs, people make-sense by asking what is happening. They favour coherence of events and credibility therefore sense is constrained by previous events, environmental cues and agreements with others (Weick, 1995). If plausibility is lost people begin to lose their grasp on what is happening, leaving cues unaddressed.
7. Enactment: People take action to gain some sense of what is happening in order to probe situations and see the response. This enactment occurs in environments where people build narrative accounts enabling them to understand what they think, organise their experiences and control and predict events (Weick, 1995).

The organisation and sensemaking of experiences takes place through the processes of ecological change, enactment, selection and retention in Weick's theory of organising (1979). Sensemaking starts with ecological change when there is an alteration in the flow of experience for people within their environment providing the raw materials for individuals to make-sense of. Enactment follows which is defined by Weick (1988) as the notion that when people take action, they bring structures and events into existence and set them in action. Through enactment organisational

members create a stream of events that they pay attention to (Orton, 2000). Thereby, enactment is both a process, the process of taking action, and a product, an enacted environment (Weick, 1979).

In explaining enactment Weick (1979) used the metaphor of natural selection in that the activities of people take different forms in different contexts. In the same way as with natural selection, over time certain activities which prove advantageous prevail at the expense of other activities. Therefore, it would be expected that what teachers enact in today's environment would be very different to what they enacted twenty plus years ago as a result of changing contexts and demands. The third process of selection is where enacted experiences are arranged into causal maps in order to reduce their equivocality (Weick, 1979). These maps encompass an individual's understanding of how each element fits together. Finally, the products of sensemaking activities are stored influencing future sensemaking activities (Weick, 1979).

Environmental cues are vital in the triggering of sensemaking (Weick, 1979). As the context in which teachers are situated undergoes change, I would expect teachers to notice the changing environmental demands such as the publication of multi-agency working policies such as *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003). Weick's (1979) theory of organising starts with cues generated through ecological change. Cues in the environment often take the form of violated expectations for which the meaning is ambiguous or the outcomes uncertain (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). If noticed cues can trigger the process of sensemaking through the need for explanation as they disrupt people's understanding of their world. Disruptions result from discrepancies between what individuals expect to happen and what is being experienced causing people to ask what is going on and what action they should take (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Such questioning is subjective and its level of significance is influenced by each individual's identity (Corley & Gioia, 2004), in that sensemaking activities are influenced by an individual's specific needs for self-

enhancement, self-efficacy and self-consistency (Erez & Earley, 1993). In order to meet these specific needs people will try and make-sense of events in ways which confirms their understanding of their identity.

If identity is constructed in such a way to meet individual needs for self-enhancement, self-efficacy and self-consistency, when the identity comes under threat this acts as a prompt for sensemaking (Pratt et al, 2006). In other words, if an event or experience occurs which undermines an individual's ability to do work which is central to their identity, sensemaking is triggered in an attempt to make order of their world, thus reconfirming their identity or sense of who they are.

Chapter 2 (see pages 5-34) described how multi-agency policies such as *Every Child Matters* set out the requirement for inter-agency collaboration, and in doing I suggest create the conditions needed to trigger sensemaking. The potential for multi-agency policies to trigger sensemaking develops if they bring into being environmental cues for which the meanings of such are ambiguous or confusing (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Traditionally teachers' roles have been based around isolated work within the classroom with groups of students (Mirel & Goldin, 2012). As sensemaking is a retrospective activity (Weick, 1995), people can only understand what they have they already done. Without previously having made sense such multi-agency work, I suggest teachers are likely to find cues resulting from such work confusing or ambiguous being too dissimilar to what they have previously enacted. Cues have the potential to trigger sensemaking if they are unexpected in that they set out the need for tasks not previously engaged with or through non-occurrence of what was expected (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). With regards to multi-agency work, I suggest such cues develop from tasks which teachers may find unexpected, such as the expectation for collaborative work with professionals from different agencies on aspects of a child's life which they may feel as irrelevant to their role in the classroom and the

achievement of academic results. The inclusion of the unexpected focused beyond the classroom and the non-occurrence of the expected role of subject teaching may have the potential to trigger sensemaking through teacher's violated expectations of their role in multi-agency work and trigger the questioning of what is going on and what action needs to be taken (Pratt et al, 2006), impacting on engagement with multi-agency policies.

If teachers notice the environmental cues provided by engagement with multi-agency work, this noticing could set into action the processes of interpretation and enactment (Thomas, Clark, & Gioia, 1993; Weber & Glynn, 2006). In extracting cues people rely on the presence of others around them using them as social anchors to help them form a shared understanding of confusing and ambiguous events (Weick, 1993). The development of these shared interpretative schemas was referred to by Weick as '*shared provinces of meaning*' (Weick, 1993: 645). Earlier in this Chapter (page 38) I argued that multi-agency teams can be viewed as an example of an emerging organisation in that the systems, including the social links between individuals that bring them together, have yet to be developed. Without these social and emotional ties with other members of a multi-agency teams, I suggest that teachers are likely to find challenging the development of a joint understanding of multi-agency work. Teachers' ability to form ties with others is likely to be diminished if they are not used to working collaboratively with others. As described in Chapter 2 (pages 26-28), teachers' role is based on individual work within classrooms (Mirel & Goldin, 2012), opposed to working collaboratively with others limiting their ability to develop social anchors which could support sensemaking processes and potentially affecting their ability to make joint sense of new ways of working such as that suggested by multi-agency working policies.

The potential for teachers to enact roles, such as those which are presented through multi-agency work, is influenced by each teacher's identity (Corley & Gioia, 2004), as who teachers think they are affects their ability to notice cues which in Weick's (1979) theory of organising triggers the

process of sensemaking. Drawing on the work of Corley and Gioia (2004) and their study of identity change following a company spin-off, teacher's ideas of who they are in their context of their school is important in how they take action. In this way I suggest that teacher's ideas of who they are and their view of their role in multi-agency work are important when determining what action they might take within a multi-agency team. For example, if teacher's beliefs about their role are centred purely on the transference of subject knowledge, will they notice cues and subsequently enact roles that sit outside of this including the need to engage in multi-agency work? What teachers notice and take action to has a potential transformational effect on their identity as enacted experiences are arranged into causal maps (Weick, 1979), which can change individual's conception of who they think they are. Through this study I aim to answer the question whether following engagement with multi-agency work teacher's conceptions of who they are change influencing what they take action to in the future?

### **Sensemaking for Teachers**

Sensemaking is grounded within each individual's professional identity (Weick, 1995), as who people think they are in their context shapes what they enact and how they interpret events (Currie & Brown, 2003). Teacher professional identity provides a '*framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be', 'how to act' and 'how to understand' their work and their place in society*' (Sachs, 2005: 15), shaping how they make sense of their changing world and in turn how they respond to events.

If, as Weick (1995) pointed out, sensemaking is grounded within the identity, in order to gain insight into how the identity shapes sensemaking I need an understanding of what identity means to teachers. Gee (2001) argued in his paper on identity as an analytical lens for research in education, that identity suggests a kind of person within a particular context as people's identity is not connected to internal states but to their performance in society. It is the role of context

which I believe, based on my experiences within schools, results in common beliefs and values in what Gee termed '*combination*' (Gee, 2001:109), as a person will engage in certain ways of speaking, acting, feeling and believing in a bid to be recognised as a certain type of person or having a specific identity.

Common beliefs and values develop within the identity of teachers working in the same context as individuals bid to be recognised as a certain type of person, leading to a collective understanding of teachers' role and professional knowledge within that setting (Gee, 2001). These knowledge, values and norms become stored in causal maps where experiences are arranged to reduce their equivocality, influencing teacher's ability to make sense of events (Weick, 1979). As Weick (1979) pointed out sensemaking is a retrospective activity in that events which have been previously made sense of are used to predict and take action in response to current events. If there is a discrepancy between the two, sensemaking is triggered by the failure to confirm one's self (Weick, 1995). The role of identity in how individuals make sense of events has meant teacher professional identity is increasingly seen as a crucial component in determining how teaching and learning are played out (Clarke, 2009) and is an important determiner of how teachers respond to educational change (Nias, 1989).

Identity can be thought of as fluid (Corley & Gioia, 2004) as it needs to develop a sense of transiency in order for individuals to develop a coherent sense of who they are. This presents a paradox as research has presented the view that identity is enduring and therefore stable (Albert & Whetten, 1985 cited in Gioia et al, 2000). Gioia et al (2000) argued that this seeming durability, contained within the stability of identity labels used by members of organisations when expressing who they are, is an illusion as the meaning behind these labels change. For example, research has shown that teachers favour the label of subject matter specialists (Melville, 2010) whilst my research within this study has shown that for those teachers interviewed the label of



‘educator’ was used consistently at all stages of the project. Despite this seeming durability of labels, the meaning of this label may mean different things for different teachers as a result of their environmental demands. Considering Gioia et al’s (2000) findings regarding identity fluency and how identity meanings can adapt in order to reconfirm an individual’s sense of who they are, when considering how the requirement to engage in multi-agency work has changed teacher’s beliefs, it is vital to move beyond labels and discover the meaning behind those labels.

The process of identity change is usually lengthy, taking place over years however some identity changes are so sweeping that they disrupt the order of the understood world (Corley & Gioia, 2004). Teachers in the UK are experiencing a rapid rate of policy change (Connolly & James, 2014), yet change is challenging as it comes with unknowns and ambiguity, creating a state of flux which presents the possibility for identity change (Corley & Gioia, 2004). Resolving the question of ‘who are we?’ in the wake of such ambiguity becomes a salient issue giving rise to the conditions for identity change (Corley & Gioia, 2004). Organisational members within this state of ambiguity will need to revise their understanding of who they are as previous understandings lose meaning and they may be presented with multiple interpretations of answers to the questions of who they are and who they need to be. Tensions can accompany this process (Corley & Gioia, 2004) as decisions are played out as to which interpretations will prevail in the shaping of the future image of the organisation. Within this state of flux, as described by Corley and Gioia (2004), sensemaking processes are necessary to resolve the issue of who we are through making sense of interpretations of who we need to become in light of the new world in which we find ourselves placed.

When relating the process of identity change as described by Corley and Gioia (2004) to teacher’s involvement in multi-agency work, teacher’s own interpretations of who they are should highlight whether the challenge presented by working within a multi-agency team creates the conditions

needed for identity change. If teachers structure their narratives with uncertainty and apprehension with ambiguity voiced through their talk around their identity labels and meanings, the resulting questioning of who they need to become within their organisation can generate the conditions for its own resolution. However, if teachers show a sense of clarity and certainty around their identity labels despite involvement in multi-agency work, the conditions needed for sensemaking are absent leading to a renewed clarity of current labels.

A study into how changing situational demands do not always lead to identity transformation was carried out by Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto in 2009. In their study of Finnish vocational teachers, they identified three main orientations towards reform: a resistant orientation; an inconsistent orientation; and an approving orientation. Each orientation was based on each individual teacher's positioning towards the reform, which in turn was shaped by their sense of their professional self, their prior working experiences and their expectations of their professional future. Through identifying factors which affected teachers' orientation to reform they described how a teacher's prior beliefs within their identity influenced their orientation towards change such as that being experienced by teachers through the increased need to engage with multi-agency work.

In light of uncertainty and ambiguity around identity labels identity change is possible, with change being influenced by two constructs to sensemaking: sensegiving and sensebreaking (Huemer, 2012). Sensegiving is the process of attempting to influence sensemaking towards a preferred redirection of organisational reality whilst sensebreaking involves the breaking down of meaning (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Sensebreaking can motivate people to reconsider the sense they have already made questioning their previous assumptions and causing them to reconsider their course of action (Lawrence & Maitlis, 2014). In organisations, sensebreaking often occurs before triggering sensemaking processes resulting in organisational leaders seeking to fill the void

created through sensegiving (Pratt, 2000). Sensegiving is often studied within the context of top down processes, however within organisations there are multiple possibilities with those receiving sensegiving having their own interpretations and being able to resist the sensegiving efforts of others (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014).

The influence of sensemaking processes on identity was described by Pratt (2000) in his study of a marketing organisation and how the processes of sensebreaking and sensegiving influenced how organisational members identified with their organisation. He described how sensebreaking and sensegiving processes can shape an individual's identity by breaking down their sense of self (sensebreaking) as a result of violations between who individuals think they are and the context they find themselves in and then providing meaning (sensegiving) allowing the customisation of the identity (Pratt, 2000). Drawing on the work of Pratt (2000), I suggest that if teachers are to undergo identity change to incorporate changes to their role which include multi-agency work they need to go through these processes, breaking down their sense of who they think they are within their context whilst interpreting new information about who they need to become.

Sensemaking processes are seen through the work done by Pratt et al (2006) in a six-year qualitative study of physicians during their residency training. They found that violations occurred when residents experienced a mismatch between what they did and who they believed they were and these violations were resolved through a process of identity customization. In other words, when surgeons experienced a mismatch between their identity and roles enacted, the identity changed opposed to what they did, enabling them to make sense of their changing expectations and enact rather than perform their new roles.

Sensebreaking processes were highlighted by Pratt et al (2006) during the surgeon's first year of residency as a mismatch developed between their view of themselves as surgeons and the roles

they engaged with, including the completion of paperwork and other '*scut work*' (Pratt et al, 2006:245). This mismatch left surgeons feeling useless and devalued and resulted in customisation of their identity. In order to engage with this customisation process, the researchers described how surgeons needed raw materials to draw upon in order to reconstruct their identity. This included stories told about their work and artefacts such as their clothing which signified their role. The social context of surgeon's work environment provided residents with the opportunity to experience feedback and compare themselves with role models who they saw as the ideal person within their job role, validating their identity. Application of Pratt et al's findings to teacher's roles within multi-agency work suggests that teachers could potentially adapt their identity to meet the requirements of their new role incorporating multi-agency principles providing they have the necessary conditions within their organisation.

Novel situations, such that as described by Pratt et al (2006), have the potential to evoke identity violations if the work being engaged with does not fit an individual's understanding of who they are. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) argued that the potential for violations is enhanced if there is a lack of job discretion resulting in identity changes being favoured over changes to work. Within education it can be argued that a lack of job discretion has resulted from teachers' loss of professional autonomy to control their work (The Guardian, 2013). When presented with a novel situation such as multi-agency work, removed from teachers' traditional role in the classroom, the potential for identity violations is enhanced as a result of a lack of autonomy and thereby job discretion. Teachers experiencing violations, born out of being presented with new situations which do not fit their understanding of what it means to be a teacher, have the potential to customise their identity to fit their new work roles as they attempt to make sense of their new expectations. In this way sensemaking can be viewed as a pragmatic process where individuals engage in identity work as it helps them gain a better understanding of what they do.

As described above, theoretically the requirement to work within a multi-agency team could trigger teachers' sensemaking activities as they attempt to make sense of ambiguous or confusing experiences resulting in their identity being shaped to fit new multi-agency requirements. The first event which potentially could interrupt teacher's normal routine may be triggered through initial engagement with non-educational professionals. Sensemaking activities which follow may place limits on the ability of the identity to transform. The work done by Clark and Geppert (2011) presents different sensemaking scenarios which I relate to possible sensemaking outcomes for teachers when engaged in multi-agency work.

The first scenario of consensual sensemaking provides the most positive outcome through increasing the possibility that teachers will adapt their role and enact the requirements of multi-agency work through their identity being compatible with the requirements of such work. In this scenario identity compatibility could lead teachers to perceive actions of other professionals as indicative of cultural sensitivity with a commitment to reconcile any differences (Meyer & Liebowitz, 2003). Drawing on Clarke and Geppert's account to describe the most positive scenario for teachers engaging in multi-agency work, consensual sensemaking occurs as cultural respect develops between professionals within a multi-agency team as any suspicions of others that may have been developed early in the process are dispelled. As prior suspicions fade, the possibility of enactment of new roles is heightened as teachers become increasingly able to integrate their own ideas within the new multi-agency requirements and become more involved within multi-agency teams. Clarke and Geppert (2011) illustrate the process of consensual sensemaking drawing on the example of VW Group's acquisition of Škoda, where investments made by VW conserved the Škoda's core functions, engineering values and local supplier network (Pavlínek, 2008).

In the second possibility, sensemaking is shaped through defensiveness as teacher's attitudes place limits on their ability or willingness to become involved in the process as a result of initial

incompatibility between their identity and related interests (Clark & Geppert, 2011). Linking to multi-agency work, defensive sensemaking may function out of a lack of compatibility between teachers' identity and the requirements of working within a multi-agency team. Such incompatibility may be construed as challenging, leading to local defensiveness and reluctance of implementation of new practices (Kostova, 1999).

How sensemaking practices unfold following initial incompatibility between an individual's identity and multi-agency work, is dependent on how role expectations are adapted in response to defensive sensemaking. If the process is adaptive and the role of multi-agency work perseveres within the setting over time this could lead to more consensual sensemaking as individuals see the perseverance of new practices as a sign of organisational leader's commitment. If, however the expectations of multi-agency work do not persevere and adapt, teachers are more likely to view such work as being discrepant with their own identity and increase their oppositional efforts (Clark & Geppert, 2011).

The third scenario described by Clark and Geppert (2011) results in a dominated form of sensemaking. In dominated sensemaking there may be initial acceptance of new practices, however, over time individuals may perceive insensitivity due to feelings that the legitimacy of their professional identity is being undermined (Geppert, 2003). Drawing on Clark and Geppert's third scenario, if teachers perceive multi-agency work to be undermining their current identity yet this continues to be imposed on them this may lead to multi-agency work being superficially implemented within their role opposed to it resulting in the transformation of identity.

The final scenario occurs where there is a juxtaposition of interests over time which may challenge the acquisition of new roles and practices leading to oppositional sensemaking (Clark & Geppert, 2011). As practices are imposed on individuals within this scenario these actions are

interpreted as being discrepant, threatening individual values and professional autonomy, resulting in the downgrading of traditional identities (Geppert, 2003). In turn, this imposition and downgrading may reinforce suspicions of change and those imposing them (Simon & Davies, 1996), leading to a spiral of mistrust. Relating to multi-agency work, oppositional sensemaking may occur if practices are imposed on teachers which are considered to challenge their identity, resulting in the feeling that their values and beliefs are under threat. Teachers' identity is fundamentally constructed from subject and pedagogical knowledge (Castañeda, 2011). Attempts to move their practice towards roles not traditionally associated with teaching may result in feelings that teacher identity is being downgraded. Mistrust between professionals may function in misunderstandings and lead to acts of defensive non-compliance or resistance (Clark & Geppert, 2011) as teachers avoid actively engaging with multi-agency work resulting in performance opposed to enactment of roles.

Clark and Geppert (2011) presented a number of potential ways in which sensemaking may play out following teachers experiencing the first event which has the potential to disrupt their daily routine. Differences between each sensemaking possibility are based around how far new practices associated with multi-agency work align with teacher's identity, the longevity of imposition of new practices and leader's response to opposition by organisational members. What is common to each scenario is the role that school leaders play in shaping sensemaking options. Schools, as with other organisations, are full of attempts to affect how individuals perceive and understand the world (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). Organisational leaders shape the process of sensemaking through sensebreaking and sensegiving by challenging the viability of the status quo and working to shape individual member's understanding of a positive way forward (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014).

Maitlis and Christianson's (2014) paper on sensemaking in organisations presents an account of how sensemaking is accomplished including how events become triggers for action. They described how organisational leaders strategically shape the sensemaking of individuals within an organisation through the use of symbols, images, and other influence techniques (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). They draw on the work of others, such as Lawrence and Maitlis (2014), to describe the construct of sensebreaking where leaders can motivate people to re-consider the sense that they have already made and to question their underlying assumptions and re-examine their course of action (Lawrence & Maitlis, 2014).

For Maitlis and Christianson (2014) organisational leaders are key drivers for organisational sensemaking through their sensebreaking efforts where the viability of the current direction is challenged, and sensegiving where they work to shape members' understandings of a positive way forward. This is accomplished by leaders extracting and drawing attention to cues from industry discourses suggesting the need for change (Humphreys & Brown, 2002; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007), evidence of the organisation's failing performance (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996; Sonenshein, 2010), and discrepancies between the organisation's external image and its identity (Corley & Gioia, 2004; Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). Leaders are then able to exert influence over individual teacher's meaning construction directing them towards a preferred redefinition of organisational reality (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991).

Most studies of leader sensegiving occur during institutional change (see Dunford & Jones, 2000; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Snell, 2002). The wave of educational reforms that has followed the election of the coalition government in 2010 (The Economist, 2014) has meant that such change is experienced by those working in schools in the UK today. Despite calls by policy makers for multi-agency work to include educationists, as set out in documents such as *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003), the message given to schools is one dominated by targets and accountability with results



driving education (Meierdirk, 2012) towards the government's preferred definition of educational reality. Taking into account the UK's current educational direction towards results and accountability, I question whether school leaders will sensegive around the importance of multi-agency work when there are opposing narratives which add more value to the school in terms of position in external accountability measures in what Mansell (2007) calls hyper-accountability.

Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010) provide insights into Weick's sensemaking theory during times of crisis when turbulent conditions give rise to sensemaking processes. They explain how turbulent conditions result in discrepant environmental cues which disrupt an individual's ongoing activity and involves the retrospective development of plausible meanings that rationalize what people are doing (Weick, 1995; Weick et al, 2005). The development of plausible meanings relies on the bracketing and interpretation of cues based on salient frames and how, through sensemaking, cues and frames are connected in order to create an account of what is going on (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010). The role of organisational leaders in enabling members to construct a coherent organisational identity was highlighted by Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010) as they described how leaders unfreeze employee's existing meaning, replacing them with new ones (Fiol, 2002).

As highlighted in Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010), leader sensegiving around multi-agency work influences organisational member's sensemaking processes having a potentially transformative effect on member's professional identity. It is this transformative effect which drives the organisational direction; therefore, I consider an understanding of each individual member's professional identity and any transformative effects to be paramount to my study looking at how teachers make sense of multi-agency work and any transformational effect on what their organisation is about.

Teacher professional identity can be defined as '*where the normative demands of the external encounter the internal meaning maker and desires of the teacher*' (Rogers & Scott, 2008:733), highlighting both the internal values and beliefs of the individual as well as the influence of environmental expectations. The influence of internal desires and situational demands means that professional identity can be viewed as being constructed of three different parts; the actual or one that currently prevails, the ought being the one recognised by society as good, incorporating external views of the organisation and the ideal being set by individuals as a target for achievement (Lauriala & Kukkonen, 2005).

The ought aspect of identity was drawn upon by Dutton and Dukerich (1991) in their article on how individuals make sense of their organisation's response to a non-traditional and emotional strategic issue. They found a strong relationship between organisational identity and member's sense of outsider's perceptions of the organisation. When there was a sense of alignment between perceptions of outsider's views and each individual's identity, the identity is strengthened (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). Conversely, when a discrepancy is felt between organisational member's perceptions and those of outsiders, members questioned their beliefs about what the organisation was about and this questioning acted as a trigger for sensemaking (Corley & Gioia, 2004).

Drawing on the work of Dutton and Dukerich (1991) and Corley and Gioia (2004), if teachers in my study feel that their identity which has been developed through their current role in school differs from outsider's perceptions of who teachers should be, discrepancies could act as a trigger for sensemaking and the transformation of their identity. The implementation of multi-agency working policies in schools follows a number of high-profile cases where professionals including teachers have failed to collaborate resulting in the death of a child, providing a transformational event which has the potential to change the outsider's views of the school. For example, following

the death of Shanay Walker in 2014, teachers at her school in Nottingham were found at an inquest accountable for their role in not keeping Shanay safe by failing to work with other agencies to pass on safeguarding concerns (Yorke, 2017). The widely published report into the school's failings focused on teachers' role within safeguarding remits rather than traditional roles within the classroom including the transference of subject knowledge. This focus on non-traditional roles could result in a discrepancy between teachers' actual identity and the ought identity incorporating society's view on what teachers should be (Lauriala & Kukkonen, 2005). It is this discrepancy which could trigger sensemaking and the process of identity change (Corley & Gioia, 2004).

After a potential identity transforming event, identity change becomes possible through discrepancies between teachers' actual and ought identity through the emergence of ambiguity, resulting in teachers questioning their beliefs about who they are as vagueness of self-definition emerges (Corley & Gioia, 2004). Ambiguity is '*an ongoing stream that supports several different interpretations at the same time*' (Weick, 1995: 91). I argue that multi-agency work is a potentially transforming event where through engagement with such work ambiguity can develop as multiple interpretations of what teachers need to do and be are presented through meetings. At such a time resolving the question of who teachers think they are becomes the salient issue as their familiar ways of describing their identity require revision (Corley & Gioia, 2004). Ambiguity presents multiple interpretations about what features should define the organisation (Weick, 1995), and teachers need decide what features should prevail through questioning who they need to be, making it possible that the identity can transform.

Ambiguity that supports the possibility of identity change becomes more noticeable when there is a growing sense of change overload, when members feel that their organisation has exceeded its comfortable level of change (Corley & Gioia, 2004). Corley and Gioia (2004), in their study of a

corporate takeover, described how change overload provides the context and impetus for ambiguity to become noticeable. They evidenced this increased noticeability of change through discourse as individuals used opportunities to discuss feelings of being overworked, doing too many new activities and experiences of a declining organisational commitment (Corley & Gioia, 2004). At a time when teachers are facing increasing change resulting from government reforms and innovations (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2009), there is a strong possibility that teachers today will be experiencing a similar sense of change overload. If teachers are experiencing growing pressures, which are beyond their ability to deal with comfortably, ambiguity becomes increasingly perceptible to those immersed in that context and should be noticeable in their narratives around educational change.

Ambiguity, arising from discrepancies between who teachers think they are and outsider's views about who they need to be, is resolved through sensemaking (Foreman & Whetten, 2002), and as Corley and Gioia (2004) pointed out, creates the possibility for the transformation of the identity. School leaders can trigger teacher's initial questioning of their beliefs by drawing attention to any environmental cues about the school's external image, such as policies incorporating multi-agency work, which suggest the need for change (Humphreys & Brown, 2002; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). The key environmental cue at the time of this study was *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003) which aimed to overcome previous child protection failures resulting from professionals failing to collaborate (DfES, 2003). As discussed in the previous chapter, *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003) aimed to make huge changes to the working lives of teachers through ensuring that they worked with other professionals in ensuring children were able to accomplish five outcomes through which teacher's competency was judged by Ofsted (Ofsted, 2011).

Research into organisational change has shown that when conditions are ideal and environmental cues suggesting the need for change present, the process of identity transformation is possible

(Corley & Gioia, 2004). According to Corley and Gioia (2004) following ambiguity around member's identity, identity change can occur through two forms at the organisational level. Firstly, through changing the current labels used by members to express their identity and secondly through the meanings underlying those labels shifting (Gioia, Schultz & Corley, 2000).

Research carried out by Corley and Gioia (2004) presents an account of how identity change takes place following a corporate spin-off where members of a large and successful organisation, which they named Bozco, had to make sense of the events associated with becoming an independent company. Initially this began with identity ambiguity as the labels used to describe member's roles and beliefs no longer applied and new identity labels had yet to take on meaning. In the spin-off company Bozkinetic, ambiguity was seen in member's narratives around the spin-off due to a lack of consistency in labels used to project the organisation's image and in a lack of clarity about the meanings of the expressed identity labels, which resulted in member's confusion about their identity.

Organisational members attempted to resolve confusion around their identity through the creation of new meanings for identity labels from events, action and discourse (Corley & Gioia, 2004). Organisational identity is of strategic importance (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991) as it sets out what the organisation aims to be and its values and beliefs, therefore identity meanings often come from the top via organisational leaders through sensegiving imperatives (Corley & Gioia, 2004). For example, managers at Biozkinetic offered members new labels such as '*independent and technology leader*' (Corley & Gioia, 2004:202) to describe the company post spin-off.

In Corley and Gioia's (2004) study of Bozkinetic, the offering of new labels by leaders through sensegiving imperatives was followed by a state of ambiguity about the meaning behind those labels, as the meanings offered were not understood by organisational members whilst previous

labels no longer held their meaning. This equivocality of meanings facilitates identity change (Corley & Gioia, 2004) as it leads members to seek answers to questions such as 'What is our identity?' and 'What does my organisation stand for?' Resolving these questions becomes the salient issue for members as the void created by member's prior identity losing its meaning needs to be filled by new meanings being developed through identity work. Stability in member's perceptions of what their organisation is about can only emerge when member's newly transformed identity is provided with a sense of coherence as ambiguity begins to subside (Corley & Gioia, 2004). If emergent meanings are not coherent or conflict with one another the identity remains unstable as discrepancies remain between the labels and meanings presented and past or present identities which remain salient for members (Corley & Gioia, 2004).

The findings from Corley and Gioia's 2004 study can be transferred to teachers' response to multi-agency work if teachers feel there are discrepancies between their perception of their identity and their organisation and that of outsiders. In the same way that temporal identity discrepancies became apparent in members of the spin-off company Bozkinetic, if teachers recognise inconsistency between a hoped-for future image and past and present identities, identity discrepancies may arise.

Analysis of teacher's dialogue around multi-agency work should reveal any discrepancies within their identity which have resulted from ambiguity around identity labels. Ambiguity emerges due to changing contextual conditions if teachers' past labels no longer hold their meaning within the context of multi-agency work. Drawing on the work of Corley and Gioia (2004), if ambiguity is revealed in teachers' dialogue following engagement with multi-agency work, I would expect to see teachers questioning their identity labels, highlighting uncertainty in who they think are, what they do and who they need to become. I will need to consider the role of school leaders in resolving any identity discrepancies through providing alternative meanings seeking to move the

organisation in their preferred direction. If there is the emergence of any meaning void between teachers' actual and ought identities, I will need to consider if this void is resolved through acceptance of new labels incorporating multi-agency work or whether conflict develops in teachers' identity as a result of multiple organisational identities vying for pre-eminence resulting in a lack of clarity regarding which label is the most appropriate.

Corley and Gioia (2004) drew on the role of leaders in sparking identity change in organisational members through the projection of a desired future image as they engage in the process of sensegiving. Maitlis and Lawrence (2007) in their study of sensegiving within three British symphony orchestras, found that although leadership is important in the process of sensemaking, leaders only triggered sensemaking under specific circumstances which included leader's perceptions of an issue, the degree of uncertainty around the nature of change, the nature of stakeholder issues and the potential impact of change on an organisation's performance.

In a similar way as described by Maitlis and Lawrence (2007), school leaders have the potential to influence teacher sensemaking around multi-agency work through engaging in sensegiving. They found that leaders' perceptions of a sensemaking gap are vital. If leaders consider an issue to be uncertain, either through its unpredictability or its ambiguous nature, they are less likely to trigger sensegiving (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). Relating to multi-agency work, if leaders do not have a clear sense of how multi-agency teams function and consider the impact of such to have a limited effect on the school's performance, will they be less likely to sense give around such work? Without leader sensegiving there will be fewer referents for teachers to draw upon in order to fill any meaning void created as a result of discrepancies between their identity and the roles they are being expected to engage with as part of a multi-agency team.

One condition emerging from research as being an enabler to sensegiving was the presence of a large number of individuals making up the stakeholder group making it more likely that leaders will engage in sensegiving in order to construct interpretations that bridge stakeholder differences (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). Multi-agency work is focused on the individual needs of a child and their family (Pratt, 2012). Whilst that child might work with multiple staff, this would still be a small proportion of the teaching population within that setting. In my experience the number of staff involved is further decreased as multi-agency meetings usually involve only one key member of staff from school opposed to all those in contact with the child.

I set out an analysis below of the number of stakeholders involved in multi-agency meetings. The requirement for teachers to engage with multi-agency work is inscribed within both special educational needs policies such as the 2014 *Code of Practice* (DFE, 2014a) and safeguarding policies such as *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government, 2015a; 2016; 2017). National figures from the Department for Education (2015b) indicate that 2.8% of children are identified as having special educational needs or a disability with a Statement or Education Health and Care plan which would require professionals to work together in multi-agency teams. Additionally, figures from the Local Authority where this study is based show that 4% of the population of children are on Child in Needs plans which require multi-agency work and 0.97% are classed as Looked After Children (LAC) (Walsall Intelligence, 2016). The proportion of children involved with multi-agency work is therefore below 10% which is representative for the school where this study is based. With low numbers of children and staff involved with multi-agency work, leader's perceptions of there being numerous stakeholders involved is likely to be low. According to Maitlis and Lawrence (2007), low stakeholder numbers are less likely to act as a sensegiving trigger for school leaders.



In order to engage in the process of sensegiving leaders need issue-related expertise thereby being better able to shape other's interpretations of the issue (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). This relies on leaders themselves having engaged in multi-agency work and have a high level of awareness of the roles of other members of multi-agency teams and the structure and functioning of meetings and subsequent action. If the issue reflects on organisational performance it is more likely to provide an acceptable basis for engagement with sensegiving around that issue (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). As schools are measured through performance in league tables based on a student's academic results at GCSE (DFE, 2017), the role of multi-agency work to a school's performance is unclear due to the impact of such work being based around individual children opposed to a whole cohort. Without multi-agency work reflecting on the school's performance, leaders do not have an acceptable basis for engaging with sensegiving (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007).

Limitations in the sense that can be made of events is described by Weick in his 1993 paper on *'The Collapse of Sensemaking in Organisations'*. Here he describes a further sensemaking possibility which he termed a *'Cosmology Episode'*. Weick developed his theory of sensemaking by explaining how individuals react when confronted with events where their sense of who they are and where they are collapses. Weick described such events which oppose the sensemaking process as feeling like *'vu jade'* (Weick, 1993:633), where individuals were left with a feeling of loss in their world as the universe no longer seems to make sense.

I argue that Weick's work on Cosmology episodes can be applied to multi-agency work. Earlier in this chapter (page 38) I argued that multi-agency work can be seen as an example of an emerging organisation in the same way that Weick highlighted how *'deficient sensemaking'* (Weick, 1993:636) can occur within an emerging organisation as there is loss of stability of role systems. If teachers within my study feel that the expectations placed on them through engagement with

multi-agency work results in the '*outstripping [of] their past experiences*' (Weick, 1993:636), I suggest that rather than thinking with strategic rationality facing questions which would provide answers to questions around how to respond, they will be more likely to be left with the frightening feeling that their labels no longer work. If this scenario unfolds for teachers through engagement with multi-agency work, as described by Weick (1993) their sense of who they are and what they do is likely to collapse resulting in a loss in sensemaking.

Multi-agency teams can be dually defined as a minimal as well as emerging organisation due to the limited contact between staff from different agencies who only come together when required for a particular case. This may mean that contact for different professionals is limited to a handful of occasions rather than regular long-term contact. Weick (1993) pointed out that minimal organisations are susceptible to a sudden loss of meaning as engagement in unfamiliar environments can result in changes to role systems. Weick argued that multiple failures that occurred within a minimal organisation '*may be the result of inadequate training*' (Weick, 1993:650), reflected in the lack of training teachers involved with my study had received around the structure and function of multi-agency teams. Without training into new and unfamiliar roles tasks are likely to remain ambiguous and yet teachers are expected to undertake these new roles whilst letting go of the pre-existing roles of their current system. The expectation to adopt new ambiguous roles can discredit teachers' current role system which provides staff with feelings of stability potentially adding to their sense that the universe is no longer a rational, orderly system (Weick, 1993).

The expectation to adopt new roles and engage in change may result in an emotional reaction such as that described by Weick (1993) in his account of the Mann Gulch disaster where individuals experienced a sense of panic as their world no longer made sense. Similar to the experience of individuals within Weick's 1993 paper, changes in education where expectations of

an event fail to match reality can initiate strong emotional reactions in teachers (Reio, 2005). Reio (2005) discussed the link between reform on identity, emotions and risk-taking, suggesting that teacher identity influences emotions experienced following reform and willingness to take risks in order to accept change. For Reio (2005) change can evoke negative emotions due to insufficient information and perceptions of unnecessary loss. If, following engagement with multi-agency work, sensemaking cannot fill the gap created between expectations and reality, I suggest that teachers are likely to experience and express during interviews negative emotions indicating a potential loss of structure within their world.

In summary, I argue that there are two possibilities resulting from teachers being confronted with multi-agency work. The first being the transformation of the identity enabling teachers' ability to make sense of their new roles within a multi-agency team and enact the key principles of multi-agency policies, bringing them into being in relational, situational and temporal ways (Hafermalz et al, 2016). The second possibility may result if multi-agency work is too dissimilar to teachers' traditional role in the classroom leaving them with a sudden loss of meaning if they are unable to construct an account of the situation which would facilitate action (Maitlis, 2005). If teachers are unable to make sense of multi-agency work, the ability of the identity to transform is limited (Ketelaar et al, 2012). As research has shown identity transformations are vital in the process of enactment following an interruption in the expected flow of experience (Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2009). Without enactment where policies can be interpreted and action taken utilising each individual's specific values and beliefs encompassed within their identity, it seems more likely that policies will be performed with minimal impact on practice (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008), making it less likely that teachers will react to multi-agency working policies in the ways intended by policy writers.

### 3.2 Research Questions

1. How are multi-agency working policies enacted within teacher's individual practices?
2. How does teacher professional identity affect engagement with such multi-agency agendas as *Every Child Matters*?
3. How do teachers make sense of the requirement to work in multi-agency teams?
4. How does teachers' ability to make sense of multi-agency work affect their professional identity?

My research questions sought to uncover how teachers engage with multi-agency work. The first question asked how multi-agency working policies are enacted in teacher's everyday practice, seeking to uncover teacher's knowledge about the meaning of multi-agency work and how they take action when presented with situations which involve multi-agency practice. In the previous section (see pages 35-70) I drew on Weick's (1979) theory of organising in explaining how action is a result of the noticing of environmental cues (Thomas, Clark, & Gioia, 1993; Weber & Glynn, 2006). Interviews allowed insight to be gained about what cues teachers noticed when presented with multi-agency work and any resulting action.

The second question asked how teachers' professional identity effects engagement with multi-agency work. Throughout Chapter 3 I have drawn on Weick's sensemaking theory where links were made between identity and what we enact (Weick et al, 2005). Using Weick's theory I suggest that what teachers take action to points to their professional identity, providing an understanding of who teachers in my study believe they are and whether this label and meaning behind the label prevents or enables engagement with multi-agency teams. As research shows the identity can result in self-imposed limitations to aspects of teachers work if it finds dissonance with what teachers believe is important and what they are being asked to enact (Clark & Geppert, 2011).

The third question focused on the sensemaking activities of teachers once they have confronted multi-agency work. Questions during interviews asked teachers to describe events following multi-agency work. Conflict, that may have functioned between teacher identity and events involved in multi-agency work, can trigger sensemaking (Corley & Gioia, 2004), making interviewee's feelings around such work a vital part of the interview schedule.

The fourth question asked how teachers' ability to make sense of multi-agency work affects their professional identity. Ambiguity between the roles presented to teachers through multi-agency work and their understanding of who they are as teachers could signal the first step in identity transformation (Corley & Gioia, 2004), making it vital to identify feelings of a mismatch and any questioning of identity labels during the interview phase.

## **Chapter 4 Methodology and Design**

### **4.1 Methodology**

The key component underpinning my thesis is the role of gaps between multi-agency work and individual teacher's identity as a result of gaps between the fields of policy production and implementation. This thesis does not seek an objective statement of the event of multi-agency work, rather it looks towards individual teacher's subjective experiences of multi-agency work as they attempt to make sense of the policy requirements and implement changes within their daily practice.

The methodological choices described here are structured by my ontological and epistemological assumptions about how I view the social world and in particular the professional world including policy and practice. Research can be 'objective' or 'subjective' depending upon our viewpoint of the world (Cohen et al, 2010). Historically the 'objective' paradigm has dominated the West (Habermass, 1972, cited in Cohen et al, 2010:18), seeing the world infused with meaning that exists independently of consciousness and experience. As Cohen et al (2010) point out in their text on research methods, the objective paradigm reduces humans to repetitive, predictable beings, leaving no scope for the mediating effects of various factors such as identity. As my focus is on how individual teachers make sense of policy requirements utilising their professional identity, my work lends itself more closely to the subjective perspective looking at ways in which individual's consciousness imposes meaning on the world, often as a result of intrapersonal reasons (Nesdale & Pickering, 2006: Horkheimer, 1972, cited in Cohen et al, 2010:18). Such a focus lends itself to qualitative research allowing the collection of subjective and unique data (Cohen et al, 2010).

Since the knowledge collected through my research is subjective, I subscribe to the qualitative tradition of anti-positivism in an attempt to gain an understanding of how professionals make

sense of their social reality. Qualitative methods start from the perspective and actions of those being studied (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009), locating the researcher within the world being studied thus making that world visible. It is only through the researcher immersing themselves within the context of study that the individual experiences of those being studied are made apparent, thus making sense of phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

As described in Chapter 2, through the implementation of multi-agency work teachers' roles are changing, implying new sets of professional relationships and new ways of making sense of their work, focusing on the micro-level opposed to more system-wide changes. To uncover individual ways of sensemaking around multi-agency work I have drawn on methods associated with the qualitative tradition allowing exploration of individual factors such as identity and providing meaningful answers to the questions that guide this study.

My focus on how teachers understand and experience multi-agency work contrasts with much of the current research on the multi-agency policy *Every Child Matters*, where large-scale survey methods have been commonly used to find out the extent to which schools are utilising other services (NFER, 2006) or quantitative data on success in meeting outcomes has been gathered (Ofsted, 2006). For example, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) published a survey on trends in education in 2007 identifying ways in which *Every Child Matters* was affecting schools including the impact on school planning and improvement with challenges identified around funding and access to services (Lewis et al, 2007). A second report produced by the General Teaching Council (GTC) (2008) looked into collaborative working between schools and multi-agency staff. Similar to the NFER study the report gave an objective account of factors affecting multi-agency working including the need for inter-professional training. Harris et al published their research in 2009 confirming the findings of the reports by the NFER (Lewis et al,

2007) and the GTC (2008), setting out the need for specific conditions in order to support collaborative working including the having a shared vision and goal. What was missing for me in the research studies cited above was the subjective experience of individual practitioners and how these experiences impacted on their ability to engage with multi-agency work, giving scope to exploration of this area.

This thesis investigates teacher's subjective experience of multi-agency work as a result of identity and individual ways of sensemaking through drawing on the research tradition of social phenomenology. In order to access how people make sense of multi-agency work the focus needs to be on people's inner mental states (Hill & Levenhagen, 1995). Social phenomenology provides a systematic way of reflecting on individual acts of consciousness from the first-person viewpoint (Giorgi, 2009), allowing exploration of gaps between policy and implementation by finding out how interviewees experienced policy changes differently from how they were originally intended.

My argument throughout this thesis is how individuals make sense of multi-agency work is dependent on how they construct their identity within their setting. When policies seek to make changes to an individual's identity, individuals need to be able to sense make in such a way which strengthens their understanding of their identity (Drake & Sherin, 2006). Social phenomenology subscribes to the idea that the social world has particular meaning and relevance to humans as we preselect and pre-interpret the world based on a series of common-sense constructs of the reality of our daily lives (Schutz, 1962, cited in Embree, 2009). Phenomenology allows the production of a subjective account of an event such as multi-agency work based on such individual personal accounts (Smith, Jarman & Osbourne, 1999), increasing understanding of an individual's experience through the consciousness of the experiencer (Giorgi, 2009) and allowing for the exploration of gaps between policy production and implementation as a result of individual interpretations.



## **4.2 Contextual Information**

My study is based in one setting aiding the discovery of contextual information which supports the exploration of how individual teachers experiencing policy make sense of their experiences within their context. The setting performs a dual role as both my location of study and employment. It is a large school based in a deprived area, being one of many schools that have been converted to Academy status. Students at the school come from a variety of catchment areas however the majority are local to the school. The school's catchment area is extremely deprived with many problems associated with poverty including a high crime rate and other social issues within communities.

The school consists of a population of over one thousand students. The deprivation of the surrounding areas presents the most challenging problems with a number of students having experienced complex social issues requiring staff support including issues involving domestic violence, parental substance misuse and gangs within local areas. This presents staff with challenging safeguarding issues which require multi-agency working. In addition, there are over eighty students with special educational needs ranging from visual and hearing impairments to autism and dyslexia. The number of students on the school's special educational needs register is in-line with national averages for a school of its size and staff need to be able to respond to the diverse range of needs and ensure that all those they teach are enabled to make progress. Many of these students work with multiple staff from a range of different services and therefore teaching staff are expected to engage with multi-agency work in order to enable student's holistic development. Current performance data places the school favourably within both national and local league tables indicating that staff are meeting student's academic needs.

My position as insider researcher aids my understanding of context enabling the utilisation of situated knowledge in order to get closer to the lived experience. The duality of my role reduces social and professional boundaries between those being studied and the researcher, increasing depth of dialogue through prior gained trust (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002). The reduction of boundaries is vital in studies of a phenomenological nature where individual perceptions are as important as their actions, creating a need to draw upon the conscious (Balls, 2009). However, this can result in ethical concerns and can lead to bias if my own subconscious shapes my interpretations of phenomenon uncovered.

### **4.3 Methods**

The interview has become the main data collection procedure associated with qualitative research (Englander, 2012). In line with Englander (2012) interviews formed the main data collection procedure employed within this study. When following phenomenological lines of inquiry, a description of the phenomenon of interest is needed (Crotty, 1996), and interviews provide for this level of description allowing a participant's views, beliefs and perceptions of a topic to be gained (Smith, 1995).

#### **4.3.1 Participant Selection**

The selection of participants to take part in the study formed the initial stage of data collection. In selecting participants, I needed to consider their experience of the phenomenon of multi-agency work ensuring that all selected had engaged previously with a multi-agency team. An additional consideration was the representativeness of the sample, ensuring that participants identified belong to the population being studied. As my study is based around how teachers make sense of the multi-agency work, this precluded the inclusion of other staff within school, for example support staff, who may themselves have taken part in multi-agency meetings.

Over the data collection period of twelve months, ten staff were selected to take part in the study. For studies of a phenomenological nature the number of participants is not the defining issue and instead those selected needed to represent the population and provide information about the phenomenon being observed (Smith et al, 2009). Englander (2012) recommends at least three participants are used with sample size corresponding to the population at large. In a school with eighty teachers I felt that interviewing ten would provide a better appreciation for the variation of the phenomenon whilst still being achievable within my selected time-scales.

Teachers were selected for participation through a request via email that was sent to all teachers at the school asking for volunteers to take part in the study. This was felt to be the most ethically appropriate method for gaining initial consent as I didn't feel asking particular staff to take part would allow for refusal as a result of my position in school. Following replies from teachers willing to participate I was able to identify those, through my role as insider researcher, who had recent multi-agency involvement. This ranged from staff who had been involved in meetings through their role in safeguarding or through supporting specific students with difficulties which acted as a barrier to their development.

I initially had replies from thirteen staff. To ensure that the sample was representative of mainstream teachers I ruled out two staff who were senior leaders. I felt their inclusion in the study would not give a true representation of mainstream teachers i.e. those without senior leadership experience, as a requisite to their role is to be able to engage with a higher number of professionals from different agencies successfully. The final respondent was excluded due to their date of employment with them only joining the school very recently and therefore not yet having experienced multi-agency work. The final participants were ten teachers with a variety of experience ranging from one to over twelve years. Although the majority of the participants were female there were two men. Although this wasn't an even spread this does represent the gender

mix of the school. Ages of participants ranged from early twenties to early fifties with the majority of those interviewed being less than thirty years of age. Again, this is representative of the population of the school.

#### **4.3.2 Stages**

Following the selection process participants were provided with information about the study. In line with research on conducting interviews in phenomenological studies, a preliminary meeting was held prior to data collection (Englander, 2012). This provided a useful opportunity to establish trust with participants, review any ethical considerations and concerns and complete the consent forms. Participants were provided with a copy of the information sheet providing an opportunity to review the interview questions giving them time to consider before signing the consent forms.

My work employed two data sources; observations and interviews. The interview stage consisted of two phases; an initial interview followed by a second interview after observations of multi-agency work had been made. The initial interview asked questions regarding teachers' roles, their knowledge of multi-agency work and how they made sense of this before participants engaged in multi-agency work through their normal duties. I observed this multi-agency meeting allowing the second interview schedule to be developed in such a way so I could explore teachers' actual experience of such work.

As the aim of phenomenology is to get the participants to describe their experiences (Englander, 2012), the interview questions needed to be developed in such a way that will encourage them to do so. Research suggests questions should aim to describe the specific situations and actions and not ask for general opinions (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009), making the design of my interview schedule particularly important. In order to develop my interview questions and interview

technique I completed a pilot study with a small focus group of staff in the year prior to data collection.

Focus groups should be designed to allow the maximum range of issues to be explored and personal context noted (Merton et al, 1990). My group consisted of seven members of staff; both male and female, from a range of departments selected on the basis of their ability to discuss the key issues around multi-agency work. These staff were automatically excluded from the main data collection. The group fed into my research design by ensuring that interview questions were structured to allow thorough exploration of the issues and reflected the collectively used language used by participants, ensuring consistency between how participants described the phenomenon and interview questions.

The focus group indicated that not enough attention had been given to the exploration of interviewee's experiences of multi-agency work, partially due to my inexperience as an interviewer, as interviewees seemed reluctant to expand on their own experiences. I needed to ensure that during data collection within the main study, questions were worded to in such a way to ensure that the participants had sufficient opportunities to express their views. I found difficulty drawing on my theoretical and policy framework, highlighting the need for careful pre-planning of prompt questions prior to interviews to aid analysis and encourage the flow of dialogue, allowing for opportunities to follow leads.

From the focus group I developed my interview framework. Interviews are a method of data collection in which one person asks questions of another person (Polit & Beck, 2006). When considering interview design Groenewald (2004) recommends unstructured, in-depth interviews, whilst other researchers have employed a semi-structured design when carrying out studies of a phenomenological nature (Griffiths, 2007). When deciding on the most appropriate research

design I needed to consider the quality of data I would be likely to gain taking into consideration my experience as a researcher and the results from my pilot study. This led me to base my design around semi-structured interviews which allow interviewees to be the primary experts on the material in question whilst still allowing for questions and prompts to be built in to guide the interview structure (Griffiths, 2009).

When developing my interview design, I needed to consider ways of eliciting in-depth discussion from the participants around my area of study. To support in-depth dialogue the wording and sequencing of questions was an important consideration to ensure that the interviewees were at ease with the process from the start. The semi-structured design allowed for opportunities to follow up on emerging issues which I may not have previously identified, in a style which is both open structured and non-directional yet still allows for an interview schedule to be used (Cohen, 2006). In this way there is a natural fit between semi-structured interviews and the purpose of qualitative analysis (Smith, 1995).

When using semi-structured interviews, the interview schedule is guided not by the researcher but by the interviewee as the schedule is not rigid and does not need to be strictly followed (McHugh, 1994). This is vital to my study where I needed to enter the world of the interviewee allowing them to discuss issues which are relevant and important to them. Prompts were planned for each section in order to aid the flow of dialogue and encourage interviewees to expand on a response when I believed that they have more to say (Robson, 2002).

Once the first stage of interviews was complete, I carried out observations of multi-agency meetings using the themes identified in the initial interview. Multi-agency meetings take place regularly within school involving teaching staff meeting with external professionals, therefore it was possible for me to observe these meetings opposed to scheduling additional meetings purely

for research purposes. Through my position as insider-researcher I was able to identify when meetings were due to take place and observe how interactions between interviewees and external staff functioned.

Observations allowed for reflection on how the themes from the first set of interviews were embodied within practice. Interviews may not always allow for interviewee's reactions to be uncovered when presented with real-life situations, making observations vital in uncovering how multi-agency working policies were operationalised. For example, in the first interview many interviewees expressed a desire to care for students and engage with multi-agency work in order to fulfil this value, yet in reality when faced with the possibility of role adaptations, they reacted in ways which limited the potential for engagement.

The observations made of multi-agency meetings fed into my data analysis as I was able to explore my perceptions of interviewees' responses to engagement with other professionals and re-focus the interview questions in the second interview to follow up on issues observed. For example, despite interviewees expressing a desire to engage with multi-agency work during the first interview, my perceptions of their engagement during observations seemed counter to this.

The re-focusing of my interview schedule allowed me to narrow my field of focus and re-interview staff using a new set of semi-structured questions. It is suggested in research that more than a single interview be carried out per person allowing issues to be clarified (Brenner, 1994), and further exploration of teachers' experience of multi-agency work. This helped develop my understanding of what staff meant by their actions rather than attempting interpretation using my own understanding. This is vital to studies utilising phenomenology where reality is comprehended through embodied perception (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007).

Following interviews data was transcribed and interviewees asked to validate and edit the information allowing them to withdraw from the study if they so wished. I familiarised myself with the recordings through continuous reading, correcting and editing, focusing on similarities and differences in the ways in which the phenomenon was experienced. This allowed me to draw out themes which Devries (2000) describes as a way of capturing a lived experience, enabling a practical understanding of the phenomenon. My theoretical framework aided the identification of significant sections aimed at uncovering teachers' perception of multi-agency work and how they experienced changes as a result of multi-agency working policies such as *Every Child Matters*. Once the most significant sections were highlighted, answers were grouped together with direct quotations used to illustrate key points.

#### **4.4 Theoretical Sensitivity**

Researchers undertaking qualitative work can undertake a range of roles, ranging from the complete membership of the group of interest to a complete outsider (Adler & Adler, 1994). As I was carrying out research in my own institution I was acting as an insider researcher. This is defined as those who choose to study a group to which they belong (Breen, 2007). Being a member of the group which I was studying meant that I had two roles; one within my own institution and the other studying how others in that institution experienced and engaged with multi-agency work. The duality of roles of both teacher and researcher presented both advantages and disadvantages which I discuss below.

My position as an insider researcher was advantageous in that I had access to research subjects and an in-depth knowledge of the context within which my research was based. As my study is informed by phenomenology context is vital to people's experiences, therefore, as a result credibility is increased (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The kinds of knowledge available to insider researchers would take an outsider a long time to acquire. This is not of just knowledge of the



formal hierarchy but also how this knowledge functions in practice. For example, I was aware of the best methods to approach staff to ask them to take part in the study.

A lack of social and professional boundaries between the researcher and participants can improve the quality of the dialogue (Colaizzi, 1978 cited in Ferrari, 2006) as it enhances trust, and good relationships will enable good quality, in-depth interviews (Carr, 1994). In a phenomenological interview questions should be asked in the vocabulary and language of the individual being interviewed, enabling access to their perspective unencumbered by theoretical terms (Benner, 1994). Being an insider researcher aids this as I already had access to the language used by teachers within that context. For example, I was able to correctly understand the range of abbreviations and acronyms used by teachers within school without having to stop the flow of dialogue in order to seek clarification.

Carrying out research in my own environment meant that I had increased access to staff both for the formal interview process but also for more informal, spontaneous conversations. Increased access means that staff can seek clarification of particular issues or continue discussions on themes started within the main interview process, adding to the depth and quality of data available to me. For example, following a multi-agency meeting one member of staff approached me in order to discuss their views of the issues discussed at a meeting and their feelings regarding the process. Not having an opportunity to voice their thoughts until days later during the second interview could have resulted in their feelings being forgotten or the strength behind them being reduced. I was able to use this to guide the second interview, using their thoughts and feelings to structure prompts and probe questions.

Undertaking the role of an insider researcher is not without problems. For example, being an insider researcher can pose problems if teachers confuse my role as a researcher with that of a

manager with a vested interest in their engagement with other professionals. If teachers are unable to separate my role within school with that of a researcher, the result could be the editing of what is said if they felt a need to conform to what they think I want to hear and for fear of being judged (Shah, 2004), impacting on the validity of results. This made the consent phase vital in ensuring that my role as researcher was fully defined and separated from that within school and participants were reassured of anonymity and confidentiality. This was aided further by utilising semi-structured interviews which not only allowed set themes to be explored but provided opportunities to follow up lines of enquiry if answers were unexpected (Mathers et al, 1998). For this reason, semi-structured interviews are often used during phenomenology studies as a way of enabling respondents to project their own ways of defining the world (Cohen et al, 2007).

A second difficulty could potentially exist if I failed to maintain objectivity or interpreted participant's views using my own understanding, thereby compromising the validity of my work. This would limit the extent I will be able to uncover norms or taken for granted assumptions of the setting. For example, if I was to make assumptions about the meaning behind participant's comments or actions, I would be less likely to seek clarification of what they meant. Subjectivity is therefore important (Atkinson, 2007) through the recognition that as a researcher I am also bringing with me my own sensemaking activities, imposing a second layer of interpretation (Chan, 2017). In other words, as an insider researcher there is no neutrality, making the need for awareness of biases which can be projected into my interpretations (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

A second problem posed by my increased knowledge of contextual data is in the overlooking of routine behaviour. My aim was to identify normal routines and practises which result from multi-agency work, yet environmental norms are by definition taken for granted assumptions often

invisible to those immersed in that institution. This highlights the dichotomy of involvement and estrangement which is needed to ensure findings are valid (Hammersley, 1993).

In order to reduce bias, the bracketing and detailed reflection on the subjective research process, as well as awareness of my own bias, is needed (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Bracketing is a method used to mitigate the potentially deleterious effects of unacknowledged preconceptions on the research whilst also achieving deeper levels of reflection (Tufford & Newman, 2010). Through bracketing a researcher holds in abeyance their biases or assumptions about the issue being studied. Bracketing is therefore a self-reflexive process where the researcher needs to be aware of such biases reflecting upon factors which may shape their analysis (Tufford & Newman, 2010). Bracketing was conducted through the use of a reflective journal. Following each stage of the research design I recorded within this journal my prior knowledge and feelings of what I perceived as the issues (Burns & Grove, 2003). This allowed the examination of my own position in light of emerging issues, ensuring that my own views did not override those of the participants.

#### **4.5 Ethics, Power and Validity**

There are several ethical considerations that surrounded my research design which needed due consideration before initiating data collection. Before starting my work I ensured it met all ethical guidelines as set out by the British Educational Research Association ([www.bera.ac.uk](http://www.bera.ac.uk)) and those of my own institution, Keele University ([www.keele.ac.uk/research/lcs/membership/other/ethics.htm](http://www.keele.ac.uk/research/lcs/membership/other/ethics.htm)). The main principles for consideration were potential harm, autonomy and privacy (Hammersley & Traianou, 2007).

The first consideration of potential harm could have brought me into conflict through the duality of my role if I uncovered practices which I considered unethical, for example, if interviewees discussed practices which conflicted with teachers' safeguarding duties towards students. This

could potentially jeopardise a participant's career, therefore this was made clear to interviewees at the start of the process. Asking for informed consent at each stage of the research protected interviewee's autonomy (Bigg, 2010), allowed for them to withdraw from the study and allowed for information regarding the study to be given to participants at each stage. The information provided was carefully constructed to reduce its potential to change behaviour therefore biasing results.

The second principle would be autonomy given to participants, with systems being in place to allow them to make their own decisions as to whether they wanted or did not want to participate through asking for informed consent. This is the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions (Diener & Crandall, 1978 cited in Cohen et al, 2010). This is a complex issue which involved the explanation of several factors including the purposes of the research, right to withdrawal, confidentiality and the opportunity to ask questions (Cohen et al, 2010). The issue is further complicated by consideration to the extent of information imparted (Ruane, 2005).

Participants may not want to know everything about the research topic, especially if they are already giving up their time to take part in the activity. Consideration is also needed to how this may bias results with participants potentially changing their behaviour, decreasing the validity of the results, once they are aware of what the researcher is identifying (Rothstein & Shoben, 2013).

The third principle, privacy, encompasses not only sensitivity regarding the information put into the public domain but also the participant's right to confidentiality (Crow & Wiles, 2008).

Participants were reassured regarding anonymity through avoiding the use of details such as real names, ages and subject areas taught, making it difficult for anyone in the institution to know who they were. In the same way the school was made anonymous by masking specific details about its precise location, size and staff and not revealing its name. However, it was explained

that although anonymity would be protected as far as it is possible, no absolute guarantee can be given, but as the information gained is in the public domain, the information gained is considered less sensitive (Cohen et al, 2010).

In order to ensure that participants were able to engage in discussions without feeling the need to conform or edit their dialogue in-line with their perceptions of my views, attention was given to the dynamics of power between those being researched and those conducting the research.

Power is ubiquitous, existing in all settings and pervades the way we think about and treat people we work with (Prilleltensky, 2005). Power is manifest through a variety of different forms such as age, gender, class and level of education (Hughes, 2006). As a researcher I needed to recognise that participants will bring with them their own power relations (Råheim et al, 2016) . Only through this recognition was it possible to clearly conceptualise reality and act ethically. Through analysis of my own positioning I was able to analyse positions of power within discourses and view situations from a variety of perspectives. It is important to elucidate what is considered natural, such as the way we view ourselves through dominant discourses (Alex & Hammarstrom, 2008). I considered power relations at every stage of my research ensuring participants did not feel obliged to give consent, were able to express their views freely and without judgement and could ask questions or withdraw if they so wished.

## **Chapter 5 Analysis of how Teachers Interviewed Engaged with Multi-Agency Work within their Context**

### **5.1 How are National Multi-Agency Working Policies Enacted within Teacher's Individual Practices?**

This chapter explores how multi-agency working policies, such as *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003) and *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DFE, 2014b; 2016), have impacted on individual teacher's daily practice through the process of enactment. I start by considering ways in which policies have been paid attention to and acted upon within the school of study.

#### **Enactment and Knowledge of Multi-Agency Work: “I don't really know”**

Chapter 3 describes the role of enactment in sensemaking (see pages 35-70). Here enactment is described as the action individuals take in order to create a stream of events that they pay attention to (Orton, 2000). Braun, Ball and Maguire (2011) talk about how policies are enacted through processes of interpretation and translation. I relate Braun, Ball and Maguire's account of policy enactment (2011; 2012) to Weick's theory of sensemaking (1979; 1988), as described in Chapter 3, in order to develop an account of policy enactment. I describe policy enactment as the individual attention paid to environmental cues including how cues are singled out, interpretation of text involving the reading and re-reading of policy in order to make sense of its content and how individuals take action, enacting the policy through talk, plans and meetings (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012). During interviews I invited interviewees to talk about their knowledge of multi-agency working policies and their experiences of engagement with multi-agency work. Through analysing interviewee's discussion, I hoped to get closer to the individual ways in which they enacted multi-agency work based on their knowledge of such work, how they pay attention to environmental cues suggesting the need for engagement with multi-agency policies and action that they had previously taken.

Enactment points to what people understand as their preconceptions shape what people notice in the direction of preconceptions (Powers, 1973). Preconceptions point to previous sensemaking activities as individuals use their previously gained knowledge, of which they will have made sense of, to notice and take action in response to events in their environment (Weick, 1988). As all teachers interviewed for this study had prior experiences of multi-agency work, I expected that they would be able to tell the story of multi-agency work describing their knowledge of such work and how it impacts on their daily practice.

I began interviews with questions around teachers' understanding of multi-agency work, asking about their knowledge of the structures and routines involved. In Chapter 3 (page 38) I argued that multi-agency teams can be thought of as an emerging organisation in that different people are brought together and work towards gaining self-definition through developing a series of routines and new structures (Westley, 1990). In the formation of an emerging organisation, teachers need to learn new structures and routines such as the roles of different individuals, frequency of meetings and common agendas, which they will be able to draw upon when taking action. By gaining teachers' knowledge of these routines and structures which make up multi-agency teams, I aim to gain insight into how individuals have engaged with aspects of multi-agency work and if they have enacted the principles of multi-agency policies within their practice.

When questioning interviewee's knowledge of multi-agency work, as a result of their prior experiences I expected them to be able to discuss in-depth what multi-agency work meant to them without extensive prompting. To aid the flow of dialogue, interviews took place within a location designated by the interviewee in order to create a sense of ease. In all cases classrooms were chosen being an environment which is both familiar and non-threatening. Additionally, key information about the study was provided prior to interviews taking place, so I had expected the

questions not to be unexpected and not require additional explanation. Instead responses from interviewees were limited with little in-depth discussion into what multi-agency work entailed.

Out of the ten interviewees, six were able to discuss their understanding of multi-agency work and what this meant to their practice whilst four were unable to engage in any discussion stating that they “*don’t really know.*” The six interviewees that were able to engage in discussion provided very limited accounts. This was seen in the narrative from Tara who, when asked about her understanding of multi-agency work, was only able to provide very brief and generic accounts of what multi-agency work meant to her. For example, for Tara multi-agency work involves staff external to school providing teaching staff with advice or training. An extract from the interview with Tara is below:

Interviewer: Do you know what multi-agency teams are and how teachers are expected to work with them?

Tara: I don’t know. I haven’t come across that term.

Interviewer: What do you think it means?

Tara: I would have thought it means people from different agencies coming together to meet.

Interviewer: Who might teachers have to meet with from outside of school?

Tara: Could it involve people like Learning Mentors? I would say social workers but I don’t know if they come into school so maybe a representative, [pause] like the person that we had who did the child protection training. Like a mental health nurse who goes from school to school so you might have to liaise with her. I suppose it’s about giving skills that you don’t have or just information that you need.

Interviewer: How do you think working with different people that make up multi-agency teams could impact on your work?

Tara: I don’t really know. I suppose they could give advice or training in skills you don’t have so are there to support me in my role. I don’t really think it changes what I do as a teacher, as my job is still to make sure kids get the exam results they need.



The action people take is used to order the world in which they find themselves (Weick, 2001), as what people choose to enact is done in a way that it enables the comprehension of what is going on. This act of making sense is done so retrospectively (Weick, 1995), as individuals utilise previous events to form a framework which allows the prediction of future events (Weick, 1993). The first step in this is the perception of contextual demands, where the framework formed from previous sensemaking activities is used to notice events in the environment (Luttenberg et al, 2009). What the narrative above tells us is that Tara's ability to discuss multi-agency work is limited as she frequently states, "*I don't know*," with little perception of environmental cues which could trigger action. Despite being the youngest interviewee and newest to the profession, Tara had over the course of the previous year been involved in multi-agency meetings with staff from a range of external agencies. However, the lack of retrospection means she had little to draw upon when creating a framework to describe her understanding of the term multi-agency work and the segment above is ended in a similar manner to how it began with Tara commenting that, "*I don't really know*." Without the creation of a framework, the potential for Tara to use her previously gained knowledge to comprehend the events involved in multi-agency work is limited.

I was surprised by Tara's lack of dialogue around multi-agency work, for example, seen as she struggled to define the meaning of the term multi-agency team and the frequentation of comments such as, "*I don't really know*." Those interviewed were selected based on their prior experience of working with professionals from agencies outside of school, for example, through meetings discussing a child's special educational needs. Whilst the section of interviews around interviewee's knowledge of multi-agency work took place during the first interview before taking part in a multi-agency meeting, I still would have expected interviewees to be able to utilise knowledge from their prior experiences. What this tells us is that Tara has previously taken limited action around multi-agency work even following periods of working within a multi-agency

team. If people take action to make sense of their world (Weick, 2001), what this is telling us is that Tara is not enacting multi-agency work utilising her prior experiences to comprehend what is going on but instead making sense of it in other ways.

Before starting this research, I would have expected teachers who have had prior contact with multi-agency teams to have developed a framework which would allow the prediction of future events. A framework developed through prior sensemaking activities encompasses an individual's understanding, so that when a new event occurs an individual will use this framework to search for the most plausible interpretation of what is occurring (Weick, 1995).

Interviews so far have shown that despite prior contact with external professionals, dialogue around multi-agency work was limited or non-existent pointing to constraints operating in how teachers enact multi-agency working policies. I had expected that prior engagement with non-educational professionals would have resulted in enactment of multi-agency work through cycles of interpretation and action, enabling policies to be translated into practice. As sensemaking enables the prediction of future events (Maitlis, 2005), through enacted experiences being arranged into causal maps (Weick, 1979), I had expected interviewees to have developed this cognitive framework around multi-agency work and to draw on it when I asked them to tell the story of multi-agency work.

As Weick (1995) pointed out sensemaking favours plausibility. Teachers in this study showed that when interpreting events through previously created frameworks, constraints operated which placed limits on their enactment of multi-agency work. For example, cues suggesting the need for such work had been previously presented during prior engagement yet seemed not to have been noticed as Tara relied on previous structures, seen as she tried to explain multi-agency work through the most plausible explanation in her eyes, that such work is limited to the transference

of skills or information. This seemed to suggest that Tara only enacts those aspects of multi-agency work which fit into her understanding of her role as a teacher, which is the gaining of academic results.

Similarly, Hayley, Caroline and Jenny showed limited dialogue when questioned regarding their understanding of multi-agency work despite prompting. Despite differences in age and experience, interviewee's narratives showed similarities in their expressed alignment towards subject teaching within school and the teaching of academic competencies rather than a focus on aspects of their role which could encompass multi-agency work. Differences between the three interviewee's narratives only occurred around the degree that they discussed a topic, which in their words they knew little about. For example, Caroline did not enter any discussion about the role of multi-agency work whilst the remaining two interviewees, similar to Tara, attempted to engage in discussion, albeit limited, into what might be the role of such work.

The role of an insider researcher was advantageous in answering the question of teachers' enactment as it allowed increased contact between the subject of study and the researcher. Frequent informal conversations between interviewees and the researcher took place outside of the interview environment with dialogue being focused on difficulties felt within subject areas and deficits in skills possessed by specific children. Rarely did interviewees enter into conversation about wider issues which could impact on children's progress and which would involve multi-agency work.

This lack of discussion around multi-agency work despite prior experiences suggested to me failures in the perception of environmental cues highlighting the need for multi-agency ways of working such as the publication of multi-agency working policies. When confronted with an event, sensemaking will favour plausibility (Currie & Brown, 2003), which in this case is the reliance on

teacher's traditional role, suggesting that multi-agency work is beyond interviewee's understanding of who they are as teachers as interpretations of such work favoured coherence with their beliefs around their role in the classroom. This led to multi-agency work being interpreted as providing "*advice or training*" so teachers are able to achieve their role in "*make[ing] sure kids get the exam results they need*" (Tara).

The dominance of plausibility resulted in a failure to notice cues suggesting the need for multi-agency work, such as working with children with special educational needs or through safeguarding agendas. Previous sensemaking activities support the development of a mental model linking cognition with interpretation of the environment (Hill & Levenhagen, 1995), where stimuli are placed into frameworks that make sense of the stimuli (Goleman, 1985). Teacher's previously developed mental models formed during prior experiences of multi-agency work, developed as teachers looked for the most plausible explanation of their role, which for teachers in this study was getting students exam results. The development of mental models linking multi-agency work to academic achievement, acts to constrain the interpretation of multi-agency work though opposing agendas. Therefore, despite the prevalence of multi-agency working policies in schools, enactment of multi-agency principles is constrained with few "*changes to what I [interviewees] do as a teacher*" (Tara).

The remaining six interviewees (Kate, Jean, Dianne, Ivy, Paul and Sam) were only able to discuss multi-agency work in a limited manner. The majority of these interviewees were older and had been in the profession for a number of years. What marks them as different from the interviewees above is their spoken desire to support children in a wide range of areas opposed to just focusing on the academic side of their role. This wider focus is seen in the extract from Kate below. Kate's narrative was structured through the reproduction of the words from the *Every*

*Child Matters* agenda (DfES, 2003), however beyond this she was unable to engage in dialogue around the production of policies or their impact upon her practice.

Interviewer: What is your understanding of multi-agency work and how does it impact on what you do?

Kate: Is it to make sure that every child matters, basically? So, you have to look out for every child in your class to make sure they don't miss out.

Interviewer: So, what does this mean for what you have to do every day?

Kate: Ermm, just looking out for every child. So, you know they're doing fine. So, my role is to make sure that some people weren't missing out because of their different needs. Everybody gets the same education whether they are disabled or special needs as in less intelligent. That sort of thing.

Interviewer: Do you think this relates to what you do in school?

Kate: Yeah. So, you need to make sure that you write your lesson plans and do all that sort of thing. That you are [pause], as a teacher that's your role anyway. To make sure that every child in your class can access the curriculum with what you're teaching. [pause] With my tutor group I suppose it's more pastoral. So, that sort of thing again, looking after the well-being of the child rather than the educational needs. That sort of thing.

Interviewer: When you say "that sort of thing" what do you mean?

Kate: [Pause] Looking out for any issues that they might have and trying to help them. It's difficult to describe what you need to do until you're in that situation.

Interviewer: Why is it difficult to describe these aspects of your role?

Kate: I don't know. I suppose it's not something you are taught. No-one goes through this with you and teaches you what to do. No-one checks that you are doing it right. You're just expected to get on with it.

Interviewer: How are you supported in this role? Do you think this aspect of your role involves other professionals?

Kate: Well I suppose it should involve other professionals as teachers can't do everything but I don't know how that functions in practice. For me this type of work falls into the pastoral part of our role where we have to make sure that children are happy and safe.

The lack of description in Kate's narrative around multi-agency working policies combined with her apparent difficulty expanding upon how such policies had impacted upon her practice, suggested to me that Kate possesses little self-knowledge of why she needs to engage with wider, non-academic aspects of her role. Despite limited dialogue Kate gave the impression throughout this section of the interview that working with children on wider aspects of development was important to her as she explained how her role involved "*looking after the well-being of the child.*" When talking about multi-agency work, she emphasised her role in making sure that every child matters and looking out for all children. Her role as a middle manager within a subject area in school could have taken precedence and limited her discussion to the academic aspects of her role, however, she seemed keen to dispel this through willingly engaging in discussion around what she termed the pastoral aspects of her role. Despite this seeming willingness to engage, Kate did seem to find expanding on these wider aspects of her role more difficult as she stated, "*it's difficult to describe what you need to do,*" and looked uncomfortable when pressed for more detailed descriptions.

Unlike Tara, Kate did attempt to enter into a discussion about what multi-agency work means to her and her everyday practice. What becomes apparent to me through the passage above is that Kate's ability to discuss her knowledge of multi-agency work is limited. Kate did not discuss in depth the role of different agencies or their role working with teachers. Whilst she touched on some of the issues around multi-agency work, such as supporting students on issues beyond the academic, this in itself was limited with the phrases such as, "*that sort of thing,*" being used when she was unable to draw retrospectively on frameworks developed previously through prior engagement.

The other five interviewees showed similarities in how they attempted to answer the question about what multi-agency work is and how it impacts on their role. Similar to Kate they discussed their desire to support children not only academically but also through wider aspects of development, however, their descriptions were limited in how they would go about this including the role played by multi-agency work and professionals external to education. Further similarities between the five remaining interviewees and Kate were apparent in how they presented during this section of the interview with emphasis being given during discussions to the importance of caring holistically for children, for example Dianne's comment that a "*genuine interest in children*" is needed by educationists to be able to carry out their role. Similarities also functioned in how they responded when pressed to expand on their accounts of multi-agency work with greater signals of unease, for example, seen through shifting in seats and tense postures.

To summarise this section of interviews, interviewees demonstrate a limited desire to engage in in-depth discussions around both their understanding of the term multi-agency work and what it means to their daily practice. Although there were differences in language used to describe how multi-agency work functions and depth of dialogue, the lack of discussion was common throughout. People make sense of events through stories told (Weick, 1995). Therefore, not being able to tell the story of multi-agency work, as interviewees explained they "*don't really know*," points at individual sensemaking activities and how, despite previously being part of multi-agency work, interviewees had not made sense out of what had occurred. Thereby, when new events occur, they cannot use retrospection to understand and tell stories.

Knowledge of multi-agency work is important to an individual's ability to tell stories about what such work means to them, as knowledge is stored as causal maps where experiences are arranged to reduce their equivocality (Weick, 1979). Knowledge is important to sensemaking processes, shaping an individual's ability to pay attention to raw materials in the environment before being

assimilated into their existing frameworks of understanding (Hill, 2001), allowing them to make sense of what is happening through their ability to take action. It is knowledge of each individual's experiences which forms these frameworks which allows them to comprehend, understand, explain and predict (Starbuck & Milliken, 1988). Drawing on research around the role of knowledge in sensemaking (Weick, 1979; Hill, 2001; Starbuck & Miliken, 1988), the limited discussions around multi-agency work by interviewees points to a deficit in causal maps formed during prior experience as a result of limitations in sensemaking. As sensemaking is about connecting cues to develop an account of what is going on (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010), poorly developed causal maps limit an individual's ability to notice environmental cues pointing to the need for multi-agency work, and in turn limits their ability to act and produce an environment where multi-agency work forms part of their daily practice.

We are told that sensemaking is vital in being able to produce a more ordered environment in times of change (Weick et al, 2005). When the environment does change, such as when teachers confront expectations to enact aspects of multi-agency work, they are left with a gap between aspiration and existing capacity: a gap which cannot be closed by the existing modes of operating. At such times sensemaking carves out the raw experiences, labelling phenomena which can be used for further action and providing additional input for us to assign meaning to (Weick et al, 2005). If multi-agency work had triggered sensemaking I would have expected discussion around the question, 'what is the story of multi-agency work?' as teachers look for order from the knowledge gained through involvement in multi-agency teams. This questioning of information gained from multi-agency work enables the mapping of confusion by talking about what has happened, bringing about multiple interpretations which lead to action (Ancona, 2012). As we continue to act, we change our knowledge framework to fit our experiences and retain the most plausible interpretation, reflecting upon our understanding and bringing order to our world (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005).



In interviewee's responses to questions about their understanding of multi-agency work, I expected them to engage in discussions about the story behind such work, in other words what it meant to them, what they have to know and do and how they interpret this action. This was missing from all interviewee's narratives. My role as an insider researcher was advantageous in the sense that it meant I was aware that prior engagement with multi-agency teams had taken place. Without this knowledge I may not have challenged interviewee's views that they had previously not taken part in multi-agency work, therefore would not have expected them to use retrospection to describe their story of multi-agency work.

Despite previous engagement with multi-agency work, when presented with questions around the meaning of such work teachers were unable to draw on previously developed causal maps which link cognition with interpretations of the environment (Hill & Levenhagen, 1995). Lack of retrospection suggests that interviewees failed to notice environmental cues which indicated the need for change. If there is no knowledge of raw experiences resulting from multi-agency working imperatives, teachers won't be able to make sense of such work and so will be limited in their ability to act. Instead they relied on their previous knowledge base when interpreting and engaging with policies. The result seeming to be the performance rather than enactment of multi-agency policies where interviewees described how they reacted to multi-agency agendas in a limited manner.

The pages above (89-98) have shown limited accounts by interviewees of the story of multi-agency work, with little talk questioning any information gained from engagement with such work which would enable the mapping of any confusion (Ancona, 2012). As it is the process of talking, interpretation and action which is able to change our knowledge framework to fit our experiences (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005), a lack of talking suggests limited knowledge gained from

multi-agency work. Noticing environmental cues is guided by an individual's knowledge framework (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005), so before an individual can start to make sense of multi-agency work, they need to notice the ecological changes that multi-agency policies have brought about. Following on from questions around interviewee's understanding of multi-agency work, the subsequent section of interviews sought to gain teacher's knowledge of changes to their environment as a result of multi-agency working policies such as *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003).

Interviewees were asked how in their view teachers' roles have changed over a period of years, aiming to identify if they had noticed environmental cues suggesting the need for change to their roles as a result of the implementation of multi-agency working policies in schools. All interviewees agreed that their current roles had changed even when comparing their role now with that of the previous few years. There was agreement that changes focused on the increased role that teachers play in ensuring their students achieve academic benchmarks such as a minimum of five A\*-C grades at GCSE (Pearson, 2015). When questioned about changes as a result of the increased push for multi-agency working in schools (Pratt, 2012), none of the interviewees described changes to what they have to do or who they believe they are.

Sam's account below of how he feels his role has changed from when he was at school provides an example of the lack of discussion around changes to teacher's roles as a result of multi-agency work:

Interviewer: Do you think roles have changed over time with the introduction of multi-agency working policies such as *Every Child Matters*, from your own experience of school?

Sam: Yes. I think there is a lot more focus on all students and not just the "shiny apples." There's more inclusion, more focus on everyone not just the ones who will get top grades. I know when I was at school the teacher would just be teaching to three or four people that could do the work

and the rest, as long as you didn't make too much noise, you were left to your own devices which we thought brilliant but then when I left school I thought "oh I need some qualifications." I then had to go back to night school [pause], such an opportunity I missed but at the time you don't realise. There's a lot more support and there's a lot more encouragement I think as well, no matter where you are, trying to get the ownership of education onto the students more as well as onto us. I'm a teacher, I'm here to help you but you need to help yourself. It's that getting them to help themselves that's the difficult bit. I find I spend a lot of my time sitting encouraging kids and talking about their issues outside of school, which I never thought was part of teaching.

Interviewer: When you talk about issues outside of school what do you mean?

Sam: Well sometimes kids come into lesson in a bad mood because they have fallen out with someone or they are arguing with parents. Before I expected them to just to get on with it, I suppose I didn't think it was my job to question them as I was just there to teach. Now I need to make sure they are in the right frame of mind to learn so I sometimes need to sit and have a quick chat with them so I can do my job and teach them. I would never of thought that before.

Interviewer: Do you think your role now goes beyond getting children good grades?

Sam: No, that's still what we have to do. But I suppose sometimes we have to go about it in a different way.

Interviewer: Do you see your role as going beyond this and supporting children on other aspects of their life, perhaps working with other professionals?

Sam: No. [pause] They do their bit and I do mine. [pause] I don't see why I would need to work with other people as we do very different jobs.

What can be seen from this extract is that when discussing his perception of change, Sam was confident in describing changes with regards to teachers' increased role in gaining all students results and not just the "*shiny apples*." My perceptions of his level of knowledge developed as he was able to talk around the topic of performance without hesitation, providing detailed answers and using hand gestures to emphasise meaning. Fluency of speech combined with clear intonation added to the impression of confidence. However, when I led onto changes more

frequently associated with multi-agency work, he became noticeably less sure of himself with more stilted answers frequented by pauses. For example, his reply to being asked about his role working with other professionals lacked the depth seen in previous answers and was hesitant seen through the inclusion of pauses:

“No. [pause] They do their bit and I do mine. [pause]”

Such observations did not leave me with the impression that Sam was confident in his knowledge of multi-agency work and that he was aware of the changes brought about by multi-agency working policies, such as the requirement to work with professionals outside of education. The lack of awareness of changes as a result of multi-agency working policies, seen throughout this section of the interview combined with my observation of Sam, gave the perception that he had failed to notice the raw materials resulting from multi-agency policy implementation which would have provided a basis for sensemaking.

Prior to interviews I had expected interviewees to have noticed the raw materials resulting from the publication of multi-agency working policies. For example, in the document *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (Her Majesty's Government, 2010) the safeguarding role of all professionals including teachers is clearly defined as a shared responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, working collaboratively and having awareness of and appreciating the roles that other professionals play. All staff within school undergo frequent training based upon the school's safeguarding policy and the implementation of its principles within practice, including the role of other services in promoting the welfare of children. Therefore, it would be expected that they would notice the raw materials as a result of the changes that multi-agency working policies stimulated.

As I became aware during interviews of interviewee's difficulties in describing changes as a result of multi-agency working policies, I used probes to encourage interviewees to identify situations where they have worked with other professionals. I include segments from Hayley's interview below where probes were used to encourage her to describe her role beyond exam results:

Interviewer: Do you think roles have changed over the last ten years or so?

Hayley: I think there is more emphasis now on exam results than there used to be. There is too much of a push of getting those 5A\*-C grades for some students. For some students that's never going to be a realistic option for them and they still need to feel that what they are doing is important. We're not looking after the well-being of every child if we focus on often unrealistic targets. They are still gaining something from it so maybe a skills-based sort of thing would benefit some students rather than [pause]. So yes, I do feel it's changed from when I was at school as I feel there was more time for caring and less about what grades we got.

Interviewer: You have identified well-being and caring as part of your role. Can you describe how you engage with these aspects?

Hayley: I suppose it's just having time for students. So, they come into your classroom and you have that time to talk to them and find out what is going on in their life. We need to care to show them we want the best for them and we are there to help them achieve the grades they need not just for the school but for them.

Hayley started by highlighting only the changes as a result of an increased emphasis on exam results in schools and in her view less of a place for caring as she explained that in the past there was "*more time for caring.*" To prompt her to consider wider aspects of her role, which through my role as insider-researcher I knew she had received training on, I asked her what she would do if she had a concern about a child which went beyond academic performance. She replied:

Hayley: I would pass it on.

Interviewer: What happens after that?

Hayley: I suppose other services would get involved. [pause] I don't really know as it's not really linked to what I do.

Interviewer: Do you think you have a role working with these other services?

Hayley: No, as they do their bit and I do mine. So, no. I don't really know what they do but why should I? I need to make sure they are able to do well in the classroom. I can't help them with family issues or problems with their health.

Interviewer: Have you ever come across teachers being asked to work with other services in supporting children with these wider issues?

Hayley: No [pause]. I don't know of anyone being asked to do that. We can't do other's roles.

The view that teachers' role does not extend to working with other services was common to all interviewees. I found this surprising considering Hayley's discussion around the importance of caring for students and would have expected her to describe situations where, in order to care, teachers need to work beyond their traditional boundaries and engage with external professionals. She failed to notice the need to engage with services beyond her role in securing student's exam results despite having worked with multi-agency teams previously, as she explained that she *"can't help them [students] with family issues or problems with their health"* and the role of other services is *"not really linked to what I do."*

Being an insider researcher was advantageous in that I had a heightened awareness of the roles and responsibilities within the organisation of study. Through my role within school I am aware of roles linked to multi-agency work that all teachers are expected to engage with and the range of professionals they might be expected to meet with. For example, a safeguarding advisor comes into school every year to deliver safeguarding training to staff and highlight the role that teachers play in working with other professionals. For individual children, for example those who are looked after by the local authority or who come under Children's Social Care, teachers frequently meet key workers and provide information on children's progress and welfare issues, implementing strategies to support children based on feedback from services. This includes engaging with peer mentoring programmes, supporting student's wider interests such as

encouraging them to partake in after-school activities and discussing welfare issues such as hygiene and personal safety through citizenship programmes. Through my role as insider researcher I was aware of Hayley's prior engagement with services as well as her strong affiliation with her subject area. Despite Hayley being in the profession a number of years she had worked predominately with higher achieving students. Therefore, cues suggesting that additional multi-agency work may be needed, are likely to be less obvious than with other students if individuals are not predisposed through prior sensemaking activities to notice such clues.

Despite undertaking roles which incorporated multi-agency work, none of the other interviewees noticed the raw materials setting out the need for multi-agency work within their daily practice. Raw materials result from ecological change following the implementation of multi-agency working policies within schools. Interviewee's failure to notice such cues was despite prompting to try and elicit further discussions into the role all teachers are expected to play when protecting children's welfare. Failure to notice environmental cues setting out the need for multi-agency working impacts on teacher's ability to enact roles within their everyday practice as they cannot take action to what they do not notice. The next section looks at the action teachers took following the presentation of raw materials in the school of study.

**Action: *"Other people can support"***

Sensemaking literature tells us that individuals take action in order to enact a more ordered environment which allows them to gain some sense of what is happening (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Smircich & Stubbard, 1985). When applied to multi-agency work teachers will enact aspects of multi-agency working policies that reaffirm their understanding of what it means to be a teacher. In other words, they will interpret policies in such a way that confirms their sense of what a teacher is and does, placing constraints on what they enact. In this way who people think they are in their context shapes what they enact (Currie & Brown, 2003). What people choose to

pay attention to and take action around gives insight into who they think they are as the action they take is used to produce a more ordered environment (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014).

Following on from the discussions around teachers' knowledge of multi-agency work, I continued to question interviewees in order to get closer to how teachers took action when confronted with multi-agency roles. My earlier definition of multi-agency work (see chapter 2, pages 14-16), linked interagency collaboration with having a positive impact on children's lives. Other agencies, such as health and social care services, work with children and their families on a variety of issues including medical concerns, welfare issues and offending behaviour. These are beyond teacher's traditional narrow scope of achievement of government defined academic benchmarks (Pearson, 2015). Therefore, what action teachers take and how they go about it when being expected to engage with wider issues, gives insight into how they enact multi-agency working policies.

I asked interviewees what action they would take when dealing with aspects of their role that involved multi-agency work. The four interviewees (Hayley, Tara, Caroline and Jenny) who had found it difficult to describe multi-agency work were unable to engage in further discussions about what action they would take, whilst the remaining six all linked action to engagement with pastoral aspects of their role. Pastoral care can be defined as student centred care organised around the whole child meeting their social, psychological, developmental and educational needs (Power, 1996). The linking of multi-agency work to pastoral aspects of teachers' role is seen in the narrative from Ivy below. She was asked about multi-agency work and the action she would take when engaging with this aspect of her role. She linked enactment with her role as a personal tutor, providing pastoral care and monitoring children, to making sure they can achieve in lessons:

Interviewer: What do you think multi-agency work is?

Ivy: It's working with other people who aren't teachers.

Interviewer: Can you describe the kinds of roles you do which form part of multi-agency work?



Ivy: Multi-agency work is part of our pastoral role. Our main role is making sure kids get results but we also act as personal tutors. So, we meet children daily and make sure they are ok.

Interviewer: What do you mean by ok?

Ivy: Just making sure they are happy and well so they can work in lesson and achieve the results they need.

Interviewer: What do you do to make sure they are ok and what action would you take if they weren't?

Ivy: I look out for any changes in behaviour. For example, if other teachers are telling me they are misbehaving or are behind with work. I would talk to them and see if there is anything bothering them. If there is, I would pass this onto other staff such as the school nurse.

Interviewer: How would you work with other agencies to support children who aren't ok?

Ivy: Well I suppose the nurse would tell me if I needed to do anything. So, different agencies might tell school that they need a bit of extra help and give some advice. This would get passed onto me and I would consider what I need to do.

Interviewer: So, multi-agency work involves different professionals giving you advice?

Ivy: Yes. We see the children and highlight if something is wrong and they tell us if we need to do anything extra.

Interviewer: What kind of things might you need to do?

Ivy: Watch children more carefully, talk to them. I know there are a few children here with issues so I monitor their behaviour and make sure that they are working. Other than that, I wouldn't know as my role is to make sure they can learn. Its other people's roles to deal with other issues.

Discourse throughout this section of interview, where I asked Ivy about what action she would take as part of a multi-agency team, felt stilted as she did not go into depth when responding to questions requiring additional prompts in order to attain further information. Whilst she didn't appear anxious and seemed relaxed throughout this section, the depth of her response suggested that this was not an aspect of her role which she felt was central to what she does as a teacher.

For instance, when asked to expand on what action she would take following multi-agency work,

she was only able to provide basic, limited answers for example, by *“look[ing] out for any changes in behaviour,”* and *“talk[ing] to them.”* On a number of occasions Ivy drew the discussion back to the achievement of academic results describing how her *“role is to make sure they [students] can learn,”* suggesting to me that it is this role in student’s academic performance which is central to her beliefs as a teacher. This reliance on previous structures rather than discussion around any new structures which may have been developed following multi-agency work, suggested to me a failure in noticing the raw materials resulting from engagement with such work as she still felt that *“its other people’s roles to deal with other issues.”*

The interview continued with me probing into Ivy’s perception of the action she would take when presented with situations which should draw on multi-agency principles in order to develop a greater insight into how multi-agency work functions in school:

Interviewer: Can you explain what you would do if a student in your tutor group disclosed that they were being abused?

Ivy: I would report it.

Interviewer: Would your role end here?

Ivy: Yes [pause], I think it would as it becomes someone else’s role.

Interviewer: Would that child need any further support from you?

Ivy: I could talk to them but it’s not my job to give advice or anything. That’s what social services or the police are for.

Interviewer: Would you work with the police or social services to support the child?

Ivy: I don’t think so. I can’t think of anything I could do to help. I’m sure they know their job better than me.

Despite probing using an example from teacher’s daily practice Ivy was unable to describe in depth any action that she would take when presented with a situation that would require multi-agency work. Ivy’s understanding of her role within multi-agency work involved providing

information for other agencies to act upon and acceptance of advice from professionals as she described her role being to “*report it*,” if she had concerns about a child that would require additional support. She was clear that beyond reporting it any actions “*becomes someone else’s role*.” This suggested to me that the interviewee has taken limited action when previously engaged with multi-agency work.

Action taken is used to produce an enacted environment, a more ordered environment where sense can be made out of what is happening (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). In order to produce a more ordered environment, teachers need to develop new structures allowing them to make sense of what has occurred during multi-agency work. These new structures require the refocusing and restructuring of teacher’s roles (Harris & Allen, 2009), so that teachers can develop shared goals and ways of working in what Cheminais (2009) defines as full collaboration. Following multi-agency work, the action Ivy described as having taken, the reporting, produced an environment which she could make sense of, however, this did not seem to be to be done through the restructuring of teachers’ roles. Instead this action pointed to teachers merely co-existing with other professionals who work with the same children, as Ivy maintained the traditional professional boundaries of her role and that of other professionals. This is far from the goal of collaboration as described by Cheminais (2009).

When I asked the remaining interviewees about their role within multi-agency teams all six of those who were able to engage in this section of the interview drew on previous structures, using the terminology of the pastoral, rather than the creation of new roles and structures which should form part of the new emerging organisation of a multi-agency team. An organisation involves a series of interlocking routines resulting in habituated action (Westley, 1990). Within new emerging organisations individuals need to develop knowledge of new structural systems. As all interviewees had previously been part of a multi-agency team, I had expected them to already

have taken action which would have produced a more ordered environment where multi-agency work makes sense and their knowledge of the new structural systems which have been developed is clear. Instead interviewees relied on previous structures, for example, by continuing to use pre-defined job titles such as police and social services, and failed to blur professional boundaries, for example, as Ivy described her role and that of others.

In a similar way to Ivy, all six interviewees who described action following multi-agency work were limited in their ability to describe how they enacted multi-agency principles within their role as a teacher. They described engagement in a reactionary manner, only taking action in response to an emerging situation rather than using multi-agency principles to guide their everyday practice. My role as an insider researcher meant that I had knowledge of interviewees' prior involvement with multi-agency work which led me to expect that interviewees would be able to discuss the action they have previously undertaken, for example, in ensuring that students are safe and supported including work on safeguarding issues such as e-safety and developing appropriate relationships. It is this action taken by individuals which produces a more ordered environment which can be made sense of (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). What this is telling us that action taken in response to multi-agency working policies is limited and instead teachers drew on previously developed structures, only taking action when issues touched on their traditional role of a teacher and anything beyond this was reported to others for them to act upon.

The lack of detailed responses by interviewees when describing action they would take when presented with situations which should elicit multi-agency working practices, is counter to that inscribed in policy. Multi-agency policies such as the document *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, set out teachers' roles within multi-agency work as being an integral part of the process, identifying concerns at an early stage and being involved in the assessment of children's needs and ongoing action taken to safeguard their welfare (Her Majesty's Government, 2006). To enact

policies in the way which they were intended relies on teacher's knowledge of the action they would take when their role touches on safeguarding imperatives. What this section of the interviews has shown is that teachers do not take ongoing action which sits within the new organisation of a multi-agency team. As described by Maitlis (2005), action is used in a way which allows the prediction and comprehension of what is happening. In this case action resulted in an environment which teachers can make sense of, which was focused on their role in securing students' academic results rather than allowing the comprehension of multi-agency work.

Further examples of how this lack of knowledge limited action can be seen in the narrative from Jenny below:

Interviewer: Do you know what multi-agency work involves?

Jenny: Is this the [pause], has this been [pause] oh[pause], I've forgotten what the [pause]. It's not part of Ofsted criteria? It used to be but I don't think they look for it anymore. You don't really hear about it now so I'm not sure how it affects us. There are so many other things to focus on that you can't do everything. Something has to go.

Interviewer: Do you know why teachers need to engage with multi-agency work?

Jenny: I don't, no.

Interviewer: Do you know about what it actually means in terms of your job?

Jenny: Is it things like [pause], sorry I may get this wrong [pause], raising aspirations? They are all like the key elements that you need to implement into your lessons to make sure that every child is being [pause], feels included and gets as much out of the lessons as possible.

Interviewer: Do you think that this features in policies at the moment in school?

Jenny: I would say so. I would say that school is particularly good at making sure that there is something accessible for every child to be involved in. And it's good at offering alternatives like BTEC courses or outward bound. There's lots of opportunities and session 3 activities as well so I feel that it's very good at [pause] and actually I feel that the staff are very good at putting on extra events and sessions for them. Things like the groups that have been established for them, helping pupils that [pause], I mean there's loads of opportunities available to them but I mean helping

them in terms of building their confidence or their interaction with other kids. Cause I have noticed that there are some pupils that are really struggling with that in my classes and my PT [personal tutor] group and I feel that I wish there could be more of those kind of those activities for the kids to get involved in. Cause I feel that this kind of thing [pause], that is really touching on something that gets overlooked a lot. And I think that that would be really encouraging to see and for kids to feel that “Oh I am not going to those because I am not good enough,” but wanting to go to those and it being just as much fun to go to those classes as you would a netball or a hockey. As teachers we have to notice if children feel like this.

What was clear to me was that Jenny’s knowledge of multi-agency work was focused on her view that such work is associated with “*raising aspirations*” of students. To try and gain some understanding of the action that she would take when utilising any structures developed in response to multi-agency work, for example, around safeguarding imperatives, Jenny was asked what action she would take if she was concerned about a child.

Jenny: Ermm [pause] If I was concerned what I have done in the past is to email PTs [personal tutors] to raise awareness of particular issues and liaise with them and if I have had to contact Head of Department or the Inclusion team then we have done. But initially I would raise it with the PT and my own Head of Department. And I have had [pause], I have spoken to [pause] for example, there was one pupil who was having problems socially and I mentioned it to the PT and they also expressed concern and I mentioned it to the TA [teaching assistant] in my class and they suggested the classes for social interaction and that was fantastic and I was able to go back and speak to the parent and put them at ease as it’s available. So, normally through PT to get a bit more information on the pupil.

Interviewer: What kind of concerns do you have about pupils?

Jenny: It could be [pause], its initially two things. It could be academically if they are not putting in the effort or if they are missing deadlines or it could be socially if they have been particularly distressed in class or coming in distressed which means that they can’t learn [pause]. These are the main kind of safeguarding concerns we have to deal with.

Interviewer: What action would you take if you noticed a safeguarding concern?

Jenny: Well like I said before email PTs. I am a PT and I have to sometimes deal with these issues. I can arrange session 3 activities after school so that students can catch up with work or talk to them and help them organise their work so they are no longer behind.

So far Jenny has given limited descriptions of action that she would take if a concern about a child whom she works with was to present itself. Multi-agency working policies expect teachers to possess a heightened knowledge of safeguarding issues and the action that needs to be taken (HM Government, 2015), allowing educationists to amalgamate their traditional role with safeguarding imperatives. For example, the policy document *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (Her Majesty's Government, 2015) describes how all professionals who come into contact with children need to be able to identify concerns, share information with other professionals and where needed make referrals to other agencies. The amalgamation of roles can be described as the blurring the edges of professional boundaries (Atkinson et al, 2002), so that there is an interchange in roles. This blurring the edges is an enabler of multi-agency working becoming an integral part of teacher's daily practice rather than a stand-alone activity as it makes those involved think about the bigger picture allowing a wider range of children's needs to be addressed (Atkinson et al, 2002). So far in Jenny's narrative there has been no evidence of blurring the edges and Jenny has limited action to teachers' role within the classroom focused on instances when students need additional support "*academically*" or when "*they can't learn.*"

In order to explore the link between knowledge of wider roles and action taken, I asked Jenny how her knowledge of the wider aspects of her role as a teacher had affected her everyday practice and how she takes action. She replied:

Jenny: Errm [pause] it doesn't unless an issue comes up. It's not our job to look out for these things. We have to do something if we become aware of something going on but otherwise, we get on with our job.

Interviewer: Would you ever have to work with other professionals as part of your safeguarding role?

Jenny: I may need to talk to other teachers, for example with the teacher who raised the concern as they may need to do something differently so that the child can learn.

Interviewer: What about professionals other than teachers?

Jenny: No. I can't really see why or think of a situation that I have seen this happen. How can other people who don't know about schools and getting students grades come in and help us?

Interviewer: Would you not find it useful to work with other professionals to plan support for particular students who may have issues which are affecting them learning?

Jenny: No [pause], it would be confusing not helpful. Other people would be coming at it from different angles so there would probably be conflict. We need to focus on our role and leave the rest to others.

Jenny's narrative suggested to me that all action taken by Jenny which touched on multi-agency practices is done in a reactionary manner. For example, Jenny only takes action in response to emerging events rather than utilising structures developed previously through engagement with multi-agency work in order to plan for a more ordered environment, as she described how wider aspects of her role don't affect her day-to-day practice "*unless an issue comes up.*" I would have expected Jenny to be able to discuss the continued action she might take in order to support students on a daily basis rather than simply reacting to a one-off event, for example, through her role as a personal tutor maintaining close links between home and school. As she described how she would react to emerging issues, her lack of awareness of other action that may have been required, which could have drawn on multi-agency principles, became evident to me. For example, when questioned about the role of other professionals in supporting her safeguarding role she talked about how "*it would be confusing not helpful.*"



For Weick (2001) the process of taking action or enactment is doing which produces knowing and the doing may be informed by prior knowing. What was clear to me here was that Jenny had little prior knowing of multi-agency work which in turn impacted on the process of doing or taking action in response to situations which should have triggered multi-agency practices. When enacting multi-agency policies heightened knowledge of action which may be taken is needed, yet this knowledge of action was missing. As knowledge is a product of action (Weick, 2001), lack of knowledge indicates a previous lack of action following engagement with multi-agency work.

A lack of knowing about the doing, or in other words a lack of awareness of action that could be taken, was common across all interviews when interviewees were asked about the action they would have taken in response to issues which fall within multi-agency working practices. A further example of lack of action can be seen in the narrative from Tara. Similar to Jenny she linked multi-agency work to pastoral aspects of her role but her narrative was limited in the description of action that she would take when presented with issues which should trigger a multi-agency approach. I asked Tara what action she would take if she was concerned about a child and how this linked to multi-agency work. Her reply is below:

Tara: Well, if I am concerned about a student, I would inform people.

Interviewer: Who would you inform and what kind of things would trigger you to do so?

Tara: The kinds of issues that would involve this kind of work are pastoral issues. If I had any concerns, I would email the pastoral team so they can deal with it. It links to my role as a PT [personal tutor] where I might pick up on things like mood changes, clothes, things that they say to me or things they would say to other pupils. Maybe a change in their work. My job is to pick up on things and inform other people. What they do with it I am not sure. I suppose they would work with other people if needed to make sure that that child is ok and can come into school and work.

Interviewer: Is there any action you might have to take as a result of your pastoral work?

Tara: I don't know. I suppose I might have to talk to the pupil and let them know that I'm here if they want to talk. Beyond that I don't really know as it's my job to pick up on issues with pupils so other people can support them.

I had expected the action Tara described as having taken would be informed by knowledge of multi-agency work generated through prior engagement. Such work should have resulted in raw materials for Tara to notice and take action to, so that if similar circumstances were to arise in the future she would have the structures or a mental model of how the environment works already developed (Hill & Levenhagen, 1995), which could be utilised to drive current action. For example, when asked how her role touched on multi-agency principles in supporting a child, she described how her role is focused on ensuring a child can *"come into school and work,"* rather than the development of new roles and responsibilities such as working with other professionals to deal holistically with all aspects of children's development. Through reliance on previously defined structures, multi-agency work is placed within what interviewees defined as the pastoral aspect of teacher's work, which forms a limited part of their overall role. For example, Tara voiced how this aspect of her role involves identifying issues which are affecting a student's work before passing concerns on to someone else who will take action as she explained, *"it's my job to pick up on issues with pupils so other people can support them."*

The reliance on previously created structures around teacher's traditional role as subject matter specialists within the classroom (Mirel & Goldin, 2012), opposed to the development of new structures which include multi-agency work, acted as a constraint in how teachers enact multi-agency work. For example, Tara repeatedly drew back on her role in the classroom and explained how, *"beyond that I don't really know."* The result is a failure to notice environmental cues suggesting the need for change and a lack of awareness of both action taken beyond teacher's

academic role in the classroom and potential action that could be taken to provide holistic support for students which draws on multi-agency principles.

If teachers take action to create a more ordered environment (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014), the circumstances which stimulate such action point to teacher's understanding of their environment. For interviewees, this is when concerns about a student's academic progress are raised. Teachers' actions in light of concerns did not trigger collaboration but a limited co-existence with action surrounding information sharing between services. In other words, interviewee's responses to questions about multi-agency work pointed to them understanding this work as only being acted upon when issues touch on their role in securing student's academic performance, and their only role within multi-agency teams was to trigger information sharing, as pointed out by Tara as she explained her role in "*inform[ing] other people.*"

What I would have expected if teachers were engaging with policies in ways which were intended was reflection by interviewees upon how enactment of policies such as *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003) resulted in action within their daily practice. This should elicit discussion on the range of circumstances which might trigger multi-agency work and the resulting action. Based upon my experience within schools I am aware of action which may be taken by teachers as they engage with the *Every Child Matters* outcomes. For example, in ensuring that children are healthy teachers could have described teaching students about healthy eating and exercise and monitoring students to ensure that all are developing physically as expected. Narratives around staying safe would be likely to draw on child protection procedures for which there is a duty that all teachers are appropriately trained (DCSF, 2006). Enjoying and achieving involves monitoring progress as well as additional activities that children may engage with such as after school groups and trips. Behaviour and pupil engagement in school councils are common ways in which making a positive contribution could feature in schools (DfES, 2004a). Achieving economic well-being

could feature in discourse around work experience and citizenship. Instead of discussion around the plethora of action that could be undertaken within the remit of multi-agency work, teachers have shown limited awareness of any action taken beyond that which touches on their role as subject matter specialists and in ensuring student's academic performance.

In the same way as Currie and Brown (2003) found that who people think they are shapes what they enact, interviews suggested to me that teachers only engaged with policies in a limited manner helping them reproduce an environment which they can make sense of. In Currie and Brown's study of a hospital they found that middle manager's dissonance with government policy resulted in a range of counter narratives which placed limits on what they as managers enacted. This was illustrated by their reluctance to engage with concepts such as business planning and marketing, which was felt to highlight the executive manager's lack of understanding of what goes on within the hospital, and the '*paradigm shift*' (Currie & Brown, 2003:585) which was expected of them as managers which found dissonance with their ethos and background. As a result, they voiced how in order to engage with concepts driven by senior leaders and the government they needed to temper the message provided.

For teachers in my study, in a similar way to middle managers in Currie and Brown's 2003 study, the transference of their role, in this case from purely subject matter specialists to working collaboratively with others on a wider remit, also found dissonance with who they think they are, which limited the action that they took when confronted with change. In this way the product of teacher's action, a more ordered environment, is a product of who teachers think they are which for teachers in this study was defined by their role in student's performance opposed to being an active member of a multi-agency team.

**Constraints: “*Teachers do care but we have to make sure that kids get results*”**

Individuals create or enact an environment that will subsequently impinge on their activities (Abolafia & Kilff, 1988). In this way people play a key role in creating their environment. Weick (1998) observed that within this environment individuals often produce structures and constraints that were not there before they took action. As action becomes the raw materials from which sense is made (Weick, 2001), a lack of awareness of raw materials suggests limited action.

As we have seen in previous sections on pages 88-105, interviewees showed limited knowledge or a lack of awareness of knowledge gained of the new structures of multi-agency teams and therefore their role when taking action. When interviewees described their role within a multi-agency team and any action taken, they did so through the utilisation of previously created structures which they defined as being part of their pastoral role. The utilisation of previously defined role structures acts as a constraint to how multi-agency working policies are enacted as teachers take action using their pre-defined job roles, making sense retrospectively. So, rather than interpreting events and issues in school as concerns which should trigger multi-agency work, they interpreted concerns as belonging to the pastoral aspect of their role and triggered action which helped them create order of their world. This action involved passing on information so others could act to support children.

The use of the role title ‘pastoral’ is not a constraint in its own right as although the label used is constant, its meaning could have evolved. When interviewees were asked about what action they would take, what was seen consistently in the narratives from those six interviewees who entered into discussions around the nature of multi-agency work, was discussion which linked action back to their role as subject matter specialists in ensuring student’s achievement of academic results. This linking of action to previously defined roles is seen in the extract from the interview with Paul

below, where through his discussion around multi-agency work, he linked the action he would take back to academic achievement.

Interviewer: What is multi-agency work and how does it link to what you do?

Paul: Well multi-agency work goes back to the ECM [*Every Child Matters*] agenda. There were the five things weren't there? And I remember, I think maybe, going back two or three years now when I would plan a lesson, I would always have those there and I would write what I thought was going to be there. Staying safe, economic well-being and all those things and how those would relate to what we were doing in class and some of those were quite nice like quite pastoral things as well. But the stuff that I seemed to come across, and maybe this was just me filtering it out, but stuff in the media and stuff you get inspected on tends not to be pastoral but very academic target driven so I don't bother writing it in anymore even though when you read some of these Ofsted reports they tend to talk about student safety, behaviour and things like that. So yeah, maybe it's just me focusing on the things that I don't like when I hear these initiatives come out, the things like what about the fact that the students have worked safely in that practical, some of them haven't necessarily got all the concepts but they have completed it which for some of them is a big thing. I think it would be nice if they moved towards that side of things a little bit more and recognise that fair enough that Joe Bloggs can do it safely and to get an A\* at it whereas student B won't ever get an A\* but they carried out the activity safely, those kinds of things. I don't know [pause], ECM to me was all about where you had the child's well-being at heart and [pause] I don't know, trying to make sure they were making as much progress as safely as possible. Whereas I don't know, I feel there's a lot of things that I feel people, when they come into your lesson they could, they're obviously doing a whole list and there's more emphasis on grades and things like that. It's a shame that I don't think about it the same as I feel I am always having to react to situations rather than having a plan to fall back on.

Paul's response to my question about multi-agency work began with him linking such work to the *Every Child Matters* agenda (DfES, 2003) and "*pastoral things*" which formed part of his role, where he discussed how for him this meant that "*you had the child's well-being at the heart*" of

what teachers do. Despite the centrality of welfare to his understanding of his role he still, in explaining how welfare aspects of his role functioned, referred back to academic performance and his role in ensuring children *“were making as much progress as safely possible.”* Paul went on to describe how the centrality of students’ well-being had changed in more recent years resulting in him adopting an approach where he felt he was *“always having to react to situations rather than having a plan to fall back on.”* In order to get closer to how he situated welfare aspects of teaching with his understanding of his role, I asked him for his views on whether he considered the welfare aspect of his role, which he linked to the *Every Child Matters* agenda, to still be important. He replied:

Paul: Ermm [pause] Now this is where I am going to show my failings as I used to know more about it than I do now. I know that we have had some talks about it haven’t we? Was there a case that happened that instigated these five general principles that were implemented? I don’t know. I think it tends to be a reactionary measure to be fair as opposed to us looking at it and going ok let’s be, I don’t want to say more relaxed about it but let’s try and invest financially more money into the education system so we can afford to look at kids more individually. It seems to be an incident happens and then we write a set of rules for it and see if we can apply these for a short period of time and then we almost forget about it. I mean I never hear anything about ECM for the most part now from the government. Whenever you read anything such as the TES [Times Educational supplement], there doesn’t seem to be anything like that, which is a shame. In education that’s what it’s like. They come out with all these ideas and years later it’s forgotten and they come out with something else.

Paul cited frequent policy change as a reason for *Every Child Matters’* reactionary mode of implementation before its quick disappearance from the educational field, as he explained that policies are written when *“an incident happens and then we write a set of rules for it and see if we can apply these for a short period of time and then we almost forget about it.”*

I continued the interview by asking Paul if he believed policies such as *Every Child Matters* were needed to ensure teachers look at wider aspects of a child's welfare and if the values inscribed within policy remain central to teacher's roles.

Paul: I think as a general rule of thumb most teachers are conscious of that and are good doing that to be fair, and I'd hope that anybody going into the profession would think along those lines as well. I mean for me it was absolutely about, from a selfish point of view, what job can I do where I can interact with people and work with people on a daily basis in a people-based job and not just being in an office and working with something that's just not tangible. So, I'd hope people went into it on that basis. I think you would always meet people that don't unfortunately and they to me are the ones that have the most problems in the classroom. So, I think that's always there, I think the government for some reason always have to put all these initiatives in place, I don't know. It's a bit like politics, isn't it? They come along and look at what the last government did and say right, what else do we need to do? But no, I don't know, coming back to that *Every Child Matters* thing, I liked that at the time, still do but I never think about it so much just because after a few years doing it that I am considering all those things. So, I don't know, I think *Every Child Matters* is important as we need to care but rather than it being part of everything we do, its limited to our roles as tutors, the pastoral part. Nowadays everything links back to results so teachers do care but we have to make sure that kids get results. It's a shame really.

Paul gave the most in-depth discussion into multi-agency work out of all the interviewees. He came across as passionate about the children he works with and in agreement with the principles of policies such as *Every Child Matters* which resulted, in his view, a more caring profession. He discussed how the changes resulting from the *Every Child Matters* agenda have resulted in constraints linked to his interpretation of multi-agency work as being part of his pre-defined pastoral role as he explained that "*rather than it being part of everything we do, its limited to our roles as tutors.*" At this point in the interview he became quieter and less ardent in his speech and body language as he described how the results agenda, where schools are expected to achieve



government defined benchmarks (Pearson, 2015), had constrained what he does and how for him this is *"a shame."* Weick (1998) observed that the action people take produces structures and constraints that were not there before they took action. Paul failed to recognise his role in producing constraints and instead described how they operated as a result of politics as one government will *"look at what the last government did and say right, what else do we need to do?"*

Constraints can be first viewed in the interview with Paul where he linked multi-agency work with pastoral aspects of his role. The reliance on previous structures when defining roles brackets out raw data which does not fit within these structures and becomes taken for granted, forming normative expectations of teacher's role (Weber & Glynn, 2006). Paul drew on this process of bracketing where he questioned whether, *"this was just me filtering it out."* As such, roles become taken for granted enabling the justification of what is enacted (Weick, 2001). The role of constraints in the process of enactment was seen in the experiences of musicians in jazz orchestras in a research study carried out by Gilfillan and Keith (1973). The musicians were given scripts written by three composers whose credibility was either high or low. Musicians relied on previously formed beliefs about the credibility of the composers, bracketing out data regarding the current compositions. These previously formed structures enabled the justifications of action with less effort being made when performing scripts written by low creditability composers. The musicians justified this by voicing their beliefs that these scripts were of lower quality resulting in more errors, difficulties in remembering the tune and eventually the abandonment of attempts to make sense of it.

Paul described the process of bracketing out and justification of roles as his filtering out of aspects of his role which no longer fits with his understanding of what constitutes the pastoral. The academic side of teachers' roles as subject matter specialists form teacher's previously developed

structures. Anything else which teachers are expected to do is separated in the filtering/bracketing process. In the same way that musicians in Gilfillan and Keith's (1973) study relied on previously developed beliefs, teachers relied on previous beliefs about their role as teachers. Those roles which were less credible were filtered out, so in order to engage with aspects of their role, such as the pastoral, which could incorporate multi-agency work, these aspects were linked to previous beliefs which for teachers in this study is the academic side of teachers' work.

This bracketing process involves cognitive work where beliefs and structures become transformed into a network of sequences or a causal map depicting how events are causally related and is retained in minds, which allow for them to be superimposed on the flow of experience (Weick, 2001). For Paul, what he describes as multi-agency work is now causally related to *"make[ing] sure that kids get results."* When presented with situations which should elicit enactment of multi-agency work, Paul lacked the causal maps which relate experiences and would allow for understanding to be gained, so that action is carried out in a reactive manner and constrained by previous structures which link to performance. This placed limits to how multi-agency work was enacted.

### **Why teachers fail to notice raw materials? *"We do our bit and they do theirs"***

As suggested earlier in this chapter, teachers in this study did not notice the range of raw materials present in their environment suggesting the need for multi-agency work. When professional boundaries dissolve, traditions become less prescriptive and organisations become less structured (Weick, 2001). Traditional career scripts become less suitable as guides for action leading people to pursue learning in order to cope with ambiguity (Weick, 2001). Multi-agency teams aim to reduce the boundaries of professional's work (Atkinson et al, 2007), so teachers' roles are no longer narrowly focused on the academic achievement of children but widened to

include a greater duty in ensuring the welfare of all children they come into contact with (Parton, 2009).

In order to widen teachers' roles beyond isolated work within the classroom, professional boundaries need to be loosened allowing workers greater flexibility (Atkinson et al, 2007). The loosening of boundaries provides workers with fewer salient guides for action which instead can be found elsewhere (Weick, 2001). Weick, in his 1979 book on the social psychology of organizing, described how people make sense of uncertainty through a process of collective trial and error imposing new structures from the bottom up. This collective process results in people enacting and sustaining images of their new reality that justify what they are doing collectively (Weick, 2001).

Dissolving the boundaries of teachers' work should result in the learning needed to help teachers cope with ambiguity generated from engagement in the emerging organisation of a multi-agency team and develop new structures leading them to enact multi-agency ways of working. The first step of this process being the recognition of environmental cues (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014) suggesting the need for change. What was evident from the previous sections of this chapter (pages 88-105) was that interviewees failed to notice environmental cues, for example, the plethora of policy documents setting out the need for collaborative work.

With interviewees not noticing cues within the environment, the loosening of professional boundaries did not seem to me to have occurred, evident through interviewee's responses as they continued to use previously defined roles and structures and linked these to their role as subject matter specialists aimed at securing children's academic results. The belief that teachers do their bit and other professionals have different structures to work within was evident in the

dialogue from Kate, Jean, Hayley, Dianne, Sam, Caroline and Ivy as they cited professional boundaries as a reason for lack of engagement with multi-agency teams.

Following on from the extract from Ivy on pages 106-108, where she discussed her perceptions of aspects of her role which touched on multi-agency work, I continued the interview by asking her to describe her understanding of her role and how this linked to other professionals and their role within multi-agency teams. The extract below begins with me asking her if she felt there was any cross-over between teachers' roles and those of non-educational professionals:

Ivy: Well I suppose we both work with children. But beyond that I don't think so. We do our bit and they do theirs.

Interviewer: What do you mean we do our bit? How is this different to what other professionals do?

Ivy: We are there to educate children and get them the results they need. Other professionals don't do that. They have different roles such as looking at their health or welfare. That's not what we do.

Interviewer: Do you think that teachers sometimes need to do part of this role as well?

Ivy: Not really. I know we have to highlight issues but that's it as far as I know. We can talk to children and make sure they are ok to go and learn in classrooms.

Interviewer: What about if you had a child with complex issues going on outside of school which were affecting their ability to learn? Do you see a role working with others then?

Ivy: No. As a teacher what can I do to support them? It's not my job and I have to respect the professional boundaries that are in place between professionals. I wouldn't like it if someone interfered with what I was doing in my classroom and the same goes for this. It's someone else's role to work with these issues, I don't know perhaps a social worker. I might talk to the student as part of my pastoral role but that's as far as it would go.

Interviewer: Would it be better if our roles overlapped with other professionals so we could support children on these wider issues?

Ivy: I don't see why. It's not what we do is it? It would take us away from our role in the classroom. At the end of the day that's how we get judged isn't it. So, if we are expected to do other people's roles as well, that isn't going to look good, then we would have our managers questioning our ability to do our job.

Ivy had clear boundaries to her work as a teacher with the line being drawn at education in order to "*get them [children] the results they need.*" She did not notice the range of cues presented suggesting the need for boundaries to be widened even when prompted through use of examples which should have elicited multi-agency work. Her description of how she understands the structure of her role points to how she takes action, which remained focused on her role "*to educate children.*" This is similar to the conclusions drawn by Brown et al (2008) in their study of the games firm CGS. Narratives of key workers at the firm found that the micro-stories individuals told reproduced the macro-social order, assigned meaning to history and set the future trajectory of the organisation. For example, the narratives analysed served to establish and re-establish CGS as a '*project-centred, productive entity in the computer games world*' (Brown et al, 2008:21). Similar to Brown et al's (2008) research, my study found that it was the stories that interviewees told around their role with results that set the meaning for the organisation. The stories told around multi-agency work did not tell of widened professional boundaries but of teachers' role in the classroom sustaining their image of reality around performance.

For individuals to enact multi-agency work they need micro-stories told which set the organisational meaning, reconciling them with the structures created which incorporate multi-agency principles and reproduce the macro-order (Brown et al, 2008). Yet interviews suggested that this is missing with regards to multi-agency work. There is no evidence of learning and the re-drawing of professional boundaries during interviews in response to the requirement for teachers to work with professionals external to education, as Ivy was clear that "*we [teachers] do our bit*

*and they do theirs.*” Instead of learning to cope with the ambiguity generated when thrust into new world of multi-agency work, when presented with such situations Ivy drew on previous structures including pastoral structures developed in conjunction with teacher’s role in ensuring student’s academic performance.

The other six interviewees expressed similar views clearly stating that other professionals do their bit leaving them to get on with the teaching part. The remaining three interviewees (Tara, Jenny and Paul) did not explicitly draw on the boundaries of teachers’ work when asked about their role in multi-agency teams, however, all three showed no evidence of learning as a result of action to cope with ambiguity when confronted with multi-agency work.

## **Conclusion**

Enactment is a process bringing together attention and action (Smircich & Stubbart, 1985). Attention is needed in order to notice the raw materials in the environment (Weick et al, 2005) following the policy expectation that teachers engage with multi-agency work (DfES, 2003). Following attention, action should aim to reduce equivocality (Weick, 1979). Interviewees seemed to possess limited knowledge of multi-agency work or possible action, with little in the way of noticing of the raw materials in their environment setting out the need for multi-agency ways of working, including multi-agency policies such as *Every Child Matters*. For example, even when prompted around their role within safeguarding agendas, interviewees failed to notice the environmental cues resulting from such work.

Sensemaking is done retrospectively, so events which had previously been made sense of allow the perception of events in the environment to pay attention to (Luttenberg et al, 2009). When noticed stimuli are placed into mental frameworks that make sense of the stimuli (Goleman, 1985). The lack of retrospection when asked questions about multi-agency work suggested that

previous multi-agency activities had not been noticed in such a way that interviewees had paid attention to them, limiting the development of a mental framework which would allow for the perception of future events.

Teachers enact aspects of their role which confirms their understanding of what it means to be a teacher (Currie & Brown, 2003). When questioned about their role in multi-agency work, interviewees told stories about their pastoral role which they linked back to their role in ensuring their student's academic performance. The linking of multi-agency work with academic performance shows how individuals favour plausibility over accuracy (Currie & Brown, 2003), as interviewees took the most plausible explanation of the role of such work.

The linking of multi-agency work to teachers' role in academic achievement acts as a constraint to future action. Constraints operated as interviewees bracketed out raw data which did not fit with previously developed structures focused on their role in helping students achieve, as who people think they are shapes what they enact (Currie & Brown, 2003). This limited the cognitive work needed to cope with the ambiguity of multi-agency work and production of causal maps which can be used to predict and respond to future events. As a result, teachers only enacted the aspects of multi-agency working policies which reaffirmed their understanding of what it is to be a teacher. This led to a limited role within multi-agency work as teachers described how they co-existed with other professionals rather than taking on a fully collaborative role, showing that policies are only enacted in ways limited by the teachers themselves.

## 5.2 How Does Teacher Professional Identity Affect Engagement with Such Multi-Agency

### Agendas as *Every Child Matters*?

Literature suggests that identity is multi-faceted (Cooper & Olson, 1996), and activation of each facet is premised on a hierarchy of prominence with those identities perceived to be most important taking precedence over others (Stryker & Burke, 2006). By uncovering which aspects of teacher identity take prominence allows those aspects which construe a sense of belonging to teaching to be known and an understanding of whether this affects engagement with multi-agency agendas such as *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003).

Identity suggests a kind of person within a particular context (Gee, 2001). Interviewee's talk around their identity finds agreement with this view in that interviewees discussed how teachers need a specific identity to enable them to fulfil their role or how through the process of '*becoming a teacher means that an individual must adopt an identity as such*' (Danielewicz, 2001:9).

Interviewee's identity developed within their organisation increasing the possibility that they will develop the same shared beliefs and values, leading to a collective understanding of their role and professional knowledge.

Teachers within this study shared a similar professional identity to the extent that they used the same identity labels and shared meanings. For the majority of those interviewed their core belief about themselves as teachers involved the identity label "*educator*." Interviews initially were stilted and little discussion was had beyond the belief of "*educator*" as interviewees were asked to describe their understandings of teachers' role. I interpreted this lack of discussion as difficulty articulating the meaning behind this label which suggested to me that the label is taken for granted being what teachers do every day. Following much prompting interviewees expressed their understanding of what the label meant to them, leading to a shared understanding of



teachers' core role in imparting specialist subject knowledge in order for students to gain academic results.

Whilst all ten interviewees touched on wider roles, which for some linked to multi-agency work, self-imposed constraints operated as interviewee's core belief was that teachers' work is limited to their role as subject matter specialists. Whilst teachers expressed that they care and wish to engage with wider aspects of their work, they discussed that for them action is limited to areas they believe are central to their identity, imparting subject knowledge, before they will fully engage with a role.

An important facet when engaging with new ways of working is paying attention to environmental cues suggesting the need for change (Humphreys & Brown, 2002). There are many cues within schools as to the importance of multi-agency work, not least from the increased role teachers have to play when safeguarding students. Nine of the ten interviewees failed to notice any environmental cues resulting from the publication of multi-agency working policies in schools. For example, *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DFE, 2016) sets out the statutory requirement that all school staff receive child protection training at least annually and be aware of Early Help procedures which offer a multi-agency approach to supporting children.

It seemed to me that teachers failed to notice environmental cues which threatened their belief about what it means to be a teacher as they did not discuss how cues, including those presented during interview, had affected them in their day-to-day practice. What this lack of noticing suggested was that teachers make-sense of events in such a way which confirms their understanding of their identity. As teachers showed that their identity is focused around the belief of the centrality of students' academic performance, they did not pay attention to wider non-academic cues resulting from the implementation of multi-agency working policies. As a

consequence of teachers' strong professional identity, interviewees discounted any data contrary to this and rejected any new conceptualisations of their identity which could have included multi-agency work.

### **Teachers' Professional Identity: "*To educate children*"**

My first research question dealt with how teachers enact multi-agency working policies such as *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003). What they choose to enact is dependent on who they think they are or their professional identity as individuals develop theories of action about themselves (McCutcheon, 1992). Individuals take action to enact a more ordered environment, allowing them to gain some sense of what is happening (Weick, 2001). As they gain sense, they build narrative accounts (Weick, 1995). Exploring teacher's conceptions of their identity through narratives told during interview provided insight into who interviewees think they are within the context of their school and how they make sense of multi-agency work.

During the initial stage of interviews participants were asked to describe their understanding of teachers' role and their identity beliefs, leading to an understanding of who they think they are. Despite this forming the first section of the interview, all teachers interviewed seemed relaxed and willing to engage prior to this. Therefore, I was hoping that this would extend to the interview questions and participants would feel a willingness to be open and engage in dialogue. Instead interviewees gave only limited answers when asked to expand on aspects of their identity and repeatedly drew on normative statements. Such limited accounts were seen in the narratives from Jean, Tara, Jenny, Sam, Caroline and Ivy, with the term "*educate*" used most frequently in defining what teachers do.

I had expected interviewees to be willing to engage in discussions around the meaning of identity roles, being what they engage with and enact daily. Instead there was a lack of dialogue around

teacher identity as interviewees seemed reluctant to expand upon meanings for the labels used to describe their role. An example of the seeming reluctance to structure narratives with articulated understandings of their role was seen in the extract from Jean below. Jean instinctively drew on the word “*educating*” when defining her role with frequent pauses punctuating her talk as she seemed struggled to articulate her understanding beyond this label. Despite appearing relaxed at the start of the process, the initial question regarding her role resulted in noticeable changes in behaviour which gave the impression that she was not at ease with the questioning. For example, she looked tense, started to fidget in her seat and appeared to find difficulty describing her role with frequent pauses and the use of “*ermm*” at the start of each section. As a teacher functioning everyday within a school, Jean will be enacting her identity. However, the lack of discussion around what her identity beyond “*educating*” meant for her, left me with the impression that for Jean this has not been consciously reflected on since her days training to teach:

Interviewer: Can you describe your role as a teacher?

Jean: Ermm, [pause] educating obviously, ermm [pause] I haven’t actually thought about this since my PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education). It’s the kind of thing you do every day though. I suppose being a disciplinarian. [pause] Some kids need discipline as they don’t get it at home. They need that structure.

Interviewer: What kind of thing do you do every day?

Jean: [pause] Just educating children in our classes. [pause] Teaching.

Interviewer: What about your beliefs as a teacher? What do you think is important for all teachers?

Jean: I suppose to want the best for all children. We have to believe we can make a difference so they can achieve what they need.

The lack of fluency within the conversation left me feeling disconcerted. Whilst it is understandable at the start of the interview that Jean did not go into depth, I had felt that further probing should have revealed greater self-knowledge of her identity and an ability to structure

her discourse around the roles which she fulfils on a daily basis. What this stilted discussion suggested to me thus far was that Jean had a clear identity label, based around the word “*educator*,” which she used to define what she does.

For Corley and Gioia, in their 2004 study of the identity changes that took place following a company spin-off, identity labels are important as they can be used to define who people think they are. As the new company emerged, so did new labels after individuals attempted to resolve confusion generated from changing organisational conditions. In a similar way, teacher identity is constantly shifting as it is subject to ongoing effects of past experiences and the context in which teachers work (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2010). However, it may not be that the identity labels themselves change as often identity labels remain fixed and instead the meanings of those labels change (Gioia et al, 2000). For six of the teachers in the study, including Jean, the role identity of being a teacher means being an “*educator*” and “*educating children*” (Jean). However, as Gioia et al (2000) point out, this label could take on a variety of meanings. Therefore, I considered it vital to try to reach an understanding of what encompasses teacher identity by exploring in interviews the permanency of labels and the meaning beyond labels.

The seeming reluctance by Jean, as with other interviewees, to move beyond labels and expand on meaning led me to question the stability of identity labels used as uncertainty within context could account for a lack of confidence during discussion. When roles change individuals can adapt through the process of identity customisation (Pratt et al, 2006), or in other words identity labels or meanings will adapt to an individual’s new situated demands. The seeming reluctance of Jean to expand on the meaning behind her label suggested to me uncertainty as to what that label means in today’s context. As pointed out in literature, teachers in the UK are experiencing rapid policy change which results in transitory work conditions (Connolly & James, 2014). Jean refers to these conditions as she continued with her discussion around her role stating that “*things in*

*education are always changing.*" I continued the interview aiming to explore whether the state of flux experienced by teachers within their context affected the stability of Jean's identity label. I asked Jean to explain her previous comment regarding her belief that as a teacher she "*wants the best for children,*" so that they "*can achieve what they need.*" She replied:

Jean: We educate them so they can achieve the best exam results they can. So, they get the best job that they are capable of.

Interviewer: So, is the achievement of academic results for you central to what teachers do?

Jean: Yes.

Interviewer: Will this always to be the case or could this change?

Jean: I don't think so. Things in education are always changing. You know the government decides one-minute teachers are doing this and then they change their minds so it's important we know who we are.

Interviewer: So, do you believe those in government may think teachers do something different to what you think?

Jean: [pause] ermm. I don't know. [pause] So much changes in schools that it's hard to know what people want from us. It's important to stick to our core role.

Interviewer: Which is?

Jean: Education.

Interviewer: Do you think that what is important to teachers has changed?

Jean: I don't know. We are educators so we know what our role is, but what the government wants does seem to change [pause], so I don't know.

Interviewer: What does this label 'educator' mean to you?

Jean: [pause] I'm not sure as so much has changed in schools over the last few years.

Interviewer: But if you were to describe to someone what this means what would you say?

Jean: [pause] To educate children. Teach them what they need to know to pass exams.

Interviewer: Has this label changed over recent years?

Jean: No, [pause] I don't think so. [pause]

Interviewer: What is teacher's role now after all this change?

Jean: Teacher's role has always been to educate students.

Jean seemed uncertain when discussing the identity labels used in schools as she explained that she does not know whether labels have changed, and seemed reluctant to expand on what her identity label meant to her. Uncertainty regarding identity label meanings resulted in Jean falling back on pre-defined identity labels as she explained, "*we are educators...what the government wants does seem to change, so I don't know.*" As a result, Jean described how, "*it's important to stick to our [her] core role*" which is "*education*" and to "*educate students.*" The falling back on a predefined identity label suggested to me that in times of change, when professional requirements are less certain, previously formed beliefs which provide a sense of stability and belonging become fixed and therefore difficult to change.

When questioning Jean about her role in school, my perception was that she seemed insecure as dialogue moved onto discussion around changes in schools. For example, as talk touched on topics surrounding change her replies became more limited with more single word answers than in other sections of the interview, and greater hesitation and pauses punctuating her speech. As we moved onto talk around what she felt the government wants from her as a teacher, her tone and volume of voice changed and she became quieter and more hesitant in her speak. As soon as she got back to her label "*educate,*" she answered questions more forcibly and without pause. These perceived changes suggested to me that when Jean used a fixed and secure identity label, she gained confidence in a world which otherwise would be unclear and confusing.

In the process of change, such as when teachers' roles are changing as a result of government policy, ambiguity is generated (Corley & Gioia, 2004). During such times resolving the problem of who we are becomes the salient issue (Corley & Gioia, 2004). Interviewees faced ambiguity regarding their roles and expectations as they confronted multi-agency work. For example, in the

extract from the interview with Jean she described how *"it's hard to know what people want from us."* Discrepancies between who teachers believe they are and expectations of others, for example, other professionals in multi-agency meetings, could trigger sensemaking (Foreman & Whetten, 2002), which in turn could result in identity change (Corley & Gioia, 2004). What interviews have suggested is that despite changing conditions, for example, the expectation that teachers attend multi-agency meetings, sensemaking around multi-agency work did not occur and identity labels and meanings held firm as Jean described how despite government led changes, her identity label held as *"teachers' role has always been to educate students."*

In contrast to my study of multi-agency work, Corley and Gioia's 2004 study of the company Biokinetic found that organisational change resulted in fluidity of both identity labels and meanings for organisational members. Prior to change efforts organisational members expressed clear identity labels including *'industry founder'* and *'aggressive competitor'* (Corley & Gioia, 2004:186). Members felt that clarity regarding their identity labels was advantageous as they entered a period of change. Following a period of organisational change member's identity labels adapted and previous labels were downplayed with new labels such as *'innovator'* (Corley & Gioia, 2004:195) being used. This downplaying of previous identity labels was not seen by teachers in my study as, despite change in the form of increased requirements to engage with multi-agency work since *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003), the label *"educator"* and its meaning held.

The reliance on a consistent identity label, even if the meaning of this label is uncertain, can result in that label becoming taken-for-granted (Corley & Gioia, 2003), being what individuals do every day without the need for conscious reflection. Jean, in the extract above, described the changing educational context and her struggle to make sense of the changing demands. The use of a consistent identity label in a turbulent environment provides a coherent sense of identity allowing

stability to emerge (Corley & Gioia, 2004). My perceptions of Jean on pages 135-136 find consonance with Corley and Gioia's (2004) findings as Jean seemed to me to possess a greater level of confidence when she described her previously developed identity label of "*educator*."

Maitlis and Christianson in their 2014 review of sensemaking literature described how Individuals take action in order to make-sense of their situation which in turn enacts the environment they seek to understand. In other words, the action people take is to permit the prediction and comprehension of their environment. When confronted with changing role demands, such as that felt by Jean as she described how, "*things in education are always changing*," the action that teachers take will permit them to make sense of what is happening (Weick, 2001), or when uncertain of their role, they will enact the aspects of their role which allow them to make sense of what is happening to them. For six of the interviewees in the study this action is based around the role of educator.

In order to get closer to how teachers engage with multi-agency work, I needed to explore the meaning behind the label "*educator*." This was not as easy as I initially thought. The seeming reluctance of interviewees to move beyond this label meant that a high level of prompting was needed to develop an accurate description of the meaning teachers placed on the label of "*educator*." Probing included questions around what tasks defined a typical working day enabling interviewees to draw on different aspects of their work with that cited most frequently likely being of greatest value within their role. Through the use of probes, I continued the interview with Jean:

Interviewer: Can you describe the roles you undertake every day? In other words, what you do and why you do it?

Jean: Well it's difficult for me as I am quite new to it. We are just there to educate children. To make sure that they are taught what they need to pass their exams. The rest of it I haven't thought



about since I was studying but being a teacher means you have to think about educating in terms of subject content as it's the exam side which we get judged upon through Ofsted and league tables. Even in school now we have to account for every grade that pupils gain. If pupils don't achieve the results that they expect then it reflects poorly on us as teachers. If we want to progress in our careers, we need to be seen to be doing our job well which nowadays means making sure kids pass exams.

Interviewer: So, what does this mean for what you do every day?

Jean: Well I suppose most of what I do is to make sure I fulfil my role as an educator. So, I spend my time planning my lessons and teaching so that pupils are able to get the exam results that they and the school need.

Towards the end of this section Jean seemed more relaxed when describing her role and the depth of dialogue was far greater than earlier in the interview. She continued to fall back her core identity label as she described having to "*fulfil my role as an educator.*" In descriptions of what this meant for her she spoke with what seemed to me as increasing confidence through more relaxed facial expressions, greater eye contact and increased emphasis on specific words such as, "*judged upon,*" and "*every grade,*" reinforcing the strength of meaning behind the identity label "*educator,*" which for this interviewee is based around teaching children what they need to know to pass exams.

The prioritisation of academic targets was seen in narratives around identity meanings from all interviewees. For example, Caroline voiced similar meanings of the identity label "*educator*":

Interviewer: Can you describe teacher's role?

Caroline: Right well we need to, obviously it's to educate the children and ermm [pause].

Interviewer: What do you mean by educate? What do you have to do to ensure you educate children?

Caroline: [pause] Well, I make them realise what they need to do to reach the targets they need to reach and how they can actually reach those targets and show them the way they can do it in order to improve. [pause] Education is the most important part of teaching for me, so to give them encouragement in what they do and a real love of what they do as well, to really really give them enjoyment in that subject. So, enjoyment and show them what they need to be able to achieve.

Interviewer: So, you have described the role of educator as being based around achievement of targets. Do you agree that this forms the main part of what you do?

Caroline: Yes. We have to make sure kids meet targets. So, every day I will plan into my teaching ways of showing children what they need to do. But I also try and encourage them so when I mark work or feedback, I am trying to make sure that they feel that they can achieve.

Interviewer: You mention marking and feedback. Can you describe the things you have to do each day?

Caroline: Just educate. [pause] To do whatever we need to do in order to get children the grades they need.

Similar to Jean from pages 133-136 and 138-139, the lack of detailed response or explanation of roles enacted beyond simple statements such as, *“make sure kids meet targets,”* and, *“mark work or feedback,”*, left me with the impression that Caroline was reluctant to describe in depth what her role as a teacher entailed and the meaning behind the label *“educator.”* Caroline’s instinctive drawing on the term *“educate”*, both at the start and end of the extract above, suggested to me that this is at the core of teaching being what Caroline drew back on when pressed about who she believes she is as a teacher.

All interviewees responded in a similar manner describing their core identity belief as being to *“educate students”* (Sam), prioritising their role in ensuring that students *“develop academically”* (Jenny). Although four of the interviewees (Kate, Hayley, Dianne and Paul) did not specifically draw on the term *“educator,”* they described teachers’ roles using similar language, for example,

*“getting the exam results for students that they need”* (Hayley) through *“imparting knowledge”* (Dianne). The prioritisation of academic targets within teacher’s talk around identity functioned regardless of each teacher’s individual position within the profession and knowledge of the practicalities of everyday work. The continued focus on teachers’ academic orientation suggests that for teachers it is their belief about themselves as educators which formed a stable identity label, providing teachers with a coherent sense of who they are. The academic orientation of interviewees finds consonance with literature which finds that teachers favour the perception of their role as subject matter specialists and intellectual leaders (Melville, 2010).

So far, the interviews have allowed a sense to be gained of what action teachers take each day. It is this action which people take which enacts the environment they seek to understand (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014), thereby allowing sense to be gained from the situation. The discussions entered into thus far with participants highlights a sense of uncertainty in teachers’ environment, resulting in a struggle to expand on meanings of their identity labels. For example, Jean (see page 135) described how she is *“not sure”* of the meaning of her core identity belief of educator *“as so much has changed in schools over the last few years.”* Interviewees resolved this struggle through falling back on traditional conceptions of teachers being educators whose role is to enable students to pass exams (Mirel & Goldin, 2012). However, school environments are more complex than is reflected through the use and meaning of these traditional identity labels. For example, teachers are now expected to engage with multi-agency teams as part of their everyday role (DFE, 2016), dealing with complex social issues. In order to get closer to how teachers engage with multi-agency I needed to gain an understanding of if multi-agency work functions within teachers’ identity.

The interviews continued with further questioning around what teacher's role entails. An extract from the interview with Jean is below where she describes the wider aspects of her role which she defines as being a "*social worker*":

Interviewer: Does your role extend to wider aspects of work beyond meeting academic targets?

Jean: Yes, we do have to support children on wider issues. Ermm [pause] it's hard because I never saw teachers having to deal with those kinds of aspects. Ermm [pause] I should imagine there's more awareness of having to, I suppose since ECM [*Every Child Matters*] was implemented, there is more awareness of those sorts of aspects.

Interviewer: What do you mean those sorts of aspects?

Jean: I never realised that teachers spent so much time dealing with issues other than education such as looking at families and whether children are safe outside of school.

Interviewer: So, you have to pick up a lot more things?

Jean: Yeah.

Interviewer: What kind of things do you have to do as part of this role?

Jean: [pause] I have to identify if children are well and happy. So, if there are any issues within homes or they don't look well or aren't safe.

Interviewer: What happens when you have identified issues with a child?

Jean: Ermm [pause] I pass it on to the person in charge.

Interviewer: What happens next?

Jean: Well I suppose different people may come in and work with that child or we as a school may have to support them.

Interviewer: In what way would the school have to support them?

Jean: Well, [pause] we may have to talk to families and sort out their issues or help clothe the child and generally look after them.

Interviewer: How would you define this part of your role?

Jean: I suppose you could say we are like social workers as we have to do their role.

What was apparent to me here was the lack of fluency within the conversation as Jean hesitated as she spoke with pauses frequenting her speech and the need for numerous prompts in order to encourage Jean to expand on her description of the wider aspects of her role. Jean used short generic comments such as, *“more awareness of those sorts of aspects,”* and, *“pass it on,”* when describing her role beyond the classroom. I was expecting much greater dialogue and inclusion of specific roles and tasks which she performs and has performed on a frequent basis when she has engaged with multi-agency work, including the attendance of meetings with professionals from outside of education.

What is different between Jean’s narrative above and that of Caroline on pages 139-140, is that despite extensive prompting Jean still seemed reluctant to expand on her description of action she would take to fulfil wider aspects of her role which link to multi-agency policies. Following questioning about what Jean described as *“support[ing] children on wider issues,”* when asked for how she defines these wider aspects Jean used the label *“social worker”* rather than using an identity label of her own. The lack of definition for the meaning of this wider work beyond the classroom and of lack of identity label, left me unclear as to what Jean has previously enacted in her everyday practice in order to meet the requirements of multi-agency work.

A similar study by Robinson et al (2005) of teacher’s identities within multi-agency teams, found that teachers faced dilemmas reconciling new identities formed through immersion in multi-agency teams with their past identities, values and specialist expertise. They found that identities come into play when values are problematised. Dissonance experienced by teachers in the study connected to underlying contradictions between individual’s identity-bound expectations, values and understandings.

Similar to Robinson et al's (2005) study where professionals within a multi-agency team felt that school-based professionals were often unable to fully engage with roles outside of the achievement of academic targets, teachers in this study found difficulty moving beyond their previous identity labels as they held onto their beliefs and specialist expertise. It was apparent to me through interviewee's dialogue that they felt contradictions between what they expected as educators and the expectations resulting from the reality of multi-agency work, for example, Jean as describes how she *"never realised that teachers spent so much time dealing with issues other than education."*

Differences between the findings of this study and those of Robinson et al's (2005) stemmed from differences in each studies location and how teachers were immersed within multi-agency work. Unlike my school-based study where teachers engage with multi-agency work on a case-by-case basis, teachers in Robinson et al's study were based in a multi-agency team which engaged with schools where there were children who were, for example, at risk of permanent exclusion. Whilst teams in Robinson et al's study involved teachers who had prior experience of working within classrooms, the removal of educational professionals from the school environment to work as part of the multi-agency team resulted in far more frequent engagement with non-educational professionals and meant that their identities were tied up more strongly with multi-agency work than teachers in this study.

Jean's use of language can be used to indicate how closely her identity is tied to a multi-agency team. When describing other aspects of her role, Jean's choice of language suggested to me that although she is aware of wider non-educational aspects of teachers' roles she has invested little in the process of cognitive reflection where raw experiences, such as involvement within a multi-agency team, are shaped and interpreted (Weick, 2001). For example, I argue that the way that she used the identity labels of other professionals such as where she says, *"we are like social*

*workers,*” shows that she has yet to interpret wider aspects of her work forming an understanding of how this links to her role as a teacher. It is this cognitive work which will lead to embodiment of roles (Weick, 1975) within her own understanding of her identity.

The lack of cognitive work in labelling aspects of teachers’ roles which involved multi-agency work was not just seen in Jean’s narrative but was common to all ten interviewees. None were able to describe the identity label or meaning behind such work despite interviewees making up a representative sample of teachers from within school with a range of years of practice and experience working with students and other professionals on multi-agency teams. Cognitive work is vital to the embodiment of multi-agency work within teachers’ professional identity as, according to Weick (1975), it is through such which allows different events to be linked transforming them into a causal map providing a framework for future action. What was clear to me throughout this first phase of interviews is that interviewees lacked interpretation of their experiences of multi-agency work and without this cognitive work the potential for engagement with multi-agency work was limited.

### **Why does Teacher Professional Identity Limit Engagement with Multi-Agency Work? *“It’s not what we do as teachers”***

As identity develops people develop a series of beliefs or theories of action about themselves (McCutcheon, 1992). From the perspective of Weick’s sensemaking theory, it is these beliefs that shape each individual’s interpretation of their environment through previous cognitive work (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2005). In other words, beliefs within the identity become the lens through which experiences are noticed or not. What we have seen so far is that teachers interviewed lacked the cognitive meaning-making processes when it came to interpretations of multi-agency work, illustrated in difficulties reflecting on previous engagement with multi-agency teams.

In order to explore interviewee's difficulties linking prior engagement with their current beliefs, I needed interview time to explore individual teacher's beliefs which formed part of their identity and if these beliefs impacted on their role within multi-agency teams. I needed to explore further why events within their environment, such as the publication of multi-agency working policies such as *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003), had not seemed to have been transformed into a causal map which could have been used as a framework for future action. I asked all interviewees questions regarding their beliefs around multi-agency work and how these linked to their beliefs about themselves as teachers. Kate, Jean, Hayley, Jenny, Paul and Ivy directly linked multi-agency work to their pastoral role in school whilst the remaining four interviewees discussed the role of pastoral duties even if not explicitly linking it to multi-agency work. As Currie and Brown (2003) note in their study of middle and senior leaders within a UK hospital, who people are in their context shapes what they enact and how they interpret events. Leading from this, if teachers hold beliefs regarding themselves as teachers which include pastoral roles, this belief will in turn shape what they interpret and enact (Currie & Brown, 2003). As Currie and Brown (2003) have shown, beliefs are important so I needed to find out the extent to which teacher's beliefs about other aspects of their role extended to multi-agency work.

Pastoral beliefs are discussed by Jenny in the extract below. I asked her about what beliefs she considered to be important to teachers and how these linked to her daily practice. She replied:

Jenny: I think all teachers should care. I suppose you could say that this is the other aspect of teaching, the more pastoral side of it, of being there to support [pause] ermm pupils not just in terms of in class but also in terms of any other issues that arise, so whether that's through just being there as a PT [personal tutor] or subject teacher as well.

Interviewer: Can you explain what being a PT is and the importance you place on this role?

Jenny: A PT is what we call personal tutors. It's the more pastoral role where pupils come once a day and we have time to talk to them, discussing issues that may be bothering them. Although as teachers we have to constantly think about the academic side of things, the PT role is just as



important. It's hard to explain all the things we do as we just do it. We just deal with anything that comes up. [pause] Caring, I suppose it's there in everything that we do.

In the extract above it is clear that to Jenny caring is important in teaching with clear use of statements such as, "*all teachers should care,*" and, "*it's there in everything that we do.*" What is less clear is how she engages with this aspect of her role and the centrality of this belief as she hadn't thus far gone beyond "*talk to pupils*" in descriptions of how this belief functions. If the belief of caring was found to be at the core of teachers' professional identity then it would provide an understanding of how individuals understand their work and in turn how they respond to events such as multi-agency work. For example, if an event touched on a teacher's desire to care, their identity would shape how this event was interpreted in such a way that they would be more able to make of sense of what is expected of them and enact the key principles of the event within their practice.

In order to ascertain how central caring is to Jenny's identity and what her understanding of this belief is I used probes to encourage Jenny to expand on how caring functions within her role in school. The interview continued with Jenny being asked to expand on her answer that caring is part of everything that she does. She replied:

Jenny: We have to look out for pupils and make sure they are ok. In terms of what we have to do I suppose it may involve talking to pupils either outside of class or in PT [personal tutor] time and making sure they're fine.

Interviewer: What kind of issues results in you acting on your belief about caring?

Jenny: Well it's usually something like they are finding a particular lesson difficult or don't get along with the teacher. I may have to talk to them to find out what's going on and make sure that they feel supported. Sometimes we have other issues to deal with like if someone is having difficulty with their homework or just getting overwhelmed with all the coursework that they have to complete.

Interviewer: Do these issues ever extend beyond schoolwork?

Jenny: Not really. [pause] I mean I might have to talk to a pupil about what is going on at home but only if it is affecting them in school. It's not part of my role to look into issues outside of school. I can't help them with that, it's not my job.

As seen on page 146 with use of statements such as, "*all teachers should care,*" Jenny is clear that caring is vital to what she does as a teacher. However, when I asked her to expand on how this functions in practice it became apparent to me that for Jenny there were self-imposed limitations to caring seen as she explained that although she cares if pupils find "*a particular lesson difficult,*" for her, "*it's not part of her role to look into issues outside of school,*" and if that does happen it's "*not her job.*" These limitations applied by Jenny to her role functioned when she touched on issues outside of the classroom. Based on her replies I suggest that Jenny's caring belief is limited to teachers' role in ensuring student performance.

Sections from Sam's interview are below where I questioned him regarding his beliefs about teaching in order to see if other interviewees held the belief that caring is important to teachers and applied the same limits as Jenny. The extract starts with a question about what Sam feels is important to teachers. He reinforces the view that caring is an important part of teaching and uses it as justification for entering the profession.

Sam: Ermm [pause] For me it is the personal side. I absolutely love it. It's the thing that keeps driving me on to do better and improve. I can't quote for others but yes, I really do love it and it's just so nice to be around people that you can help and give them something which is going to be useful and that they are going to use day after day, even if they don't appreciate it now they will one day and hopefully they should reap the benefits when it comes to their exams. So yes, I believe that caring is important.

Again, similar to Jenny, Sam sets out the prominence of caring to his role as he explains how “caring is important,” and for him, *“it’s nice to be around people that you can help.”* He continues by drawing on his own experiences of school.

Sam: I think because, from my experience originally it was if you weren’t careful the board rubber would be flying across the room. And now I think with safeguarding, because a lot of people abused that power and I think it’s not the way to get the best out of people. I know that occasionally I have raised my voice and I’ve thought “no don’t raise your voice” cause all you’re going to be faced with is a raised voice back. Lower it down and say I can’t talk cause everyone else is shouting. And I think it’s the best way. If you can be more supportive and show empathy as well, cause I know that I struggled in school and I know how difficult I found it, so it’s ok, yeah. It frustrates me when you say have you read the question and they say, “no I don’t get it,” and you say, “well read the question,” and I will come back in a minute. So, it’s the best way to motivate people if you are more encouraging and more supportive rather than just shouting.

What was interesting to me in the extract above is that Sam draws on his own experience of school as a child and uses it as a reason for why caring is important to what he does as a teacher. For instance, in describing a situation in his own childhood where the teacher acted in an uncaring manner he explains how in his view, *“it’s not the best way to get the best out of people.”* In justification of his view he makes links to safeguarding agendas which include multi-agency policies such as *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003). In order to elicit if caring within multi-agency work had been acted upon by Sam within his practice, I asked him if this aspect of his work linked to his belief about caring. He replied:

Sam: Yes ... It makes me consider why I am teaching what I am teaching and also how I can make it relevant. It links to my values as a person and as a teacher. From my own experiences I felt that teachers were there not just to give us information but to help us and care. We all know we have to make sure students get good results but *Every Child Matters* makes me think about more why I want to be a teacher. It ties my job to real life giving students the opportunity to grow, develop

and feel that they are in a safe environment, somewhere that is going to, cause a lot of students it's the norm but here school is quite a safe, supportive area where they know they are going to be looked after and treated as a human being or as an individual rather than just giving them £10 and saying, "I don't want to see you until its dark," which it's scary that that happens, but I am so happy that I am in a place where I can be a bit more proactive and help and at least give them some bit of compassion and understanding. I feel that there isn't as much emphasis on this anymore by those in power which is a shame as this is what made me consider teaching and I don't want to lose it. I think teachers will always care even if it isn't valued by others as this is what we do.

Interviewer: What kind of issues would you have to support children with as part of this caring role?

Sam: Well we have safeguarding issues, so pupils who are having a hard time and find it difficult to concentrate on their work. We have to take time to talk to them and make them realise they can do well. Sometimes these kids don't have anyone at home who encourages them.

Interviewer: Do you think its part of your role to work with other professionals to support them on some of these issues?

Sam: No. My job is to educate them. Whilst I can show I care; I can't get involved in these issues as it's not my job. If I did that then how would I have the time to teach and make sure they can achieve what they need?

Similar to Jenny, it is clear to me that Sam holds the belief that caring is important to his role as a teacher as he describes how caring "*links to [his] values as a person and as a teacher.*" As he continues his discussion into how caring functions in practice, he sets out his belief that despite caring he "*can't get involved in these issues*" if they are focused outside of the classroom. Once again, the belief of caring, which Sam explicitly linked to multi-agency working policies, has self-imposed limitations which function as soon as the link to the classroom is removed. As a result of these limitations, Sam feels he can no longer engage with action to support students as it is "*not [his] job.*" Based on these limitations I suggest, as Sam clearly made links to multi-agency working

policies such as *Every Child Matters*, if he felt that multi-agency work was focused on issues outside the classroom, he would again impose limitations to how he enacts such work resulting in limited engagement.

The interviews, seen in the sections set out above, suggested to me that for those teachers interviewed the belief that they need to care is common. However, the caring belief is limited to teachers' role in the classroom as it is being interpreted through the lens of academic performance rather than touching on wider welfare issues which could trigger multi-agency work. Teacher beliefs, which are developed with their identity (McCutcheon, 1992), are central to how they engage with aspects of their role (Castaneda, 2011). Teachers will try and make-sense of events in a way which confirms their understanding of their identity (Ketelaar et al, 2012). What was apparent to me in the extracts above is that although teachers care about their students, student's academic performance is central to their understanding of who they are as teachers seen as interviewees drew back the discussion on teacher's beliefs to performance in the classroom. For example, as Sam explained that these limits to caring are in place as if they were not, "*how would I [he] have time to teach and make sure they [students] can achieve what they need?*" In this way the interviewees have shown that they only engage with parts of their job that touch on issues related to student's performance. When Sam above was asked if he would engage with his caring belief if this link to performance was missing, he described his feeling that this was not part of what he does.

The link between caring and teachers was drawn upon by O'Connor in her 2008 study of secondary teachers in Australia. She described how caring is at the epicentre of teaching, being used to construct and maintain a sense of professional identity. This is in contrast to the findings of this study as interviewees have described how despite feeling that caring is important in their role as educators, it is not central to their identity and therefore they do not experience tensions

when they feel reforms are counter to this. Whilst for O'Connor caring is central to what teachers do, she does draw on the work of Constanti and Gibbs (2004) who describe how emotions are considered worthless as such qualities cannot be measured by policymakers. Although O'Connor does not expand on how such beliefs are limited, it does link to interviewee's experience in this study of how their role in caring is constrained by other agendas deemed important by policymakers.

All the interviewees expressed similar views that caring was vital to what they do as a teacher and similar to Sam they are discussed limits to how this belief is enacted in practice. This is seen in the transcript from Caroline. In the extract from Caroline's interview which is set out below, she talks about her caring belief as she feels that teachers should "*care about them [students] as people.*" In a similar manner to Sam and Jenny, Caroline described how although caring is important, how she engages with caring in classrooms is limited by other beliefs. I started by asking Caroline what beliefs are central to teaching. She replied:

Caroline: Empathy, understanding, ermm, compassion, patience, ermm, obviously good knowledge of your own subject and the ability to convey it. Really.

Interviewer: From your list it seems that you believe caring is central to what you do as a teacher. Is that right?

Caroline: To a certain extent yes, I do. I do. Because I don't really see how you can just teach a subject if you are quite cold about it really. You have got to have passion and love of your subject otherwise I don't think you can convey it otherwise really. So, passion for your subject.

Caroline's response at the start of this segment about what she believes is important to teaching, led me to believe that her caring belief functioned in a similar manner to Sam and Jenny in that it impacted on all aspects of her teaching role. In a similar manner to the other two interviewees, Caroline seemed to impose limitations to this belief however these limitations functioned differently to what I had come across before during interviews. Based on her response so far

Caroline's caring belief seemed not to be centred on a person but towards her subject area as she described how "*you have got to have passion and love your subject.*" I asked her to expand on her belief explaining why caring is important to her. She replied:

Caroline: You have to care what the children are learning or they will see that and not be bothered in your lessons. You need to show that you care what they are doing.

Interviewer: Does caring extend beyond what you do in the classroom?

Caroline: Yes of course. We have to care about what the students are doing elsewhere as it could impact on their ability to learn in your classroom.

Interviewer: In what way?

Caroline: Well, if they were struggling and having to put more work into a particular area it may mean that they haven't got time to do your work, so you have to know what's going on so you can support them.

Again, it became apparent to me that Caroline's belief was subject rather than person focused as her dialogue was littered with references to her particular subject area in school, for example, she explained that she cares about "*what children are learning*" and if they "*have to put more work in.*" I continued by asking Caroline if caring in her view ever extended beyond what a student was learning. She replied:

Caroline: Yes

Interviewer: In what way?

Caroline: Ermm, we care about them as people and want to make sure they are ok.

Interviewer: So, if there were issues unrelated to your subject which were impacting on them, would you intervene in any way?

Caroline: No. It's not my job, is it? Although we can care and have sympathy for students, we can't support them with anything other than what we are doing in the classroom.

Interviewer: What about your pastoral role?

Caroline: Well we have to talk to them and make sure they are ok but it still all comes down to what they are doing in subject areas. There has to be limits.

Caroline's interview continued with her clearly stating, *"there has to be limits,"* to the belief that caring is important. Differences between the responses from Caroline and that of Sam and Jenny, included on pages 148-153, became apparent to me when considering how the self-identified limitations to their belief of caring functioned. Whilst for all interviewees how caring functioned as a belief in everyday practice was limited, for Sam and Jenny this belief extended beyond the classroom but was constrained by other beliefs especially those around their role in a student's performance. For example, Jenny described how although she cares and *"might talk to a pupil about what is going on at home,"* she would only do so *"if it [was] affecting them in school,"* and for Sam limitations to caring are needed as how would he otherwise *"have the time to teach and make sure they [students] can achieve what they need?"* For Caroline, despite also believing that caring is important to what she does, she described how this belief is limited to work within the classroom as she explained that *"although we [teachers] can care ... we can't support them with anything other than what we are doing in the classroom."* By limiting the belief to the classroom, Caroline excludes working with students on wider issues which could have included multi-agency work.

Identity is continuously negotiated within specific contexts (Clark, 2009), so differences in individual backgrounds and experiences could account for specific nuances in each individual's professional identity, which could in turn result in differences in how their caring belief functioned. In identifying differences between interviewees my role as an insider researcher is advantageous. It is through my immersion within the school context and prolonged access to individuals that I am aware of differences and similarities between interviewees, and through this knowledge that I am able to consider how wider factors may have impacted on them.

Sam and Jenny, despite differences in background and school experiences, find commonality in the period in which they entered the teaching profession both being in their teaching role for two



years at the time of interview, unlike Caroline who had been teaching for a number of years. During this time period when Sam and Jenny were developing their identity within school, there had been increasing dictates from the government regarding teachers' roles in protecting children's welfare including multi-agency working documents such as *Working Together to Protect Children* (DFE, 2013). Whilst identity may change over the course of a teacher's professional life, research has shown that the longer a teacher has been in the profession, the greater the clarity of their identity (Dobrow & Higgins, 2005), suggesting a distinction between professional identity profiles between teachers with varying experience (Canrinus, 2011). Following on from this perspective it is possible that experience has impacted on how individuals in my study responded to policies which in the eyes of those teachers interviewed required them to carry out work which is beyond their traditional and core role as educators.

From the narratives above it became apparent to me that for Caroline, as for the other interviewees, "*there has to be limits*" to the extent that they enact their belief that caring is central to their identity as a teacher. The caring belief only functioned when associated with student's academic performance and was not used in association with multi-agency work. When asked if she would intervene supporting students with issues unrelated to her subject area, Caroline was clear in her response that, "*no, it's not my job.*" I would have expected that if the value of caring was central to each individual teacher's identity, it would extend beyond the academic and trigger the conditions needed for engagement with multi-agency work. Chapter 3 (p53-54) summaries the findings from Pratt et al's study (2006) into how the identity responds when there is a mismatch between the roles surgeons were expected to enact and their identity. Unlike Pratt *et al's* study, I did not see teachers questioning who they believed they were in light of multi-agency work. Interviewees did not draw on raw materials following the publication of multi-agency working policies which could have been used in the process of identity customisation. The lack of apparent identity work following engagement with multi-agency work

developed my belief that for teachers in my study, although they believed that caring is important, it only functioned when issues touched on the academic orientation of their students and is thereby limited by identity beliefs.

Following on I aimed to explore why interviewee's caring value did not extend beyond student's academic performance allowing them to engage with multi-agency teams in order to support students in all aspects of their lives. As research has shown that teachers will resist reforms if they feel their vested interests and beliefs are threatened by the reform (Schmidt & Datnow, 2005), I wanted to explore whether interviewees felt that the reforms which incorporated multi-agency work threatened teacher beliefs, resulting in a lack of engagement with multi-agency working agendas. Continuing the interviews, I asked interviewees about the limits they believed were in place to their role as teachers. The interview with Caroline is continued below:

Interviewer: Why do you believe there has to be limits to how you support students?

Caroline: Because I need to stick within the boundaries of my work.

Interviewer: Why?

Caroline: Well, how can I teach and ensure students are getting good grades if my time and attention is taken up on issues which are not part of my role?

Interviewer: Are you saying that if you were to work with students on issues such as welfare then the academic side of your work would suffer?

Caroline: Yes. There is only so much time in the day. It all comes down to who we are as teachers. I am not a social worker or a health worker. My job is to get students good grades. If this is threatened by working on wider issues then what does this mean for me as a teacher?

Interviewer: Do you not think supporting students with wider issues goes hand in hand with helping them in the classroom?

Caroline: No. Whilst yes, I can talk to students I'm not responsible for looking after their welfare. Teacher's role is to get results and that's it. This is important as without good grades students are

limited to what they can do in life, so I do this is as it as vital as other professional jobs as without us teaching children where would society be?

The extract above shows that for Caroline academic performance is central to her understanding of her role as she is clear that a *“teacher’s role is to get results and that’s it.”* In this section of interview, where she discussed her role in student’s academic progress, she expressed her views more readily without the need to extensive prompts suggesting that this was an area she felt strongly aligned to. Issues outside of this central role which potentially take her attention away from her teacher beliefs are perceived as a threat, for example, as she explained that if her time is taken up with wider issues beyond performance her *“job to get students good grades”* is *“threatened,”* leading her to question what would that *“mean for me [her] as a teacher.”*

According to Currie and Brown (2003) who people think they are shapes what they enact. Working on this principle, identity labels that individuals assign to themselves are important in the identification of who they are. Identity labels are the symbolic expression of who individuals are and can adapt as organisations change (Corley & Gioia, 2004). If caring beyond the classroom and multi-agency work were part of teachers’ identity, I would have expected the inclusion of identity labels incorporating this work within interviewees dialogues as labels adapted. Instead interviewees used the job roles of other professionals when describing roles outside what they felt was their core identity. Earlier sections of this chapter have shown that teachers used the core identity label *“educator,”* which in the words of Caroline means *“to get students good grades.”* The use of labels of other professionals to describe how interviewees engage with multi-agency work suggested to me that these roles sit outside of their identity as they have not gone through the process of identity customisation which could assign labels and meanings to such roles (Pratt et al, 2006). Caroline was clear in her discussion that these roles are outside of who she believes she is, for example, she was clear that she is *“not a social worker or health worker.”*

There was conformity between all interviewee's narratives in that they expressed a belief that caring in their view is important to teaching, however, this was limited to their role in ensuring children achieve academic results. Explanations for the limitations to their caring belief centred on three possible factors; time available to engage with roles, recognition of teachers' professional boundaries and teacher's knowledge of how they can provide support to students on aspects beyond their academic achievement.

The extract above (p156-157) shows how Caroline cited time as the factor which limited engagement with her caring belief as she explained that *"there is only so much time in the day."* With time being limited Caroline explained how she needed to use it to focus her attention on her core identity belief and if she instead engaged with wider issues, which could include multi-agency work, *"how can I [she] teach and ensure students are getting good grades if my time and attention is taken up on issues which are not part of my [her] role?"* Similar views were common to six other interviewees (Tara, Dianne, Jenny, Sam, Paul and Ivy).

The two remaining factors which have the potential to limit teacher's engagement with beliefs outside of the academic orientation of students, became apparent to me during my interview with Jean. When describing the different aspects of her role, similar to other interviewees Jean drew on wider aspects of her work which included caring and instead of defining this role using predetermined identity labels, used the labels associated with other professionals, for example, *"a lot of the time we have to act like the police or social workers."* I asked her how she would define her role which touched on wider issues. Her reply linked limitations of teachers' caring belief with the need to recognise teacher's professional boundaries:

Jean: I suppose you could say we are like social workers as we have to do their role.

Interviewer: You use the role of other professionals in your description of what you do to fulfil wider aspects of your role. Do you believe that in order to carry out these wider aspects that you need to carry out the role of other professionals?

Jean: To an extent. We have to care but there also has to be limitations. Although I do believe we are expected to do parts of a social worker's role, this is not central to what we do and we have to recognise our professional boundaries. I can sit and talk to students and be an ear for them but at the end of the day my role is to support them academically. It is beyond my role to do anything more.

Interviewer: Why is this?

Jean: Well it comes down to who we think we are. I consider myself an educator, there to pass on knowledge to students. I am judged in this role as is the school. I can't go carrying out roles which take my attention away from this as it will affect what I do. If I did, me or my school wouldn't be very happy come results day in the summer.

During the part of the interview where Jean was asked questions about her role, she became animated which can be seen through the quantity of dialogue when compared to other sections. The confidence with which she spoke gave me the impression that the boundary of teacher's work was something which she felt was important to her. As who we think we are shapes what we enact (Currie & Brown, 2003), Jean was clear in her identity belief that her role is that of "*an educator,*" and she enacts this through "*pass[ing] knowledge to students.*" Engagement beyond her core identity acted as a threat as she explained that she "*can't go carrying out roles which would take my attention from this [knowledge transference] as it will affect what I do.*" In order to countenance the threat to her identity she set limitations to work beyond her core role, using the need to "*recognise our [teachers] professional boundaries*" in her explanation.

Similar limitations to the caring belief were seen in the narrative from Hayley, covering the final factor affecting engagement with multi-agency work; teacher's self-perceived lack of knowledge

of wider issues. The extract below starts with Hayley discussing how she hasn't witnessed teachers being asked to engage with multi-agency work and why she thinks this is:

Hayley: No [pause]. I don't know of anyone being asked to do that. We can't do other's roles.

Interviewer: Do you believe that multi-agency work involves teachers having to carry out other professional's roles?

Hayley: I would have thought so. We are expected to do so much and there is always talk that other services like social care and health are so stretched, so yes, I do believe that given the chance we would be expected to take on their roles.

Interviewer: How will you engage with this?

Hayley: Well I won't. It's not what we do as teachers. We can care but at the end of the day our role is to teach children. How I am supposed to deal with some of the issues that children come into school with today? I can't. I don't have the knowledge or the skills to help them and if I did what would be the effect on my role as a teacher? I'm sure results would be affected and then that would impact on the school.

Interviewer: Why do you think engaging with such work would threaten results?

Hayley: Well, in order to engage I would need to develop these skills. I don't have the time to do this. Plus, kids know that my role is to teach them a subject. I think this would confuse them if suddenly we start getting involved in other aspects of their life. We all have our role and I think this needs to be maintained to stop confusion.

As with other interviewees, Hayley described her belief that teachers "*can care*" but when linked to working with other services this belief was limited through it is not being part of her core identity as it is "*not what we do as teachers.*" In her explanation of why this belief functioned she explained that she felt she did not "*have the knowledge or skills to help them [students]*" and questioned "*the effect on my role as a teacher,*" suggesting that in her view engagement with multi-agency work would threaten her identity

In summary, all interviewees described their central identity belief that teachers are educators there to ensure student's academic performance, exemplified by Jenny's belief that "*we are educators... [there] to educate children. [To] teach them what they need to know to pass exams.*" When asked about aspects of their role beyond the academic, interviewees described their feelings that wider aspects of their role, which they grouped under the identity belief of caring, would challenge their identity.

In order to make changes to teachers' roles, teachers need to develop new interpretations of what their organisation is about (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). So, if caring beyond the classroom, which could include engagement with multi-agency work, is to become a key identity belief, teachers needed to experience an identity mismatch between who teachers think they are and what they do, which can result in the process of identity customisation (Pratt et al, 2006). The lack of discussion by interviewees, despite prompting, around multi-agency work and the continued role of academic achievement featuring heavily in interviewee's dialogue, suggested to me that teachers are not currently experiencing tensions between the performance aspect of their role that they are currently enacting, who they think they are as teachers and the expectation to engage with multi-agency work. I would have expected, if teachers were experiencing tensions, the questioning of who they are as their current beliefs no longer held in the context of multi-agency work. Instead teachers' current identity held and was not questioned by interviewees, providing them with a sense of self and meaning (Ashforth & Mael, 1996), seen in the words from Caroline where she is clear that a "*teacher's role is to get results and that's it.*"

Instead of tensions as interviewees discussed their roles and different aspects of what they do, they described how their wider beliefs, associated with what they termed caring, would result in identity threats if limits to their belief were not in place. These limits functioned through linking wider aspects of their role to their belief about themselves as educators and subject matter

specialists, so that any engagement with wider aspects which included multi-agency work, would only occur if this linked explicitly to student's academic performance.

### **Noticing Environmental Cues: *"it's not my job"***

Pages 132-145 have described how although interviewees are aware that their role is multi-faceted, they faced difficulties when describing aspects of their role beyond the academic. Interviewees described how there are limits to their beliefs about their identity when it extends beyond the core aspect of subject matter specialists and ensuring student's academic performance. Research, such as that carried out by Gioia et al (2000), Pratt et al (2006) and Corley and Gioia (2004), has described ways in which individual's identity can change in response to changing environmental circumstances. In the same way, if teachers are to enact multi-agency principles within their everyday practice, their identity needs to undergo a customisation process so that collective beliefs which incorporate multi-agency practices, which for interviewees described as caring and pastoral, become part of their identity.

According to Pratt et al (2006), in their study of identity changes in medical residents in a hospital, identity customisation occurs when individuals experience tensions when what they do does not match who they are, leading to assessments of work identity integrity. For the surgeons in Pratt et al's study, tensions were felt when they had to engage with roles which they considered menial, leading them to question why they were doing such tasks. In the recognition of the need for identity customisation residents needed the presentation of raw materials in their environment which they could draw upon in order to reconstruct their identity. In a similar way to the residents in Pratt et al's study (2006), pages 130-162 have told the story of how teachers experienced multi-agency work and their feelings of mismatch between who they believed they are and the requirements of multi-agency work. However, instead of describing tensions which threatened their identity and could have triggered identity change, teachers' identity held with little



questioning of who they were or who they need to be. Even when questioned teachers did not draw upon any environmental cues suggesting the need for change, for example, the presentation of multi-agency working policies in schools.

The lack of discussion around raw materials in the environment, which could act as environmental cues for change, surprised me as my experience within that context developed my awareness of cues presented. All teachers have been involved in training looking specifically at the *Every Child Matters* outcomes (DfES, 2003) and what that means to their classroom practice. All staff undergo yearly safeguarding training which includes the requirement for teachers to be aware of Early Help procedures which incorporates multi-agency work (DFE, 2016). Raw materials can include the stories told about the need for changes which make individuals aware of the values and beliefs a profession holds, so that those experiencing the change are able to adjust to environmental jolts (Pratt et al, 2006). As all those interviewed had experienced multi-agency work, they would have experienced the presentation of stories around the need for multi-agency work to become part of their beliefs as outside professionals explained why for individual children different agencies need to work together.

There was lack of cues cited throughout interviews as all interviewees, except Paul, did not draw on any of the raw materials which, through my role as an insider researcher I was aware had been presented within school. The failure to voice their perception of cues for multi-agency work is seen in the interview with Hayley. Hayley's narrative is used due to its contradictory nature. Initially she described how she has not noticed changes to the way she works as a result of multi-agency working and stated when asked if she has worked within a multi-agency team that "*no. It's not something we do.*" When prompted she was able to describe situations where she has engaged in the past but despite this, she failed to notice this as a key change in the environment of her school:

Interviewer: Can you describe any examples of how you are expected to work as part of a team of wider professionals?

Hayley: No. It's not something we do. I don't really know.

Interviewer: What about your role in safeguarding students?

Hayley: We have to make sure that students who we teach are safe and well.

Interviewer: What would you do if you were concerned about a student?

Hayley: I would pass it on to the person in charge.

Interviewer: What would they do?

Hayley: I don't know. It's my job is to pass things on.

Interviewer: Have you ever had anyone from a different service discuss a student with you?

Hayley: Not to me directly. I have been to meetings and there may be other people there but they aren't working with me directly, they aren't impacting on what I am doing.

Interviewer: What do you think their role is within these meetings?

Hayley: I don't really know. I suppose to find out about the child.

Interviewer: Do you ever get asked to support a child because of that meeting or work with that professional?

Hayley: Kind of. I get asked by staff in school to perhaps spend more time with them or provide additional support but this is the kind of thing that happens anyway because that's our job to get student's results. It's not because someone outside of school attended a meeting.

Hayley did not go into depth when discussing her role in multi-agency meetings and although willing to discuss the topic she didn't seem as comfortable with this section of the interview, where she was asked about her experience of multi-agency work, as with other sections. My perception as an interviewer was that she struggled to describe her knowledge related to this section of questioning and hadn't recognised that the events that she took part in constituted multi-agency work. As an insider researcher I knew Hayley outside of the interview and was aware of how she usually presents, so when she was only offering short, simple discussions around

questions and frequently answered saying that, *"I don't know,"* I was surprised as Hayley is an older, more experienced member of staff who is usually confident in her role.

Pages 132-145 have shown that teachers' identity is focused on student's academic performance and their role as subject matter specialists. Following multi-agency work these beliefs continued to hold their meaning so that interviewees did not draw on environmental cues suggesting the need for engagement with multi-agency working. I interpreted the lack of room for discussion around multi-agency work as interviewees failure to notice the environmental cues suggesting the need for change. This is because despite involvement with outside professionals and prompting aimed at encouraging interviewees to draw on these experiences, they still did not present any discussion around why children may need support on wider issues outside of the classroom. Even as Hayley, in the extract above, described how support provided for students changed as a result of engagement with outside professionals, she still expressed her belief that these outcomes of multi-agency work would have happened naturally as a result of her identity and alignment with performance outcomes, rather than needing external guidance as she described how she *"get[s] asked ...to spend more time with [students],"* however, this is *"the kind of thing that happens anyway because that's our [teachers] job to get student's results."*

Paul was the only interviewee who described, albeit briefly, the conditions resulting from the changes following the implementation of *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003), which in his view resulted in teachers putting *"the child's well-being at heart."* Despite having noticed the changes occurring following the introduction of multi-agency policies such as *Every Child Matters*, Paul explained that the changes that had occurred in the past were no longer current as policy writers *"come out with all these ideas and years later its forgotten and they come out with something else."* Due to what he perceived as the transitory nature of multi-agency work there had been

little impact on his identity and in his current role as he explained how he “*never think[s] about it so much.*”

The extracts above suggested to me that sensemaking is subjective and influenced by an individual’s identity, seen as interviewees made sense of multi-agency work, with which they have previously engaged, in individual ways different to my interpretation of multi-agency policies. For example, *Every Child Matters* sets out the government’s vision that professionals should know how their role fits in with others and establish new cultures in the workplace so that individual professionals can work horizontally across professional boundaries rather than vertically in professional hierarchies (DfES, 2003). What interviewees have described is a belief that teachers need to “*recognise their professional boundaries*” (Jean) and focus on their role in “*get[ting] results and that’s it*” (Caroline). So, despite engagement teachers interpreted multi-agency work differently from the way policies intended, making sense in such a way that confirms their understanding of their identity.

Similar to the findings described on pages 145-162, where interviewees found events surrounding multi-agency work challenging to their beliefs as teachers, individuals in Corley and Gioia’s 2004 study of events surrounding a corporate spin-off, found change challenging. Differences in individual responses featured as individuals in Corley and Gioia’s study responded to change by customising their identity in response to changing environmental cues. They were able to do this as the traditional referents for understanding their identity no longer made sense triggering sensemaking. What I found was that teachers’ identity within school was strong and referents held their meaning, seen as interviewees repeatedly drew on their role as educators noticing only referents for this traditional role. This strong identity, with links to traditional referents, is exemplified by comments from Jean as she described how “*being a teacher means you have to*

*think about educating in terms of subject content as it's the exam side which we get judged upon through Ofsted and league tables."*

When organisational identity is strong, members may discount contradictory data and so fail to engage in sensemaking (Martins, 2005). The discounting of referents around multi-agency work was a common feature across interviews as interviewees rejected engagement with roles beyond their identity beliefs, putting limits in place to what is enacted. For Sam referents are rejected as *"it's not my job,"* as he describes how he *"can't get involved with these issues"* which include engagement with external professionals. In this way instead of customising their identity, interviewees rejected the new conceptualisations as they perceived them incoherent with education's performance tradition and their sense of self.

## **Conclusion**

Through interviews I aimed to explore aspects of interviewee's identity, allowing a sense of prominence to be found when linked to teacher's core belief about what it means to be a teacher. It is a result of individual professional identities that the choice of what to enact depends (McCutcheon, 1992). For interviewees their core belief about who they are was described as being an educator with their belief meaning being to *"educate children. To teach them what they need to know to pass exams"* (Jean). Interviewee's response when questioned about changes in education, including that of multi-agency work, suggested to me that this label of "educator" was fixed as, despite prompting around the range of roles teachers are expected to enact, the label remained.

The fixing of a label provides individuals with confidence and becomes taken for granted being what they do every day without the need for conscious reflection (Corley & Gioia, 2003). It seemed that teacher's label of "educator" had become fixed and taken for granted as

interviewees needed a high degree of prompting to expand on what this label meant for them. I was surprised by this as I had expected them to be able to easily expand on the meaning of the label, it being what they do every day. Use of consistent identity labels provides a coherent and stable sense of self (Corley & Gioia, 2004), so in times of uncertainty, such as when expected to engage in new roles outside of the classroom, individuals will rely on consistent and stable identity beliefs which allow them to take action, enacting an environment that they can understand (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Interviews suggested that as a result of uncertainty resulting from *“so much change[ing] in schools over the last few years”* (Jean), teachers relied on their core identity belief. This reliance is exemplified by Jean as she described her belief that *“I consider myself an educator, there to pass on knowledge to students... I can’t go carrying out roles which take my attention away from this,”* as she explained why she couldn’t take action beyond her core identity belief as *“it comes down to who we think we are.”*

Secondary aspects of teachers’ identity were drawn upon by all interviewees with the use of the term pastoral to explain the wider caring aspect of their role. Again, interviewees seemed reluctant to expand beyond very limited descriptions of what this aspect entailed. Unlike with the core belief of educator, interviewees did not, despite extensive prompts, expand what this belief meant for them beyond very limited explanations. For example, Jenny explained this aspect of her role as being *“the more pastoral side of it, of being there to support pupils.”* Links were made between this pastoral role and multi-agency work although constraints operated as interviewees described how they *“have to constantly think about the academic side of things”* (Jenny). Despite further questioning to ascertain how multi-agency work functioned within teachers’ identity, I was not left with a sense of a clear and coherent understanding of how interviewees engaged with such work. Responses frequently included statements such as dealing with those *“sort of aspects”* (Jean), and often used the job title of other professionals in attempts to describe how multi-agency work featured within interviewee’s understanding of their role, as interviewees

defined this role as being *“like social workers as we have to do their role”* (Jean). The limited responses from interviewees suggested to me that little investment had taken place in cognitive reflection which for Weick (1975) is needed in order to embody roles within the identity.

When questioning interviewees about how multi-agency work featured in their identity beliefs, the wider aspects of teacher’s roles, which they described as caring or pastoral, seemed to function with self-imposed limits. These limits linked back to teachers’ core identity belief as *“educators,”* as interviewees described how, *“there has to be limits,”* as it, *“all comes down to what they are doing in subject areas”* (Caroline). Enactment of roles is dependent on each individual’s professional identity (Corley & Gioia, 2004), so when confronted with and expected to enact multi-agency working practices, teachers will make sense of such roles in ways which confirm their identity, which in the case for teachers in this study is through their role as subject matter specialists. Thus, the positioning of student’s academic performance within teacher’s identity constrains sensemaking around multi-agency work.

Identity threats resulting from a mismatch between what teachers are expected to do and who they think they are can result in tensions which can be resolved through the process of identity customisation (Pratt et al, 2006). Unlike Pratt et al’s study, teachers interviewed did not question who they are and instead held onto their identity belief that they are *“educators”* through utilisation of factors to justify why they cannot engage with roles periphery to who they believe they are, thereby limiting engagement with roles beyond the academic. The factors cited in explanation for the self-imposed limitations were the recognition of teachers’ professional boundaries, time available to support students on issues beyond the classroom and teacher’s lack of knowledge of how to support students around wider issues.

The process of identity customisation relies on the presentation of raw materials in the environment which can be used in the reconstruction of an individual's professional identity (Pratt et al, 2006). Interviewees showed little awareness of the wide range of cues presented within school, which through my role as insider researcher, I was aware of. This included dialogue around multi-agency policies such as *Every Child Matters*, annual safeguarding training and frequent involvement of external professionals in school, for example, as part Early Help meetings. When teachers' identity is strong, such as that presented here as teachers described their core belief of their role as educators, they may discount data which is contrary to this, in other words, the discounting of cues in the environment suggesting the need to engage with multi-agency work. The discounting of contradictory data can result in a failure of sensemaking (Martins, 2005). Instead of customising their identity to incorporate multi-agency work, teachers rejected any new conceptualisations as they perceived these to be incoherent with their beliefs as educators.



### **5.3 How do Teachers Make Sense of the Requirement to Work in Multi-Agency Teams?**

Environmental change, such that as occurring following the implementation of multi-agency work, can result in individual questioning of what is going on and what action should be taken. For Corley and Gioia (2004) this questioning is subjective and its level of significance is influenced by an individual's identity. In this way as people make sense of events, they will do so in ways which confirms their understanding of their identity as they make sense retrospectively drawing on prior experiences (Weick, 1995).

If, following environmental change, individuals experience a violation between who they are and the tasks they are expected to enact then sensemaking can enable the resolution of the issue of who they are (Pratt et al, 2006). Weick (1993), in his paper about individual sensemaking responses following the Mann Gulch disaster, described how if an event occurs which results in the collapse of who people think they are then they no longer can make sense of the event. Weick (1993) described these episodes as cosmology episodes resulting in feelings of 'vu jade' (Weick, 1995:633) as people's sense of who they are and where they are collapses.

Interviewees were asked about their sensemaking activities in the second interview following engagement with a multi-agency team which I observed. All ten interviewees, as part of their normal role in school, meet with professionals from agencies outside of the school context to discuss the support and progress for students with whom they work. Multi-agency working events happen normally as part of the school day under both safeguarding and inclusion aspects of teachers' role. These professionals belong to a wide range of external agencies which include social services, the educational psychology service and the sensory support service. For example, professionals from the sensory support service monitor the progress of students with hearing and visual impairments, liaise with school-based staff and are part of multi-agency meetings where all

professionals working with that young person come together in order to ensure a holistic approach.

Prior to this study, my own observations as an insider researcher led me to question the impact of multi-agency meetings as I felt that teachers often failed to engage with non-educational staff during and post meeting, and resultingly the impact of multi-agency work was minimal. It was these observations which formed the impetus for my study as my role within school meant I was the professional managing school-based staff's involvement within multi-agency work. As I collated evidence towards the achievement of student outcomes post meeting I was often left with a sense of confusion as the impact resulting from engagement within the meeting was minimal, in that teaching staff often failed to implement strategies suggested at the meeting even when I felt that these could have a positive impact on their practice.

In order to gain insight into why multi-agency work did not result the outcomes I had expected and result in changes to teachers' professional identity, I asked interviewees questions about their sensemaking activities around multi-agency work. Although teachers had engaged with multi-agency work previously this is still a less frequent experience than what pages 132-145 of this thesis have shown to be teachers' core role related to student's academic performance. I had expected, based on my previous observations of multi-agency work, that when confronted with multi-agency teams, teachers would experience a mismatch between who they believed they are and what they are expected to engage with, which would be resolved through sensemaking activities in order to answer the question of who they are.

Gioia and Chittipeddi in their 1991 paper on strategic change in a university, developed a framework for understanding change which used the concepts of sensebreaking and sensegiving in explaining how individuals influence the sensemaking activities of others. Sensebreaking

involves the breaking down of meaning of who individuals think they are whilst sensegiving follows as meaning is given in order to drive individual's sensemaking processes towards a preferred redirection (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). If sensemaking processes had been initiated around multi-agency work I would have expected that teachers would structure their talk with ambiguity as their understanding of who they are as a teacher no longer fitted the expectations of them at a multi-agency meeting, in the same way that stakeholders in Gioia and Chittipeddi's study experienced a '*stirring up*' (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991:439) following strategic change efforts. Gioia and Chittipeddi went on to describe how organisational leaders drove stakeholder's sensemaking activities by establishing new meaning through sensegiving imperatives in a phrase they termed '*re-visioning*' (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991:438). In a similar way if the sensemaking activities of teachers was to lead to an increased sense of clarity about who they are when engaging with multi-agency work, I would have expected to teachers to talk about sensegiving activities where a wider vision of themselves is developed. Instead I found that teachers described a feeling of loss as their sense of who they are in their context collapsed with no space given for discussion around new meaning or resolution of who they needed to become.

Seven interviewees (Hayley, Tara, Dianne, Jenny, Sam, Caroline and Paul) described a sense of loss as they felt their sense of who they are as a teacher no longer held and resulted in feelings of crisis. For example, Hayley when asked about her involvement in a multi-agency meeting described how "*it left me [her] feeling at a loss... they looked at us as if we were stupid ... I definitely didn't feel respected, just very confused.*" Kate and Jean expressed similar feelings about the usefulness of meetings but instead of expressing feelings of crisis used strategies such as transference of negative feelings as a result of ambiguity regarding their role to staff from external agencies as they allocated blame and only paid attention to what they felt was relevant to their role. For example, Kate strongly expressed that she would no longer engage with external professionals following a multi-agency meeting as she felt that the professional from outside of

*school “came in talking about all these other things trying to confuse us and make us question what we do,” so her belief about her role remained as she explained that, “I have to keep clear in my head what my role is and that is to educate students.”*

The findings from the second interview and observation of a multi-agency meeting with Hayley are described below. Prior to the meeting taking place Hayley had shown little knowledge or desire to gain additional knowledge of the role played by multi-agency teams in supporting students with additional needs, seen in both in the first interview and informally through my role in school. For example, at no point in the first interview did she question the role of multi-agency work in her beliefs about who she is as a teacher and despite having previously met one of the professionals who attended the multi-agency meeting, had never expressed any desire to find out more about what they do.

As part of my research I observed the meeting between Hayley, other teachers and two professionals from health and social services regarding the progress and support in place for a student with safeguarding needs. The meeting started with all professionals being shown to a room in school especially arranged for the meeting. Initially the atmosphere was relaxed and jovial as individuals helped themselves to refreshments and engaged in informal conversations. The teaching staff sat together discussing issues unrelated to the meeting whilst the staff from outside of school conversed about the needs of the student to be discussed. The member of staff from social services started the formal part of the meeting by welcoming all professionals and briefly explaining the purpose of the meeting. In observing teachers’ responses to this welcome there seemed to me to be a sudden change in atmosphere. Teaching staff became quiet and no longer possessed the relaxed facial expressions that they wore prior to the welcome.

Introductions were made by all however the teaching staff gave out much less information about who they are and their role within school. The staff from outside of school were more generous in

their introductions and discussed not only what they do and some personal details but also their role in supporting the child and their family.

The meeting continued as the professional from social services discussed details of the student's current needs and how these have progressed over time. Teaching staff were asked to contribute in order to provide a holistic picture of the student's needs. When asked for their contributions, there was a limited response from teaching staff. Initially no-one spoke but instead looked at each other with what I interpreted as a look of concern. My perception of this at the time was that they were looking for someone to act as a leader and speak on their behalf. Eventually one member of staff spoke and very briefly discussed how that student was "*doing ok*" in school. The external staff tried to engage the teacher in further dialogue but didn't elicit any further information other than they were on target to achieve their grades by the end of the Key Stage. The remaining teachers were asked if they had anything additional to add but they all avoided making eye contact with the external professionals with one staff member shaking their head.

The meeting carried on in a similar vein with the vast majority of the dialogue being from the two members of staff from external services. Developed from my observation of teachers' limited eye contact and lack of engagement in dialogue, I was left with the impression that teaching staff were disinterested in what was being said. Despite much of the talk from external professionals not being focused on the student's academic performance, they did explain that the issues being discussed would impact on the student's ability to engage in lessons and therefore they would need additional support from teaching staff. The meeting ended with the professional from social services concluding what was said before staff started to leave.

After the meeting I had informal conversations with the teaching staff who attended the meeting. I asked them what they had got out of the meeting and the common reply from all those who had

attended was that they didn't gain anything of use. The member of staff who had commented within the meeting complained that they felt undervalued as the meeting was dominated by the external staff and they seemed to have no understanding of who teachers are and what they do. When asked about what had led them to that decision, they described how they felt they were being told to deliver roles which were not relevant to teaching. I asked them how they were going to respond to this and they said that they would avoid attending similar meetings in the future. One of the other teachers who attended commented that they felt anxious being put on the spot in the meeting and felt that they needed someone from school to lead the meeting as they felt isolated.

Extracts from the second interview with Hayley following the multi-agency meeting are set out below, beginning with her response to my question about her feelings about her involvement in the meeting and if she felt respected in her role by staff from other agencies. Her reply was surprising to me due to my perceptions as an observer (as described on pages 174-176):

Hayley: Not really as I wasn't included. They did ask us [teachers] for our opinions once but it all seemed focused on stuff outside of school. They seemed to expect us to know all of this? How am I supposed to, [pause] I am just a teacher? I don't know what happens in children's home lives or how to support them. It left me feeling at a loss so I didn't speak. When none of us spoke, they looked at us as if we were stupid, as if we should know what to say. But, how can I? This isn't my role. I definitely didn't feel respected, just very confused. Surely if the management team want us to change what we focus on then they should be the ones to talk to us not these people who think they know everything from outside, who actually have no idea what we do.

Interviewer: You have strong feelings about the meeting. Why did you feel at a loss?

Hayley: Because they seemed to have a different opinion about what we do compared with our roles. This confusion made me question my role as a teacher. You know what is my role every day? Should I be looking at all these issues or focusing on who I think I am in school? I don't know. I just left feeling very confused about what's expected of me.

Interviewer: So, feeling confused, do you think this will stop you working with these outside professionals?

Hayley: Yes, as if I don't know what my role is how I am supposed to work with them. Talking to the other teachers there after the meeting, they all felt the same so I know I am right and I need to focus on my role getting results. I will definitely not be attending another meeting as what's the point in sitting there, whilst people talk over you, ignoring what you do whilst you have other things to do?

In the same way that informal conversations with school-based staff following the meeting had focused talk around themes of lack of understanding of teachers' roles, unrealistic expectations and desire to avoid subsequent meetings, Hayley described how the meeting left her feeling "*at a loss*," as she felt that external professionals expected her to know about "*stuff outside of school*." This led to her experiencing a sense of confusion and made her "*question my role as a teacher*." She dealt with feelings of confusion post meeting by talking to other teachers who had attended, making clear that her reliance on her core identity belief in her "*role [in] getting results*" held. Resultingly, to avoid talk contrary to her role belief she was clear that she "*will definitely not be attending another meeting*."

For this interviewee it was not the first meeting she had attended yet her talk of confusion around engagement with wider aspects of student's lives left me with the impression that this was the first time that she had had to confront the demands placed on her through multi-agency work. Confusion about key identity questions such as 'who am I?' and 'who do I need to be?' can trigger sensemaking allowing the resolution of such questions (Corley & Gioia, 2004). In Corley and Gioia's 2004 study of identity change following a corporate spin-off, they talk of how a discrepancy between an individual's perceptions of who they are within their company and those of outsiders resulted in employees questioning their beliefs and triggered sensemaking. Ambiguity was present in Hayley's talk of confusion but sensemaking did not seem to me to answer the

question of who Hayley needed to be in that meeting and instead her sense of herself seemed to collapse as she explained, *"I just left feeling very confused about what's expected of me."*

My impression from Hayley's response above that this was the first time that she had had to confront the demands of multi-agency work despite attending meetings previously. I continued the interview by questioning Hayley's previous involvement and if this had led to similar feelings of confusion.

Interviewer: Have you never attended such a meeting before?

Hayley: No never.

Interviewer: Have you ever gone to a meeting where a student has been discussed and there have been people from other services there?

Hayley: Well yes, I did go to the meeting about Y last year but I don't really class it as a meeting as we are just there to sit and listen. It's not like a proper meeting.

Interviewer: What made this meeting different to the one last year?

Hayley: I don't know really. [pause] I suppose I felt alone. I know there was more of us there but there was no-one speaking for us. I guess we felt a bit alone and isolated. In the meeting last time it was more we are there to sit and listen. We weren't expected to contribute which I think is right as these people need to realise that it's not our role to do these other things. So, last time they talked to us and if we could support the child in any way we would. It wasn't expected of us like it seemed to be last week. It kind of felt like they were telling us we had to do a different job. What do they expect us to do? Give up our main job and do what they are asking? I don't think they appreciate what we do as teachers and that left me feeling insecure.

Interviewer: When you say you felt they were expecting you to take on new roles what do you mean?

Hayley: I don't know as it was never made clear. Obviously as teachers our role is to educate children, making sure they get the results they need but this was kind of brushed over and they focused on other aspects of the student's life. At one point they asked us for feedback and we told them they were doing fine but they didn't seem happy with that. It was all very confusing as I had



no idea what they wanted from me or what they wanted me to do. How are you supposed to do something if you are not clear in the first place what it is? To be honest it left me feeling like I have no role, that I don't do anything important as no-one wanted to know what we do.

The extracts above suggested to me that Hayley, in the context of multi-agency work, felt insecure and lacking an answer to the question of who she is and who she needs to become as she described how the meeting left her *"feeling insecure,"* as she felt that external professionals were telling her to *"do a different job... give[ing] up our main job."* This surprised me following my observations of the meeting where I was left with a feeling that teaching staff did not want to engage, with Hayley clearly stating that she would *"not be attending another meeting,"* rather than she felt she couldn't engage due to the feelings it triggered. My observations found similarities with research by Abbot et al (2005) into multi-agency work where professionals from other agencies described how they did not feel that teaching staff were committed to engagement with multi-agency teams. In contrast to my perceptions built upon my observations of the meeting, Hayley explained how lack of engagement was not due to a lack of desire but resulted from feelings of isolation developed within the meeting where she described how she *"felt a bit alone and isolated."*

The lack of social ties confounded feelings of confusion as Hayley voiced her feeling that *"there was no-one speaking for us [teachers]."* Confusion was generated as she described how she felt that external staff were expecting her to *"do a different job"* and engage with new roles beyond which she was comfortable with. As she described how during the meeting teaching staff tried to draw discussions back to her belief to her core teaching role *"to educate children,"* however, she felt this didn't seem to satisfy external professionals as they *"didn't seem happy with it."* The ambiguity in role expectations that Hayley described developed from her perceptions of external staff's beliefs as she explained that there were no cues provided to support staff to develop their

understanding of who they needed to become during the meeting, so she was left with *“no idea what they wanted from me,”* and she left *“feeling like I have no role, that I don’t do anything important.”*

Talk of confusion and lack of resolution of who Hayley felt she needed to be in the multi-agency meeting drew for me similarities with Weick’s work on cosmology episodes (1993). In Coutu’s 2003 paper *‘Sense and reliability, a conversation with Weick’*, she provides insights into his understanding of how individual’s experience of events can lead to feelings of panic and confusion. How Weick talks about cosmology episodes in Coutu’s (2003:88) paper is included below:

*‘A person feels like he has never been here before, has no idea of where he is, and has no idea who can help him. An inevitable state of panic ensues, and the individuals becomes, more and more anxious until he finds it almost impossible to make sense of what is happening to him.’*

For me there were parallels between Weick’s description and Hayley’s feelings about the multi-agency meeting she attended. Despite being there before through previously attending such meetings, Hayley didn’t seem to recognise this stating that, *“no never,”* when asked if she had been involved previously in multi-agency work. I had to give her clues before she recognised her involvement in a previous meeting through citing specific examples where she had meet with external staff to discuss a student. Similar to Weick’s description she felt there was *“no-one speaking for us [teachers].”* The ensuing panic left her *“feeling at a loss,”* as she increasingly felt out of place as she described how she was made to *“question her role as a teacher,”* and the world made no sense as she *“had no idea what they wanted from me or what they wanted me to do,”* leaving her feeling insecure. The feelings generated manifest in Hayley’s desire to avoid engaging in meetings in the future as she explained:

To be honest I just wanted to get out of there and from the look on the faces of the other staff [teachers] so did everyone else. We all said after the meeting that there is no way we will attend again as what's the point?

Observing the meeting proved useful as it allowed me to see how Hayley perceived events differently to someone observing from the outside. Hayley described how she felt when, in her opinion, she was told "*to do a different job*," abandoning her current role of getting students results. She described how she was asked for her input which she subsequently gave but this wasn't welcomed, giving her the impression that what she was doing was inadequate as she felt that she does not "*do anything important as no-one wanted to know what we [teachers] did*." From an outsider's view the impression gained was that the teaching staff had given up thinking and started to panic.

The sense of loss Hayley described above on pages 176-179 developed as non-school based staff began the meeting by relaying details of the child's concerns outside of the classroom. Hayley seemed to have perceived this dialogue, which I had observed as being part of the information sharing section of the meeting, as teachers being asked to give up their role as subject matter specialists as she described how she left feeling as if she had "*no role*." The focus on issues outside of what Hayley and other interviewees had described as being central to their identity, seemed to me to have stopped Hayley making sense of how issues outside of school could impact on students within classrooms, requiring additional support from all those working with them including teachers.

In Coutu's article (2003) Weick talked of how cosmology episodes are not just related to large-scale crisis but also to everyday occurrences such as those played out daily in the business world. Here he described how with changing responsibilities and frequent changes in leadership, workers

are often unsure of whom they are working for and why, which combined with the high velocity change in the environment makes it unsurprising that nobody seems to have a firm sense of who they really are anymore (Weick in Coutu, 2003).

For me the similarities between Weick's description of the business world and the educational world being experienced and described by interviewees was striking. The introduction of multi-agency work to teachers' responsibilities is one of just many changes teachers are having to contend with daily (Connolly & James, 2014). Multi-agency teams are built around the principle of having one professional, termed the lead professional, in charge of meetings and their outcomes (Dagley et al, 2007). Changes in leadership add to what Weick (in Coutu, 2003) described as having no sense of who can help, as individuals struggle to know who to pay attention to.

In Weick's 1993 paper on individual's sensemaking activities following an unexpected event, he talked about the difficulties faced by individuals as organisational structures decline and a loss of leadership is felt. As Hayley described on page 178, she felt this loss in leadership as despite there being a number of teachers present in the meeting, she felt that she had *"no-one speaking for us [teachers]"*, as there was no clearly defined structure which was visible to her. She tried to cope with this loss in leadership by relying on previously developed structures. For example, on page 176 she drew on what she believed the role of the school's leadership team should be when there is change, stating that, *"surely if the management team want us to change what we focus on then they should be on the ones to talk to us not these people who think they know everything from outside, who actually have no idea what we do."* The reliance on previous structures in times of change created a world which for Hayley was *"very confusing,"* and resulted in apprehension and uncertainty as a result of her being unable to make sense of the events unfolding around her.

Similarities were seen between Hayley's description of confusion and loss, as she felt that she was expected to abandon her role following engagement with multi-agency work, and Paul's narrative as he described his feelings about a multi-agency meeting he attended:

Interviewer: How did this [attending a multi-agency meeting] make you feel?

Paul: Completely inadequate. We were told, "you should be doing this and that," but we can't. She is expecting us to do her role but that's not what we do. What's the point in listening if this is what she thinks?

Interviewer: Do you think any of what was said could be useful to you?

Paul: No. [pause] Well I don't know really. I suppose we always could do things better but we can't do someone else's job. So, it could have been [pause], if I hadn't had been made to feel useless then, yes but by that point there's no way I was taking any of it in.

Paul, in a similar way to Hayley and other interviewees, talked about what he perceived as the expectation from external professionals that in order to engage in multi-agency work, he would need to abandon his current role as "*she is expecting us to do her role.*" He described he felt he needed to hold onto structures that he had previously developed because in his words, "*that's not what we [teachers] do.*"

The discrepancy between who Paul believed he is as a teacher and his perception of the expectations of external staff, should have triggered sensemaking (Weick, 1995), allowing Paul to make-sense of what is happening and ultimately engage with multi-agency work. What was clear to me in the narratives above is that sensemaking around multi-agency work doesn't happen as what is being expected of teaching staff in the context of a multi-agency meeting is too dissimilar to what teachers expect on the basis of their prior experiences. Their traditional referents no longer held as interviewee's belief in themselves as subject matter specialists no longer explained their role within the meeting. Hayley drew on the dissonance between expectations and reality as she described that the meeting "*seemed focused on stuff outside of school,*" and teachers were

expected to engage with tasks outside of their prior experiences, which in Hayley's words, *"I don't know what happens in children's home lives or how to support them."*

Without making sense of what is happening at the meeting there is no resolution of the cognitive gap between teacher's traditional view of what is expected of them and new roles presented as part of a multi-agency team. As a result, interviewees were left with feelings of chaos as they described how their world seemed to dissolve, which Paul described as being *"useless,"* whilst Hayley felt as if she had *"no role."* Without resolution of what multi-agency work meant to them, the orderliness of interviewee's world is called into question as *"both the understanding and procedures for sensemaking collapse together"* (Weick, 1995:637).

### **Loss of Structure: *"I had no idea"***

In Chapter 3 I argued that multi-agency teams can be thought of as an emerging organisation as such teams lack the interlocking routines that result in habituated habit which define pre-existing organisations (Westley, 1990). Individuals within this new team need to develop new structures and routines whilst attempting to maintain their knowledge of the structures within their original organisations, so that when one organisational structure collapses a substitute might be invented immediately (Weick, 1993). For example, teachers within school know their lines of command with a clear leadership structure. When entering a multi-agency meeting, teachers along with other professionals need to develop an awareness of new lines of command within that team, for example, knowing who is the lead professional and what their role will be. The creation of new structures depends on bricolage and improvisation skills as individuals seek to make order out of the chaos that occurs as their original structures disintegrate (Weick, 1993). Without the ability to create order through improvisation, individuals will not be able to *'realise their reality, by reading into the situational patterns of significant meaning'* (Morgan, Frost & Pondy, 83:24), and so not be able to solve the problem of knowing who to turn their attention to.

A lack of leadership structure within the multi-agency team was discussed by Kate when asked to describe her feelings regarding multi-agency meeting she had recently attended. Her discussion began with a description of the events that occurred within the meeting. Her narrative suggested to me that the lack of order being made out of chaos occurred through difficulties in her ability to improvise. Weick (1993) identified the ability to improvise as an important source of resilience, yet Kate seemed to struggle with this having little awareness of new structures that should be created so that she could make order and sense of the requirements of multi-agency work as her talk was frequently littered with uncertainties such as, *"I have no idea,"* and, *"I don't know."* An extract from the interview with Katie following the multi-agency meeting she attended is below:

Interviewer: Do you think the structure of the meeting was clear at the start?

Kate: No, I don't. I had no idea whose meeting it was, who was in charge. If we meet in school like in our departments, it's very clear. The head of department is in charge and they carry out the meeting using a set agenda. We all know what to expect and who to talk to. That didn't happen with this meeting. I had no idea what to expect. She came into school so I got the impression that she thought it was her meeting but she came into us and used our rooms so surely it should be run by someone from school.

Interviewer: So, why do you think the meeting was held?

Kate: I have no idea. She certainly didn't value me and my role. She left me feeling like my role as a teacher wasn't good enough and she could do it much better than me. I don't know what she wanted from me. There needed to be someone from school there to run the meeting.

Interviewer: Why do you think this is important?

Kate: Because I don't work for her so surely there needs to be someone from my organisation there to speak on my behalf. They could have then demanded that we follow an agenda like we do in our meetings so I knew what would be happening.

Interviewer: Why is it important to have someone to speak on your behalf?

Kate: Because she obviously thought she was better than me so that she was in charge but there's no way she wanted to listen to anything I said, so you do need someone there who is told by the school that they have responsibility.

Interviewer: Do you think the person in charge should be from the school?

Kate: Yes, as they are meeting with us. They would know how school works and therefore focus the meeting and what we want to talk about. Having someone else in charge means they expect to talk about things which have nothing to do with us, which aren't part of what we do.

Interviewer: So, how did having no-one from school to manage the meeting affect you?

Kate: Well I couldn't speak up. I'm not usually someone who's quiet and holds my tongue but I had no idea of how the meeting was run so how am I supposed to know when to speak? She left me feeling like I couldn't speak, so that when she was telling me what I should be doing I couldn't answer her back. It left me confused as to what my role is. There's no way I am meeting her again.

I left the interview with Kate with a clear impression of her feelings towards the multi-agency meeting. Where Kate described interactions with the external professional her tone and volume of voice, as well as her voiced beliefs that this individual *"didn't value me and my role"* and felt that *"she was better than me,"* left me with the impression that Kate had developed very negative emotions about multi-agency work. The impact of these feelings became clear to me as she explained that she *"couldn't speak up"* as she *"had no idea of how the meeting was run,"* having lost any sense of the structure of the meeting.

Problems of structure became apparent as Kate drew her talk back to previously created structures as she described how meetings are run in school *"using a set agenda,"* but *"this didn't happen with this [multi-agency] meeting."* She continued to voice her feelings about loss of structure as she explained her desire for someone within her current organisation of the school to take over the meeting to *"speak on my behalf,"* and who could demand *"that we follow an agenda like we do in our meetings."* Her reliance on previously defined structures suggested to



me that Kate was using the structures and systems created within her original organisation of the school in an attempt to maintain order in a world which she was finding increasingly chaotic as she explained how the meeting had left her *"confused as to what my role is."*

In Weick's 1993 paper on Cosmology episodes he talked of when individuals lose organisational structure and feel that their world is no longer a *'rational, orderly system'* (Weick, 1993:633), it is shattering leaving individuals with a range of negative emotions as they find it harder to make sense out of what is occurring. The sense of chaos that Kate described on pages 185-186 was both confusing and frightening as she experienced the realisation that her old labels and structures were no longer working leaving her with the impression that her *"role as a teacher wasn't good enough."* Instead of working within previously developed structures, Kate received orders from someone whom she did not acknowledge as being her leader. When asked by this person, a professional external to teaching, to drop the roles and meanings which for Kate defined her as a teacher, it seemed that she was being asked to drop the reasons for being a teacher, leading to frightening questions about who she was. At this point she stopped thinking as negative feelings about the meeting began to unfold as she described her confusion and lack of voice as she felt how the external professional left her *"feeling like I couldn't speak,"* and she *"couldn't answer her back."*

Talking with others is a key element of sensemaking during a crisis (Muhren et al, 2008), as it is through communication that individuals can gain the information needed to fill any cognitive gap developed. Kate withdrew from the meeting as she described how she *"couldn't speak up,"* resulting in her losing access to the relationships available within that meeting. As relationships disappeared, she reverted to what Weick described as *'primitive tendencies'* (Weick, 1993:638), which in Kate's example was flight as she voiced her negative beliefs about the meeting and was clear that *"there's no way I am meeting her again."*

Similar feelings regarding a lack of structure within multi-agency meetings were raised by a further seven interviewees (Jean, Hayley, Tara, Dianne, Jenny, Sam and Paul). Extracts from Sam's interview are below, starting with him being asked to describe his feelings about the multi-agency meeting that he attended:

Interviewer: What did you feel about the meeting?

Sam: I didn't know anything about it for a start. When you're in school you are used to having a set format to follow in meetings so everyone knows what's going to happen. It helps you to plan what to say and bring as you can think back to what was talked about last time. This meeting had none of that so we were completely left in the dark. I had no idea as we started the meeting with what they were going to cover, so I was left feeling like it was completely irrelevant at times as I didn't see how it linked to what we did. It was obvious from that that they weren't going to bother to listen to anything we said so what's the point?

Interviewer: How did that make you feel during the meeting?

Sam: Because I didn't know what they were on about I couldn't make sense of what they wanted so I felt anxious as I didn't know if I was going to be put on the spot. You end up feeling like everything you know about your job is irrelevant as these people are talking about something unrelated to what you do and expecting you to get involved.

Sam had clear expectations of what to expect from the meeting based on his prior experiences and previously developed structures within school, as he talked about the need for *"having a set format to follow so everyone knows what's going to happen."* He attempted to rely on these previous structures within the multi-agency meeting, and when they did not hold their meaning, he was left feeling *"completely left in the dark"* with *"no idea"* what was going on. When his prior beliefs no longer fitted with his experiences of multi-agency work, this left him feeling like what he had known up to this point no longer made sense as he *"couldn't make sense of what"* was happening.

Prior to this point in the interview Sam had given the impression of confidence and self-belief. Despite being relatively new to the profession, Sam was an older member of staff who had worked for a number of years in industry prior to taking up teaching and at points throughout the interview he drew on these experiences in a way which suggested to me that he would be able to cope with change and uncertainties as a result of his belief in himself. In contrast to this view, during this part of the interview Sam described how through engagement in a multi-agency meeting he was left feeling *“anxious as I didn’t know if I was going to be put on the spot.”* In a similar way to Kate (pages 185-186), as Sam’s prior beliefs no longer held their meaning, he felt that who he thought he was a teacher was being questioned making him feel as if his *“job is irrelevant.”*

To cope with the chaos generated from loss of meaning of Sam’s previously developed structures and beliefs, Sam withdrew as he felt that other professionals *“weren’t going to bother to listen to anything we [teachers] said.”* By withdrawing from social interactions Sam was withdrawing from what Weick (1993) identified as a source of resilience in times of crisis. For Weick (1993) it is only face-to-face interactions that are able to adapt quickly enough in times of uncertainty providing a second source of ideas and strengthening of independent judgements made by those in the midst of crisis. Withdrawal from social interactions in the meeting meant for Sam that shared meanings could not be made of multi-agency work which left him feeling as if he was *“left in the dark.”* As a group becomes disintegrated a panic can arise (Freud, 1959, cited in Weick, 1993), with such feelings having the potential to limit the likelihood that individuals will want to engage further with multi-agency work.

Similar views to Sam and Kate were expressed by Jean who attended a meeting with two members of staff from different external agencies and a small number of teachers who worked

with a specific student within school. This child, being on the special educational needs register, was subject to at least three multi-agency meetings each year. I had expected Jean to be aware of the structures within the meeting as a result of her previous engagement, so I asked her to explain her understanding of the meeting and why this is needed. She replied:

Jean: I don't really know. I suppose to see how she is doing academically.

Interviewer: Did it involve anything more than this as this information could have been gained through a school report?

Jean: Ermm [pause], I suppose they could have. I am not really sure.

Interviewer: What were your views of why it took place?

Jean: Well, we all sat down. It was difficult really as I didn't know anyone so I wasn't really sure who was in charge. I found this difficult as I didn't know the kind of structure of the meeting and who to direct my opinions to. I couldn't really make sense of what was happening. It wasn't what I expected based on meetings we have in school.

As part of the school's special educational needs provision, guidelines for which are set out in policies such as *Special Educational Needs in England* (DFE, 2015b), school-based staff who have worked with a child with special educational needs are invited to attend multi-agency meetings to enable collaborative working practices. With this knowledge in mind and through my role as an insider researcher I was aware of Jean's previous engagement with multi-agency teams. This left me surprised by her comments that she "*didn't know the kind of structure of the meeting and who to direct my opinions to.*" I asked her why she found the structure of the meeting unfamiliar and difficult to engage with. She replied that:

Jean: Ermm. I suppose it made me anxious. I am used to going to meetings as we meet as teams in school every week but at these meetings, I know who is running the meeting, what their role is and what they want from me. I didn't know any of this at that meeting so felt very anxious.

Prior to interviews I had expected that staff attending meetings would conduct themselves in a similar manner to when they attended meetings within school without non-educational staff being present. From my observations of the meeting I was left with the impression that this was not the case and staff seemed to me to engage very little and didn't look to be following what was being said by non-educational staff. Based on my observations I was surprised by Jean's response above about how the meeting for her generated anxiety and so aimed to explore how these feelings affected her ability to engage. I continued the interview by asking her how the anxiety generated affected her within the meeting:

Jean: It made me question why I was there and the value of my input. At the end of the day how can I get involved in her healthcare? My job is to teach her X [subject] and that's it. To be honest I didn't feel like there was any point me being there and I think other teachers in the room felt the same.

Interviewer: Did this affect how you engaged in the meeting?

Jean: I suppose so. I probably didn't really pay attention to any of the parts that didn't affect me.

The meeting had made Jean question her role when talk extended beyond teachers' traditional beliefs that their role was to *"see how she is doing academically."* As soon as Jean's prior beliefs and expectations of multi-agency work no longer fitted with her experience within the multi-agency team, she was left with too many uncertainties seen as her talk became littered with comments such as, *"I didn't know,"* and, *"I wasn't really sure."* The result for Jean was feeling like she *"couldn't make sense of what was happening."* In a similar way to Kate and Sam, Jean described how she coped with the feelings generated not by making sense of what was being asked of her but by withdrawing from the meeting as in her words she *"didn't see any point being there."*

A theme common to all interviewees, including Jean on pages 190-191, is the perceived lack of leadership structure within a multi-agency team. Jean refers a lack of leadership as she explained why she found the meeting difficult as she “*wasn’t really sure who was in charge.*” Clark and Geppert, in their 2011 study of sensemaking possibilities in post-acquisition integration processes, discuss the role of organisational leaders in steering the organisational direction towards their desired strategic outcomes through a continuous process of ‘*sensemaking, enactment and negotiated interactions*’ (Kostova et al, 2008:1002 cited in Clark & Geppert, 2011). Leaders can trigger the sensemaking process by conveying the importance of adopting a new direction (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014), in this instance the acceptance of new roles as part of a multi-agency team. According the Clark and Geppert (2011), in order to achieve the best chance of steering the process towards the best strategic outcomes, leaders need to understand the role played by identities and comprehend how and why employees make sense of their actions.

Leaders can trigger the process of sensemaking by drawing attention to environmental cues from industry discourses suggesting a need for change (Humphreys & Brown, 2002). For education this would involve the publicising of government policies which detail the need for teachers to engage in multi-agency teams. I wanted to find out whether interviewee’s perceived lack of leadership within meetings extended beyond that meeting and the role of school-based leaders in triggering sensemaking around multi-agency work. I continued to question Jean around school leader’s role in drawing attention to environmental cues suggesting the need for teachers to change:

Interviewer: Have you had any guidance from school leaders about what to expect from multi-agency meetings or why they are important to attend?

Jean: No nothing.

Interviewer: Would you expect them to provide some guidance?

Jean: Yes, if they want us to do something differently. As far as teachers are concerned our role is about getting kids the grades they need. Unless someone in charge in school tells us differently

then that is what we are going to do. I don't know how people from these different services think they can come in and tell us to do something different. It just doesn't make sense.

From Jean's perceptive, sensegiving by school leaders with regards to multi-agency work seems to be missing in this context as she was clear when asked if she had received any guidance that she has had *"nothing."* She explained her expectation that if school was to change its organisational direction from teachers' core belief in *"getting kids the grades they need,"* this message should come from school leaders and not from staff external to school and *"unless someone in charge in school tells us differently then that is what we are going to do."*

Without sensegiving from school leaders around the need for multi-agency work, when the viability of teacher's current direction and beliefs were challenged in a multi-agency meeting Jean found it difficult to make sense of what was being said. Jean referred to such difficulties in making sense of messages within that meeting as she explained, *"I don't know how people from these different services think they can come in and tell us something different. It just doesn't make sense."* As her current beliefs no longer made sense in the context of the meeting, she experienced anxiety and began to question her role and engagement within the meeting. Jean coped with this by withdrawing from engagement in the meeting and no longer *"pay[ing] attention."*

The interviewees' responses to disintegrating role structures is similar to that described by Weick (1993) in his article based on the Mann Gulch disaster. The organisation of the fire-jumpers was destroyed resulting in unaccustomed orders and a lack of leader legitimacy. In the same way interviewees described how no-one at the meeting held the legitimacy to give orders which made sense, resulting in the questioning who they are within that meeting as Jean described how, *"it made me question why I was there."* In response to a perceived lack of leadership and

development of new structures within the meeting, interviewees held onto their previously defined structures and beliefs including leadership structures. So, rather than noticing the messages given out in the meeting about the importance of multi-agency work, interviewees described their expectation for sensegiving imperatives by school leaders if they were to change the organisation's direction from what Jean described as teachers' main role in "*getting kids grades*." For both the fire-jumpers in the Mann Gulch disaster and teachers within my study, the lack of legitimate leader sensegiving resulted in the collapse of their ability to make sense of the events they confronted, seen for example in Sam's narrative as he described how he "*couldn't make sense of what they wanted*." Instead individuals continued to hold onto their previously formed beliefs about who they are as teachers and expectations of organisational structures.

#### **Holding onto Previously Formed Beliefs: "*I had to stick to what I do as a teacher*"**

A prelude to sensemaking is sensebreaking, where individuals experience a breakdown of meaning (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Sensebreaking can motivate individuals to re-consider the sense that they have already made, questioning their underlying assumptions and re-examine their course of action (Lawrence & Maitlis, 2014). Interviews have shown that interviewees do not go through the process of questioning their underlying beliefs about who they are as teachers in order to re-examine their course of action when taking part in multi-agency meetings and instead held onto their previously formed beliefs. They used these beliefs to rationalise what they did and what they were confronted with when attending a multi-agency meeting. When presented with cues suggesting the need for change in their beliefs about what they do, cues remained unnoticed. The more that individuals drew on previously held beliefs to make sense of what was happening in the meeting, the less and less of what they saw made sense.

In seven of the interviews (Kate, Jean, Hayley, Tara, Dianne, Jenny and Sam) there was no re-examination of action that interviewees would take following engagement with multi-agency



work and no questioning of interviewee's beliefs about who they are as teachers. Extracts from the second interview with Dianne are set out below following engagement with a multi-agency meeting for a child with special educational needs. The meeting was attended by an Educational Psychologist and Healthcare professionals as well as teaching staff who worked directly with the student. Multi-agency meetings for students with special educational needs are a normal occurrence in schools. Meetings take place termly and all key staff who support the child and family are invited to attend in order to ensure that services work together to promote children and young people's wellbeing or improve the quality of special educational provision (Section 25 of the Children and Families Act 2014).

Through my role as researcher, I observed the multi-agency meeting attended by Dianne. The meeting began with all staff coming in and sitting round a large table. There were ten teachers present and two members of staff from external agencies. The teaching staff sat at one end of the table with the external staff at the other end with a gap in-between creating from my perception a physical barrier between agencies. The meeting was begun by the Educational Psychologist discussing why people were there and what the meeting aimed to achieve, so that all people working with this child and his family had a clear understanding of his difficulties across all aspects of his life, developing a coherent plan setting out the best way to provide support him across all settings. As someone not involved in the meeting, I felt this had been clearly explained and that everyone would be expected to contribute. My perceptions however didn't seem consistent with the views of the educationists within the room. There seemed to be a lot of hesitation by teaching staff when speaking about the student's difficulties resulting in the Educational Psychologist having to go around the table asking each person in turn for their views. Despite my perception regarding the clarity around the reasons for the meeting and expectations of staff, the quality and quantity of the dialogue gained was limited in that teaching staff said very little even when prompted and what they did say added little value to the meeting with staff either voicing that

they had experienced no problems with the student in their subject area or by relaying attainment grades as proof that things were fine.

My perceptions of staff's willingness to engage in open dialogue about the student within the meeting found dissonance with my prior experiences within school as I was aware of the frequent, informal discussions between staff around their experiences of the student's poor behaviour. I found this awareness of staff's experiences beyond the scope of the study invaluable as it enabled me to question and probe inconsistencies between what I expected to see and hear and what interviewees actually voiced in interview or acted out during the observations.

I have included extracts from the second interview with Dianne below. In response to questions about the purpose of the meeting she had explained how she felt that the meeting should have been focused on issues affecting the student's performance in the classroom and any talk of wider issues *"would just waste everyone's time."* It seemed to be that there was dissension between my own observations of the meeting, where school staff didn't seem to me to want to discuss the student's behavioural difficulties, as described above, and Dianne's reasoning for the meeting where she felt the focus should be on *"how he misbehaves in the classroom."* In explaining the reasoning for her lack of engagement she talked about the need for single agency meeting as she didn't see *"what use it would be to drag up all his medical history"* as school staff *"don't have a lot of free time,"* and it would be better if *"external people can talk about that at their meeting."*

In order to clarify Dianne's feelings about different agencies working together I asked her whether she felt multi-agency meetings are a better way of ensuring a more collaborative approach compared with single agency meetings. She replied:

Dianne: No. I don't need to know what they are doing. As teachers we don't have a lot of free time so we can't sit there whilst people talk about issues that don't involve us.

Interviewer: Do you not think that this medical problem might be causing him problems in the classroom?

Dianne: Probably. But still that's not my role. They can support him with that outside of school. All I wanted to know was what works with him in the classroom.

Interviewer: How would you define your role based on what was said in the meeting?

Dianne: My version or theirs?

Interviewer: Both

Dianne: Well, I believe that teachers have to educate children and that's it. Yes, we have to make sure they are well behaved and happy enough to learn but we don't get involved in any other issues.

Interviewer: What if these other issues are causing them not to learn?

Dianne: Then I would refer to other people as that's their job to sort out.

Interviewer: Would it not be better if everyone worked together as you know them the best and discuss how they are finding things difficult?

Dianne: I still don't think going to these meetings is part of my role as it's outside of the classroom. All I want is a list; do this or that.

Interviewer: So, what do you think the external people thought your role was?

Dianne: I'm not really sure as it was never explained. [pause] I would think they think we should want to get involved in all areas of a child's life. You know support them with issues at home, or if they are unwell or don't feel safe. From going to that meeting they seem to think we have time to help them decide what's best for the child.

Interviewer: Do you think you have a role helping support these wider issues?

Dianne: No. I think the rest of the teachers in the room felt the same, as they all focused on the grades he's getting, so no definitely not.

Dianne seemed to me to have a clear belief of who she is as a teacher which comprised of *“educate[ing] children”* with a focus on the *“grades he’s [student] getting.”* Despite having a view of what external professionals felt she needed to enact in her role and prompting aimed at getting her to consider reasons why her role may need to extend beyond the classroom, there was no breakdown of meaning of Dianne’s current direction. At various points during the meeting the external professionals tried to explain the link between the student’s medical condition and what staff may have experienced in classrooms but this was not noticed by the interviewee. She only noticed the cues in the meeting which confirmed her belief about herself as a teacher, the responses from other teachers who in Dianne’s view *“felt the same, as they all focused on the grades he’s getting.”*

Following Dianne’s discussion about differences between different agencies’ perceptions of teachers’ role, I asked her to clarify her feelings about the meeting. Her reply is below:

Dianne: Not great. It just didn’t make sense what they were asking us. How it made us feel [pause], I don’t remember much about it now as it was so confusing. It sounds stupid now but I just remember the panic at what she seemed to be expecting from us and I kept thinking don’t ask me. It’s kind of like we need two meetings, one just for teachers so we can talk and actually contribute and, you know, focus on what our job actually is.

The more Dianne tried to rationalise action she felt was expected of her by external professionals through her previously formed beliefs about who she is as a teacher, the less of what she experienced made sense. The panic that ensued as her world became more confusing meant that any cues stressing the need for multi-agency work remained unnoticed and culminated in Dianne’s desire for two separate meetings, counter to the principles of multi-agency work.

In the same way that Dianne seemed to fail to notice cues suggesting the need for multi-agency work as her ideas about who she was as a teacher held firm, Jenny expressed a similar view following a multi-agency meeting for a student with a statement of special educational needs. Meetings involving external agencies for special educational needs students take place each term and all subject teachers are invited to attend. The meeting, which was held in school, was attended by staff from sensory support services and the Local Authority as well as two other teaching members of staff. According to the *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice* (DFE 2015c), reviews should focus on the young person's progress towards achieving their outcomes specified in their statement or Education Health and Care plan (EHCP), reviewing health and social care provision as well as ensuring that the special educational provision made for the young person supports their ability to make good progress. Whilst Jenny was one of the youngest and least experienced members of staff at the school, she had previously attended meetings with external staff on a number of separate occasions. So, having previously attended reviews where not only was academic progress discussed but also health and social care provision, I had expected Jenny to find the meeting both familiar and predictable utilising her prior experiences to allow her to make sense retrospectively of what was being asked of her.

Despite my expectations of how Jenny would experience the meeting, my observations presented a very different view as I felt that Jenny came across as very nervous. She only contributed to the discussion when asked and frequently tried to relate questions back to progress within her subject area rather than generalising to wider roles and beliefs which are encompassed within multi-agency work. An extract of the interview is below:

Interviewer: So, did you feel that you were really involved in the meeting?

Jenny: I did when I was talking about how she was doing in my subject err [pause] but in terms of the format of the meeting I have never been to one before so I did feel that, err [pause] I did feel a little out of the loop actually. Err as to [pause] what they were talking about I really did feel out of

my depth. I got the impression that they thought I would know all this stuff about her and her needs outside of the classroom but that's not my job is it? I can only talk about progress and grades, everything else [pause], I did feel out of the loop.

Interviewer: How did this affect you?

Jenny: I didn't really know about anyone's roles or what they do to support that pupil or me in my role. I felt I couldn't ask questions as I didn't want to come across as ignorant. As well everyone else knew each other so they looked far more relaxed and even though they came across as really welcoming I didn't feel I could contribute at all. I did feel excluded from what was going on. For example, at one point they were talking about targets they had set. I didn't know what these were or if I was supposed to have done anything with them.

Interviewer: Can you give an example?

Jenny: For example, one of the targets was her [pause] the way she plays with her hands sometimes and that was something that I hadn't been aware was a target for her but was something I had noticed in class myself. So, I know it's an issue but I really don't see how I can support her with this. As long as she is getting the grades she needs then that's my job done.

Interviewer: Did you feel that there was a disparity between what you do and what they expected from you in the meeting?

Jenny: Yes. I am only a teacher. I only work on subject knowledge. I can't talk about all these medical things that she has or issues with her autism. That's for specialists to deal with. So yes, it did make me feel a bit uncomfortable especially when they kept expecting me to contribute.

Interviewer: What did you do at the points when they wanted you to say something about things you didn't feel were your role?

Jenny: I had to stick to what I do as a teacher. Teaching my subject, so I just had to say about this.

Jenny's belief that who she is as a teacher is focused on "*progress and grades*" and "*teaching my subject area*" held firm. She described how her belief prevented her from noticing how the student's wider, non-academic needs could be impacting on them in school, which in turn could affect their ability to make progress thus impacting on Jenny's beliefs. For example, she described

how when talk in the meeting touched on these wider issues, she stuck to her belief that *"I only work on subject knowledge. I can't talk about all these medical things... That's for specialists to deal with."* From my observations, staff from external services seemed to attempt to bring Jenny into the conversation and discuss the wider implications for some of the behaviours the student exhibits but Jenny failed to notice these cues. Instead she interpreted events as being focused on issues beyond her remit resulting in feelings of being *"out of the loop."*

By holding onto previously formed beliefs interviewees attempted to rationalise what they found at the meeting. As they did less of what they experienced made sense. For example, Jenny maintained her belief about her role so when others in the meeting expected her to contribute towards discussions around issues which she herself had noticed, she failed to notice the cues suggesting the need for collaborative working and instead was left feeling *"uncomfortable"* and *"excluded from what was going on."* The failure of interviewees to notice environmental cues suggesting the need for change finds parallels with Weick's description of fire-jumpers in the Mann Gulch disaster (Weick, 1993). The fire-jumpers failed to recognise the cues regarding the severity of the fire they were attempting to suppress despite noting that the flames looked intense. Instead they rationalised that the fire was a 10:00 fire, one that can be surrounded and isolated by 10.00 the next morning (Weick, 1993), through only noticing cues that reaffirmed their beliefs. Teachers within my study also showed how they have failed to recognise environmental cues for the need for multi-agency work including governmental policies and narratives from staff outside of the educational field. Instead they rationalised their understanding of their role which excluded multi-agency work through only noticing discourse which reaffirmed this understanding and held firm in their beliefs that *"I had to stick to what I do as a teacher"* (Jenny).

In order for teachers to adopt changes to their role and enact multi-agency work they need to experience a breakdown of their current meaning, questioning their previous assumptions and

reconsidering their course of action (Lawrence & Maitlis, 2014). None of the teachers interviewed expressed openness towards the questioning of their beliefs and interviewee's beliefs around their role in "*educate[ing] children*" (Dianne) were cited as reasons for a lack of willingness to reconsider their course of action as Jenny explained she has to "*stick to what I do as a teacher.*" As the meaning of their belief in their role seemed for interviewees to break down as they were asked to engage with aspects of children's lives beyond academic performance, this could have alerted them to pay more attention to what multi-agency work means and realign structures (Weick, 1993), making sense out of what was happening. Instead interviewees paid more attention to their previously formed structures and beliefs which according to Weick (1993) leads to more ignorance and their ability to make sense of events diminished. As their experiences outstripped the meaning that interviewees could make, they experienced a collapse of their sense of self, resulting in feelings which in turn led to a greater sense of isolation from other staff within the meeting.

## **Conclusion**

Individuals make sense of events in ways which confirm their understanding of their identity, utilising their prior experiences (Weick, 1995). If events result in violations between who individuals think they are and what they are being expected to enact, sensemaking can enable the resolution of the issue of who they are (Pratt et al, 2006). A second possibility is created if events result in the collapse of who people think they are, meaning they can no longer make sense in what Weick (1993) termed a cosmology episode, where the universe is no longer a rational, orderly system.

The data collection for this research question took place during observations of multi-agency work and the second interview where interviewees were asked about their experiences of the meeting they had attended. It was through my role as an insider researcher that formed my belief



that teachers, through their prior experience of multi-agency work, would be able to make sense of meetings retrospectively through drawing on these prior experiences. Instead interviewees described how they were left feeling “*very confused*,” and, “*at a loss*” (Hayley), as who they felt they were didn’t to them seem to hold meaning in the meeting they attended. Such feelings materialised as interviewees described how they felt professionals from external services expected them to engage with roles beyond their scope of ensuring student’s academic performance. As Weick (1993) pointed out, out of ignorance grows wisdom, so as interviewees experienced this potential breakdown in meaning through noticing cues suggesting the need for change and focusing on the meaning of change, individuals had the ability to make sense of confusion. Instead interviewees continued to rely on previously created structures, for example, leadership structures within school, not noticing the cues suggesting the need for multi-agency work. The reliance on previous structures resulted in the understanding and procedures for sensemaking collapsing (Weick, 1995), as interviewees described their feelings that when immersed in the context of a multi-agency meeting their “*role as a teacher wasn’t good enough*” (Kate).

As interviewees experienced feelings of loss as what they believed about themselves as teachers no longer made sense, the impact on their engagement within the meeting was noticeable to me as an observer. The quantity and quality of dialogue from teaching staff was far less compared with my expectations of staff based on my experiences within single agency meetings in school. The feelings expressed by interviewees as they described “*feeling at a loss*” (Kate) and being “*very confused*” (Hayley), suggested to me that through engagement within a multi-agency team, interviewees experienced a violation between their prior experiences as a teacher and what happened within the meeting and the expectations placed on them. According to Pratt et al (2006) sensemaking can enable the resolution of the issue of who they are. Despite the confusion felt by interviewees it seemed to me that sensemaking wasn’t triggered, grounded in reasons

around what Weick termed '*sources of resilience*' (Weick, 1993:638). In similar ways to how Weick (1993) explained the loss of sensemaking at Mann Gulch, interviewees cited reasons for an inability to make sense of multi-agency work around a lack of social ties within the meeting. As feelings of confusion continued without in interviewee's eyes there being no-one "*there to speak for us[teachers]*" (Hayley), their world no longer made sense. They expressed feelings of having "*no idea what they [external professionals] wanted from us [teachers]*" (Hayley), resulting in '*an inevitable state of panic*' (Weick in Coutu, 2003:88), which Weick termed a '*cosmology episode*' (Weick, 1993:632).

#### **5.4 How Does Teachers' Ability to Make Sense of Multi-Agency Work Affect Their Professional Identity?**

According to Weick et al (2005), our identity shapes what we enact and how we interpret events, which affects who outsiders think we are and how they treat us, which in turn stabilises or destabilises our identity. So, in the process of becoming a teacher through enactment of teachers' roles, an individual must adopt an identity as such (Danielewicz, 2001). Pages 132-145 have shown that teachers' professional identity is centred around their belief of themselves as educators and subject matter specialists with the prioritisation of children's academic performance.

When an event occurs that undermines an individual's ability to do work central to their identity, sensemaking is triggered in an attempt to make order in their world thus confirming their identity (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). If there is a discrepancy between an individual's identity and the event, sensemaking can trigger identity change (Pratt et al, 2006). Ambiguity over events provides the conditions for the identity to change as people look to resolve the issue of who they are (Corley & Gioia, 2004). Ambiguity for teachers can result as they respond to educational change such as that experienced in recent years (Connolly & James, 2014), with a wealth of policies which highlight the need for multi-agency work in schools (see chapter 2 for details). When teachers are subject to educational reform, they may make sense of the reform in such a way which confirms their ideas of who they are or if there is a discrepancy between the reform and their identity, sensemaking can result in the renegotiation of the professional identity (Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2009).

Previous chapters (pages 171-204) have shown that who teachers thought they were shaped their sensemaking activities, with multi-agency work resulting in violations between teacher's

expectations of events as a result of their identity and the event itself. Interviewees described how their reliance on previous structures and beliefs meant that in the context of multi-agency work they experienced such feelings of loss, as they were expected to engage with roles beyond their academic focus, that their understanding and procedures for sensemaking collapsed (Weick, 1995). Weick termed such events cosmology episodes (Weick, 1993). What these previous sections of my study have shown is that, in line with academic research (see Nias, 1997; Sachs, 2005), teacher identity is an important component to how teachers respond to educational change.

Interviews with teachers in my study have shown that teacher identity does not transform following multi-agency work to incorporate aspects of collaborative work within their beliefs about themselves as teacher. It is through teacher's work that they develop theories of action about their role as a set of beliefs, images and constructs (McCutcheon, 1992). Yet despite engagement with a multi-agency team, interviewees continued to rely on previously formed identity labels such as that of "*educate[tor]*" (Paul) with the role of "*get[ting] results*" (Kate). My findings suggested to me that the experience of multi-agency work was too dissimilar to interviewee's teaching role and gave rise to a wide range of negative emotions such as confusion, anxiety and feelings of being overwhelmed. Such emotions effect an individual's risk-taking behaviour which is needed for transformation of the identity (Laskey, 2005).

Opportunities to talk with others about the reform supports individual sensemaking activities and through sensemaking the renegotiation of the professional identity is made possible (Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2009). Social validation through opportunities to talk about reform enables the acceptance of new identity labels (Ashforth & Mael, 1996), and in particular talk from school leaders around reform was identified as a key component by interviewees in the acceptance of change. Sensegiving by leaders can support identity transformations as it helps fill

any void created by engagement with new roles (Pratt, 2000). Interviews have highlighted interviewee's perceptions of the message given to staff by school leaders as being around student's performance rather than messages around multi-agency work. Without leaders providing meaning to the changes needed for multi-agency work, interviewees voiced their perception that such work lacked importance within their environment and limited opportunities to incorporate multi-agency work within teacher identity through identity transformation. Whilst individuals can be assigned roles as part of multi-agency teams, if these new roles are not engrained within the identity, then enactment of such will be superficial and therefore transitory (Danielewicz, 2001). So, without identity work, multi-agency work is less likely to be enacted in ways as intended by policy writers.

#### **Identity transformation: *"It won't change what I do"***

My analysis so far has shown that multi-agency work creates a discrepancy between how teachers feel about their identity and educational reforms which incorporate such work. Discrepancies between teacher identity and educational reform can create ambiguity regarding teachers' roles and can lead them to question who they are and who they need to be in light of change (Pratt et al, 2006). Resolving the question of 'who are we?' in the wake of such ambiguity becomes a salient issue giving rise to the conditions for identity change (Corley & Gioia, 2004).

Ambiguity was cited by interviewees as functioning within multi-agency work as they described having "*no idea what happens*" during multi-agency meetings and being "*left to try and figure it out ourselves*" (Kate). I aimed to question the impact of ambiguity on teacher identity following involvement in multi-agency work during the second interview.

I include below an extract from the second interview with Kate where she revealed feelings of ambiguity over the multi-agency meeting she had recently attended as she described how she was left with little understanding of what the meeting was for:

Interviewer: What was the reason for the meeting you attended?

Kate: She came in, well actually I didn't know she was coming in, so that was a bad point to start with cause at least if I was aware. I didn't know what the meeting was for; she just came in and expected me to drop everything. She obviously thinks she's more important than me.

Interviewer: How did not knowing she was coming in affect you?

Kate: Well if I don't know how can I prepare? I had no idea what happens at these meetings so it allowed her to take over and I didn't really know what to say. She didn't let us explain anything so we just all sat there.

Interviewer: Did no-one explain to you what was going to happen and how it would impact on what you do?

Kate: No. The meeting just started and that was it. We were left to try and figure it out ourselves.

Kate described her feelings of not "*know[ing] what the meeting was for*" and how she was left to make order out of what was happening. The lack of knowledge around the meeting was evident to me as she explained that not only did she not know the reasons for multi-agency work but she also didn't know that the meeting was due to take place and had been expected to "*drop everything*" in order to attend. I continued the interview by questioning Kate about how engagement with multi-agency work had impacted on her beliefs about who she is as a teacher.

Interviewer: Did you leave with a sense of what the meeting was about?

Kate: No. I didn't see the point. If it was going to be important to what we do then surely someone should have made us aware.

Interviewer: Do you think this is an indication that teachers' roles are changing?

Kate: No. It won't change what I do.

Interviewer: Why?

Kate: Why should it? Why should I change what I do? I sat there as she was talking and felt out of my depth. I had no idea what she was talking about and it left me feeling anxious. Why should I let someone make me feel like that? At the end of the day my role is to teach kids what they need to know to pass exams, so she can go on about all these other things she wants me to do but it's not my job, so no.

Kate described feelings of ambiguity around the functioning of multi-agency work which left her *"feeling anxious."* Whilst ambiguity could trigger identity change (Corley & Gioia, 2004), in the case of Kate her belief in her role as a teacher in *"teach[ing] kids what they need to know to pass exams"* held firm. Identity change is challenging and tensions accompany the process (Corley & Gioia, 2004). The tensions accompanying Kate's involvement with the multi-agency team did not lead to her to question who she needs to be but instead seemed to strengthen her resolve that her identity still made sense, and she was clear that multi-agency work would not *"change what I do."* Instead the feelings Kate described, which could have triggered identity change, manifest in negative feelings towards the external professional as she described feeling *"out of my depth"* which allowed the professional *"to take over,"* as it seemed to me that she held her accountable for the changes to teachers' roles which require multi-agency work rather than recognising that the changes are part of a wider national framework.

Kate was the most senior and experienced member of staff interviewed and is usually someone who is very confident so I was left surprised by her feeling that she couldn't speak up as the external professional *"didn't let us explain anything,"* and that she *"didn't really know what to say."* Kate seemed to respond to ambiguity over expectations by continued reliance on previously developed identity labels rather than making retrospective sense out of what was happening. In this way Kate came across as being resistant to change. As research has shown teachers' identity is fundamentally constructed from subject and pedagogical knowledge (Castañeda, 2011), so any

attempts to move practice towards roles not traditionally associated with teachers may result in feelings that teacher identity is being downgraded (Geppert, 2003).

Following Kate's comments shown above which I had interpreted as resistance to change, I aimed to explore further Kate's feelings about her identity and attempts by professionals to engage with roles beyond the classroom. I asked Kate about how the meeting impacted on her ideas about what it means to be a teacher:

Interviewer: Do you think the meeting has changed your ideas about what roles teachers need to perform?

Kate: No, not at all. Our job is to get results, not get involved in other issues. I know she tried to make us feel like we're responsible but, how are we?

Interviewer: At any point did you feel that it might be important to do some of the roles she suggested?

Kate: Well, [pause] the way she was talking did make me feel quite nervous as she was going on that we have to do this and then that. It was just overwhelming. At that point I really stopped trying. I just needed to remember what my role is and not let anyone make me feel worried about all these other things that they want me to do.

Kate clearly described feelings of nervousness, being overwhelmed and worried when asked about the meeting. Based on my knowledge of Kate and her role in school I was surprised that she felt this way and that it was these feelings that led to what I had interpreted as resistance. I continued the interview by asking Kate if she would change anything as a result of attending the meeting. She replied:

I think because of how she was I wouldn't. No, I wouldn't want to. She made me feel like I had all this responsibility when what right does she have to say my job has to change... So, I may take on board her ideas if I feel they would affect what I do in the classroom but otherwise no especially considering how she was.



It was apparent to me that the ambiguity needed for identity transformation was present in the narrative above as Kate expressed uncertainty as she *“had no idea”* regarding the roles she was being expected to enact following engagement with multi-agency work. This ambiguity could have resulted in her questioning who she is as a teacher when confronted with a new context where her ideas about her identity do not answer that question. Instead Kate did not transform her identity as she clearly expressed how she felt the work being discussed in the multi-agency meeting conflicted with her understanding of her role, as she described how the external professional was *“go[ing] on about all these other things ... but it’s not my job.”*

A mismatch between an individual’s view of themselves and the roles they are expected to enact was found by Pratt et al (2006), in their study of professional identity construction in surgeons, to be a trigger for identity customisation where surgeons used alternative identities to help them make sense of what they were doing. The findings from my study showed similarities with Pratt et al’s study in that the feelings expressed by interviewees such as Kate, as she described feeling *“nervous,”* resulted in her sense of being overwhelmed as she found engagement with roles beyond her identity no longer made sense. Despite these initial similarities, interviewees in my study, unlike the surgeons in Pratt et al’s study, did not question who they were as teachers and their current identity label held firm as Kate explained that in order to cope with the negative feelings generated, she *“just needed to remember what my role is.”*

In consideration of reasons for differences in response to engagement with roles beyond individual’s identity between those in Pratt et al’s (2006) study and mine, there are a few important differences between the longevity of the research and time for the individuals experiencing the change to be exposed to it. Those in Pratt et al’s study were continuously engaging with roles which they felt conflicted with their sense of self, these roles being what they are expected to do on a daily basis and this gradually led to what the researchers described as a

*'deeper, more nuanced understanding of this identity'* (Pratt et al, 2006:247). Individuals interviewed were at different points in their career so that they had a cross-section of responses from those who were new in post to those who were completing their residency. Within my study teachers only engaged with multi-agency work as needed rather than continuous engagement with new roles, reducing the opportunity for teachers to validate changes to their identity. This seeming transitory nature of multi-agency work, where individuals only engage at often drawn out intervals could impact on interviewee's perception of the importance of such work to who they are as teachers.

As Kate talked about conflict between her sense of self and the roles she was being expected to enact through engagement with multi-agency work, she questioned how although the professional from the external agency *"tried to make us [teachers] feel like we're responsible but, how are we?"* If actions are imposed which are interpreted as discrepant and threaten individual values according to Geppert (2003), in his study of sensemaking in multi-national corporations, the result is the downgrading of traditional identities, which for Kate remained focused on *"get[ting] results."* Kate's response is one of resistance as she described that despite talk around wider roles, it is not her job to *"get involved in other issues."* She cited mistrust and negative feelings towards the external professional as being responsible for her resistance as she explained that *"the way she was talking did make me feel quite nervous,"* and, *"she obviously thinks she's more important than me,"* and as a result *"of how she was I wouldn't, no I wouldn't want to... take on board her ideas."*

Feelings of mistrust towards external staff are heightened by the sense of a loss of control Kate felt both in the organisation of the meeting and subsequent involvement as she described that she *"didn't know she [external professional] was coming in"* or *"what the meeting was for"* and the outside professional *"just came in and expected me to drop everything."* The lack of control

Kate felt impacted on how she interpreted the actions of the external professional as she used this as evidence that she *“thinks she’s more important than me.”* Kate’s feelings of how a lack of control was responsible for her unwillingness to engage with multi-agency work is in-line with research into reform. Research has shown that reforms have a better chance of succeeding if teachers feel a sense of ownership of the change (Fullan, 1993; Sarason, 1990), allowing their beliefs to be valued as opposed to feelings of being threatened.

Similar views around reluctance to change were seen from all interviewees as no interviewee described how their role or understanding of who they are would change as a consequence of attending a multi-agency meeting when I questioned them during the second interview. The only differences centred around the hostility towards the professionals from outside agencies. Kate above on pages 209-210, described the mismatch between her view of herself as a teacher and the roles she was being expected to enact in a multi-agency meeting but rather than these violations triggering identity customisation, they resulted in negative feelings towards the outside professional as she explained how she felt, *“anxious,” “nervous,” and, “worried,”* as she felt her identity was being downgraded. For Kate this manifest in reluctance to engage and blame focused on the external professional. This degree of hostility was not evident to the same degree with the other interviewees however all expressed some form of anxiety and reluctance to adapt their beliefs following engagement with multi-agency work, resulting in a feeling of conflict between the roles which they felt defined their identity and those being thrust upon them by external professionals. Unlike Kate, other interviewees internalised these feelings as their own failings, for example, as Tara explained, *“I guess it’s me that lacks the skills.”*

The expression of emotions by interviewees when asked to engage with changes to their role is not unexpected as the process of making sense of new demands is an emotional one (Geijsel & Meijers, 2005). The emotions expressed by interviewees came across to me to be intense and

negative as Kate described feeling “*anxious*” and confused, whilst Dianne explained that she felt panicked. The expression of such emotions is in-line with research that found that when teachers work is characterised by conflict, change and ambiguity, intense and negative emotional reactions can result (Schmidt, 2000). Such negative emotions can influence risk-taking behaviour (Ponticell, 2003) as well as an individual’s ability to learn and develop (Reio, 2005). As the process of identity change requires a willingness to take risks (Laskey, 2005), the expression of negative emotions by interviewees can reduce the likelihood of the identity transforming to incorporate multi-agency work. For Kate, the negative emotions which she described having resulted from multi-agency work meant that she “*just stopped trying*” as her willingness to take risks decreased thus limiting the potential for the identity to transform to include multi-agency work.

Negative feelings about a lack of knowledge of change can affect sensemaking (Spillare, Reiser & Reimer, 2002), and can result in cosmology episodes as described in section 5.3 and interviewees’ feelings of ‘*vu jade*’ (Weick, 1993:633), where they described how they felt as if they ‘*have never been here before, I have no idea where I am, and who can help me*’ (Weick, 1993:333-334). Kate’s feelings of a lack of knowledge of both the meeting itself and expectations of multi-agency work became apparent to me as she described how she “*didn’t know she [external professional] was coming in,*” and she “*was left to try and figure it out.*” A lack of knowledge of multi-agency work contributed to her feeling that the world she inhabited as part of a multi-agency team no longer made sense. In response to Kate’s experience of multi-agency work outstripping her prior experiences, she resisted the customisation of her identity, holding onto her previously developed beliefs through telling herself that “*I just need to remember what my role is.*”

Hayley expressed a similar reluctance to change her understanding of who she is as a teacher. Earlier in her second interview she had described how the roles she was being expected to enact through engagement with multi-agency work had conflicted with her own understanding of her

role leaving her feeling confused and anxious. When asked if as a result of attending the meeting her ideas about whom she is as a teacher would change, she replied:

It won't change who I am as a teacher. It's important that we know and understand what is expected of us. This has always been to get kids results. One person is not going to change this and if they wanted to change something about what we do surely, they should have made sure that we come out of the meeting with a clear sense of what this is. I came out with no idea about what they think my role is. So, how can my role change? I just think the kind of things they were suggesting, [pause] well they just don't make sense to what we do. I have to remember what my role is and not to let others question this.

Hayley described how she was unable to make sense of the shifting expectations placed on her within the meeting as she explained that she was not left *"with a clear sense of what this is."* Without engagement with sensemaking processes around multi-agency work which could have converted the confusing into something intelligible, Hayley held onto her prior beliefs as she described how multi-agency work *"won't change who I am as a teacher,"* and *"this has always been to get kids results."*

Vähäsantanen and Eteläpelto's 2009 study of Finnish vocational teachers identified how changing situational demands do not always lead to identity transformation and instead teachers may resist transformations. Before identity transformations can take place, teachers must make sense of the reform, interpret it and find it meaningful (Drake & Sherin, 2006). Vähäsantanen and Eteläpelto (2009) showed that teachers' ability to make sense of changing demands and subsequent engagement with change was influenced by their prior experiences as they attempted to build *'bridges between the past, present and the future'* (Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2009:28). What the interviews have suggested to me is that teachers were limited in their ability to make sense of the requirement to work in multi-agency teams as a result of their desire to hold onto past beliefs about their role in *"get[ing] kids results"* (Hayley). Interviewees, even when

prompted, didn't seem to have made links between this role in getting results to multi-agency work and roles they might subsequently engage with outside of the classroom. Kate was the only interviewee who suggested a link as she explained that *"I may take on board her ideas if I feel they would affect what I do in the classroom."* I asked Kate to expand on the link between multi-agency work and her understanding of her current role and whether she felt that teachers' roles needed to adapt to incorporate wider roles. She answered:

I have to keep clear in my head what my role is and that is to educate students and not get involved in these things she was going on about.

Kate's reply suggested to me that she has yet to make links between multi-agency work, her current role and her future self as she seemed to resist consideration of tasks beyond what she described as being her role in educating students.

Without the building of bridges linking interviewee's prior experiences of their role as subject matter specialists in the classroom with potential future roles in multi-agency work, interviewees seemed to find it difficult to make sense of the new demands resulting from multi-agency work, being unable to generate their own understanding of the events they confronted. For example, Hayley seemed to find difficulty in making meaningful the demands of multi-agency work as she explained that, *"I just think the kind of things they were suggesting [pause], well they just don't make sense to what we do."* Without making sense of the requirements of multi-agency work and linking this to their own understanding of what they do, interviewees didn't seem to find the demands imposed on them meaningful and seemed clear in their belief that multi-agency work was *"not my job"* (Kate).

Without being able to find the demands of multi-agency work meaningful, interviewees seemed to cope with the changes suggested in multi-agency teams by resisting identity work thereby

avoiding risk, blaming any changing demands on individuals outside of teaching rather than recognising changes within the system as a whole. For example, Hayley explained, *“I have to remember what my role is and not let others question this,”* linking the changes suggested at a multi-agency meeting not with her prior beliefs identifying how this linked to her role in *“getting kids results,”* but with the external professional as she stated, *“one person is not going to change this [her role],”* and so could not make meaningful what she was being asked to do as she seemed to struggle to build bridges between the past, present and future.

### **Identity labels: ‘It’s not changed at all’**

Earlier sections of the interviews (pages 132-145) have revealed that the teachers interviewed felt a strong alignment to the identity label *“educator”* and described in-depth how this was related to ensuring students *“achieve the best exam results they can”* (Jean, p.136). As Corley and Gioia (2004) described in their study of identity change at the company Bozco, if identity transformation had taken place individuals should feel a sense of ambiguity over their identity labels resulting in the questioning of who they are. In a similar way, if teachers’ identity had transformed following engagement with multi-agency work, I expected to see ambiguity in the identity labels used during the second interview, post multi-agency work, as individuals experienced temporary identity discrepancies.

Corley and Gioia described how temporary identity discrepancies arose from individual responses to change following a corporate spin off, as employees of the original company questioned *‘who are we going to be?’* and *‘how we will see ourselves?’* (Corley & Gioia, 2004:184). In my study, if the transformation of teachers’ identity incorporating multi-agency work had taken place, I would have expected to come across greater uncertainty in interviewee’s responses when asked to describe their identity during the second interview when compared with their responses in the first interview. Uncertainty as a result of a lack of identity meaning could have developed for

interviewees as they were presented with a desired future identity within the multi-agency team, which found discrepancies with their current identity triggering feelings of identity ambiguity (Corley & Gioia, 2004). As Corley and Gioia (2004) discussed, the void created as a result of uncertainty could either result in the resolution of the identity as individuals accepted new labels or conflict due to a lack of management of identity-based tensions limiting the space for identity transformation.

The second phase of interviews allowed me to question the durability of teacher's identity labels as I probed into their interpretations of any change triggered by multi-agency work, any identity tensions resulting from change and individual identity responses. In-line with research from Corley and Gioia (2004), I expected discussion around new identity labels offered through multi-agency work. For example, I had expected discussion around collaborative work, development of holistic targets for students and working with widened roles outside of the classroom. If identity change was likely I had expected dialogue around teachers' identity to reveal uncertainty about whether current identity labels represented teacher's beliefs about who they are in their current context which included multi-agency work. In subsequent discussions within the interview I would have expected to see either identity conflict as interviewees experienced a lack of clarity regarding the appropriateness of their labels and whether these still answered the questions of 'who they are?' and 'who they need to be?', or identity resolution as they accepted the new labels and meanings.

Individual identity responses to multi-agency work can be viewed in the extract from Kate below during the second interview where she talked about who she believes she is as a teacher following engagement with a multi-agency team. Earlier in the interview she had described how she felt her sense of who she was had not changed as a result of involvement in multi-agency work. Continuing from this I questioned her feelings about the labels that she used to describe



herself and the meaning behind these labels. I started by asking her what her understanding of her role was following engagement with multi-agency work. She replied:

Kate: To educate children.

Interviewer: If you were to label this role what term would you use?

Kate: Educator. I am there to make sure children are educated.

Interviewer: When you say educator what exactly do you mean?

Kate: We teach children so they come into our classrooms and we teach them. It really ends there.

Yes, we have to plan and do what we do need to think about different children and their needs but it's only our job to make sure their work is doable. It definitely not my role to work on helping children overcome these difficulties.

Interviewer: Do you feel that the word educator is still the best word to define what you do?

Kate: Yes.

Similar to Kate's response to questions about her understanding of who she is as a teacher during the first interview, Kate presented a clear belief that her role as a teacher is best defined as an *"educator"* there to *"teach children."* I had expected to see the questioning of this label of *"educator"* following multi-agency work as interviewees were presented with other identity labels as they were asked to engage with wider roles during the multi-agency meeting they attended. For example, the meeting attended by Kate involved staff from Local Authority services including the Sensory Support team and centred around the needs of a student with a visual impairment. During the meeting talk from outside professionals consisted not just of how her impairment impacted on her ability to access materials within the classroom but also how it was impacting on the degree to which she felt fully included in all aspects of life both in school and in the wider community and how all professionals could support her in this.

I continued the interview with Kate by asking her if she had experienced any sense of ambiguity over the appropriateness of her label “*educator*” and meaning behind it and if the labels that she used to define her beliefs as a teacher had changed. She replied:

Kate: No. It’s not changed at all. She went on that we all have to work together to solve these issues and I know X needs support for these, [pause] but it’s not my job. At the end of the day a teacher’s role is to get children exam results.

Interviewer: What role do you think this person was trying to get you to perform?

Kate: I have no idea. It was all very confusing. I don’t know how you could define what role she was trying to get me to perform but I suppose somewhere along the lines of social worker or health worker. I don’t know.

Interviewer: Can you describe what you would have been expected to do as part of these roles?

Kate: Not really. [pause] I don’t know. I mean she was going on about health and development and working with families but it wasn’t really clear. So, sorry no.

Interviewer: Do you see it as being part of your role as an educator to work together with others at meetings like the one you were at?

Kate: No. I didn’t think it before and I definitely don’t now. If she was coming to give me ideas of what I could do to help student X get better grades then I might change my mind but that’s not what she did. It was all about getting me to do other people’s roles. At the end of the day I am a teacher, you know an educator, I am not there for her medical or home needs.

In the same way that Corley and Gioia (2004) talked about ambiguity being a component of identity change, if Kate had engaged with the process of identity change I would have expected to see ambiguity in her talk around her identity label as she questioned the appropriateness of her label “*educator*” in light of the new situated demands of multi-agency work. What was apparent to me here was that Kate’s label of “*educator*” remained unquestioned as she described that “*at the end of the day I am a teacher, you know an educator.*” Although Kate expressed ambiguity as she explained that “*it was all very confusing,*” and, “*I don’t know how you could define what roles*

*she was trying to get me to perform,”* this ambiguity did not seem to have triggered identity change and Kate was clear that engagement with multi-agency work and other professionals would only impact on what she does if the outside professional was *“coming to give me ideas of what I could do to help student X get better grades.”* It seemed to me that despite attending a multi-agency meeting, Kate’s identity beliefs about who she is as a teacher had not changed despite being presented with roles beyond her current understanding of her identity.

There were similarities between the interview with Kate and the other remaining interviewees in that their pre-multi-agency working identity seemingly remained unquestioned despite engagement with multi-agency work. An extract from the second interview with Paul is below where he talked about his identity beliefs following multi-agency work. I asked him if his involvement with multi-agency work had changed his ideas about who he is as a teacher. He replied:

Paul: No, my role is still to educate children. That hasn’t changed.

Interviewer: Do you think that the person from outside of school was trying to change your role?

Paul: She tried. She kept going on about these roles which she thought were part of our job.

Interviewer: Such as?

Paul: Looking into much wider issues than education, for example, working more with home and making sure that their health is good. I don’t think she used the word educate or teaching once. It was all about support and development not about subjects and exams and isn’t that what teachers are all about?

Interviewer: How did that make you feel?

Paul: I don’t know really. Confused I suppose at first as all our past experiences have been around teaching kids and then suddenly she is trying to change the meaning behind our role and get us to work with other issues.

Ambiguity is apparent in Paul's narrative as he talked about the confusion he felt as he was presented with new identity meanings centred around "*much wider issues than education*" which in his view "*isn't what teachers are all about.*" I continued by asking him how he responded to the non-educational professional "*trying to change the meaning behind our [his] role.*" He replied:

Paul: Well what could I do? I couldn't argue with her and trying to work with what she was saying made me feel very anxious as it left me feeling like I didn't know my job. It's like she was telling me to let go of everything I know as a teacher as now I have to do something else. To tell a teacher that they should forget about a child's grades is like telling someone to let go of the tools of their trade. What's left?

Interviewer: What did you do?

Paul: Well I had to protect myself and what I think about who I am as a teacher so I stopped trying to listen and engage with her. I suppose I reminded myself of everything I had been taught previously about who teachers are and what we do.

Interviewer: So, you used previous experiences to guide you?

Paul: Yes. The only way to feel secure in my role is to look back at past experiences and think what they are telling me.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of work could ever be incorporated into your role as a teacher?

Paul: I suppose if it was done properly, protecting our core role rather than telling us to change everything we think about ourselves. If we had, you know, our managers working with us and showing us that we need to change some things in order to teach better than yes, I suppose we would change.

Ambiguity, as a result of discrepancies between current identity labels and those presented as being ideal, is a component of identity change (Corley & Gioia, 2004). Whilst ambiguity was apparent in Paul's response as he talked of his confusion and anxiety around the roles being presented by the non-educational staff in the multi-agency meeting he attended, Paul didn't seem to question the meaning of his current identity label. Instead he described how he felt the external professional questioned his identity beliefs as she "*was telling me to let go of everything I*

*know as a teacher.*” Rather than question the durability of his identity Paul expressed his concern over the presentation of new roles stating that *“to tell a teacher that they should forget about a child’s grades is like telling someone to let go of the tools of their trade.”*

When presented with multiple interpretations of teachers’ identity Paul took action which allowed sense to be made of the situation which he described as confusing and anxiety generating. In a similar way to how Weick (1995) explained how individuals restore order to new situations, Paul attempted to make sense of the situation through searching for meaningful cues which would provide a retrospective account of what had occurred. As plausibility is favoured over accuracy (Currie & Brown, 2003), individuals will sort through the multiple images of reality generated by engagement with multi-agency work and search for the understanding that portrays the situation in the most plausible manner. When presented with multiple accounts of teachers’ identity Paul sorted through the possible interpretations drawing on his previous experiences and core belief in his role of *“teaching kids.”* For Paul it seemed implausible to consider roles beyond his core identity as he expressed his disbelief in the external professional not using *“the word educate or teaching once.”* Without plausibility Paul could not make meaningful *“wider roles”* that were being presented through multi-agency work so voiced his desire to *“protect myself”* and his *“core role,”* and remind himself of *“everything I had been taught previously about who teachers are and what we do.”* In this way, as his core beliefs remained unchanged, Paul’s identity did not transform to incorporate wider ways of working.

When individuals confront new images of themselves and their organisation this has the potential to destabilise their identity (Corley & Gioia, 2004). Interviewees in my study described how professionals from outside of teaching presented new images of who they need to be. For example, Paul described how the professional within the meeting he attended *“kept going on about these roles ... looking into much wider issues than education, for example, working more*

*with home and making sure that their health is good.*" Providing the conditions are right this destabilisation should trigger sensemaking resulting in alterations in the identity (Gioia, Schultz & Corley, 2000). This discrepancy was evident in identity labels used by employees of the company Bozkinetic in Corley and Gioia's 2004 study. Initially, similar to teachers within my study, individuals in Corley and Gioia's study held a strong organisational identity and were sure of the meanings behind this label. However, over time individuals started to notice environmental changes and the confusing array of identity labels and rhetoric led them to question who they are and select the meaning which provided the most plausible explanation for the current situation. In response the identity transformed. In contrast, in my study it was apparent to me that teachers did not make sense of the array of identity labels presented to them by external professionals, resulting in the identity failing to transform to incorporate wider ways of working within their core beliefs. This failure to transform was seen as interviewee's understanding of who they are remained consistent with their pre-multi-agency working identity, for example, as Kate explained *"at the end of the day a teacher's role is to get children exam results."*

### **Reasons for the lack of transformation: *"No-one talks about it"***

The previous chapter (pages 171-204) has shown that teachers interviewed did not make sense of the events they confronted when asked to engage in multi-agency work. Instead interviewees described their feelings of loss in their sense of who they are as teachers, exemplified by the comment from Hayley as she explained that engagement with multi-agency work *"left me feeling at a loss."* As interviewee's ability to understand the situation they faced crumbled, they experienced anxiety and other negative emotions which made it almost impossible to make sense of what was happening.

Interviewees' feelings of a sense of loss developed as new identity labels were presented to teachers within the context of a reform which they didn't seem able to make sense of and make

meaningful to their beliefs about who they were as teachers. The reform being experienced, which sets out the requirement for teachers to engage with multi-agency work, is engrained in a plethora of policy documents such as *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003) and *Keeping Children Safe* (DFE, 2016), yet in the words of interviewees, *“it just doesn’t make sense”* (Jean). In order for teachers to accept new organisational identities, the new conceptualisations must be socially validated in order to be internalised by organisational members (Ashforth & Mael, 1996).

Organisational leaders have a role to play in this process by presenting the changes in ways which relate them to past experiences (Gioia, 1986), so that the events confronted by staff can be made sense of retrospectively. Paul on page 222, referred to how he made sense retrospectively when he described how *“the only way to feel secure in my role is to look back at past experiences.”* In times of change attentive leaders will experience a sensegiving imperative (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991) and take steps to promote collective sensemaking so they can foster a renewed clarity about their organisational identity (Fiol, 2002).

Paul, in the extract above on page 221-222 where he was talked about why he *“stopped trying”* to engage with multi-agency work, referred to the role of school leaders and his expectations of them in the process of sensemaking as he explained, *“if we had our managers working with us and showing us that we need to change ... than yes I suppose we would change.”* This suggested to me that in the case of multi-agency work the role of leaders in stimulating sensemaking and thus the transformation of individual’s identity was missing.

Organisational leaders can trigger identity transformation by providing alternative identity labels or meanings which act to destabilise the current labels (Corley & Gioia, 2004). I aimed to explore the role of school leaders in triggering this process of identity transformation by asking interviewees about the images projected within school by management teams and how this impacted on their understanding of who they think they are as teachers. Extracts from the

interview with Paul are below, following on from his discussion around his experience of multi-agency work. I asked him if the role of multi-agency work was discussed in school. He replied:

Paul: No, never. Before this I was aware that people came into school but thought that this was to work with students rather than work with teachers.

Interviewer: Has this changed now?

Paul: Not really. I suppose now I know that these people come in and sometimes want to meet with us but no-one has ever said, you know, what we do needs to change as a result.

Interviewer: Does the management of the school never discuss the importance of working with these people?

Paul: No, not at all. It's not part of what we do every day so no one talks about it.

Interviewer: Will you talk about it now after your experiences?

Paul: No, I didn't enjoy the experience and certainly don't want to relive it, so no. I mean it hasn't changed anything I do so why should I? We have enough to try and deal with which are part of what we do.

In Paul's experience multi-agency work is not presented to teachers through dialogue between teachers themselves or through school leader's efforts to shape the organisation's identity. This suggested to me a lack of prominence of multi-agency work within the organisation's identity. I asked Paul what formed school leader's key messages to staff. His reply is below:

Paul: Results, results, results. Everything is about performance. It's how we are measured and therefore judged. It comes back to what our role is and that isn't to meet with these people and take on new roles but to focus on our core role which is to help kids get results.

Interviewer: So how does this message affect your understanding of your role as a teacher?

Paul: It makes me confident in what I do. You know, our role is about performance. Yes, these outside people may come in and say well you need to do this and this but I know that that's not my role. My role is making sure that the kids in my classroom achieve the results they need.



From the extract above Paul seemed to me to have a clear sense of what his organisation is about as a result of the sensegiving imperatives of school leaders, which in Paul's words is focused on, *"results, results, results."* Sensegiving is a process whereby individuals attempt to influence sensemaking and the meaning construction of others, resulting in a preferred redefinition of organisational reality (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Gioia and Chittipeddi's 1991 study of strategic change at a university revealed the significant role that leaders played in affecting change and shaping organisational sensemaking. Sensegiving strategies included providing visions of a projected new organisational reality (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991), providing new identity labels (Corley & Gioia, 2004), and sensegiving in narratives around events (Dunford & Jones, 2000).

It became apparent to me as Paul described leader's sensegiving narratives around performance, that these narratives provided for Paul a strong and stable identity in which he had confidence. For example, he explained how the message provided by leaders affected his understanding of who he is as a teacher as *"it makes me confident in what I do."* His strong sense of who he is and what his organisation is about, allowed him to reject alternative identity labels offered by professionals in multi-agency meetings as he explained *"outside people may come in and say well you need to do this and this but I know that that's not my role."* Through rejecting alternative identity labels, Paul is less likely to adapt his understanding of his role and incorporate tasks such as multi-agency work, which aren't in his view part of leader's sensegiving efforts within his identity.

All interviewees expressed views similar to Paul during the second interview, post-multi-agency work, in that leaders' key message to staff about the organisation's direction did not incorporate multi-agency work. Instead the discourse of results prevailed which for interviewees formed a stable and lasting identity. The role played by school leaders is cited by Caroline in the extract below. She had attended a multi-agency meeting regarding a student with additional health

needs. She met with staff from various health services in order to assess the student's current needs in school as well as within the community and at home, and plan interventions designed to develop greater independence. During the second interview, Caroline's response to questions about her understanding of the reasons for the meeting seemed to me to be based on limited information about multi-agency work as she described how she *"wasn't really sure why they did come in or what their job was"*. Later in the interview I asked her if her view of multi-agency work and her role in it had changed as a result of engagement with external professionals at the meeting. She structured her answer with talk around the stability of her current identity and the role she expected school leaders to play if she was to adopt another direction.

The extract below starts with me asking Caroline whether her understanding of what she does as a teacher had changed as a result of the multi-agency meeting she attended. She replied:

Caroline: Not really. I would have expected them to get me thinking a bit more about what I do but that didn't happen. It was more about what she needs to do rather than what I should be doing.

Interviewer: Can you explain more, in other words, what was spoken about?

Caroline: Well it was all around this needs to be done for X [student] and this will help them get a job and be independent outside of school. None of it was related to what I am doing in the classroom. It would have been nice if the focus had been more about school and not about other issues.

Interviewer: So, this wasn't what you expected?

Caroline: No, not at all. Why invite me to a meeting where I couldn't really give any input?

Interviewer: Did you have any knowledge about what to expect at this meeting?

Caroline: None at all. It's not something anyone talks about in school. You know no-one ever mentions that you have to work with people from outside school so I had no idea what to expect.

Caroline referred to the lack of sensegiving within school around multi-agency work as she explained that multi-agency work is *"not something anyone talks about in school."* I wanted to

further explore with Caroline the role of sensegiving within school so I continued the interview by asking her about the role of school leaders and if they provide to staff messages about multi-agency work. She replied:

Caroline: No. [emphasis on word]. We don't ever hear anything about this kind of thing.

Interviewer: Why do you think this is?

Caroline: I don't know. I suppose it's not what we do. I know I had to go to this meeting but that's not my job really is it?

Interviewer: How would you describe your job?

Caroline: It's the same as before, to get good results. To educate kids and make sure they get the grades they need.

Interviewer: What makes you so confident in your role of getting good results opposed to taking part in these meetings?

Caroline: Well I suppose it comes down to the messages we get from those in charge. We are accountable to them so whatever they say goes. The key message is always around results.

Interviewer: How do they give you this message?

Caroline: Through meetings, in briefings that we have every week. The messages they put out.

Interviewer: What type of messages do they put out?

Caroline: Ermm [pause] it's not something I have really thought about. I suppose there's the obvious messages like at the start of the year when we get the talk from the Head about last year's results and whether we have done well or not. We get set targets then which we have to achieve. Ermm [pause] I suppose thinking back there are more subtle messages. You know they like to tell stories, like this teacher had this class and they achieved these results and detailed discussion into how. The focus is always on results. In meetings that we have the main topic as results. We might discuss issues around it like someone might not be achieving cause of their behaviour or something and it doesn't give a very good image so you always want to make sure that you are not that person and you can give a good kind of image about yourself and your teaching.

Caroline was clear in her view about leader sensemaking in that *“the key message is always around results.”* She described how leaders engaged in sensegiving imperatives through the telling of stories but in Caroline’s view *“the focus is always on results.”* The message given to staff by leaders finds congruence with research in that the message given to schools is one dominated by targets and results (Meierdirk, 2012). If teachers are to incorporate new roles and beliefs within their identity, I would have expected to see reference to how leaders break down the meaning of teachers’ current identity as they triggered the questioning of previous assumptions through sensebreaking, causing individuals to reconsider their course of action (Lawrence & Maitlis, 2014). Maitlis and Sonenshein, in their 2010 paper where they reflected on Weick’s (1988) insights in sensemaking in crisis situations, described how the breakdown of meanings around organisational identity is a fundamental part of strategic change. Drawing on the work of Fiol (2002), they described the process where organisational leaders unfreeze stakeholders’ existing meaning of the organisational identity and replaced them with new meanings before refreezing those meanings.

I continued the meeting with Caroline by asking her whether leaders told stories beyond the academic which included the importance of multi-agency work in teachers’ daily role. She replied that:

Caroline: No, never. That’s why it’s so difficult to understand our role in these meetings. It’s not something that anyone discusses or really focuses on. So, no, sorry.

Interviewer: So, taking part in a meeting hasn’t changed your understanding of what it means to be a teacher?

Caroline: No but I didn’t expect it to. I would expect if we were to change anything it would be coming from those at the top in school. So, I would have expected X [line manager] to sit down with all of us to go through what we have to do, why we need to do it, why what we’re doing is not working now and what to expect. None of this has happened so I don’t see how anything can change.

Interviewer: If this was to happen what kind of things do you think would be talked about?

Caroline: Well I don't know but I'd imagine kind of discussion around what we do and how this change. So, I suppose less talk about results and progress and more about your role now needs to cover this, this and this.

Interviewer: Would this make you change your ideas about who you are as a teacher?

Caroline: It's hard to say [pause]. I suppose it would make you think about what you do more. It might take a while as it would be a big change so I would have to see it played out and what kind of effect it would have on me. You know whatever they suggest does need to be do-able so if they say, "you now have to go to lots of these meetings and work with these other professionals," I would have to make sure that I can do this and that it wouldn't be to the detriment of others parts of my job.

It became apparent to me as Caroline talked about her identity beliefs and change processes that she expected school leaders to set the organisational identity and trigger change as she explained that, *"I would expect if we were to change anything it would be coming from those at the top in school."* As Maitlis and Christianson (2014) point out in their review of sensemaking literature, identity change is enhanced by leaders as they change the viability of the status quo and shape organisational member's understanding. Leaders facilitate sensemaking by extracting and drawing attention to environmental cues suggesting the need for change (Humphreys & Brown, 2002; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007), which evidence how the organisation's current direction is falling short of expectations. Caroline referred to her expectations of this process as she explained, *"I would have expected X [line manager] to sit down with all of us to go through what we have to do, why we need to do it, why what we're doing is not working now and what to expect."*

Caroline described how *"the key message is always around results,"* as school leaders tell narratives around student's academic performance projecting positive and negative images of staff who meet or fail to meet organisational ideals. Through stories told leaders aimed to drive

the organisation's identity in a particular direction through shaping individual teacher's understanding of a positive way forward, which in Caroline's words is to "*get good results.*"

There are parallels between the sensegiving efforts of leaders described by teachers in my study and by organisational leaders in other research such as that by Dunford and Jones (2000).

Dunford and Jones described how senior leaders of an information technology company based in New Zealand, engaged with sensegiving activities around the need for change following a major downsizing after a poor financial performance in the early to mid-1990s. They described how leaders '*tell a story*' (Dunford & Jones, 2000:1223), providing a context for organisational members so they could interpret events and their implications in the similar way to that described by Caroline. Through leader's sensegiving activities they triggered organisational member's sensemaking processes as they described how the new company was '*reborn as a company that they saw as entrepreneurial*' (Dunford & Jones, 2000:1214), enabling them to make sense of their circumstances.

Despite similarities between the two studies in how leaders engage with sensegiving, differences became apparent to me in that in the New Zealand study leaders talked about the need for change using language which challenged employee's current practices (Dunford & Jones, 2000), whilst teacher's identities in my study seemed to me to be stable with no talk around change. In my study, interviewees did not talk around leader's attempts to provide images or stories about the need for change to their practice through the need to incorporate multi-agency work into teacher's identity. For example, as Caroline explained that multi-agency work is "*not something that anyone discusses or really focuses on.*" No interviewee was able to provide examples of how leader sensegiving was used to project positive images of multi-agency work and the need for teacher engagement. This led in my view to interviewees failing to perceive the importance of multi-agency work to their role, with little impact on teacher's understanding of who they are and

who they need to become. For example, Caroline, when asked if engagement with multi-agency work had changed her understanding of who she was as a teacher, described how she *“didn’t expect it to”* as she would *“expect if we were to change anything it would be coming from those at the top in school.”*. If multi-agency work is not perceived to be of importance to the organisation due to a lack of leader sensegiving, it is likely to result in teacher’s feeling that such work is illegitimate to their identity and fail to trigger the identity transformation needed to incorporate it into teacher’s identity (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007), stabilising teacher’s current views of who they are, seen as Caroline described how her role is *“the same as before.”*

## Conclusion

As Weick et al (2005) pointed out our identity shapes what we enact and how we interpret events and in turn what we enact can stabilise or destabilise our identity. When an event occurs, such as the requirement for teachers to engage with multi-agency teams, if there is a discrepancy between the event and teachers’ identity, sensemaking can result in the renegotiation of the professional identity (Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2009). Ambiguity seemed to be present in interviewee’s responses as they described how they found that the roles they were being expected to enact *“just don’t make sense”* (Hayley). Corley and Gioia (2004) point out that ambiguity can give rise to the conditions for identity change yet in this case I found no evidence of transformation of individual identities as interviewee’s core belief in their role as teachers in *“teach[ing] kids what they need to know to pass exams”* (Kate) held firm.

Instead of discussing how engagement with multi-agency work resulted in changes to how interviewees view themselves as teachers, interviewees described their experience of multi-agency work as resulting in negative emotions such as feeling nervous and overwhelmed. Interviewee’s response to the feelings they described was the continued reliance on previously developed identity labels rather than making retrospective sense out of what was happening. In

this way interviewees came across as being resistant to change, exemplified by Kate's comment that she *"just needed to remember what my role is."*

In addition to the negative emotion's interviewees used to describe their feelings about engagement with multi-agency work, negative emotions towards other professionals within the multi-agency team were cited as a reason for lack of engagement and subsequent identity work. For example, Kate explained that as a result *"of how she [external professional] was I wouldn't, No I wouldn't want to... take on board her ideas,"* when asked if the roles that she enacts have changed as a result of multi-agency work. The violations experienced by interviewees, as they described discrepancies between their view of themselves as teachers and the roles they were being asked to enact, could have triggered the customisation of the identity but instead resulted in negative feelings towards the other, non-educational staff present. Feelings of mistrust seemed to me to have developed as teachers felt a lack of control over multi-agency work as they described how they felt no sense of ownership over any part of the process. Reforms are more likely to be successful if those experiencing them feel a sense of ownership (Fullan, 1993), allowing their individual identity beliefs to be valued as opposed to feelings of being threatened. The negative emotions described by interviewees reduce their ability to engage in risky behaviour, yet it is this which is needed for transformation of the identity (Laskey, 2005).

In order to discover if and how the professional identity of interviewees had transformed as a result of multi-agency work, I asked questions in the second interview about the labels used to describe who interviewees believed they were and the meaning behind these labels. In the same way that Corley and Gioia (2004) described how the questioning of individual beliefs can lead to identity change, if multi-agency work had transformed the identity of teachers then what I expected to see was the questioning of who they thought they were. This uncertainty is then either resolved as teachers accept their new identity labels or they are likely to experience conflict



due to the lack of clarity resulting in the identity failing to transform (Corley & Gioia, 2004). In interviewee's responses to how multi-agency work had changed their beliefs, there seemed to me to be no change in identity labels used. Instead there seemed to be conflict as interviewees described how *"the kind of things they were suggesting [pause] well they just don't make sense to what we do"* (Hayley). They described how they coped with uncertainty, not by transforming their identity but by holding onto their prior beliefs, for example, as Hayley described how multi-agency work *"won't change who I am as a teacher"* which is *"to get kids results."*

The consistency in identity labels used by interviewees suggested to me that they were unable to make links between engagement with multi-agency work to their role as educators, in the same way that Vähäsantanen and Eteläpelto's (2009) described how changing situational demands do not always lead to identity transformation. Vähäsantanen and Eteläpelto described how teacher's engagement with change was influenced by their prior experiences as they attempted to build *'bridges between the past, present and the future'* (Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2009:28). Without making links between their current understanding of their role and the new requirements generated from engagement with multi-agency work, teachers seemed to find it difficult to make sense of the new demands, being unable to generate their own understanding of the events they confronted. Without making sense of the requirements of multi-agency work and linking this to their own understanding of what they do, interviewees didn't seem to find the demands imposed on them meaningful and seemed clear in their belief that multi-agency work was *"not my job"* (Kate).

Without making the changes suggested by engagement with multi-agency work meaningful, individuals will restore order to new situations by making sense of the situation through searching for meaningful cues which would provide a retrospective account of what had occurred (Weick, 1995). Plausibility is favoured over accuracy (Currie & Brown, 2003), so when presented with

multiple accounts of teachers' identity through multi-agency work, interviewees sorted through the possible interpretations drawing on their previous experiences and core belief in their role as an educator. Interviewees described how it seemed implausible to consider roles beyond their core identity and that to consider this is like *"telling someone to let go of the tools of their trade"* (Paul). Without plausibility interviewees could not make meaningful wider roles that were being presented through multi-agency work and so voiced their desire to resist change to their identity and instead held firm in their belief that *"at the end of the day a teacher's role is to get children exam results"* (Kate).

In order for teachers to find reform meaningful and accept new identity labels, any new conceptualisation needs to be socially validated in order for it to be internalised (Ashforth & Mael, 1996). School leaders play a role in this process through sensegiving fostering a renewed clarity around individual and collective identity. It didn't seem to me from interviewee's responses that leader sensegiving around multi-agency work had taken place. The image presented to teachers by their leaders is around performance or in the words of interviewees *"results, results, results"* (Paul), stabilising teacher's current identity as educators. Interviewee's strong sense of who they are and what their organisation is about allowed them to reject alternative identity labels offered, limiting the transformation of their identity.

## Chapter 6 Conclusion

My study is an in-depth qualitative analysis of how teachers engage with multi-agency working policies and function as part of multi-agency teams. Based on my reading and experience working within schools I define multi-agency work as being:

Where professionals from more than one agency work collaboratively within a shared culture enabling aims, information, tasks and responsibilities to be shared in order to have a positive impact on the lives of children and their families.

The duty for teachers to collaborate with other professionals was strengthened during the start of this century through the publication of *Every Child Matters* in 2003 (DfES). This duty has been continued through the publication of a plethora of further policies aimed at impacting on the lives of teachers including: *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DFE, 2014b; 2016); *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government, 2010; 2013; 2015a; 2016; 2017); the *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice* (DFE, 2014); the *Prevent duty* (Home Office, 2009). As a result of policy change, teachers are now at the forefront of the newly widened safeguarding agenda (Parton, 2009). This change in positioning has a potential impact on teacher identity as policies may not only change what educationists do but who they are and what it means to be a teacher (Ball, 2003).

The research questions below were developed to answer the question of how teachers engage with multi-agency work and how teacher identity affects and is affected by how they engage.

1. How are multi-agency working policies enacted within teacher's individual practices?
2. How does teacher professional identity affect engagement with such multi-agency agendas as *Every Child Matters*?
3. How do teachers make sense of the requirement to work in multi-agency teams?
4. How does teacher's ability to make sense of multi-agency work affect their professional identity?

The first research question asked how national multi-agency working policies are enacted within teacher's individual practice. Enactment is described as the action individuals take in order to create a stream of events that they pay attention to (Orton, 2000). Attention points to what people understand as their preconceptions shape what people notice (Powers, 1973), as individuals use their previously gained knowledge to notice and take action in response to events in their environment (Luttenberg et al, 2009).

Interviewees were asked to tell the story of multi-agency work, describing their previously gained knowledge in order to uncover what aspects they had paid attention to. Responses were limited providing at best short, generic accounts of multi-agency work, and despite prompting there was little discussion into what multi-agency work meant to interviewees as they seemed to find drawing on previously gained knowledge challenging. As Weick (1995) pointed out sensemaking is done retrospectively, so events which had previously been made sense of allow the perception of events in the environment to pay attention to (Luttenberg et al, 2009). When noticed stimuli are placed into mental frameworks that make sense of the stimuli (Goleman, 1985). The lack of retrospection when asked questions about multi-agency work suggested that previous multi-agency activities had not been noticed in such a way that interviewees had paid attention to them, limiting the development of a mental framework which would allow for the perception of future events.

In Weick's theory of organising (1979), enactment follows ecological change. Policy enactment converts the confusing into something intelligible (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012). Interviewee's limited ability to intelligibly describe the world of multi-agency work suggested limitations in policy enactment. Interviewee's limited descriptions of previous multi-agency activities surprised me based on my knowledge of their prior engagement. One of Weick's (1995) key arguments in

his sensemaking theory was the role of plausibility, where plausibility is favoured over accuracy when interpreting events (Currie & Brown, 2003). For teachers in this study, their previously developed mental frameworks have developed around their role in student's academic achievement, so when asked to tell the story of multi-agency work, they will take the most plausible explanation of the role of such work, linking it to their role in academic achievement. Who people think they are shapes what they enact (Currie & Brown, 2003) as individuals take action to produce a more ordered environment, allowing sense to be made of what is happening (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). The action teachers took when confronted with multi-agency work was linked to their pastoral role reaffirming their understanding of what it means to be a teacher, rather than taking action to develop new structures which would have allowed them to make sense of what had occurred. As doing produces knowing (Weick, 2001), the lack of knowledge of the new structures and appropriate action suggested that despite previous engagement with multi-agency work, the action taken as a result was limited. Interviewees described how they only took action when issues touched on their traditional role of a teacher in securing students' academic results and anything beyond this was reported to others for them to act upon rather than teachers engaging in collaborative work.

The collaboration needed for multi-agency work (Cheminais, 2009) requires the blurring of professional boundaries (Atkinson et al, 2002). The limited action described by interviewees reduces this blurring of boundaries (Harris & Allen, 2009), so that action was taken only in response to emerging events linked to traditional roles rather than utilising structures developed previously through engagement with multi-agency work in order to plan for a more ordered environment. This acted as a constraint to how teachers enacted multi-agency work. Individuals often produce constraints that were not there before they took action (Weick, 1998). Constraints operated as events which could have triggered multi-agency work were interpreted as belonging to the pastoral aspect of teachers' role and triggered action which was most commonly

described by interviewees as involving the passing on of information so others could act to support children. The reliance on previous structures when defining roles brackets out raw data which does not fit within these structures (Weber & Glynn, 2006) and what interviewees described as their pastoral role and the academic side of teachers' work. When presented with situations which should elicit enactment of multi-agency work, interviewees described actions which were constrained by structures linked to performance aspects of teachers' roles, placing limits to how multi-agency work was enacted by interviewees.

The loosening of professional boundaries needed for collaborative work should lead to a collective process of trial and error (Weick, 2001), where in order to learn to deal with ambiguity, individuals need to recognise environmental cues suggesting the need for change (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). As interviewees bracketed out raw data which suggested the need for change, there was no evidence of learning and re-drawing of professional boundaries in response to questions in interviews around the story of multi-agency work. This led interviewees to describe a limited role within multi-agency work where they co-existed with other professionals rather than taking on a fully collaborative role, showing that policies are only enacted in ways limited by the teachers themselves.

The second research question asked how teacher professional identity affected engagement with multi-agency agendas. To gain insight into teacher professional identity I asked interviewees to talk around their beliefs about who they are as teachers. Interviewees commonly described the identity label of "*educator*" but seemed reluctant to expand on its meaning. With prompting I developed an understanding of the meaning behind this label as interviewees described the centrality of their belief in their role ensuring the academic performance of students. Any roles counter to this academic focus seemed to be discounted as interviewees rejected any new conceptualisations of their identity which could have included multi-agency work. Talk about

wider aspects of teachers' role only found consonance with teachers' beliefs when the self-defined role "the pastoral" was linked to students' academic performance. The continued focus on teachers' academic orientation suggested to me that for teachers it is their belief about themselves as educators which formed a stable identity label providing teachers with a coherent sense of who they are. In this way teachers' professional identity limited their engagement with multi-agency agendas.

I explored how interviewee's beliefs limited their engagement with multi-agency principles. Interviewees described how although caring is important, situated within what they defined as their pastoral role, acting on this belief is outside of the academic orientation of their role. Interviewees described how these limits functioned through a lack of time, a need to maintain professional boundaries and their limited knowledge of wider aspects of their work.

I went on to consider interviewee's responses to environmental cues which could stimulate the identity adaptations needed for full engagement with multi-agency work. If multi-agency work is to become a key identity belief through the customisation of the identity, teachers needed to experience an identity mismatch between who they think they are and what they do (Pratt et al, 2006). There was little discussion in interviewee's narratives around wider aspects of teachers' work, suggesting little experience of identity tensions between performance aspects of their role, who they think they are as teachers and the expectation to engage with multi-agency work. Instead teachers' current identity held as interviewees described ways in which it provided them with a sense of self and meaning, and new identity conceptualisations, which could have included multi-agency work, were rejected.

The third research question asked how teachers make sense of the requirement to work in multi-agency teams. If following environmental change, such as when teachers engage with multi-

agency work, individuals experience a violation between who they think they are and what is expected of them, sensemaking can enable the resolution of the issue of who they are (Pratt et al, 2006). If an event occurs which results in the collapse of who people think they are, they will no longer be able to sense make, resulting in what Weick (1993) termed a Cosmology Episode. Following interviewees engaging with multi-agency work, they described feelings of loss as their sense of who they are collapsed. They described how they felt confused by the role they were expected to play both during and after meetings, which they felt conflicted with their understanding of who they are as a teacher, resulting in them feeling lost and insecure. Such discrepancies find parallels with Weick's description of Cosmology Episodes (Weick, 1993) as individuals described how at that meeting the world no longer made sense.

Multi-agency teams can be thought of as an emerging organisation due to the lack of interlocking routines that haven't yet resulted in habituated action (Westerly, 1990). Interviewees found themselves trying to develop new structures whilst still maintaining knowledge of their original organisation. This could have triggered sensemaking so that when one organisational structure collapses, a substitute might be invented immediately (Weick, 1993). Instead interviewees described how their world became increasingly chaotic as they tried to make sense using prior knowledge from their original organisation, leading to their understanding of who they are within the multi-agency meeting dissolving.

Interviewees associated a lack of leader sensegiving with their difficulties in making sense of the events they confronted during multi-agency work. They described their expectations of leaders in conveying the importance of adopting a new approach through drawing their attention to environmental cues suggesting a need for change but felt this was missing with regards to multi-agency work. With a lack of leader sensegiving around multi-agency work interviewees held onto their previously held beliefs about their role and failed to notice environmental cues which would



oppose this. The persistence of interviewee's belief that teaching is purely focused on achievement of academic outcomes meant that, despite engagement in a multi-agency meeting where wider aspects of teachers' roles were discussed, interviewees did not make sense of these roles limiting their role in the collaboration process.

The fourth research question asked how teacher's ability to make sense of multi-agency work affected their professional identity. Teacher professional identity forms as they develop theories of action about themselves through their work and the roles they enact (McCutcheon, 1992). Chapter 5.2 (pages 130-170) discussed teacher's views of themselves as "educators", delivering subject matter to students in order to secure academic success. If teachers had been able to make sense of multi-agency work, I would have expected the stability of their label "educator" to be questioned, resulting in the customisation of teacher identity through incorporating multi-agency principles within teacher's views of how to be and act. Instead interviewees described a stable identity as prior labels and meanings endured.

Identity customisation is triggered through violations between an individual's expectations and reality of the roles they are expected to enact (Pratt et al, 2006). Despite interviewees describing such violations between their expectations of multi-agency work and reality, identity adaptations were not apparent in narratives. These violations left teachers feeling a sense of loss of order of their world, which in the words of one interviewee was like losing the tools of their trade. The result of this loss for interviewees was intense negative emotional responses which reduce the risk-taking behaviour vital to the learning process (Ponticell, 2003). This reduction in risk-taking behaviour reduces interviewee's ability to interpret and respond to the new demands placed on them (Reio, 2005). Interviewees described how they coped with such violations in their understanding of their role through allocating blame to external professionals involved in multi-agency meetings and continuing to rely on their previously defined identity.

Interviewees described how they could not make the new expectations generated through multi-agency work meaningful as there has been no social validation of new identity conceptualisations by organisation leaders due to a lack of leader sensegiving. Sensegiving can provide a sense of clarity about the organisational identity (Fiol, 2002), and is triggered by leaders through providing alternative identity labels (Corley & Gioia, 2004). I expected that if the change suggested by multi-agency work is organisational wide, teachers would discuss alternative images projected by the school's management. Yet, this sense of organisational identity de-stability was not present as the enduring message provided by school leaders was around school performance as it is upon this which the organisation's image is based, thereby stabilising current identity and limiting the possibility of identity transformations.

This study provided a snapshot of teacher's engagement with the policy context at the time of data collection; however, the findings can be applied to the current context within UK schools. The policy context within schools has become increasingly complex as teachers are expected to engage with potentially conflicting agendas as the role of results and accountability measures has continued (DFE, 2017), yet the requirement to work with professionals external to teaching has been maintained and strengthened through additional duties (DFE, 2015a).

Many of these additional duties continue to fall under safeguarding remits which in recent years have been widened (HM Government, 2015b), incorporating issues previously not seen within UK schools. An example of these additional roles developed from the Prevent duty with there now being a legal duty for teachers to protect children from the risk of radicalisation (DFE, 2015a), requiring teachers to be able to identify children at risk of being radicalised through awareness of potential indicators for abuse as well as building resilience through promoting traditional British values (Prevent Strategy, 2011). Thus, as teachers' roles become ever widened, they have to work

with a greater number of partners outside of education, including staff from the police and the Local Authority.

Teachers' ever widened roles make it vital that they can continue to work with outside staff through a process of collaboration opposed to co-existence. This further develops teachers' roles beyond the academic, having potential consequences for their professional identity. What this study has shown is that teachers found the process of transforming their understanding of who they are as teachers challenging. Therefore, if the duty to work within multi-agency teams is to be implemented as intended in schools, how teachers engage with changes to their role needs to be considered by policy makers and leaders so that teachers are able to make sense of the new requirements and enact multi-agency principles as intended.

### **Summary**

In summary, this study has shown that the teachers interviewed engaged with multi-agency agendas in a limited manner as a result of the failure of sensemaking activities around multi-agency work and the failure of such work to become integrated into their professional identity. Sensemaking is triggered when individuals select environmental cues suggesting the need for change (Weick, 1979) before taking action in order to produce a more ordered environment (Maitlis, 2005). What interviews have revealed is that teachers repeatedly failed to notice cues suggesting the need to engage in multi-agency work and only took action which reaffirmed their current understanding of their identity, centred around the role of results and transference of subject knowledge. This action meant that teachers' self-defined identity label of "*educator*" presented as stable and resistant to change, limiting the action they took in response to multi-agency work as they rejected any new conceptualisations of their role which were inconsistent with their understanding of their role as an educator.

When taking part in multi-agency meetings, teachers described how they attempted to make sense of the new demands through reliance on previously defined roles and described how multi-agency work resulted in a violation of their previous experiences. The resulting ambiguity could have triggered sensemaking (Corley & Gioia, 2004), however instead led to interviewee's voiced sense of loss as who they were no longer made sense within the context of multi-agency work. Instead of transforming their identity to incorporate collaborative ways of working, their identity endured with no sign of attempts to redefine meanings.

The lack of identity customisation led to a sense of conflict with other professionals as interviewees described violations between their expectations and reality of multi-agency work. Poor relationships between professional groups led to teachers describing their feelings of vulnerability, leading to a sense of isolation and lack of trust. Leader's role in facilitating change seemed to be missing as interviewees described no examples of how leaders had engaged with sensebreaking or sensegiving leading to perceptions that multi-agency work lacked importance in their understanding of who they are as teachers. Without others acting as a source of support during times of change, a vital source of construction of meaning is removed (Weick, 1993), limiting teachers' ability to make sense of the demands of multi-agency work.

Returning to Cheminais' (2009) five degrees of multi-agency work, this study has shown that teachers are far from the ultimate goal of full collaboration. Observations of multi-agency meetings revealed how professionals are co-existing with little work done to redefine professional boundaries, which would lead to newly developed job roles. Instead teachers' lack of sensemaking activities around multi-agency work led to conflict with external professionals as the roles they were expected to engage with did not make sense to teachers with the stable identity label of "educator." Eventually interviewee's feelings of vulnerability and chaos during multi-agency work saw them reject future engagement. At a time when teachers are coming under

increasing pressure to keep children safe, the need for collaboration is increased, as seen through more recent policy developments including the Prevent duty (DFE, 2015a). Without teachers being able to make sense of multi-agency work and transform their identity to include newly defined roles, questions remain about how far collaboration is going to function in practice.

This thesis contributes to the knowledge around how teachers engage with multi-agency policies at a time when the requirement to do so continues. Unlike many previous studies of how teachers engage with multi-agency work, it goes beyond the collection of quantitative data, looking instead at teacher's subjective experiences of multi-agency work as a result of the influence of their identity, identifying not only ways in which teachers engage with policy but also the micro-level factors influencing their ability to do so. Therefore, the focus of this thesis on how individuals engage with policy makes it an original contribution to knowledge around how teachers engage with multi-agency work and the factors which influence their ability to make changes in their working lives.

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## **Chapter 7 Appendix**

### **7.1 Invitation to Take Part**

Dear all,

I am currently completing a doctorate in Educational Studies at Keele University looking into the factors affecting teacher's engagement with multi-agency teams. I am carrying out the research to improve the quality of multi-agency working within school and therefore the support available to pupils to ensure that all their needs are met. I need to carry out interviews with ten members of staff to discuss their perceptions and experiences of working with other professionals. Anonymity and confidentiality will be paramount throughout the study. An information sheet is attached with further details of the study.

If you would be willing to take part please contact me for further details.

Many thanks

Rebecca Somerfield



## **7.2 Information Sheet**

### **Information Sheet**

**Study Title:** A case study looking at how teachers function as part of multi-agency teams and factors which impact on their ability to engage.

#### **Aims of the Research**

The study aims to identify how schools and teachers operationalise the key principles from the document Every Child Matters (ECM); specifically looking at how teachers engage with other professionals with whom they come into contact with. The research should help to find how ECM is operationalised within schools and how its principles function within teacher's daily practice. It should help understand factors which impact on teacher's ability to work as part of multi-agency teams, leading to a better understanding of how such work will be carried out in the future.

#### **Invitation**

You are being invited to consider taking part in the research study looking at how teachers function as part of multi-agency teams and factors which impact on their ability to engage. This project is being undertaken by Rebecca Somerfield.

Before you decide whether or not you wish to take part, it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read this information carefully and discuss it with friends and relatives if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is unclear or if you would like more information.

#### **Why have I been chosen?**

The study involves ten teachers working within the same setting. As part of your work you are expected to engage with other professionals; within meetings, during training, implementing advice on the most appropriate strategies for pupils within your care. It is this aspect of your role which I wish to investigate.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

You are free to decide whether you wish to take part or not. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign two consent forms, one is for you to keep and the other is for our records. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time and without giving reasons.

#### **What will happen if I take part?**

You will be asked for two interviews. Both will take place at a time and place of your convenience. In addition, a meeting involving professionals from other agencies will be observed. This will be part of your normal role in school and not additional to this.

### **If I take part, what do I have to do?**

If you agree to take part you will be asked to take part in 30-45-minute interview. This interview will be recorded on tape and transcribed, providing you with the opportunity to check what has been recorded. The interview questions will be centred the following themes;

- *Every Child Matters* and policies within school which drawn upon its principles;
- Working with professionals other than teachers;
- Interventions which you implement to meet the needs of learners within the classes you teach.

Following this an observation will take place of meeting with professionals belonging to a different agency. This could take the form of a review of special educational needs, discussions with medical professionals or discussions into the support requirements of pupils which you teach. The final stage will involve another 30-minute interview drawing on the previous observation.

### **What are the benefits (if any) of taking part?**

Through taking part in this study it is envisaged that you will develop a greater understanding of the benefits of working with other professionals to support pupils whom you teach. The information gained will be used to guide future meetings so that maximum benefit can be gained from such work.

### **What are the risks (if any) of taking part?**

There are no risks involved in taking part in the study unless instances of malpractice, as governed by the school policies, are uncovered.

### **How will information about me be used?**

The data from interviews and observations will be recorded on a Dictaphone and transcribed. Codes will then be allocated to different sections of the text. Extracts of coded sections will be used to illustrate points within the final thesis. This data will be published in the future. All transcripts will be made anonymous and confidential thereby protecting the participants are far as it is possible. However, it is important to note that 100% guarantee of confidentiality cannot be made.

### **Who will have access to information about me?**

Following interview all transcripts will be made anonymous by removing details such as names, ages and departments worked in. The school's details will be treated in the same manner by avoiding using the schools age, precise location, size and status. The data will be securely stored on a password protected computer. The data will be retained by the principal investigator for at least five years.

I do however have to work within the confines of current legislation over such matters as privacy and confidentiality, data protection and human rights and so offers of confidentiality may sometimes be overridden by law. For example, in circumstances whereby I am made aware of future criminal activity, abuse either to yourself or another (i.e. child or sexual abuse) or suicidal tendencies I must pass this information to the relevant authorities.

### **Who is funding and organising the research?**

The research phase of the project is being funded by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA).

### **What if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you may wish to speak to the researcher who will do their best to answer your questions. You should contact Rebecca Somerfield on [r.somerfield@ippm.keele.ac.uk](mailto:r.somerfield@ippm.keele.ac.uk). Alternatively, if you do not wish to contact the researcher you may contact Sally Findlow (my study supervisor) on email via [s.findlow@educ.keele.ac.uk](mailto:s.findlow@educ.keele.ac.uk). Sally Findlow is my supervisor at Keele University.

If you remain unhappy about the research and/or wish to raise a complaint about any aspect of the way that you have been approached or treated during the course of the study please write to Nicola Leighton who is the University's contact for complaints regarding research at the following address:

-

Nicola Leighton

Research Governance Officer

Research & Enterprise Services

Dorothy Hodgkin Building

Keele University

ST5 5BG

E-mail: [n.leighton@uso.keele.ac.uk](mailto:n.leighton@uso.keele.ac.uk)

Tel: 01782 733306

### 7.3 Consent Form

#### CONSENT FORM

**Title of Project:** A case study looking at how teachers function as part of multi-agency teams and factors which impact on their ability to engage.

**Name of Principal Investigator:** Rebecca Somerfield

*Please tick box if you agree with the statement*

- |   |  |                          |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | I agree to take part in this study.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | I understand that data collected about me during this study will be anonymised before it is submitted for publication.             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | I agree to be interviewed on two separate occasions.   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 | I agree to both interviews being audio recorded  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 | I agree to the observations of multi-agency meetings being audio recorded.   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

_____	_____	_____
Name of participant	Date	Signature

_____	_____	_____
Researcher	Date	Signature

## CONSENT FORM

(for use of quotes)

**Title of Project:** A case study looking at how teachers function as part of multi-agency teams and factors which impact on their ability to engage.

Name of Principal Investigator: Rebecca Somerfield

*Please tick box if you agree with the statement*

1 I agree for any quotes to be used ☐

2 I do not agree for any quotes to be used ☐

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

## 7.4 Semi-Structured Interview Questions and Prompts

Theme: **teacher's role**

Questions:

- Can you describe teachers' role (What does this mean for you daily?)
- What do you think is the most important aspect of your role? (Why? Who for?)
- Has what it means to be a teacher changed? (What you do or what your belief is important to teaching? Who makes changes to your role?)
- How do changes to the profession affect you as a teacher? (Does it change what you believe is important?)
- Do you think it's important to have a say in how the profession moves?
- What are your beliefs as a teacher? (what you think it vital to the profession)

Theme: **Multi-agency work**

Questions:

- Do you think your role extends beyond the academic? (Can you give examples?)
- What is multi-agency work? (what does it involve or how might it involve? For example, Every Child Matters)
- How does this impact on what you do each day? (does it change anything?)
- Does this change who you are as teachers? (i.e. your beliefs or values. Does this conflict with any of your beliefs about who you are as a teacher?)
- Can you give examples of work which requires multi-agency principles?
- Can you describe any examples of how you are expected to work as part of a team of wider professionals?
- Do school leaders discuss the role of multi-agency teams and the importance of working with them? (do they support you in your role?)
- Do you think this has changed over time?
- Do you think it's important for leaders to discuss aspects of your role? (What do leaders discuss with staff?)
- Do you know about the roles of external staff who might come into school? (Is there any crossover between your and their role?)
- How do multi-agency meetings run? (who leads them and what happens?)
- Do you think multi-agency work is needed in your role? (what do you or students gain from it?)

## 7.5 Transcripts

### Interview 1: Kate

*Interviewer: Can you describe teacher's role?*

Kate: Emm, to improve students, to get the best out of students. What do you mean? The whole role? To look after the student's welfare, look after the student's safety, improve their grades, help them get the best out of themselves. Ermm, also as a teacher you have to work as a member of a team as well so work together with other members of your department. Pause.

*Interviewer: There's quite a lot there isn't there?*

Kate: Yeah. A lot of things. The main bit is obviously the education part but there's a lot of other things that we do that perhaps people aren't aware of. All the coaching and supporting kids. We cover lots of things that perhaps are other job roles like social work, psychology and counselling.

*Interviewer: Do you think it's changed at all?*

Kate: Yeah, definitely.

*Interviewer: How's it changed?*

Kate: It's become more focused on grades and getting the grades than teaching what I would call proper S [subject].

*Interviewer: Has it changed other than the subject you teach? Has education changed at all?*

Kate: Has teaching changed at all? No, I think deep down the same message is there. We have to look after the health and safety of the kids and all the well-being of them. But I think sometimes it gets a bit lost with all the C grades and focus on the league tables. If we didn't have league tables it would be lovely.

*Interviewer: So, when things do change how do you find out about it?*

Kate: How am I informed?

*Interviewer: Yes, how are you informed?*

Kate: Usually from my line manager, that's X, or in the news or I go on the internet and find out through the exam boards.

*Interviewer: Do you feel that you have any input in that?*

Kate: No! (laugh)

*Interviewer: Why do you think that is?*

Kate: Cause we are not important enough. We are only teachers; we have no control over anything.

*Interviewer: Does it affect what you do in school?*

Kate: I suppose it does. I might resist doing things or not do them properly. [pause] You're not going to put loads of effort into doing something unless your hearts in it and you can see the value of it so yes, I would resist. I wouldn't if it would benefit the kids but if it's just some paper exercise then I would. I suppose I would still do it in the end but at least those in power would know that you're not happy about it and your voice has been heard.

*Interviewer: Why would you do it in the end?*

Kate: Because we have to. It's our job so we can resist for a bit but we still have to conform at the end of the day.

*Interviewer: Do you think that being able to control aspects of what you do is important to being a professional?*

Kate: Yes, I suppose I feel that I have to conform. It's different when you are in the situation as you feel like you have to do what is asked or risk your career. But yes, as professionals we should be able to say, "No, this is not why I went into teaching," and those in power should trust us to act as professionals and do our jobs. You don't think about it at the time, you feel angry or upset that people aren't listening to you but you end up thinking it must be me as no-one else is not doing this so you try and forget your concerns and get on with it.

*Interviewer: What do you think is the most important thing about what you do?*

Kate: What's the most important bit? [pause] That's a difficult question. I think it's all important but I would say the effect that you have on the children is the most important part, when you see the smile on their face and you know you have helped them. The best bit of my job is seeing, it's going to sound really tacky now, its seeing the children improving and so seeing them happy and confident. Seeing someone who couldn't do something and then at the end can actually do it. The learning. When they improve their grades and they know they have gone up. This is important as through them reaching their targets we achieve ours.



*Interviewer: What is your understanding of multi-agency work and how does it impact on what you do?*

Kate: Is it to make sure that every child matters, basically? So, you have to look out for every child in your class to make sure they don't miss out.

*Interviewer: So, what does this mean for what you have to do every day?*

Kate: Ermm, just looking out for every child. So, you know they're doing fine. So, my role is to make sure that some people weren't missing out because of their different needs. Everybody gets the same education whether they are disabled or special needs as in less intelligent. That sort of thing.

*Interviewer: Do you think this relates to what you do in school?*

Kate: Yeah. So, you need to make sure that you write your lesson plans and do all that sort of thing. That you are. [pause] As a teacher that's your role anyway. To make sure that every child in your class can access the curriculum with what you're teaching. [pause] With my tutor group I suppose it's more pastoral. So that's sort of again, looking after the well-being of the child rather than the educational needs. That sort of thing.

*Interviewer: When you say, "that sort of thing," what do you mean?*

Kate: [Pause] looking out for any issues that they might have and trying to help them. It's difficult to describe what you need to do until you're in that situation.

*Interviewer: Why is it difficult to describe these aspects of your role?*

Kate: I don't know. I suppose it's not something you are taught. No-one goes through this with you and teaches you what to do. No-one checks that you are doing it right. You're just expected to get on with it.

*Interviewer: How are you supported in this role? Do you think this aspect of your role involves other professionals?*

Kate: Well I suppose it should involve other professionals as teachers can't do everything but I don't know how that functions in practice. For me this type of work falls into the pastoral part of our role where we have to make sure that children are happy and safe.

*Interviewer: So, do you think having policies such as ECM in school, do you think that's changed teacher's role?*

Kate: Yeah, yeah. I think ECM has changed teacher's roles. More teachers are aware of it. When I started it wasn't ECM, I don't know what it was but I didn't know anything about these issues. I don't remember ever having training about what to look out for or how to work with others. But since ECM came into place, I think more people are aware of it as I think it encourages you to think more about the children that you have got. It makes you think about whether children are progressing in all areas and happy or whether there are other issues holding them back.

*Interviewer: So, when these changes have come about, when you are thinking about the welfare, what were your views of it?*

Kate: What, when it first came in?

*Interviewer: Yeah*

Kate: I thought it was a good idea, but to be honest I was a bit panicky and thinking is it going to be more work for me. But I think to be honest its more common sense. It's what you do anyway but it's actually written down so people who don't naturally do it, will do it.

*Interviewer: So, you don't think its more work?*

Kate: No

*Interviewer: The people who didn't do it. Why do you think they didn't do it?*

Kate: I think for some people they didn't really engage with the changes from ECM because I don't think everybody cares as much as they should. To be a teacher you should be caring and have the children's interests at the forefront of your mind. Can I say that? [Laugh] I think they did carry out the functions of the policy but it was more like a tick box exercise and I don't think this aspect of the job can be done like that. You need to care about the children and what you are doing otherwise you can't engage.

*Interviewer: Do you think it's changed what is important to teachers?*

Kate: Yes.

*Interviewer: Do you think it conflicts with any other parts of your job?*

Kate: No, I don't think it conflicts.

*Interviewer: So, if you had a concern about someone's welfare or needs being met. What would you do?*

Kate: I would come to you.

*Interviewer: And what else?*

Kate: If it was my tutor group or a child, I knew, well I would talk to them first and find out what their problems are and then go to the right people, either the nurse or to you and try to help in whatever way I could.

*Interviewer: Thinking now about teacher's own views of themselves. Teacher's identity, how they think about themselves and how they place themselves in society. What do you think is teachers' role in society is in relation to others? How do they place themselves in society?*

Kate: I think teacher's role is to educate the children and to help socially, morally and ethically, all those words.

*Interviewer: So, how does it relate to other professionals? Is there any cross-over?*

Kate: Yeah. We should [emphasis on word] be able to work together. So, if there was a child like X, we should be able to work with the visually impaired people or all the people who help her health wise even though we are helping her education wise. I'm not sure though whether we teachers have the skills they need to talk to other professionals.

*Interviewer: What do you think is important for teacher in terms of qualities, values and skills?*

Kate: You need to be down to earth, knowledgeable; you don't need to love yourself. Your communication skills have got to be good. You have got to have good relationships. You have relationships with staff and students. All those sort of things.

*Interviewer: In order to do the job what do teachers need in terms of resources, such as qualifications or things about them? Teacher's attributes that they need?*

Kate: They need a good knowledge obviously, a degree in the subject they teach in. They need communication skills, they need empathy. Is that a good word empathy? They need to be able to get on with people.

*Interviewer: Where do you think in terms of social hierarchy teachers come?*

Kate: They don't need to be gods like doctors. This is probably completely wrong but remember I am old but I would there are a lot of teachers in this school who think they are god and I am afraid you are a teacher you are not God. I would say teachers are middlish. I wouldn't even say teachers are that high up really.

*Interviewer: Do you think that causes problems when you are working with people who think they are good?*

Kate: Yeah.

*Interviewer: What kind of problems?*

Kate: Because they think that they are god. The biggest problem I think is a teacher, because they are used to talking to kids cannot talk to people. Cannot talk to professionals. Cannot talk to doctors. There is no way would go in and pretend I was better than a doctor. Some teachers do.

*Interviewer: How do teachers pretend to be better than doctors?*

Kate: They pretend to be more important. Perhaps they aren't always honest about what is happening in order to make them look better.

*Interviewer: Do you think doctors sometimes come in and think they are better than us?*

Kate: Oh yeah. Doctors think they are better than anybody. You respect doctors more than teachers which maybe wrong but doctors are saving lives aren't they.

*Interviewer: How would this impact on you in a meeting?*

Kate: I would probably listen to what a doctor said more than anyone else. So, if they asked to do something I would do it without questioning it. If I was told to do something by a teacher, I would question it first.

*Interviewer: Why would you not question what you were asked to do if it came from a doctor?*

Kate: Because they know more, are better trained so you respect them more so you wouldn't question what they were asking of you.

*Interviewer: Do you think when ECM came in and changed teachers' role, do you think it's changed teachers position in society and how people view them?*

Kate: I suppose they were given a bit more power but I don't think anyone should have power over anyone anyway. We should all be working together.

*Interviewer: Ok. Thinking about all the people teachers have to work with, what professional groups do teachers have to communicate with?*

Kate: So, people like Ed pyschs [educational psychologists] and people like that. The nurse here, she's a professional. She's not just a nurse. [pause] ermm, people like the visually impaired and the women that comes in for Chris, the deaf people and those sort of people. [pause] I would have thought social workers, but not me cause I am not that high up but I am sure you have. [pause] ermm, who else ...

*Interviewer: So, thinking about those people what form does the communication take place? Is it a meeting or does written communication go back and forth?*

Kate: I would say both.

*Interviewer: Do you think that's enough? Do you think it's good enough to aid communication?*

Kate: Just written?

*Interviewer: The way it's happening at the moment. Do you think you get enough communication?*

Kate: Me personally?

*Interviewer: Yes.*

Kate: Yeah. No. I don't deal with them really do I?

*Interviewer: Why is that?*

Kate: They don't really impact on what I do so there's no need for me to meet with them. We do completely different jobs so there's no reason for any crossover between us.

*Interviewer: Do you think you could gain anything from working with other professionals?*

Kate: I don't see how. They are not experts in teaching so how can they support us teaching the kids.

*Interviewer: But you may pass on information to them about some pupils in your tutor group for example?*

Kate: But I think it's more an in-school than an out-school thing. The powers that be know, for example ... might have a meeting but he won't tell me even though they are in my PT [personal tutor group]. But that's more in school than communicating with outside school.

*Interviewer: Do you think it would be more useful if you would be allowed to be part of those meetings?*

Kate: Yes. [pause] definitely.

*Interviewer: So, how could those meetings take place and what would make them better?*

Kate: You could have a meeting in school and you could also invite, not all teachers would want to go anyway but you could invite teachers along and they could put their point of view especially as a tutor [pause], I would say.

*Interviewer: Why would not all the teachers want to go?*

Kate: Because they have other things they need to do. Not everybody values the pastoral side as everything is about results nowadays.

*Interviewer: So, do you think if there was a meeting in school and everyone was sat round a table would everyone be able to give their opinion freely and listen to each other's advice?*

Kate: Depends who is chairing the meeting. Well I would but I am a strong person.

*Interviewer: So, if they were to suggest to you strategies for you to implement how would you take that?*

Kate: Depends I suppose. So, what if they were like criticising what I was doing or suggesting. If they thought they know better than me, [pause] I would do it but I may grumble about it but then you would still do it.

*Interviewer: The fact you are not very happy about it, do you think it would affect how you implement them?*

Kate: Yeah. But then I suppose it depends how they put it across. If they put it across as, I don't know, X would be better if you did this and this and this and it sounded like I was helping her. If they put it across as a criticism it would get my back up but if they said you were doing really well but we can make it better than that would be fine. It depends on how they talk to you.

*Interviewer: Are you saying that the way things are put is important?*

Kate: Yes, as it is very easy to misunderstand people. We are all coming at it from very different angles so it would be easy to take something the wrong way. We will all be looking for different things so the lady who work with X may be looking at her eyesight and making a negative judgement because of that whilst I will be looking at how she is doing in class.

*Interviewer: So, what kind of things would aid it? How could you make that process better?*

Kate: Well I suppose it might be better that in the meeting [pause] there are other people there that would say, maybe stand up for you so you are not just being criticised all the time so if we are talking about X, if [pause] was there going [pause] you are doing a good job but.

*Interviewer: Some kind of advocate?*

Kate: Yeah. So, you have some friends with you so you are not on your own. Not like you on your own with all these outside people going blab bla bla... Cause that would do.

*Interviewer: Do you think it's a two-way process or do you think it's just going do this and this and this?*

Kate: Well it should be a two way. They should listen to us as well [pause] cause it's alright them telling us what to do but they don't teach so how do they know what goes on in a lesson. It would be useful to have maybe two meetings, [pause] they would advise things, you go away and try it and then come back and say well I tried this and it didn't work then you can feel like you are putting your point of view.

## **Interview 2: Kate**

*Interviewer: What was the reason for the meeting you attended?*

Kate: She came in, well actually I didn't know she was coming in, so that was a bad point to start with cause at least if I was aware. I didn't know what the meeting was for, she just came in and expected me to drop everything. She obviously thinks she's more important than me.

*Interviewer: How did not knowing she was coming in affect you?*

Kate: Well if I don't know, how can I prepare? I had no idea what happens at these meetings so it allowed her to take over and I didn't really know what to say. She didn't let us explain anything so we just all sat there.

*Interviewer: So, did no-one explain to you what was going to happen and how it would impact on what you do?*

Kate: No. The meeting just started and that was it. We were left to try and figure it out ourselves.

*Interviewer: Did you leave with a sense of what the meeting was about?*

Kate: No. I didn't see the point. If it was going to be important to what we do then surely someone should have made us aware.

*Interviewer: Do you think this is an indication that teachers' roles are changing?*

Kate: No. It won't change what I do.

*Interviewer: Why?*

Kate: Why should it? Why should I change what I do? I sat there as she was talking and felt out of my depth. I had no idea what she was talking about and it left me feeling anxious. Why should I let someone make me feel like that? At the end of the day my role is to teach kids so she can go on about all these other things she wants me to do but it's not my job so no.

*Interviewer: Can you describe what happened at the meeting?*

Kate: I walked into my lesson and she was sitting there. She was obviously part of X's team who check her visual needs or whatever. Erhh but she didn't introduce herself so I went over and introduced myself which I thought if you're coming into my classroom it's a bit rude but, so I started carrying on with the lesson and afterwards spoke to her and at that point she was speaking to K ermm and basically she was saying that X needs this and X needs that bla bla bla but not at any point did she ask how we felt X was getting on. Not at any point did she allow us to explain why X was writing, she looked at X's work and said why hasn't X written this as K had written it but on that day X was having problems with her eyes so K had taken over so it was like she was there to put her point of view but not to ask how we thought she was doing. If that makes sense.

*Interviewer: Do you think she came in with a set agenda?*

Kate: Yes, she definitely came in with a set agenda.

*Interviewer: Why?*

Kate: I don't know. Whether it's part of her job to suggest things. I don't think she came in. So, I think her job is to look after X which is all well and good but she didn't ask us and we teach her all the time, she didn't ask my opinion on anything. She was on about getting slanted desks things but X said she wouldn't use it so she didn't ask X cause X doesn't like to be different to everybody else and she does use her things when she needs to ermm and then she looks at her poster and moaned about the colours she used. X had a choice, she goes to the felt pens, she chooses what



colours she want so she came in she'd got an agenda, I don't think she came in to criticise us I just felt that that's how she came across.

*Interviewer: Why do you have this perception?*

Kate: Because all she did was criticise what we were doing. She didn't allow us to explain why we do things in certain ways. She just wanted to get her point across and let us know that we weren't doing things right even though we have worked with that pupil to develop what we are doing.

*Interviewer: When you said that she didn't allow you to explain what you were doing, how exactly did she do this?*

Kate: She didn't ask for my opinion once. I would have expected her to be asking me what I thought was best but that didn't happen. I suppose I could have tried to explain but I got the impression that that wouldn't have been welcomed.

*Interviewer: Why do you think that?*

Kate: I don't know. It's just the impression I got. Perhaps it's down to the fact that she knows more about how to work with children with these kind of difficulties.

*Interviewer: Do you think the structure of the meeting was clear at the start?*

Kate: No, I don't. I had no idea whose meeting it was, who was in charge. If we meet in school like in our departments, it's very clear. The head of department is in charge and they carry out the meeting using a set agenda. We all know what to expect and who to talk to. That didn't happen with this meeting. She came into school so I got the impression that she thought it was her meeting but she came into us and used our rooms so surely it should be run by someone from school.

*Interviewer: So, why do you think the meeting was held?*

Kate: I have no idea. She certainly didn't value me and my role. She left me feeling like my role as a teacher wasn't good enough and she could do it much better than me. There needed to be someone from school there to run the meeting.

*Interviewer: Why do you think this is important?*

Kate: Because I don't work for her so surely there needs to be someone from my organisation there to speak on my behalf. They could have then demanded that we follow an agenda like we do in our meetings so I knew what would be happening.

*Interviewer: Why is it important to have someone to speak on your behalf?*

Kate: Because she obviously thought she was better than me so that she was in charge but there's no way she wanted to listen to anything I said so you do need someone there who is told by the school that they have responsibility.

*Interviewer: Do you think the person in charge should be from the school?*

Kate: Yes, as they are meeting with us. They would know how school works and therefore focus the meeting and what we want to talk about. Having someone else in charge means they expect to talk about things which have nothing to do with us, which aren't part of what we do.

*Interviewer: So, how did having no-one from school to manage the meeting affect you?*

Kate: Well I couldn't speak up. I'm not usually someone who's quiet and holds my tongue but I had no idea of how the meeting was run so how am I supposed to know when to speak? She left me feeling like I couldn't speak so that when she was telling me I should be doing and that I couldn't answer her back. It left me confused as to what my role is. There's no way I am meeting her again.

*Interviewer: So, do you think she came in thinking I have got to make myself useful by suggesting things?*

Kate: YES, I think.

*Interviewer: So why do you think she didn't work with X or us very well?*

Kate: I think the way she came in and I think, [pause] I don't think she was there to criticise us but the way she was I got that impression. Coming in, cause she came to us, we didn't ask her to come to us, do you know what I mean? To me the way she handled it wasn't right because if someone is coming in to meet me, one I would like to know about it beforehand and two I would have got up and introduced myself if I was her straight away and said I am X's learning aid/visual aid person la la la I just want to see what's going on and then asked my opinion, ask K's opinion, ask X what she likes, rather than being she needs this and that if that makes sense.

*Interviewer: How did this make you feel about the meeting?*

Kate: Not great. I do think if people come into to see us it does need to be on equal terms. I don't mind people saying well this could be better but they have to do it in a way that doesn't leave you feelings rubbish. You know you need to feel respected. Perhaps if she had come in differently, I

would have felt I could have spoken up more the way she was I couldn't. There's no trust there. How can she expect me to be honest with her about what's happening if I know she is just going to criticise what I do? So, you know, I know that she is involved with X but it's my classroom not hers so I would expect her to ask me if she can come and work in here. Classrooms are where we teachers work not other services so I felt it was a little bit rude for her to come in and expect me to talk to her.

*Interviewer: Do you think other services should be able to come and work in schools?*

Kate: I don't see why not if it's done properly but we have to have control over the process. At the end of the day schools are where we work not them and it's our role to make sure students make progress. So, if they want to come in and work with students on other issues that's fine if they have our permission.

*Interviewer: Do you think it would be the same no-matter what school she went to?*

Kate: Oh yeah. I don't think it was [pause] I think it was the way she was. But I don't think the way she was is going to get the best out of the teacher or the child.

*Interviewer: Why do you think she feels teachers should not have a voice?*

Kate: Why maybe she knows more, which she probably does, about visual impairment. But she doesn't know, I don't think, I may be wrong, I didn't get the impression that she knew more about X, we see X everyday so we know. Yes, she may know about visual impairment and what may be best for her but X is a different person she her own person, we have got to work with her you can't just say you have got to have this. Like you can't just say you have got to wear your glasses if she doesn't want to, you have got to work with her. It's probably not her fault as she doesn't work with her everyday but what she did wrong was to not ask us or X's opinion.

*Interviewer: Do you think we are more centred around the pupil whilst other people are ticking boxes?*

Kate: YEAH. Because we see them every day, we see them as a whole person. I don't just see X as a visually impaired kid, you know if she wants to go and pick up a purple, she can pick purple, I am not going to go and say to her you can't see properly with purple, do you know what I mean? I am marking it and I can see it.

*Interviewer: Do you think the meeting has changed your ideas about what roles teachers need to perform?*

Kate: No, not at all. Our job is to get results not get involved in other issues. I know she tried to make us feel like we're responsible but, how are we?

*Interviewer: At any point did you feel that it might be important to do some of the roles she suggested?*

Kate: Well [pause] the way she was talking did make me feel quite nervous as she was going on that we have to do this and then that. It was just overwhelming. At that point I really stopped trying. I just needed to remember what my role is and not let anyone make me feel worried about all these other things that they want me to do.

*Interviewer: What do you think teacher's role is?*

Kate: To educate children.

*Interviewer: So, if you were to label this role what term would you use?*

Kate: Educator. I am there to make sure children are educated.

*Interviewer: When you say educator what exactly do you mean?*

Kate: We teach children. So, they come into our classrooms and we teach them. It really ends there. Yes, we have to plan and to do that we do need to think about different children and their needs but it's only our job to make sure our work is doable. It definitely not my role to work on helping children overcome these difficulties.

*Interviewer: So, do you feel that the word educator is still the best word to define what you do?*

Kate: Yes.

*Interviewer: Do you think the meaning of this may have changed slightly after the meeting?*

Kate: No. It's not changed at all. She went on that we all have to work together to solve these issues and I know X needs support for these, it's not my job. At the end of the day teacher's role is to get children exam results.

*Interviewer: What role do you think this person was trying to get you to perform?*

Kate: I have no idea. It was all very confusing. I don't know how you could define what role she was trying to get perform but I suppose somewhere along the lines of social worker, health worker. I don't know.

*Interviewer: So, can you describe what you would have been expected to do as part of these roles?*

Kate: Not really. [pause] I don't know. I mean she was going on about health and development and working with families but it wasn't really clear. So sorry no.

*Interviewer: Do you see it as being part of your role as an educator to work together with others at meetings like the one you were at?*

Kate: No. I didn't think it before and I definitely don't now. If she was coming to give me ideas of what I could do to help X get better grades then I might change my mind but that's not what she did. It was all about getting me to do other people's roles. At the end of the day I am a teacher, you know an educator, I am not there for her medical or home needs.

*Interviewer: Would you be able to implement the strategies she suggested or do you think you wouldn't be able to do them fully because of how she was?*

Kate: I think because of how she was I wouldn't, No I wouldn't want to. She made me feel like I had all this responsibility when what right does she have to say my job has to change. If X wanted them then I would but because I know X doesn't like to be different, I might try rather than buying this thing she wanted us to buy maybe putting a book there or something that wasn't saying I am visually impaired, I have got this great big fat thing in-front of me. So, I may take on board her ideas if I feel they would affect what I do in the classroom but otherwise no especially considering how she was. But I think if she had put it in a nicer way, I might have thought about it a bit more. If she had come in and respected how we work in school and our role with students I would have been more willing to listen and take on board what she said.

### 7.5.2 Jean

*I: Can you describe your role as a teacher?*

J: Ermm, educating obviously, ermm (pause) I haven't actually thought about this since my PGCE. It's the kind of thing you do every day though. I suppose being a disciplinarian. Some kids need discipline as they don't get it at home. They need that structure.

*I: What kind of thing do you do every day?*

J: Just educating children in our classes. Teaching.

*I: Can you describe the roles you undertake every day? In other words what you do and why you do it.*

J: Well it's difficult for me as I am quite new to it. We are just there to educate the children. To make sure that they are taught what they need to pass their exams. The rest of it I haven't thought about since I was studying but being a teacher means you have to think about educating in terms of subject content as it's the exam side which we get judged upon through Ofsted and league tables. Even in school now we have to account for every grade that pupils gain. If pupils don't achieve the result that they expect then it reflects poorly on us as teachers. If we want to progress in our careers, we need to be seen to be doing our job well which nowadays means making sure kids pass exams.

*I: So, what does this mean for what you do every day?*

J: Well I suppose most of what I do is to make sure I fulfil my role as an educator. So, I spend my time planning my lessons and teaching so that pupils are able to get the exam results that they and the school need.

*I: What about your beliefs as a teacher? What do you think is important for all teachers?*

J: I suppose to want the best for all children. We have to believe we can make a difference so they can achieve what they need.

*I: What do you mean by wanting the best for children?*

J: We educate them so they can achieve the best exam results they can. So, they get the best job that they are capable of.

*I: So, achievement of academic results is for you central to what teachers do?*

J: Yes.

*I: Do you think this will always be the case or could this change?*

J: I don't think so. Things in education are always changing. You know the government decides one-minute teachers are doing this and then they change their minds so it's important we know who we are.

*I: So, do you believe those in government may think teachers do something different to what you think?*

J: [pause] ermm. I don't know. [pause] So much changes in schools that it's hard to know what people want from us. It's important to stick to our core role.

*I: Which is?*

J: Education.

*I: So, do you think that what is important to teachers has changed?*

J: I don't know. We are educators so we know what our role is but what the government wants does seem to change, [pause] so I don't know.

*I: What does this label 'educator' mean to you?*

J: [pause] I'm not sure as so much has changed in schools over the last few years.

*I: But if you were to describe to someone what this means what would you say?*

J: [pause] to educate children. Teach them what they need to know to pass exams.

*I: So, has this label changed over recent years?*

J: No [pause] I don't think so. [pause] teachers' role has always been to educate students.

*I: What does ECM mean to you?*

J: For me ECM means to keep an eye out for any issues that students maybe having, so more of a pastoral role.

*I: So, you provide things that should be at home but actually not?*

J: Well in a lot of cases yeah, unfortunately. Because of the area that we work in. A lot of the time we have to act like the police or social workers to make sure that children develop some sense of discipline.

*I: What about your perception when you were a child and how you see your role now? Does your role extend to wider aspects of work beyond meeting academic targets?*

J: Yes, we do have to support children on wider issues. Ermm [pause] It's hard because I never saw teachers having to deal with those kind of aspects. Ermm [pause] I should imagine there's more awareness of having to, I suppose since ECM was implemented, there is more awareness of those sorts of aspects.

*I: What do you mean that sort of aspects?*

J: I never realised that teachers spent so much time dealing with issues other than education such as looking at families and whether children are safe outside of school.

*I: So, you're having to pick up a lot more things?*

J: Yeah.

*I: What kind of things do you have to do as part of this role?*

J: I have to identify if children are well and happy. So, if there are any issues within homes or they don't look well or aren't safe.

*I: What happens when you have identified issues with a child?*

J: Ermm [pause] I pass it on to the person in charge.

*I: What happens next?*

J: Well I suppose different people may come in and work with that child or we as a school may have to support them.

*I: In what way would the school have to support them?*

J: Well we may have to talk to families and sort out their issues or help clothe the child and generally look after them.

*I: How would you define this part of your role?*

J: I suppose you could say we are like social workers as we have to do their role.

*I: You use the role of other professionals in your description of what you do to fulfil wider aspects of your role. Do you believe that in order to carry out these wider aspects that you need to carry out the role of other professionals?*

J: To an extent. We have to care but there also has to be limitations. Although I do believe we are expected to do parts of a social workers role, this is not central to what we do and we have to recognise our professional boundaries. I can sit and talk to students and be an ear for them but at the end of the day my role is to support them academically. It is beyond my role to do anything more.

*I: Why is this?*

J: Well it comes down to who we think we are. I consider myself an educator there to pass on knowledge to students. I am judged in this role as is the school. I can't go carrying out



roles which take my attention away from this as it will affect what I do. If I did, I or my school wouldn't be very happy come results day in the summer.

*I: So, if things change in your role, how do you get informed about it? Does someone tell you or do you have to go and find it out yourself?*

J: Well there has been a lot of changes recently. Most of the stuff I have been told second hand. I suppose if it's things like new policies you can always read the Times Ed and stuff like that.

*I: Thinking about all the things you have said about your role, what is the most important thing for you in your role?*

J: The teaching aspect I would say as that is the one thing they won't get at home.

*I: So, it's the one thing out of all the other things that they cannot get anywhere else?*

J: Yeah. The teaching.

*I: Looking at ECM, do you know what was the context which it was written in?*

J: Because of Victoria Climbié and other kids who had fallen through the net as it was. There was not enough coherence I suppose between different agencies.

*I: How does that relate to your role?*

J: Well we are one of the main agencies that deal with children, (Pause) so we have to be on the ball looking for signs of abuse or concerns which we then obviously relate to you. It's not really a standalone policy in school but is in all that we do.

*I: Do you think that's changed aspects of teacher's role, as you said that teaching was the most important aspect? Do you think ECM has changed this?*

J: Yeah, I think so. We have to be far more aware of it I suppose and we have to know common signs and keep an eye out. I suppose it fits into the pastoral role that we have to do.

*I: Have you found any difficulties with these changes needed in awareness and changes in the role? Has anything prevented you from doing it particularly well?*

J: Do you mean with my actual role?

*I: Yeah. Anything which hinders it in school.*

J: Well I suppose with the workload I am quite tired all the time. So, I suppose I may drop a comment every so often when I am tired or if I am trying to deal with the behaviour of other students, I may miss it.

*I: So, do you think ECM and the changes it brought in conflict with anything else that you have to do?*

J: Definitely, like I have just said, knowing the what the signs are and being able to recognise them are two different things, (pause) because if you are not on top of your game you might not be able to recognise it. (pause) You might just think it's another one of those things. It's quite hard.

*I: What about if you identified somebody that you thought something is not quite right. What would you do?*

J: I would probably send an email to you.

*I: Looking at teachers, they have their own way of seeing themselves in relation to others. What do you think teacher's identity is? What do they value about their role? If they were to describe their role to somebody what would they describe?*

J: Ermm (pause) I suppose good at their job, so, a good teacher or facilitator of learning.

*I: How would they measure that? What would they say? I'm good at my job because I can...*

J: Well, I suppose performance tables and you know what you have at the end of the year [pause] appraisals. Whether you use a lot of the AFL techniques. Things like that.

*I: What personal qualities do you think makes a good teacher?*

J: I think you have to be robust (pause) and ADAPTABLE DEFINATELY. (Laugh)

*I: In order to carry out their role what things do you think teachers need to be in possession of? So, for example do they need certain aspects of knowledge or qualifications or social standing or power?*

J: To be a teacher or for anyone?

*I: To be a teacher.*

J: Qualifications in the relevant subject. Good listening skills especially if you are going down the ECM route. You have to be able to be ASSERTIVE. Instil discipline when its needed.

*I: Do you think teachers need to at a certain hierarchy in society? Do they need to be equal to everyone else or above others?*

J: I think we are all just regular people. I think if you go into a classroom thinking you are better than the kids in your class or their parents you are setting yourself up for a fall. Cos most of us aren't. I am from a working-class background. Most people are, aren't they?

*I: Who do you think teachers need to engage and talk to as part of their role?*

J: In the wider community, outside of the school?

*I: Yes. Agencies that come into school.*

J: Ermm I suppose people from specialist agencies that come in to do training for us. Or people who are coming in to take different parts of the curriculum so when we are doing sex ed. Last year we had the nurse come in and help us out with the sex ed part so she talked to the pupils

educating them about the dangers. Last year we had the man come in to do alcohol awareness and things like that. That's all I can think of from my personal point of view.

*I: Can you think of any situations where an outside professional might come in to support a child rather than be involved in delivering the curriculum?*

J: No. I wasn't really aware that people from outside of education come into school.

*I: What do you think multi-agency teams might involve?*

J: I don't know enough about what different agencies do so I don't know how they could help support a child in school.

*I: Why do you think we ask these people to come in?*

J: Well, to help us do our job I suppose. We can't be a specialist in everything. I mean I am a chemist; I am not a specialist in alcohol awareness. It's everyone working together to benefit the children.

*I: Do you think there is a hierarchy of professionals?*

J: Ermm I think a lot of people think there is. Me personally? I don't think there is. I think we all just do a professional role but I know if you asked kids, they would think doctors are more important than teachers and teachers are more important than someone who works in industry or something like that.

*I: If we had a meeting with different professionals coming in to meet about a child, do you think everybody would have the same kind of values or do you think there may be some kind of conflict?*

J: I'd HOPE we all would. I'd hope we all had similar values but this may not be the case, but I suppose we may have all been looking at it from a different point of view. There might be issues there. We might have disagreements if one agency saw something as a risk and another agency might not necessarily think that that is a risk.

*I: How would that get worked out?*

J: I have no clue actually. I don't know what we would do in that situation. Is there a person who has a more senior decision on it?

*I: Someone would chair it. Knowing that this is likely how would you feel about attending such a meeting?*

J: It makes me more hesitant. Our job can be demanding enough without having to justify ourselves constantly. If others do not understand what's important for teaching then it would make me not want to put myself in that position. If I did have to go then maybe I wouldn't get involved as much as I would do if it was a meeting with just teachers.

*I: If we had a meeting with none educational people and they were saying I want you to do this and this and this with this child how would you respond?*

J: Ermm I would be open minded but ermm (pause) it depends if it was reasonable and if I could fit it in with my particular role. That wouldn't be an issue as that's what we have to do, it's part of our job. If they were asking me to do things which would be very difficult for me to do as a teacher [pause], I would obviously let them know about that and see if we could work out some sort of compromise between the two of us. They often have very unrealistic expectations of what we do and I suppose we might have the unrealistic expectations of what they do day-to-day.

*I: Do you think you would be able to say to them this doesn't work? Do you think that actually happens?*

J: I'd like to think so I suppose in the real world it probably doesn't. Everyone is pushed for a deadline and everyone has other things to be thinking about so we probably would have to go ahead and do what we are told.

*I: Why would you do as you were told if you disagree with it?*

J: Because that's what we have to do.

*I: So, you feel that a lot of time resources are taken up by it?*

J: Oh definitely.

*I: So, what would make the process better? How could we make sure that it is collaboration and not just people trying to impose things?*

J: It's difficult really because we don't have an idea of each other's roles. Training. Maybe some sort of training or experience of each other's roles. Maybe a day spent shadowing someone so you could get a flavour of what each of the different organisations has to deal with. They could have more realistic expectations of what you expect each other to do.

### 7.5.3 Hayley

*I: Can you describe teacher's role? What kind of things you do every day?*

H: I don't know where to start (pause). There are so many things we do. OBSVIOUSLY there is the teaching of the subject. I think to try and provide a positive role model is quite important. An important part of teacher's role is to try and to get them to have a sense of morals in the world and what's right and wrong. I think that's quite important you know aside from all the subject stuff yet it gets overlooked in favour of the subject side. It's important that we are able to get the exam results for students that they need. We are given targets each year for each student so it's important that we achieve these. So, for me we are educators.

*I: Do you think roles have changed over the last ten years or so?*

H: I think there is more emphasis now on exam results than there used to be. There is too much of a push of getting those 5A\*-C grades for some students. For some students that's never going to be a realistic option for them and they still need to feel that what they are doing is important. We're not looking after the well-being of every child if we focus on often unrealistic targets. They are still gaining something from it so maybe a skills-based sort of thing would benefit some students rather than. [pause] So, yes, I do feel it's changed from when I was at school as I feel there was more time for caring and less about what grades we got.

*I: You have identified well-being and caring as part of your role. Can you describe how you engage with these aspects?*

H: I suppose it's just having time for students. So, they come into your classroom having that time to talk to them and find out what is going on in their life. We need to care to show them we want the best for them and we are there to help them achieve the grades they need not just for the school but for them.

*I: So, what would you do if you a concern was raised about a child?*

H: I pass it on.

*I: What happens after that?*

H: I suppose other services would get involved. [pause] I don't really know as it's not really linked to what I do.

*I: Do you think you have a role working with these other services?*

H: No as they do their bit and I do mine. So, no I don't really know what they do but why should I. I need to make sure they are able to do well in the classroom. I can't help them with family issues or problems with their health.

*I: Have you ever come across teachers being asked to work with other services in supporting children with these wider issues?*

H: No [pause]. I don't know of anyone being asked to do that. We can't do other's roles.

I: Do you believe that multi-agency work involves teachers having to carry out other professional's roles?

H: I would have thought so. We are expected to do so much and there is always talk that other services like social care and health are so stretched, so yes, I do believe that given the chance we be expected to take on their roles.

I: How will you engage with this?

H: Why I won't. It's not what we do as teachers. We can care but at the end of the day our role is to teach children. How I am supposed to deal with some of the issues that children come into school with today? I can't. I don't have the knowledge or the skills to help them and if I did what would be the effect on my role as a teacher. I'm sure results would be affected and then that would impact on the school.

I: Why do you think engaging with such work would threaten results?

H: Well in order to engage I would need to develop these skills. I don't have the time to do this. Plus, kids know that my role is to teach them a subject. I think this would confuse them if suddenly we start getting involved in other aspects of their life. We all have our role and I think this needs to be maintained to stop confusion.

I: Can you describe any examples of how you are expected to work as part of a team of wider professionals?

H: No. It's not something we do.

I: What about your role in safeguarding students?

H: We have to make sure that students who we teach are safe and well.

I: What would you do if you were concerned about a student?

H: I would pass it on to the person in charge.

I: What would they do?

H: I don't know, my job is to pass things on.

I: Have you ever had anyone from a different service discuss a student with you?

H: Not to me directly. I have been to meeting and there may be other people there but they aren't working with me directly, they aren't impacting on what I am doing.

I: What do you think their role is within these meetings?

H: I don't really know. I suppose to find out about the child.

I: Do you ever get asked to support a child because of that meeting or working with that professional?

H: Kind of. I get asked by staff in school to perhaps spend more time with them or provide additional support but this is the kind of thing that happens anyway. It's not because someone outside of school attended a meeting.

*I: How do you think that's going to affect pupils?*

H: It's going to really demoralise them. They are going to feel really useless.

*I: What do you think is the most important thing if you were to pick one thing?*

H: For the students to get out of education?

*I: For you in your role.*

H: Ermm I think kind of the coaching aspect. I know I should be more bothered about the physics but I think it's more important that they are a confident and happy individual rather than someone who can recite equations. Do you know what I mean?

*I: Looking at ECM do you know how it came about or some of the context in which it was written?*

H: Ermm it was, wasn't it the poor treatment of students?

*I: Do you think this relates to your role in school?*

H: Definitely. I don't think I was ever really taught it. It was just something [pause] for me I think it was just something from when I first started teaching. It's never been a rule; I don't think it was something that has changed over time. I think it's just something that everyone should do. I am a naturally caring kind of person. I think that helps in terms of that aspect of the job really. I think that this aspect should be at the core of teaching and it shouldn't matter what other initiatives come into schools. It's the pastoral side of the job, caring for students.

*I: Do you think this is the same for everyone?*

H: I would like to think so but possibly not. You'd like to think that everyone cares and this is what they always put first but I do think that some people will only do these things if they are told to and they have to be seen to be doing the right thing. As soon as people stop looking, they stop. That's the problem with ECM. No-one checks on it anymore so people have stopped caring.

*I: Why do you think this is?*

H: I think for most people teaching isn't just a job but how you are as a person. You go into teaching because you want to care. Other people just have different values. The essence of WHY you teach is not there.

*I: You say you were never taught it. Do you think lots of things get left untaught? That with these initiatives no-one really tells anyone about it.*

H: POSSIBLY. I think a lot of (pause) maybe, I'm sorry, You make the assumption that what you do in your classroom is the same as what everyone else does in their classroom. Only through training sessions and observations do you realise that's not the case and not everyone acts or

teaches in the same way, so that whilst I'd like to think that this is something that is naturally embedded in everyone's teaching maybe it's not and it does need flagging up in schools and people being made more aware of it. I do think it's the younger staff that don't fully understand the need to be caring. They are so focused on other issues. If schools placed more value on this then maybe caring would be more valued by everyone."

*I: Do you think there is not enough focus in policies and training for the whole staff? Do you think people are not saying this is an important part of our role?*

H: I think you could be right there, there isn't enough training or focus within the policies. It might be that we need to make teachers more aware of it. I think because there is such an emphasis on the exam results, I think that the student's get lost to a degree sometimes. They're just a number rather than a person. They're the difference between 61 and 63% really.

*I: So, it should change teacher's role but it doesn't all the time?*

H: Yeah.

*I: Ok. So, if you were concerned about someone what would you do?*

H: I tend to have, it's happened a few times, a little informal chat with the nurse. That tends to be the way I go about it and she will either act on my behalf or make further enquiries. I sometimes feel that I have got to do that then I feel that I don't have to worry about it then. Do you know what I mean?

*I: So, when you have these ideas that something's just not right what are you basing it on? Are you basing it on something that is in a policy or is it a gut instinct?*

H: Ermm, a change in behaviour usually triggers it to be honest. If you notice a student that is normally quite happy and outgoing and they become more introverted and sad by the way they interact with you. You can sometimes just tell that something's not quite right with them.

*I: Looking now at teacher identity, what are teacher's views and ideas about what the profession means? What do you think teacher's identity is? What are the core values in teaching and education?*

H: Other people's perception?

*I: Yes, and is there any conflict with your own?*

H: I don't think people realise the amount of roles that teachers do in the real world. They think people stand in front of the classroom spouting a subject that we teach and I don't think they realise all the other stuff that goes on. All the caring and the coaching and the ethics and the counselling. Cos we do have so many roles and I am not sure that the general public out there appreciate that. (pause) Although they do often say, "I couldn't do that," if they say, "what do you do," and you say, "Oh, I am a teacher," and then they will go, "what age?" and you will say and then they go, "Oh god, I couldn't do that. It's scary." I think that a lot of people out there have quite a negative view of youngsters. I don't know if it's a generation thing. If older people have a negative view. I suppose if it's you are out there and you see gangs of kids hanging about with



hoodies on and that and if they're not quite nice to you, you are not going to have a very good opinion of them, are you?

*I: Do you think that changes how they view teachers?*

H: It could be. They might see us as like babysitters rather than professionals. People do have a quite negative view of us because of what they see in the media. We are always the ones responsible for children's lack of respect and problems with gangs.

*I: So, what qualities, personal qualities do you think teachers need?*

H: Ermm, I think you have got to be caring to a degree but not so much that it takes over. You can't take them home with you, can you? There's a case with a girl in my tutor group where I knew that home life was awful and I could I do was see her for twenty minutes a day and sometimes you would want to say, you know, "come on I'll take you home and give you some tea," but you can't. There's a line there but ermm as well as that you have to be so many different things. You have to be flexible because things can change in an instant. It's so unpredictable, no one day is the same as another. No five minutes is the same as another. Definitely not boring, so you have to be adaptable in that respect. Errm ORGANISED. Definitely, you have to be approachable to a degree, I think. It's better if the students feel that they can approach you rather than they feel scared of you. I don't think that's a good thing to have.

*I: Do you think teachers need to be possession of any resources in order to be good at their job, a particular place in the hierarchy of professionals or a certain amount of power or can we work independently?*

H: Oh no. Cos we are part of the bigger picture, aren't we? We function as part of a community where there are all different people involved. The nurse has baled me out on so many occasions I can't remember them all.

*I: So, to go and talk to the nurse or someone else do you think you need certain qualities or characteristics?*

H: You need to be open and friendly but have some kind of understanding of what might be going on. There's the risk that some teachers might be naive with what's going on in the world. You need an awareness of popular culture to a degree. To keep in touch with the trends and cultures of what is going on.

*I: Thinking of all the people that come into school to support us, who might come into school?*

H: I know that there is an ed psych thats been in. I've not seen them recently but in the past I have seen that they have been into school. And when I had a hearing impaired student there used to be someone who came in to check on their progress.

*I: When people come in would you say that they are all equal or would you say that some people are more important than others?*

H: I think we are all the same and all trying to do the best for the children no matter what their needs are.

*I: Do you think they think that as well?*

H: I HOPE so.

*I: Do you think there is anything that stops people working together well?*

H: Ermm I don't think I have noticed anything that has put people off.

*I: Do you think there is enough joint working going on or do you think there needs to be more?*

H: Ermm (pause) possibly a little bit more. Ermm I mean I haven't got a hearing or visually impaired at the moment. But (pause) possibly a little bit more for the ones that really need the help.

*I: When you say help, who are they there to help?*

H: They come in to support the students so, for example they take them out of lesson and sit and talk to them. I don't know what about but I presume they will ask them how they are doing and if their disability is holding them back in anyway.

*I: At any point would you expect that they will come and speak to you as the classroom teacher?*

H: No. Why would they. They're there to support the child with their disability whilst we are there to teach them. So, two different things. There's no need for them to come in and see us.

*I: So, what form would that contact take? Would it be written reports and written feedback or would you rather be face to face in a meeting?*

H: I think face to face would be better to give ideas of what is needed. To be honest when dealing with children with autism, I don't feel confident that I know to be able to differentiate for them properly. I know that we have had a degree of training on that but I know there are so many symptoms that they could have, that to get to know what each individual needed, I don't think I have done that in the past.

*I: So, you would want to be able to make it personalised and focus on individuals.*

H: Yeah.

*I: If you had a meeting with people from services other than education, for example health, and they said that they have to do this and this, how would you feel?*

H: If I could see it was for the benefit of the student and it could help and obviously if I could see that it makes them happier and allows them to make progress, it will allow your lesson to run better anyway so I would hope that I would take it on board and act on the advice I was given. I'd hope I would.

*I: Do you think there would ever be any times when you thought, "no I'm not doing that?"*

H: I suppose it depends on how realistic it is. If they are telling me there is an unrealistic thing that I can do then no but otherwise I might take up most of what they say but maybe not all of it.

*I: Do you think they are willing to accept feedback?*

H: Again, I would hope so. If we could have a friendly and open conversation about what a student needed and I would be given the opportunity then to say, "yeah, I could definitely do that but I might find this aspect more difficult, could you find something more manageable." Something like that.

*I: So, it would be good if everyone was the same around the table?*

H: Yeah.

*I: Could you think of any reasons why you might listen to what they had said and say, "no, I couldn't do it?"*

H: Probably time constraints to be honest with you. I think sometimes we value different things. Outside people will be looking at helping the child develop in one way whilst teachers nowadays are very much focused on results. Although we might agree with what they are saying we have to put results first.

*I: Is there anything we could do to make the process more open?*

H: Ermm (pause) I suppose it's just a meeting with that outside agency and then with the teachers that teach that pupil.

*I: Just regular feedback and keeping it going?*

H: Yeah.

#### 7.5.4 Tara

*I: What do you think teacher's role is?*

T: Ermm (pause) Well we are there to educate children. I think the first thing would be to deliver your subject to enable the pupil to learn, to be able to apply what you have taught them so that they can get good marks in exams which is what employers and universities will expect. And in addition, I would say a secondary role would be (pause) to teach them life skills, to teach the more pastoral element so they will be a more socially aware individual. The learning part and the social part as well.

*I: So, do you think that's most people's perception of what a teacher is or do you think that might be dependent on who you are?*

T: I'd expected that's what people would say. Teaching aspect and [pause]. I think so. Possibly not the social aspect for everyone but definitely in terms of delivering the subject and getting people to apply it. But I don't know about the social element.

*I: Comparing your view of a teacher now and when you were at school, do you think that's changed?*

T: When I was at school teachers were just there to teach the subject. I don't think that I saw teacher's role as enabling me socially. I think I saw them purely as subject teachers to teach a skill so, I don't think I looked at the wider picture. It makes it difficult to understand the needs of all children at times as I've never seen it so I'm not sure about the social side. Unless I'm told exactly what to do, I'm not really sure of my role in supporting children. But no-one checks on these things so it's easier to focus on what I know, the subject side of things.

*I: Do you think it went on and you were not aware of it or do you think that that has changed?*

T: I think that it did go on, I think it is more structured now. Or maybe I wasn't aware of it when I was at school, of people being on SEN lists or certain people getting special care in certain areas. If they were on a certain list, if they were on action plus, I wasn't aware of it of that kind of things happening at school. I was oblivious.

*I: If any changes to teacher's roles come about how are you made aware of that?*

T: That's a good question.

*I: Are you made aware of them or do you feel that the government or the school do not make you aware?*

T: I would say that the first route would be the meetings that we have every week where we get immediate feedback about what is happening in the department or in the school. Things like training days, briefings. I would say meetings first and then what you see on the news and what you read in TES and the magazines that come through to you. The unions send lots of emails and newsletters and complain about things like pensions and things like that. So, I would say the unions and meetings and the news.

*I: So, thinking about changes in school. Do you have any input into these changes or policies?*

T: At this point I don't think I would say. As an NQT I am just focusing on getting through the year. Even if things bother me, I would not voice my opinion at this point.

*I: Why?*

T: I don't know. I wouldn't feel it was appropriate. I guess I feel too inexperienced to say anything especially to people who are more experienced than me. I think I will find a voice later on or my perspective will change as the years go by or I discover new things. Possibly.

*I: So, for you what do you think is your most important role? The thing that you value about being a teacher?*

T: The most important thing (pause) I THINK (pause) is when I see pupils enjoying and understanding something that I am doing. Because then I feel that's it's been a success. It's been a successful lesson. Ermm, I feel like I am doing my job well and they are getting something out of it.

*I: What made you want to be a teacher?*

T: I don't know. (pause) I can't (pause) I can't go back with an answer. What I like about teaching now is, I like the environment, not badly-behaved kids, that annoys me. Being around the pupils and I have never had a boring day. I didn't know I wasn't going to never have a boring day when I was younger and deciding on career choices but every other job that I have had I have been very bored but I can honestly say I have never had a boring day even in my free time the time goes quite fast and I am rushing to get things done. So, I like that aspect of it as well. It's always a challenge, there's always something to do and I like the environment apart from when I come up against really challenging kids. But challenging in terms of their behaviour not in terms of them not getting it.

*I: Do you think you get enough support with those kind of kids?*

T: NO I DONT. It's one of the reasons that I am leaving. Ermm, I DONT understand why there isn't more of a behaviour policy here. That could be because of experience as well. As I am new and still trying to figure out behaviour management and how it works. But I don't think there is enough of a system in place to back me up. If I do need to, ermm If I want to remove a pupil or support with detention or senior staff. I DONT think that support is there. If I need help there is no-one really to turn to. It means you have to play it safe all the time and not try anything new.

*I: Are you able to voice this to someone, perhaps head of department?*

T: Ermm, my head of English, he knows why I am leaving, but he doesn't know that there are things about the system that I don't like. I guess I feel that it wouldn't make a difference anyway and that it would be seen as if it's me. It's me that isn't good with behaviour management opposed to (pause) the system that was flawed. I feel like I always need back-up so I guess it's me that lacks the skills. It guess it could be a bit of both [pause], I'm not sure.

*I: Do you think that senior managers have some of the answers? Do you think that they would be able to show you things if they took the effort?*

T: I think possibly and I think some of it has to do with personality as well. I don't think I have the right personality that others have. Ermm, in terms of observations, it seems as if some pupils are able to take to other teachers because of their character and personality so part of me feels like it's about mimicking characteristics to some level, some aspect and then I think that the other half is just good behaviour management, I don't think, I don't think, I have been supported.

*I: What kind of characteristics do you think these people have which make them good at this kind of thing?*

T: With my head of department he has humour on his side, but he also has the fact that he is a male as well. I have noticed that pupils kind of respect that more. I don't think that the support has been there but I don't see how anyone could really support me develop this kind of personality. Ermm where they see me as a student. I do look like a student today but even in a suit they still see as a student. Ermm, and I don't think I have that humour to me either. Maybe because I haven't relaxed in the role yet so I think I am more, "right let's do that and this and." Ermm But with the students like my year 11, actually I have two year 11 classes, actually no they are not that different except for one is lower ability. I am able to relax a lot more with key stage 4 and they are able to enjoy the lesson more and I am. I think with the younger years, I haven't got that, balance of personality, trying to be a disciplinarian, maybe I haven't got that balance right.

*I: How does your understanding of this affect you in school?*

T: I would avoid situations where I feel I am put on the spot as I don't feel confident enough especially when I am with people who don't have these difficulties.

*I: Do you think personality is a very important characteristic of a teacher?*

T: Not necessarily. I can be and I have seen some teachers that have been quite (pause) you know, that have come across as being disciplinarians without coming across as showing any of their personality. And the pupils have responded out of fear and you know got on with their work. So, I am not sure, it depends, its different for different teachers. I don't know what the magic key is.

*I: What makes a good teacher? What characteristics?*

T: Ermm, I think a teacher who is passionate about their subject and because I think that comes through, you can tell when they don't like the subject and they don't like the kids. So, I think someone who is passionate about the subject and someone who likes children. It sounds obvious but a lot of them don't. Ermm, someone who can break it down and make it simple enough to understand and that type of thing, the problem that I have sometimes, especially with key stage 3, ermm, sometimes I don't recognise people's abilities, and so I plan work that's too hard and it takes me a while to get gage it.

*I: I suppose it is hard when you're used to doing work which is way above this and then you have to think back to what it was like.*

T: Yeah. So, I think that a teacher who is able to break anything down and make it easy to understand.

*I: Do you know anything about ECM, its background or why it was written?*

T: Were there five steps to it like enjoy, learn, achieve. It was to make sure that all children are able to achieve the grades they need. I'm going to say grow but that doesn't make sense to me, enjoy, I have said that already? I used to know this as I wrote an essay for my PGCE course. I don't know. I have to actually think ECM. I can't remember the rest but I know there were five steps.

*I: Why do you think you used to know it when you were at university but not now?*

T: I suppose we would be expected to know it when we were at uni. In school we don't talk about it. Other than the achieving and learning bit, no-one tells us to do any of it or checks up on it.

*I: Why do you think everyone does the achieving bit?*

T: Well its what teachers do, isn't it? It's how we get judged by people. The other bits aren't checked up on so it doesn't affect us in our roles so much.

*I: So why did it come about?*

T: Was it from the Victoria Climbié case? Yes?

*I: Do you think those principles of multi-agency work are still important?*

T: You don't hear anything about these policies by the government anymore. It makes you question whether they thrown them out. We aren't going to devote lots of time to them if they aren't part of how we are judged.

*I: Do you think they have gone out the window? Do you think the government has changed the emphasis a bit?*

T: Definitely. We used to hear about Every Child Matters and what we had to do as a result but you hear nothing anymore. At the time when we did need to know about it it was discussed in school. Heads of department and the leadership team would actually sit and go through and say you need to do this and this. None of that happens now so I presume that's because its gone.

*I: Are there any other multi-agency working policies which might influence your role in school?*

T: No {pause} I don't think so. Or not that I've heard of.

*I: So, do you think what is expected of you as a teacher has changed?*

T: Ermm [pause] In part. I mean we still have to get kids good results so that hasn't changed. But before we did need to make sure we knew about *Every Child Matters* and now its not important.

*I: So do you think that *Every Child Matters* was related to ensuring children achieve good results?*

T: Well yes. I know there were other things there but for us as teachers yes that was our role in it. I suppose you could break it down a bit more and say we had to look at the issues which may

prevent kids getting good results so like making sure they have a good breakfast but it was all linked to our role in classrooms. It was something that was used to show how good we were doing our job. Not only are results published for the public to see but Ofsted used to come in and judge on the outcomes. So we had to know it. We didn't want to fail in something that was so public.

I: Why is it not important anymore? Do you think the principles of the policy are no longer important to schools?

T: No [pause]. Obviously it's important that all kids are safe but that isn't our focus. No-one bothers looking at it anymore as the government isn't bothered. It shows that this isn't the core of what teachers do. If it can pass so quickly. It's the government who decide what's important to schools and the lasting message is results. It's how we are judged by others to be doing a good job. That hasn't changed.

I: So the image that others have of you as a teacher is important to what you do in school?

T: Yes. Who wants to be seen as doing a rubbish job. You hear these stories about rubbish teachers and think, "god, I never want to be like that."

I: Where do you hear these stories?

T: Oh everywhere. Newspapers, online, by word of mouth you know when it comes out a school in the local area has done badly.

I: Do you think those teachers might be doing a good job but perhaps in other ways than what's shown through results?

T: Well no. If our job is to get good results then that's what you have to do. That's how the public see schools isn't it? As being there to get good results. A lot of it is about nurture isn't it?

*I: Do you think this school is nurturing?*

T: Ermm Yes, I do in some ways with things like action plus, the washing machine, I think there is some element of helping pupils. I just think the discipline element is not there. I think other elements are there, things like session 3, I have never seen so much of it. So that element defiantly there, the kind of enjoy and learn as they are able to do those kinds of things that they are unable to do in any other area of your life. So, I think that element is there. Yeah. Ermm, but I don't think all schools are like that.

*I: Do you think that those principles relate to what you do in the classroom?*

T: I think it depends on the individual teacher and the teaching style I guess and what kind of teacher you are. The learn aspect will be there, if you're any kind of teacher you need to be able to enable the pupils to learn. And it's the same with enjoy. If you have an enjoyable lesson. So, I think it depends on the teacher.

*I: Do you know how roles may have changed because of ECM?*



T: No, because I didn't do it before. Ermm, and I think that when I was a pupil, I think that I was quite oblivious and I was also in a streamed school, I didn't think it existed. I stopped and thought about it a while back and thought I wonder if we did have a lot of problems in the other classes but I just didn't see those classes so [pause]. I thought that maybe it was better but maybe it wasn't years ago, so.

I: So, how does this link to your understanding of multi-agency work?

T: Well if I am concerned about a student, I would inform people.

I: Who would you inform and what kind of things would trigger you to do so?

T: The kinds of issues that would involve this kind of work are pastoral issues. If I had any concerns, I would email the pastoral team so they can deal with it. It links to my role as a PT where I might pick up on things like mood changes, clothes, things that they say to me or things they would say to other pupils. Maybe a change in their work. My job is to pick up on things and inform other people. What they do with it I am not sure. I suppose they would work with other people if needed to make sure that that child is ok and can come into school and work.

I: Is there any action you might have to take as a result of your pastoral work?

T: I don't know. I suppose I might have to talk to the pupil and let them know that I'm here if you want to talk. Beyond that I don't really know as it's my job to pick on issues with pupils so other people can support them.

*I: Do you think it's clear enough in the policies of the school what we should be doing?*

T: I think so but based on the fact a while ago we did child protection and we went through that we were told who we had to send messages to and what to look for. I don't know how often that comes around. But I think so. I think you can miss it though. In the classroom, lesson after lesson, with lots of pupils, I think you can miss it if you're doing so many things. You're not really paying attention.

*I: So, time is a big factor in your ability to respond to it.*

T: Yeah.

*I: What professional values do you think are important to teachers? How should they act?*

T: I don't think they should be too personal with the pupils. That sounds obvious but. I think that they should have good work ethic, things like punctuality, planning, assessing. I think that they should be professional about the way they talk to parents and other staff. I don't agree with shouting at other staff. Ermm, just conduct with other staff, conduct with pupils as well.

*I: Would you say that the majority of teachers have those characteristics?*

T: I think the majority do. I think a lot of them cut corners but I think in terms of professionalism with pupils and parents the majority have got it.

*I: So, what kind of things are important to teachers? What do they value?*

T: Ermm What do I value? I'm sorry.

*I: What is important for teachers to be able to do their job?*

T: Good training. A supportive team rather than a competitive team. But competition is encouraged here but I don't know. I don't necessarily agree. I've been in departments where I haven't seen the competition and it's thrived. Its better I think, a department that gets along and is not competing with each other would be stronger.

*I: Why do you think we have suddenly become quite competitive?*

T: Teachers nowadays have become so competitive whether it's within a department or departments within a school or between different schools and it's all down to results. Its results driven isn't it. It's a way of pushing results up. I guess people have got their own agendas about getting ahead and getting their own position. If they get good results then they will be seen as better teachers, raising their status in schools and making it more likely that they can advance their career. Therefore, you are going to focus on these parts of the job as you get to gain more both in terms of how others see you and how quickly you move along the career ladder.

*I: How does competition make you feel?*

T: I feel vulnerable. You always have to think about how others judge you and what they think about your ability to teach. It makes you worry about everything you do. You are only as good as your last mistake so I worry about trying anything new just in case it doesn't work and people will judge me by it.

*I: What are the symbols of being a teacher?*

T: Maybe the way they talk and respond to people. They're quite instructional, I think. I think teachers can't do what other people necessarily do. Maybe it's just when you're in school. There's certain things, like putting pictures on Facebook. You can't do what other people do because you have a public image to maintain. Someone is always watching you, especially the pupils. I think you have to be careful about how you present yourself.

*I: Do you think that raises their position in society because they are having to think like that?*

T: It makes me nervous thinking about working with other groups as I don't think they think very highly of what we do. Some people see teachers as not being able to do anything else because they couldn't in a million years see themselves as being with pupils or with children.

*I: Do you think the fact that we are working with children, lowers teacher's status?*

T: Its half and half. But I think in England it does have a bad reputation. Yeah, I do.

*I: What else makes that reputation bad?*

T: Bad teachers. Bad teachers, yeah. You hear a lot about teachers that are rubbish at their job or they have been there for years and they are not making a difference or they don't care, they just kind of stay there even after its gone stale.

*I: Where do you get that message about bad teachers from?*

T: You hear it from children. From stories you hear when you are with your friends, "I remember that teacher because they were rubbish," and you don't remember the good teachers only the bad teachers. It's always in the media, in newspapers and on TV. The media has such a potential to impact on how the public view us.

*I: What level of qualifications and knowledge do you think is important to be a good teacher?*

T: Degree in your subject.

*I: Do you think it should go above that or is a degree enough?*

T: No, it's not enough at all. But I don't know if it's necessarily about education because the PGCE course is very theory based and that is not adequate for the being in a school with pupils. There needs to be more about, I don't know if it's necessarily more on paper. The subject part is one part but the other part of the job is being able to interact with staff and with pupils. I don't think that's something that you can just learn. I think that maybe, the PGCE course feels rushed, there's a lot of information and then you get two short terms in school and that's not enough at all. There are a lot of people-skills missing, you need a lot of experience as I don't think that anyone can tell you how it feels to be in a school and I don't think anyone can adequately explain that to you. You have to experience it for yourself to know if you are going to like it or not. And to know if it's for you and if you do like it how are you going to deal with it. So, I think there needs to be more than you just being good at your subject but you can be really good at your subject and be really crap at teaching.

*I: Do you think that kind of boundary between skills and qualifications; do you think that's the same with other professionals?*

T: I think that there is a difference, yeah. You can have jobs where you don't have to interact with people. Yet this is a job where, I think there's a difference yeah.

*I: Can you give an example?*

T: You can have jobs where you don't have to interact with people yet this is a total interactive job, isn't it? With both the teachers and the pupils constantly. It's not like being on the phone talking to someone. Or being over the counter serving someone or talking to adults who are rational all the time. I know that adults aren't rational all the time but I think it's different.

*I: Do you know what multi-agency teams are and how teachers are expected to work with them?*

T: I don't know. I haven't come across that term.

*I: What do you think it means?*

T: I would have thought it means people from different agencies coming together to meet.

*I: Who might teachers have to meet with from outside of school?*

T: Could it involve people like Learning Mentors? I would say social workers but I don't know if they come into school so maybe a representative, [pause] like the person that we had who did the child protection training. Like a mental health nurse who goes from school to school so you might have to liaise with her. I suppose it's about giving skills that you don't have or just information that you need.

I: How do you think working with different people that make up multi-agency teams could impact on your work?

T: I don't really know. I suppose they could give advice or training in skills you don't have so are there to support me in my role. I don't really think it changes what I do as a teacher as my job is still to make sure kids get the exams results they need.

*I: Do you think that their role is very different to our role?*

T: I think so as I don't have the skills to mentor or counsel a child, so yeah and neither would I have the time as I have to deal with twenty four of them and someone else gets to have them on a one-to-one who has the skills to talk to them on a different level. It's a different relationship. They have different relationships with TAs [Teaching Assistants]. TAs can be more relaxed with them.

*I: These people, who are they there to work with?*

T: The kids. They talk to the kids about what's going on. They might need to briefly talk to me if there was an issue which may affect them in lesson.

*I: What about people who come in from outside of school?*

T: I don't really know anything about what they do.

*I: Do you think that these people who come in have an understanding of teacher's roles?*

T: I imagine they should have if they go into schools a lot. I would like to think that they think well of teachers as they probably wouldn't be able to do our job as they don't have the knowledge and skills. Ermm I don't know. I imagine there's a lot of criticism.

*I: Why do you say that?*

T: Ermm, I don't know. Cause I think that I imagine that there is a lot of criticism cause that's what you see in the media. In the media you see everyone attacking teachers all the time. Teaching has such a bad image. Recently the government has tried to turn around the image with the 'those who can teach' advert but it's terrible. It just makes you think of the those that can't saying. The fact they are having to turn the image around means it obviously had a really bad image in the first place. You also see social workers attacked all the time. I think it's only a recent thing to try and make teachers look good, to try and encourage them to come into teaching. And they are going to be doing the same thing with social workers soon.

*I: Do you think that that affects people when they come into school. The bad image of teachers.*

T: Probably, yeah. Especially if it let's say a mentor, who probably. It depends on the individual who comes in but of course it's going to affect how other professionals see us as they will be thinking, "they're not doing this, and I need to do it." So, it will affect how they work with us. Depends if they see that as our job to do or their job to do.

*I: So, they could see it as their job to come in as we can't do our job properly.*

T: Yeah.

*I: So how do you think it will affect the relationship if they come in and have this bad image of us, how would that affect their ability to work with us?*

T: It would either make them. They might get offensive or they might speak to you in a manner that lets you know that they don't think highly of you. Possibly. Or it could be quite the opposite. Or they could see themselves as a cog in the wider system and see themselves as working with you. It makes me quite anxious to think about it. I think it would make it easier for people to misunderstand each other if they have this negative view of us.

*I: So, if you think they are coming across as hostile what would you be picking up on?*

T: Ermm, the tone of voice, the body language maybe accusations.

*I: How would that affect you and you working with them?*

T: I think that I would just think that they were ignorant.

*I: Would you still be able to work with them?*

T: I would find it more difficult. If it was a continuous thing. Yeah. I think I would probably say something.

*I: Why do you think they would be offensive?*

T: Because they're got a higher status than us in terms of how much they know and what they earn. Teachers are constantly in the media being criticised for not doing things properly.

*I: If you were in a meeting and they said, "right you have to implement this strategy," what would you say?*

T: What in a hostile way?

*I: In any way.*

T: I would in the first instance I would feel shocked and try not to show it. And be polite and say right that's fine and note that down. If it was something that was continuous. If they had to come in each month, I think I would be a coward and tell someone in senior management to have a word. But if it was just me and them in a room, I would feel more confident about saying something if it was a group of people.

*I: Why do you think you wouldn't be confident saying something, cause obviously you work in education and they don't.*

T: No that's a good point. Initially, I think it would be just assessing the situation and the shock of it. But I guess because I am an NQT, so that feeling of lack of experience so I imagine in a few years when I am feeling more confident about my role and my ability, I would probably stop them in the first instance. I hope so.

*I: So, if it was a proper collaborative process, what kind of things would you expect such a meeting?*

T: I would expect good advice with things that I am not aware of or not trained to do. So good advice, good strategies that I could put into place. Information that I might not know.

*I: Do you think that have a part where you can talk to them or do you think they should just tell you things?*

T: Well I imagine they would need information from me as well not just the child that they have come to observe or come to see. I would imagine that they would need information about what's been happening or what I have been doing as well.

*I: Do you think it would be more of them giving advice or do you think it would be more shared problem solving.*

T: No I think that, the first thing that came into my mind was that it would be advice opposed to a collaborative effort.

*I: Why do you think it would be advice?*

T: Because I don't think they would be listening to what we had to say.

*I: Why do you think that is?*

T: Because health professionals would think they are more important than us as they save lives.

*I: Which one do you think that would be best?*

T: Probably the collaborative. So, I would be the one with the pupils all day so. I think it would help if we all listened to each other as we are probably all coming at it with different values so it would help prevent any misunderstandings.

*I: How could we make that process better?*

T: I don't know. Going in prepared from the teachers' point of view. I don't know. Having the confidence to voice your opinions, to offer your suggestions as well.

*I: Why would you feel that you have to go in prepared?*

T: I suppose because I would feel that they are there to judge us. It seems to be everyone who comes into school has to form an opinion on whether we are performing as we should.

### 7.5.5 Dianne

*I: Can you tell me about teacher's roles?*

D: I think the main aspect of teacher's role is to impart knowledge to the students, so that they have the knowledge they need to get the exams results they want. As well I think it is to support them where they need support, to make sure that they are happy, confident, comfortable ermm and to make sure that they are ready to get on with their life when they leave school. I do think it's important to look after the child as a whole but it's difficult when there is so much focus on exam results from the government. There isn't the time available to do both sides of the job well. It's always going to be the exam side that wins as children need to leave school with the qualifications they need to get a job. It's a shame as they need to leave happy and feeling confident but we can't do everything.

*I: Do you think that has changed at all in the last few years or from when you were at school?*

D: Ermm, I don't think it's changed from the perspective of a teacher from what they always think they do. No, I don't think so. I would like to hope and think that all teachers when they go into schools that that's what they want to do. They want to look after the children, not just, they like their subject and that's all they want to do. They should have a genuine interest in children and want to be able to care for them and work with other professionals if they feel it will be of benefit to pupils. So, I don't think ECM should have changed teachers although there is more presence now so I guess it's more rule like, you know you have to do this and this but that could maybe cause I am more aware of it being an adult, not just from being a teacher. There's more cases of such and such not looking after the kids or this happening so I suppose teachers are more aware that they have to be doing these things rather than hoping that every teacher will automatically do them. So, I don't know if I was just not aware of it as a child.

*I: So, when you say you are more aware of it?*

D: Yeah there's more in the media, although there does seem to be more social services but they always say the teacher never mentioned this and the teachers haven't said that such a such a child hasn't been in. So yeah, I think its more media-based now, it more on the news, radio. The media can have such an effect on teachers and how other people view us. It's so powerful you have to be careful and watch everything you do cause if you don't do something properly and it gets into the media your career could be over.

*I: When we get news stories about teaching and education, is it more negative or positive?*

D; Most of the time its NEGATIVE. Most of the time it's because ermm something has happened and it has not been highlighted by the teaching staff. Most of the time if its good it's because the kids have performed well and again that's the kids side of it, the kids doing it rather than the teacher having helped so it's the TEACHERS fault if something bad happens and if something good happens it's the kids have done it, you know.

*I: If it's more rule like do you think it become easier for teachers to implement?*

D: I guess so but when it's a rule you can get blamed for not doing it so you have to be careful of exactly what you are doing and record everything. This will always be in your mind so I do feel that it may stop some people doing things as they will be worried about doing it wrong.

*I: Do you think it is the same for other professions?*

D: Probably ermm with nursing I suppose. Ermm if a patient dies, they look at why they died. The doctor or the nurses. The doctor, you know maybe the patient didn't do what they were meant to do.

*I: Do you think it's the same in the media, all the stories involving a more positive or more negative stance?*

D: I think it just makes more news. Negatives make more news. Things like even in football things like that. You know they make the news when they do something wrong. They wouldn't get applauded for doing something well. Ermm, you know they get a grilling for doing something they shouldn't have done.

*I: Do you think the media is right to always be negative towards teachers?*

D: I think it would be better if they did a bit of both. You know, obviously you need to highlight some situations. But positives should be rewarded. We are always telling the kids that, reward positive behaviour rather than looking at negatives, so you always praise the good things and that would make the child do the good things. In the teaching profession, maybe if you reward the good teachers with certain aspects then maybe the other teachers will be like, "oh, want to be like that, I want to get that benefit rather than get." But maybe teachers, maybe I am thinking from a slightly naive point of view, but I don't think teachers do things on purpose. Obviously, there's instances and certain cases.

*I: Why do think they don't do things that they should?*

D: Why can't teachers do all the things they should? Time possibly. Doing too much. There's so MUCH to do. We always have so much on that its being able to get everything done and things will just slide a bit. You don't intend to let things go but you can't do everything as you need to try and have a work-life balance yourself. You need to consider what is most important. I suppose it comes down to what makes us a good teacher and that will always be getting pupils the grades they need. You also support from your team so if something goes wrong you are not going to get the blame for it.

*I: Do you think this support is missing?*

D: Yes. Everyone is looking out for themselves. You don't want to ask anybody for help as you will always be thinking that they will think it's a sign you can't cope.

*I: Do you think having incentives are there in terms of the government and teaching?*

D: I can't think of what the government particularly do. I mean recently they have been messing about with the pension and making a lot of teachers and they are talking about changing the school calendar type of thing so you know so that one of the benefits why people come into the



profession that you get paid a reasonable salary and equal to other similar services within the public services but we get more holidays and tends to, it does have an influence on people in the sense that we have to do work at weekends and we are not getting paid to do that but we know that we have to as we have so much stuff to do but you don't mind as you get more holiday time, it does swing about so if you add it up we probably do as much as a nurse would do in hours, it's just that you can't see it. So ermm other than that I don't think so if they are going to start taking all those things, I don't think the government [pause]. There was a thing with getting people into teacher training wasn't there. And they do a golden hello in certain subjects ermm but I think they have stopped doing that now apparently so I don't think there is very much.

*I: Do you think that all these negatives have an impact on the profession, teacher's views or what they think about themselves?*

D: Oh, we were having a conversation at lunch earlier saying that you know you have to be very careful about what's right and what's wrong. You always think of the negative and although you are thinking that that would never happen you know, that you are not allowed to be in a room with a student just because they might say something and you like, you know always think of the negative and that's from the point of the media will get hold of it and that will be my career is over even if you haven't done anything.

*I: Do you think teachers are made to be quite defensive?*

D: YEAH. Because they are ALWAYS having to try and PROTECT their backs. And it's always very much I need to, ermm, watch what I am doing. I need to prove and evidence everything so I prove that I have said that this child is not doing this and this child is doing this. And it's written down and it's there so when it all goes wrong it's not the teachers' fault. Cause I don't think [pause], GENUINELY teachers try and do their best.

*I: Do you think that affects when people come into school to try and work with us?*

D: YEAH cause maybe their thinking we are spying on them and looking for ermm, negatives so obviously when they say I think you should do it this way that therefore means that teachers are more likely to think then if that's the case I must be doing it wrong already. So, YOU'RE telling me I am doing it WRONG. So maybe yeah. Again, so I a lot of teachers might end up thinking that they don't want them in the room because the person is going to be there to pick at them rather than, like Ofsted and observations, that's why they're there, therefore they should not work with them.

*I: Why would teachers feel like they are being spied on?*

D: Because we didn't ask them to come in. If we ask for help it might be different but when people just turn up or get asked to come in by those in charge in school then of course we are going to think it's all about them spying and feeding back judgements on how well we are doing.

*I: How are you informed about changes to teacher's roles?*

D: Ermm, Our job specification?

*I: Yeah or anything that you have to do differently.*

D: In school, as far as I am aware of, we have a new job role, so in the summer we get a mail drop and we get our new specification. I don't think mines changed but obviously it's on there and if you got a new role or promotion you would get a new job role and as for the government, we get standards that we have to follow so I would assume that if they changed, they would change on there. Not to say people would read it if they change it but it's there if you wish to check.

*I: Do you think the policies in school reflect what is going on in the wider world?*

D: I think they tend to but obviously I think they will be biased towards the school and what's beneficial towards the school.

*I: Do you think you have an impact on these policies or what happens in school?*

D: Me personally?

*I: Yeah.*

D: NO. [laugh]

*I: Why do you think that is?*

D: I am ONLY a TEACHER. I have no impact on policies in school or outside of school.

*I: What do you mean only a teacher? Do you think that's important?*

D: Yeah but I don't influence. I am not high enough to do that. That would not be my sort of [pause], I suppose I could have an idea but if I had an idea, I would have to then flag it to my line manager who would then have to give it to SMT who would then go through the head. So, I am right down the bottom.

*I: Do you think it would be useful to have a voice?*

D; Yeah. We are the ones that. As a school here we are trying to get more of SMT in, back into classrooms so that they are aware of what is going on. But again, that's not going to be quite as helpful as kids know that they are SMT so they obviously have a different relationship so they may act better. I would hope their behaviour would automatically be better. So again, yeah if there were any problems, they probably wouldn't be highlighted from that so yeah there's issues that have arisen from teachers maybe, if they could say something it might work better.

*I: How do you think that would happen?*

D: It's probably done, maybe through meetings so if there were any issues that have arisen, maybe in a meeting and then obviously all the other teachers can say there's a problem and that goes to the Head with the minutes. And maybe other subjects do the same thing and if people cross-reference so someone's looking for it, is the same thing happening and are the all asking for the same thing? So, if they are all asking for a similar thing that needs to be put into place. Or someone thinks this is happening there and this is happening there maybe if we did this it would work better for the whole school or that department.

*I: Do you know why ECM came about?*

D: Ermm children being abused and neglected basically.

*I: So, how does that relate to what you do?*

D: Well we look after children, don't we, so we see children for a long length of time everyday so we may be able to pick up on things which seem to be unusual which may need to be looked into maybe their home life to see if there's a problem, to see if the students are coming in and not being looked after. So, if they don't look like their being looked after or if they're not coming in at all. Or if they're missing from school, why are they missing from school? Is there something going on?

*I: Looking into kid's home life. Do you think that always been teacher's role? Has this changed over the years?*

D: Probably yeah. In the past if the kids weren't there, teachers were probably, "That's it." It doesn't matter what their home life is. They're at school, that's how it is, their home life is separate, that's their home life, don't get involved. Nowadays we have to get involved. Kids bring so many issues into school that we have to respond to.

*I: So, do you think there is more of an overlap with different professions?*

D: I would like to say so. Obviously as being a new teacher and always having ECM in place since I have been a teacher. So, I think it's always been there. But I would imagine it's quite a new development which teachers before wouldn't, you know twenty to thirty years ago teachers didn't have to think about that kind of thing.

*I: In what way would teachers have to work with these people?*

D: I don't know really. I know we are expected to but haven't actually had to do it. You get an idea from watching TV about their jobs and what they do but I haven't a clue about how this could affect us in school.

*I: How do you think that impacts on working with other professionals?*

D: It means that you do have to work better with them. We have been trained to be teachers and we know our bit but they'll know their bit and although they link, they can't do our job and we can't do their job so you need to help of each other.

*I: So that would aid better collaboration? Do you think you ever find it difficult if someone was coming in and you were both looking at it from different angles would it be difficult for you to work together or do you think anyone would be defensive?*

D: Yeah working with other professionals is a worry cause obviously there is the issue of people always worrying what other people think of them and if they are doing things right. If someone comes in and says that they are wrong in what they are doing, that person is going to feel upset that what they have worked so hard to achieve has been completely devalued. The other problem with teaching is that everybody has had experience of teachers and so they know about our roles but we don't know about theirs. But I think if the philosophy of the people involved is on a more positive aspect and they are aware of the purpose of what working together is for, it's not about

them it's about the child and that's the whole point why you go into these profession, it's about you being concerned about the children and if there is a child that you are worried about you need to work with as many people as possible to make sure that that child is not being upset and is happy and is enjoying their life and isn't at risk of anything.

*I: Do you think other professions are as likely to be as defensive as teachers?*

D: Yeah. Social workers, they get a hard time, they are equally probably more so to be fair. Teachers they get blamed for not getting the grades with kids and obviously not looking at bullying so much but, ermm, they don't get the blame when the child is at home and is being abused by the parents, it's always the social worker cause if the child doesn't come to school it goes to the social worker really to look after, to go to visit and see what's going on in the home life. So yeah, social workers get a negative deal. So pretty much anyone in the public sector service they get slated all the time. When anything goes wrong it's always blame.

*I: What made you want to be a teacher?*

D: Ermm I don't know. I haven't always wanted to be a teacher. I was a biomedical scientist before and I think the challenge every day and I like science and I wanted to be able to give that to other people. And I love like working with children. Their quite funny, they can be challenging but you know but sometimes there's reasons behind their behaviour. They don't always mean what they are saying, there's always reasons why they are like that sometimes, not always. Sometimes they can just be vile or in a bad mood like anybody else but obviously they are different every day and it gives you a rewarding career especially when they come out and realise that they have got what they wanted and are happy and just seeing the smile on their faces is very rewarding.

*I: What do you think teachers need in terms of personal characteristics to be a good teacher?*

D: Ermm caring, organised so they can they can keep everything juggled sensitive to other peoples, to children's needs. To be aware of what they are after, so don't just treat all children the same cause they are not.

*I: What about professional characteristics?*

D; Ermm confidential. You need to be able to work with others. Responsible sometimes careful with your wording.

*I: Where would you place teachers in the hierarchy of professionals?*

D: Nurses probably

*I: Who would be above them?*

D: Doctors. Probably. See I am slightly biased as I was hospital based so I tend to look that way. Ermm so I could have put equal to biomedical scientists as I was one of those and now I am one of these and I don't think there is much difference.

*I: Why have you placed people where they are?*

D: Personally, I think it is due to how much studying that you have done. Ermm (pause) so obviously doctors know more. They obviously have slightly more risk involved so they are saving people's lives. Nurses do relatively equal qualifications at standard level and can go higher like headteachers there are consultant nurses. Ermm (pause) but, you know, both of them have quite important roles.

*I: Do you think working with children lowers teachers' place in the hierarchy as everyone was once a child?*

D: I shouldn't think so as children are important and they are the next thing. You always remember your teachers so I don't think it should be. I mean everybody gets ill; everybody goes to the nurse and the doctor. You need a teacher to make sure that your child learns enough stuff and can get on with their life and be able to succeed in their life so you know it's something that is very very important.

*I: What symbols do you think represent a teacher?*

D: Their mannerisms maybe and the way they explain things.

*I: What mannerisms will they have?*

D: I'd like to think they are quite caring so they seem to be interested in what other people do. They're observant in that way. The way they talk, they don't try to confuse people on purpose. They try to explain, verbally in a good way so that others can understand. Teachers don't use certain terminology that other professions use. This kind of language is used to confuse people on purpose.

*I: Do you think that some professionals try and confuse people whether intentionally or unintentionally?*

D: YES.

*I: Can you give an example?*

D: Lawyers try [pause] and educational psychologists and social workers can do it as well. They introduce things that are to do with their profession that other people don't understand. It makes them feel important and shows us that they are different and know more than we do.

*I: So, it gives them some kind of power?*

D: Yeah.

*I: Do you think use of a professionally exclusive language would impact on you in a meeting?*

D: Definitely. Some professions will try and use language that you don't understand just so that they have the power in that meeting. I do think that teachers are in a bad position as everyone knows about school yet not everyone knows about what social workers or psychologists do. It makes it easier for them to exclude you from the meeting.

*I: How would it affect you?*

D: Well if I don't understand something, I may interpret it wrongly or get the wrong gist.

*I: Why do you think they do it?*

D: So that you NEED them. So that you can't work things out for yourself as you don't understand what they are talking about. It gives them power over us and makes us depend on them.

*I: How would this affect you in a meeting?*

D: It would mean that we couldn't really contribute. It would make you feel very insecure if different people were talking about something that I didn't understand. I would feel like I would have to agree with what they said. I wouldn't really want to be part of a meeting like this as I would feel very uncomfortable.

*I: In terms of working with other people do you think that teachers are able to have a good network, are able to work with other people?*

D: Yeah, so you can make sure that everything is working well, so that that child is a fully rounded person so you can look at things from all sorts of angles.

*I: So, it's important to look at things from different perspectives?*

H: Yeah. Different people might think different things as well.

*I: If you were in a meeting and lots of different people had lots of different viewpoints how do you think that would affect the meeting?*

D: Ermm it would make it a lengthy meeting, I think. [laugh] Which would be the first problem. Ermm, I think you would have to take notes and take stock. You would need someone who could organise everyone, so you would need a manager or chairperson that can be taking each point and the obviously looking at the point or purpose of the meeting and trying to get a gist of what everybody is saying. Cause although they won't all be saying exactly the same thing there will be a main stem running through all of it cause obviously that's what you need to work with as children can be completely different in subjects, you know, so they can be good in one subject but not in another. So, to talk just one teacher would be detrimental to the child as if that child does not get on with that subject they are not going to sound like a very nice child and they will sound like they have issues. But if you went to another subject and they liked that subject and get on with that teacher, then that teacher will be going, "oh they are a little angle," and I have heard of things like that, I am aware of that.

*I: Can you think of a situation in school where you are working with different people?*

D: I have worked with teaching assistants before, learning mentors, sometimes have to have the nurse come in and sort some things out.

*I: Have you ever worked with someone who is not employed by the school?*

D: We have had nurses come in from the local authority and they have come in and worked with the children explaining their special information. The ones that we have in tends to be your sexual

health clinics and the alcohol related clinic so obviously their imparting their information and there obviously there and we have to work with those.

*I: Have you been in any meetings or training with anyone else?*

D: Training wise we have had some local authority people coming in to give us safeguarding training, although I don't remember their name.

*I: Do you feel that those sort of meetings, it is equal, everyone has a chance to participate information and have an equal discussion?*

D: Yeah. They explain what they need and if we have any issues or questions we can raise them.

*I: Do you think that process can be improved at all?*

D: I have only dealt with people who come in about the children or when there have been a large amount of people. So, I suppose maybe if people were having an issue or if there were smaller groups it would be better. Just so people aren't [pause] everybody can get heard if they need to. And just so they are not going to think that everybody is going to be gossiping about them. And again, it's the NEGATIVE sort of thing which everybody is going to think about. You wouldn't want to say certain things, maybe.

*I: What about if you were in a meeting and someone was coming to give some advice about a child and they suggested lots of different strategies. Do you think people will be willing to take everything that they have just said?*

D: [sigh] It depends on how much effort people would have to do. That's always a sticking point with things. So, if it's a whole new way of thinking, I think they would probably have some reasoning as to whether to actually works. Something which I have found recently which other people have laughed at, and I have gone, "if it works, it works." I put into place a strategy to support one of my students with ADHD in a class I teach.

*I: How did you develop the strategy?*

D: I have a teaching assistant who works with one of my students in my class and she'd heard something that if a child can be grounded they concentrate better so she wanted to try it. I had no bother as it didn't seem to affect me, so I said, "yeah, go for it," and she put the box down for him and he worked very well. Admittedly, this child does work very well for me and I have heard of issues where he doesn't work so well for others and now he comes to me every lesson saying, "Miss can I go and get my box?" And he goes and gets his box and goes and sits down on his box. I can't see particularly much difference but he seems happier about it. I don't know whether he feels more comfortable perhaps cause of the stools we have so perhaps. I wouldn't say it works brilliantly well but he's never naughty. I would have to see him in a lesson where he does cause he does have the odd bit where he doesn't concentrate with the box same as he did before. But he never was horrifically bad though it's quite hard to see whether that works. But no, I think people are happy to try things if there not [pause]. If we know that they work but again you would never know they work if somebody has not tried them in the first place so people need to be open to try things. If they don't work, they don't work but they are more likely to do that if they are easier.

*I: Do you think people aren't open to try things? The fact they laughed at you for trying something.*

D: [laugh] They were like, "why are you doing that?" and I was like, "why not?" Possibly yeah. They get very much, do it my way or not do it at all.

*I: Why do you think that is?*

D: Again, maybe it's the negative thing where you, where they think their way is right and they don't like to be told, but I like to think that I am not really like that so I am quite happy to let anyone try anything once.

*I: Did that affect you, the fact people laughed when they found out you were doing something new?*

D: Ermm Yeah. I think if it had been my idea, I would have been a bit annoyed with people laughing at it. As it wasn't me who came up with it I could just kind of say well, "she suggested it," she went and got it and the child seemed to like it so I am not going to go, "no, you can't have your box." It's not affecting me, it's not damaging me. So, no it wouldn't bother me but other people maybe or someone that suggested perhaps might be a bit like, "right I am not going to suggest anything else." There's no need to be nasty to someone if someone has come up with an idea, even if it doesn't work. I mean from a science point of view that's what's made a lot of science, you know people trying things and them going wrong and then keep trying. Just cause it doesn't work, maybe you need to tweak it a bit in another way. Nobody's perfect and everybody should be striving to get better.

*I: How does this make you feel when you develop new strategies?*

D: I tend not to. I do what I know works.

*I: Why?*

D: I don't know. I guess I lack confidence. I don't feel experienced enough to know how to adapt things and then the worry of it going wrong.

*I: Why don't people like change?*

D: It makes them feel uncomfortable.

*I: Why?*

D: Cause they have not done it before and they are not sure what's going to happen when they do it. And then in teaching that can lead to misbehaviour of children and then it goes into chaos and then if they know if that works with kids, they don't want to change it. It may, if they do it, work out, it's better than it was before or it could go backwards.

*I: It links to the stick rather than the carrot?*

D: Yeah. You're worried about what if someone walks in and I'm trying this and it's absolute chaos in the room. And you know I am always conscious of this, I am not the most strictest of teachers



and I am not very harsh and I am, you know I don't shout a lot and I think if someone came in and I am shouting my head off that would be like, "oh god." You know. So, I wouldn't really like that.

*I: So you feel that you would be judged by others?*

D: Yeah. Judged by others in what you are doing and what is going on in your classroom.

*I: If you were asked to do something that was new and you were unsure of, would you do it?*

D: If I knew the reason for doing it. If I didn't see any benefit I might resist.

*I: How would you resist doing something?*

D: Perhaps I would avoid doing it or sit back a bit. I suppose if I had to I would eventually do it but at least it would be clear that I wasn't happy.

### 7.5.6 Jenny

*I: Tell me what you think teacher's role is.*

J: One of the roles is obviously delivering effective, efficient lessons. In terms of allowing pupils to develop academically. We are there to educate students so they get the exam results they need.

*I: What beliefs do you think are important to teachers and how does this impact on what you do?*

J: I think all teachers should care. I suppose you could say that this is the other aspect of teaching, the more pastoral side of it of being there to support, ermm pupils not just in terms of in class but also in terms of any other issues that arise so whether that's through just being there as a PT or subject teacher as well.

*I: Can you explain what being a PT is and the importance you place on this role.*

J: A PT is what we call personal tutors. It's the more pastoral role where pupils come once a day and we have time to talk to them, discussing issues that may be bothering them. Although as teachers we have to constantly think about the academic side of things, the PT role is just as important. Is hard to explain all the things we do as we just do it. We just deal with anything that comes up [pause], caring. I suppose it's there in everything that we do.

*I: When you say that caring is part of everything you do, what do you mean? Can you give examples?*

J: We have to look out for pupils and make sure they are ok. In terms of what we have to do, I suppose it may involve talking to pupils either outside of class or in PT and making sure they're fine.

*I: What kind of issues results in you acting on your belief about caring?*

J: Well its usually something like they are finding a particular lesson difficult or don't get along with the teacher. I may have to talk to them to find out what's going on and make sure that they feel supported. Sometimes we have other issues to deal with like if someone is having difficulty with their homework or just getting overwhelmed with all the coursework that they have to complete.

*I: Do these issues ever extend beyond schoolwork?*

J: Not really. [pause] I mean I might have to talk to a pupil about what is going on at home but only if it is affecting them in school. It's not part of my role to look into issues outside of school. I can't help them with that, it's not my job.

*I: Do you think, thinking back to when you were at school, teachers' roles have changed at all?*

J: I would say that maybe now it's more the priority is more towards the academic side of things. Its more target driven ermm, where I do feel from my own personal experience that that was a focus if you like there was still an element of just having time or space in lessons to kind of discuss what they want to be doing in the next couple of months time. Particularly with year 10 and 11

with their options and university choices. I just feel that sometimes even with my year 13 class that I don't have or put in the time to discuss things like that with them.

*I: So, what made you want to be a teacher?*

J: Well I have I've enjoyed the subject, English, tremendously and I've always done things like running workshops or working with young children so for me it just seemed like a natural path to combine those two aspects together. Well I was more driven by the work that I had done, I had ran loads, well quite a few workshops at university, working with schools that came in and we did creative writing and poetry and it was just brilliant. Seeing them engaged with writing and making things in that sort of way, that drove me to want to pursue.

*I: If teacher's roles are changing, how are you informed about these changes?*

J: Personally, I feel that I get informed within the department so for example, at the moment our exam board, syllabus has changed and there have been a lot of changes that the exam board have sent information about and that's come through to me obviously from senior management and departments like that. My sort of personal responsibility is just checking with exam boards and just information from the department for education, keeping up-to-date with the websites and changes like that. But ultimately, it's from the department.

*I: What about in-school changes? Do you get feed through information?*

J: Arhh, ok [pause] ermm, again I would say head of department, senior manager, my mentor, mainly through those means. Again, normally it's usually through word of mouth or emails sometimes.

*I: Do you think it's enough? Do you think you get informed enough about the changes that go on?*

J: Ermm I would say so, that I am given enough information to kind of carry out my work effectively. Sometimes I feel that if I need further clarification, I'm sometimes a little unsure about who to go and ask. Sometimes I rely on my head of department a little too much and kind of bombard him with questions but they're not always there available so. I am sometimes unsure as to who to go to for further clarification.

*I: Do you feel that you have any input into changes that are made?*

J: NO I don't.

*I: Do you feel that you would like to have an input?*

J: YEAH, I would. I feel that I would like more of a teacher's voice. It's very ermm top heavy at the moment and I would like more of a say. I was thinking the other day that, it's nothing radical but in terms of assemblies. I would personally, I was talking to a couple of other staff in English, would like an input in something like that and not just it being restricted to PT time. And last year a teacher in Geography did that and got involved. I feel that I would like more of that, getting involved with that kind of aspect.

*I: What would you like to do if you had a chance to do an assembly?*

J: Ermm I would [pause. Oh, I haven't actually thought of what to offer. I would link it in with in terms of the subject, but do. Assemblies are brilliant anyway cause you have got great, they update it with you tube clips to make it relevant for the kids. But I would like to do something with, cause we have a problem in English where they are not, for example with things like poetry or things like that, that sort of topic is not considered very cool and I would like to do something based around the spoken word in poetry and thinking about how even rapping and all of that is based around poetry originally, so just like little information bites around subjects which would get them interested.

*I: Have you gone and spoken to anyone about this?*

J: No. I don't know. I don't think at the moment I have the skills to do this. I need to become more experienced before I can do this.

*I: What do you think is the most important thing about what you do at the moment?*

J: In terms of my role as a teacher? Ermm, I suppose my ultimate desire within my role as a teacher is to be there for pupils looking at some of the wider issues around their welfare. I feel as if it's being able to give the pupils a space where they feel that they can come in, or hope I create a space, which is safe and they feel that they can come in and they can talk about their work or what they have done without feeling that they are feeling like they are going to be criticised or put down and I can give them a sense of achievement in what they have done not just in terms of the grades they have gained. I hope I create that environment ermm [pause], if not I hope that they feel it is a space where they could also feel that they could approach me and tell me about anything that could be bothering them or that they are particularly proud about and find the time, cause I am really conscious that there is never enough time to do those things with so much pressure on pupils and on us to get the right results that everything else gets side-lined to an extent. I hope they feel they have the time or that I am approachable.

*I: Why do you think it's so important that they are not criticised and that they can come and speak to you?*

J: Yeah, I just, thinking about the lesson that I had this morning. I have a top set class and most of them are Bs and they need to get As and there's this constant pressure. A B is not good enough, they have got to aim for an A. And yes of course they should aim as high as you can but some of them I feel are really struggling with that crossing over that particular threshold and they just seem really, I feel that they are made to feel inadequate just because they can't reach it when I feel that that is the best that they can do and at times and with certain ramifications that has to be good enough for them. They have got to be able to see that that is just as good. And I feel that there is a lot of pressure these days that if they are not achieving their target they are made to feel a bit, you know, inadequate.

*I: Earlier you talked about your role in wider issues making sure children feel safe. How do you view this role, is it just linked to teaching subject matter or does it have wider implications?*

J: It's difficult to explain. Yes, I do think it's important to have time to talk to kids about some of the wider issues but yes I suppose ultimately our role is to ensure kids get the grades they need.

It's just sometimes we need to be aware of the pressure they are under and give the space and time to help them deal with this.

*I: So which aspect of your role is most important?*

J: It has to be the exams. Although I still wish we had more time I know this is our focus. It's how we are judged at the end of the day so we have to make sure we performance this part of our role well.

*I: So do you believe that the parts of your role which need the greatest degree of your time are those aspects which project an image of school to those on the outside?*

J: I hadn't really thought about it like that but yes. It's not that we want to look good, it's just that we have to show that we can perform well. If this is what people are looking for then we have to do it well.

*I: Do you believe that this is what those outside of school are looking for?*

J: Well yes. What else would people look at? We have to get good grades as this is what's published in reports and newspapers. When parents are looking at a school, they will want to know what results we have got kids in the past. All these measures don't include things like, talking to kids and making sure they're ok.

*I: Do you know what multi-agency work involves?*

J: Is this the [pause], has this been [pause], oh [pause]. I've forgotten what the [pause]. It's not part of Ofsted criteria anymore. All that stuff on *Every Child Matters* used to be so I knew bits of it but I don't think they look for it anymore. You don't really hear about it now so I'm not sure how it affects us. There are so many other things to focus on that you can't do everything. Something has to go.

*I: Do you think it's important for such issues to be part of the school's image?*

J: They shouldn't but it is important.

*I: Why is this?*

J: Because we all want to be seen to be doing a good job. If finding the time to give students on wider issues is going to affect the results you get then you aren't going to do it.

*I: When you talk about being seen to be doing a good job, how does this work? Who is seeing you?*

J: Ermm [pause] anyone outside of school. Our results are published each year and the school's results put in league tables. If we don't do a good job then we will be down the table. It must be horrible to work in one of those schools which always do badly. I would be embarrassed to say I worked there as what does it say about you and how good you are?

*I: So, does how the public see you affect who teachers are and how they do their roles?*

J: [pause] Yes, I suppose. Everyone wants to be seen to be doing a good job so even though we might not say so we are only going to really put effort into those things which people notice. I probably shouldn't say that.

I: Why?

J: Because we should be there for the good of the kids not to be seen as being good but that just isn't life.

*I: So, if working with other professionals was more visible and monitored and used to judge how well teachers and schools are doing, would teachers put more effort into these parts of their role?*

J: Yes, I think so. I think more people would try and find out exactly what is involved and why it's important to do. Perhaps if it was back in Ofsted criteria or it was somehow included in performance measures.

*I: Do you know why teachers need to engage with multi-agency work?*

J: I don't no.

*I: Do you know about what it actually means in terms of your job?*

J: Is it things like [pause], sorry I may get this wrong [pause], raising aspirations. They are all like the key elements that you need to implement into your lessons to make sure that every child is being [pause], feels included and gets as much out of the lessons as possible.

*I: Do you think that that features in policies at the moment in school?*

J: I would say so. I would say that school is particularly good at making sure that there is something accessible for every child to be involved in. And it's good at offering the alternative like BTEC courses or outward bound. There's lots of opportunities and session3 activities as well so I feel that it's very good at [pause], and actually I feel that the staff are very good at putting on extra events and sessions for them. Things like the groups that have been established for them, helping pupils that [pause], I mean there's loads of opportunities available to them but I mean helping them in terms of building their confidence or their interaction with other kids. Cause I have noticed that there are some pupils that are really struggling with that in my classes and PT and I feel that I wish there could be more of those kind of those activities for the kids to get involved in. Cause I feel that there the kind of thing that is really touching on something that gets overlooked a lot. And I think that that would be really encouraging to see and for kids to feel that, "Oh, I am not going to those because I am not good enough," but wanting to go to those and it being just as much go to those classes as you would a netball or a hockey. As teachers we have to notice is children feel like this.

*I: Do you think that is in conflict with other targets?*

J: It doesn't, unintentionally it comes into conflict, ermm [pause], because it is so target driven so I can't feel but feel that sometimes kids are looked at as a number or a grade rather than an individual and I know it's not always possible to you know nurture. I DO FEEL that they are at conflict, there is a slight imbalance and it needs to be readdressed in education generally I think.

*I: How do you think we can go about doing that in school?*

J: Ermm things like student voice or the council, I think that's really positive but I do question how much of that information gets feedback to the kids. I mean if there was going back to assemblies, I think they are brilliant cause they happen for every year group every week. If there was an assembly where there could be a student voice representative and it actually comes back and addresses the issues that you have raised and this is the kind of things that you have done. They feel like they have actually got a voice and things are happening. So, I don't know how much of that goes on.

*I: If you were concerned about any child what would you do?*

J: Ermm If I was concerned, what I have done in the past is to email PTs to raise awareness of particular issues and liaise with them and if I have had to contact head of department or the inclusion team then we have done. But initially I would raise it with the PT and my own head of department. And I have had, I have spoken to, for example, there was one pupil who was having problems socially and I mentioned it to the PT and they also expressed concern and I mentioned it to the TA in my class and they suggested the classes for social interaction and that was fantastic and I was able to go back and speak to the parent and put them at ease so it's available. So normally through PT to get a bit more information on the pupil.

*I: What kind of concerns do you have about pupils?*

J: It could be [pause], its initially two things. It could be academically if they are not putting in the effort or if they are missing deadlines or it could be socially if they have been particularly distressing in class or coming in distressed which means that they can't learn [pause]. These are the main kind of safeguarding concerns we have to deal with.

*I: What action would you take if you noticed a safeguarding concern?*

J: Well like I said before email PTs. I am a PT and I have to sometimes deal with these issues. I can arrange session 3 activities after school so that students can catch up with work or talk to them and help them organise their work so they are no longer behind.

*I: So how does safeguarding impact on what you do every day?*

J: Errm [pause] it doesn't unless an issue comes up. It's not our job to look out for these things. We have to do something if we become aware of something going on but otherwise, we get on with our job.

*I: Would you ever have to work with other professionals as part of your safeguarding role?*

J: I may need to talk to other teachers, for example the teacher who raised the concern as they may need to do something differently so that child can learn.

*I: What about professionals other than teachers?*

J: No. I can't really see why or think of a situation that I have seen this happen. How can other people who don't know about schools and getting students grades come in and help us?

*I: How are teachers placed in society?*

J: I feel that they are to a certain degree respected DEFINATELY. I feel from personal experience that people's reaction is gosh how, especially being in a secondary school, how do you deal with behaviour management things and the sheer workload. I think that's one perception. Also, there is the perception, which is kind of fuelled by the media, that exams are getting easier, people feel that we have these very long holidays and everything stops and we can go off and stop. The media also runs a lot of stories about teachers not doing their job properly or putting children at risk. So, I think there is this mixed view of what teaching is, it's definitely respected ermm, but I think people do question the amount of work that does go into it.

*I: So, do you think that will impact if you are having a meeting with different people?*

J: Oh, definitely yeah. Yeah, I think, for example, parents that I have had to have meetings with, some of them are very clued up on syllabus and exactly what their child is doing. And there are other parents who mostly likely through no fault of their own and sometimes through the information that they are given as well, I think that that could be improved and they could be given more regular feedback. I know that we do do that through module reports but maybe we could more specifically about how core subjects are broken down into strands as it can be very confusing. So I feel they come in and feel like rabbits in the headlights, that kind of thing.

*I: Do you think people knowing what teachers do, does that help meetings?*

J: Definitely DEFINATELY I feel that by having that understanding puts you on the same footing that helps you build on and address these issues.

*I: Do you think they would have an understanding of teacher's roles?*

J: I think they think they would. Everyone seems to think they know what's involved in being a teacher but I still think that we do have our own professional knowledge which others, unless they work as a teacher, will not have.

*I: If you were having a meeting with a professional would you feel that you knew about their role?*

J: I do feel that, I wouldn't know a lot about, cause I haven't had to deal with them. I haven't had to deal with them so far but I wouldn't feel that I know too much about what they do. I feel that it would help me to have that knowledge and enable me to go in there and get a perspective of where they're coming from. DEFINATELY.

*I: So, would that affect you in the meeting? So, if they were talking would you be able to have an input?*

J: I feel I would still be able to input but at the same time I would feel very conscious and personally I would feel that I would feel quite nervous in that situation as I would be thinking that everyone is judging what I do. I definitely would if I didn't have all the relevant information available in terms of what they do. I would also worry about some of the language they might use as I am not really aware of the terminology that other professionals use. I would feel quite wary going in.



*I: Which professionals do you think would do this?*

J; Doctors definitely have the highest status of professionals as they think they are better than everyone.

*I: Why do you think this?*

J: I don't know. They just always give that impression.

*I: In what way?*

J: In the way they present themselves which I suppose links to the fact that they earn more money so can dress better. They are better trained than us having been studying for longer which can make them feel more confident.

*I: How would we make that better?*

J: Ermm, I would feel that if I was in that situation that I hope I would approach somebody before the meeting and say someone is coming in to speak with me what do I need to know or what does their job involve or what specific angle are they going to be looking at? Maybe having some kind of, maybe on staff PD days some kind of information about the different kinds of people we are likely to interact with throughout our teaching career. I think it would be really helpful to have an idea. I think it would be really interesting.

*I; In terms of knowledge there's a bit of a difference. Anything else that would affect your ability to engage in that meeting?*

J: I ermm With the point of view of the holidays and the job not being as difficult as everyone makes out I feel that those kind of attitudes and opinions can be very difficult to deal with and address and you can't change those as well. Ermm. So in that way it's all about your tact and the way in which you deal with that. Ermm, I really wouldn't know how to, how you could deal with that other than listening to where they are coming from taking it on board just see what you could do to address it. Make them leave thinking that, you know, that you are listening.

*I: What about in terms of hierarchy? Do you think teachers standing is above or below other professions?*

J; I would say it sits somewhere in the middle with ermm. I may have got this totally wrong, with doctors, surgeons, lawyers those professions I think would sit quite high and be quite obviously at the top and teaching would come under there. The reason I put it there is because of in terms of hours, the amount of hours that are put in. I see teachers putting in, you could be working twenty-four seven if you, you know don't have that time to switch off. And also, the demands of the job, the stress levels are involved in it as well are quite high stress driven job.

*I: So why are teachers lower and lawyers and doctors higher?*

J: Ermm with doctors in particular because of the risk element in their jobs, the fact that's it dealing with somebody's health. I think health and education are the two key players in society but health definitely stands at the top. Ermm I just feel that that is something that is prized most

highly then obviously education comes under that. Lawyers, I think that of lot of it is to do with their salaries as well and how much money they make from their profession. It's measurable in so many different ways, what they're doing, their outcomes and their salaries. I think society, the wages that you get really does determine where you are on the social hierarchy which in turn impacts on how much power you can exert over others. Going back to meetings this is going to affect our ability to take part. If others have more power then teachers are going to feel more excluded from any decision making that takes place."

*I: Do you think their backgrounds would be very different?*

J: I would say, you could still be from the same background but could decide to go down either one of those routes such as teaching. Particularly in terms of medicine and teaching as well, the ethos is trying to help people and I guess you could argue it's the same with lawyers as well is routed in that. Ermm, I don't feel background does affect it. I wouldn't say that it does at all.

*I: What about personal qualities? How would you describe a typical teacher compared with other professions?*

J: I would like to think that teaching is, I would say, DEFINATELY say it's got to come from, It DOES come from a caring and nurturing profession. I strongly believe that. It's got to be about wanting to guide people through to pass on knowledge. Its so democratic. I feel that that's the main idea behind it whereas something like law for example I can see as being quite competitive, coming at it from a different angle and I feel that with doctors and teachers there's a shared, this shared grounding of wanting to help people and to better people. I feel it's more driven by a desire of individuals to get ahead with their career. To make themselves look good. More than by wanting to[pause] I might be wrong, a desire to want to work together and help children. This career driven need to want to make it to the top.

*I: All these differences between people, do you think that's going to impact on people working together?*

J: I think it does, it can come in the way and cause tension or conflict if you like cause everybody does come at it from a different angle and they have different ambitions and are driven by numerous things and I feel that will have a bearing on it. If people want to gain something from the meeting rather than working towards meeting the needs of the child then I don't know how people would overcome it. Ermm, how people overcome that?

*I: In your view who would be trying to gain from the meeting?*

J: Other professionals that are involved. Teachers do things for the children as we are the ones who see them the most so know them best. I do feel other professionals are not really interested in the children but want to progress in their career.

*I: Can you give an example of how someone might be affected by these characteristics?*

J: Ermm I would say something like ermm, in a sort of department sense, ermm, you might have someone that feels that they want to, that every child in that cohort has got to get, you know this minimum grade that everyone has to achieve. You might have another teacher who feels that ok

yeah, we will aim to get everyone achieving that grade but maybe a class or group of individuals that are not going to achieve it but can we do something else with them? Can we give them a sense of achievement and fulfilment in another aspect? It might not be academic at the end but I feel there is a lot of this competitiveness and others wanting to try and outdo each other and be better and it's really ambitious. If you don't get your students achieving their targets, what's it going to mean for your career? But I DO question what, but that's fine of course but and schools aren't actually competing against each other but I feel that it's a shame that certain individuals get overlooked and they leave with a sense of dissatisfaction. So, I feel that that is a conflict that I see.

*I: So, if you were in a meeting with people would it be better to have one shared objective that everybody agreed with?*

J: I think that shared objectives are very important. I think you do need a common goal especially if you are working as a team. But I think once you establish and lay out your common goal you do need to make allowances or you need to have almost like a back-up plan. This is what we are all aiming for, we need to all decide that we are in this together but if for example this was to happen and we didn't achieve this because of this what else have we got in place and what else are we doing to ensure that pupils. I think the objectives does, particularly in a teaching sense it has to be orientated around the pupils. And mostly it is but I think they have got to realise that if it's not met it's kind of not the end of the world if we are still doing this and this and can show that we are doing this ensuring that pupils are still getting something out of it. So, I feel YEAH, a common objective is important but it's the other allowances that we make along the way as well and being open to those.

*I: What will affect people being open to it?*

J: It's really difficult to say. I would like to think the incentive of everybody really trying, working hard for this one goal that is the primary thing and that's always going to be set from by higher orders and we all work and strive to achieve that. Ermm, but what will affect it? Oh gosh, I am really not sure. It's difficult as we have to look at it from the teaching sense and make sure it helps that student get the grades they are predicted whilst other people may be looking at different targets. It could cause tension.

*I: What do you think multi-agency working is?*

J: Is it ermm. I believe that it's a series or group of different organisations that deal with different aspects that or a particular issue or try and address different aspects of, and are all specialists in a different area but they are working together for somebody or to achieve something. So, a common goal.

*I: So why would they all work together in school?*

J: So, it could be going back to the social worker or psychologist they could, for example, having issues with particular pupils. There is certain amount that the school can do and provide but I feel that within the school we have very few specialists in a particular field, especially when you are dealing with pastoral you would need external people that are specialists that could come forward and give their input. The same in terms of academically as well. You would need, are

encouraged to bring in specialists in particular fields to come in and to be able to talk, address and offer specific perspective or different viewpoints which I think are particularly key.

*I: How do you think people would find that, having people come in and tell them how to do aspects of their job?*

J: I don't think, that would OBVIOUSLY NOT be taken too kindly I can imagine that nobody would want to be told that or made to feel that they are not doing a good enough job. I think the way it needs to be approached is, people need to be reassured that it's not that you are not doing a good enough job or that aren't doing this effectively this is more to enhance the job that you're already doing. It's more to benefit you. It's more about the wording and the way that they are posed. Yeah, it's something that definitely needs to be considered.

*I: If you were in a meeting and you had different people telling you that you had to do these strategies how would you feel?*

J: I know that people say, "there's no way that I am doing that, how dare they, I have been doing this for so many years." Ermm But ermm, I personally feel that they are all ideas that you take on board and listen to them. Whether you implement them is down to you at the end of the day but I think it's very important to realise that these people are coming from a particular background or particular profession and have research or have had experience of you know doing this for quite some time. It's important to be able to listen and take it on board. But absolutely you know most people would quite narked by something like that I would imagine.

*I: So, when there's meetings do you think that everybody would be equal or do you think that certain people would have more power than others?*

J: Ermm, There would be a difference in power, yeah. I think that if you were being told that you had to implement something in your lessons you may have in that meeting people that are just starting out, for example someone like myself and at my stage as well as more experienced teachers. I would go in with the attitude that if someone more qualified and with more knowledge tells me what I need to do I would have to take it on board without questioning. I can be sat alongside people who have been in the profession for many more years and they do, I feel that rightly if I was in their position that yeah I would feel a bit like that like, "How dare you tell me how to do things when things have been working fine." And it is hard to challenge that, people don't once they have got into a certain way routine people don't want to break out of that.

*I: Why are those with less experience more likely to be dominated?*

J: I do feel that in teaching experience is more important than qualifications but I don't think that others would also have this view. I think other professions would see qualifications as being more valuable. I don't think I would question this as they know more so can back up what they are saying whilst I would feel a little lost.

*I: Why do you think people like to keep in a certain routine?*

J: I think as soon as they see something works people stick with that and are very reluctant to deviate off that path and try something new. I think that, not everybody, but people do fall into a

certain way of doing things and if it works, and sometimes if as well they find that, for example with a particular lesson they get given a new group and they find it is not working I think people think automatically that it's an issue with the class maybe and not so much with the material.

*I: Why do you think people are reluctant to pick up on new things?*

J: It's so difficult isn't it cause I don't want to pick on personality traits at all but it's there, ermm, yeah, as much as it pains me to say it I think a lot of it is a certain personality that does kind of resist that. I don't know what it is but I think that there are certain people that as soon as you offer, "Why don't you kind of do this?" their guard goes up and they feel they are being challenged ermm, and I think in teaching as well a lot of the time you have to, are always having to prove yourself, you are always having to, you know, always being observed, you have to prove that you are a good reflective teacher, getting graded, ermm so people do become protective of their work and what they do and I feel that it is a natural defence mechanism that goes up.

*I: Why do you think people's defence mechanism goes up?*

J: Because people feel vulnerable and it's a way of protecting their work. You are always being observed and judged and when it's your job on the line you will feel vulnerable.

*I: How will this vulnerability affect teachers in their day to day work?*

J: It will impact on what they do. If you feel people are constantly watching and judging you are aren't going to try anything new. You will stick to what you know works even if you may have found something better. People will end up feeling that it's not worth the risk as they can't be confident that something will be better and it's not worth the risk of trying it out. It would stop you wanting to take part. If you feel that people are judging you then you would worry about taking part in meetings. For some people this would mean they would resist anything new offered and instead keep doing what they always have. At least you know what you are doing works. I don't see how people who don't work in schools could give you that much help to improve things as they don't work here, do they?

### 7.5.7 Sam

*I: Can you tell me about teacher's role? What you think teacher's role is?*

S: Firstly, it would be to educate students. To support and put in place scaffolding to aid students learning and future abilities to continue to learn throughout their entire life not just while they are at school but hopefully try and get an enthusiasm and passion to continue to learn not just to think oh I have three years left in school to do and then I am out of here.

*I: So, what kind of things do you mean when you say scaffolding?*

S: As within, just start off with very basic skills. And try and relate it to real life as much as you can as I know that many of the questions that I have come across are, "when am I ever going to use this?" So it's make it real for the students, relate it to where they will have seen it or experienced it before which is quite easy within maths because can use computer games and explain how if it wasn't for maths you wouldn't have all your computer games available, it's all done, even though it's all pretty, it's all maths related. And then building up slowly and being aware of your students as well, knowing what level they are and giving them the appropriate skills set best suit them as well. There's no point, if you have a low ability class, trying to teach them Pythagoras theorem, it's not going to happen. You're going to get frustrated, they're going to get frustrated and disengage them and it's just giving them a taste of what they need to be doing and giving them skills that will hopefully put them in a good place.

*I: Do you think roles have changed over time with the introduction of multi-agency working policies such as Every Child Matters, from your own experience of school?*

S: Yes. I think there is a lot more focus on all students and not just the 'shiny apples'. There's more inclusion, more focus on everyone not just the ones who will get top grades. I know when I was at school the teacher would just be teaching to three or four people that could do the work and the rest, as long as you didn't make too much noise, you were left to your own devices which we thought brilliant but then when I left school I thought oh I need some qualifications. I then had to go back to night school [pause], such an opportunity I missed but at the time you don't realise. There's a lot more support and there's a lot more encouragement I think as well, no matter where you are trying to get the ownership of education onto the students as well as onto them more as well as onto us. I'm a teacher, I'm here to help you but you need to help yourself. It's that getting them to help themselves that's the difficult bit. I find I spend a lot of my time sitting encouraging kids and talking about their issues outside of school which I never thought was part of teaching.

*I: When you talk about issues outside of school what do you mean?*

S: Well sometimes kids come into lesson in a bad mood because they have fallen out with someone or they are arguing with parents. Before I expected them to just to get on with it, I suppose I didn't think it was my job to question them as I was just there to teach. Now I need to make sure they are in the right frame of mind to learn so I sometimes need to sit and have a quick chat with them so I can do my job and teach them. I would never of thought that before.

*I: Do you think your role now goes beyond getting children good grades?*

S: No, that's still what we have to do. But I suppose sometimes we have to go about it in a different way.

*I: Do see your role as going beyond this and supporting children on other aspects of their life, perhaps working with other professionals?*

S: No. They do their bit and I do mine. I don't see why I would need to work with other people as we do very different jobs.

*I: So, you have said you are frustrated, so would you have done something differently or ended up at a different point do you think if you had had more support at school?*

S: I (pause). It would be, yes, I'm sure that I would have ended up somewhere totally different to where I have ended up. I think that my career path has been very unstructured and I have just fallen into things where as if I had been given, if I had been more focused, I could have been a bit more driven with ok this is what I want to do. It's only now that I am realising that this is what I want to do and it's like oh wow.

*I: So, do you think that you would still be a teacher?*

S: Yes. Yes but I would be. I think I would have gone into more of the outdoor ed. And been in a better position where I would have done a more specific degree or qualification where I could have gone into that rather than the way that I have gone. So yeah it would still be teaching.

*I: Why? What makes teaching stand out?*

S: I think it's the challenges that you face on a. I was going to say day-to-day basis but it's not even day-to-day its almost, in certain classes, its minute to minute. Or lesson to lesson. It's just the variety, the interaction; it's the sense of achievement that I can get personally as well as the sense of achievement that the students can get. It's the little times, you can be having the worst lesson in the world yet you explain something to a student and they can't, haven't got it and all of a sudden you have that little light bulb moment their face lights up and they think I've done something good. That can happen a couple times a day which is so refreshing. The job that I was in was very. I'd only ever get phoned up if the systems were broken in IT so everyone was very angry with me and it was well it's not my fault. I was just the front for that so I got very. I'd go home at night thinking well I haven't achieved anything.

*I: So what is important for teachers in their role?*

S: Ermm, for me it is the personal side. I absolutely love it. It's the thing that keep driving me on to do better and improve. I can't quote for others but yes I really do love it and it's just so nice to be around people that you can help and give them something which is going to be useful and that they are going to use day after day even if they don't appreciate it now they will one day and hopefully they should reap the benefits when it comes to their exams. So yes, I believe that caring is important.

*I: Why do you think it's changed, become more caring?*

S; I think because, from my experience originally it was if you weren't careful the board rubber would be flying across the room. And now I think with safeguarding because a lot of people abused that power and I think it's not the way to get the best out of people. I know that occasionally I have raised my voice and I've thought no don't raise your voice cause all you're going to be faced with is a raised voice back. Lower it down and say I can't talk cause everyone else is shouting. And I think it's the best way. If you can be more supportive and show empathy as well cause, I know that I struggled in school and I know how difficult I found it so, it's ok Yeah. It's frustrating when you hear I don't get it, and I think well have you read the question and it's no, and that frustrates me when you say have you read the question and they say no I don't get it and you say well read the question and I will come back in a minute. So, it's the best way to motivate people if you are more encouraging and more supportive rather than just shouting.

*I: You have talked about the safeguarding bit. Do you think this links to your belief about caring?*

S: Yes.

*I: So how do you think that affects you and your role in school?*

S: It makes me consider why I am teaching what I am teaching and also how I can make it relevant. It links to my values as a person and as a teacher. From my own experiences I felt that teachers were there not just to give us information but to help us and care. We all know we have to make sure students get good results but ECM makes me think about more why I want to be a teacher. It ties my job to real life giving students the opportunity to grow, develop and feel that they are in a safe environment, somewhere that is going to, cause a lot of students it's the norm but here school is quite a safe supportive area where they know they are going to be looked after and treated as a human being or as an individual rather than just giving them £10 I don't want to see you until its dark environment which it's scary that that happens but I am so happy that I am in a place where I can be a bit more proactive and help and at least give them some bit of compassion and understanding. I feel that there isn't as much emphasis on this anymore by those in power which is a shame as this is what made me consider teaching and I don't want to lose it. I think teachers will always care even if it isn't valued by others as this is what we do.

*I: What kind of issues would you have to support children with as part of this caring role?*

S: Well we have safeguarding issues, so pupils who are having a hard time and find it difficult to concentrate on their work. We have to take time to talk to them and make them realise they can do well. Sometimes these kids don't have anyone at home who encourages them.

*I: Do you think it's part of your role to work with other professionals to support them on some of these issues?*

S; No. My job is to educate them. Whilst I show I care I can't get involved in these issues as it's not my job. If I did that then how would I have the time to teach and make sure they can achieve what they need.

*I: So, do you think that the policies have changed how teachers are or have how teachers are changed the policies?*



S: I think a bit of both. I think everything. I think the policies have had to change to be more supportive and the teachers have had a change to be more supportive. If you keep shouting at someone and hitting them with a stick you are just going to end up with aggression back at you.

*I: Do you think that every child matters is written into the policies within this school? Do you think it's reflected in policies as we don't have one policy for it?*

S; I don't believe we have one individual policy for it. I don't think we need this as I do believe the essence of the framework is there and in place. [pause] Its left to the individual teacher's interpretation to what they have to do.

*I: Do you think each teacher will interpret it properly or do you think there's room for error?*

S; I think there's room for improvement what we do as there will be room for error as people interpret it differently. I think some people will think well hang on there must be a better way of doing it as not everyone will be doing what they should. But it's nice to have the freedom rather than this is rule 1, 2, 3, 4 so on. So, we have the framework and idea in place but there's pros and cons for both and it's how you oversee it that's important. People need to know it's going to be monitored so they have to do it.

*I: So, there's room for teachers to be a bit creative?*

S: Well, that's what you need. You need the freedom to explore a little bit more.

*I: Do you think that teachers have any say within the policies within the school? Do you feel that you have any say about what's written?*

S: From my experience from while I've been here I've felt that yes on the whole I've been, when I have asked for things, for changes to happen they have happened which is nice. I think some things could have gone slightly better with certain scenarios that have happened to me but on the whole I would say, "Yeah I do feel as though if can see that it's not working for me." or I can see an issue I can suggest different outcomes and they will be considered and go, "Oh yes or no," it's not just that's what you have got. I do feel that I can make changes if I need to.

*I: Do you think teachers can affect government policies?*

S: That's I would say yes but it's how we do that isn't it? Cause we would be seen, if we were to go on strike saying we want this or that we are going to be seen as inconsiderate cause everyone going to have to change their childcare for the day. It's just how, I think something needs to be done to allow us a voice so we can say look this is not working, Mr Gove or whoever is in charge, can we look at doing this. I think that if we had that sort of, it would be a far better, more creative environment for us to be in than here's all your policies from the government get on with it.

*I: Do you think that's different for other professions or do you think they are all the same? Do they have any control over their policies?*

S: I think to a certain point that everyone has control, I know in the industry that I was in, we were brought out by Lloyds bank and to start off with we were left alone and then when integration started it became very much you do this because we do this and we were so this doesn't work for

what we do. We were, our whole ethos or whole structure was about speeds of the market rather than spending, rather than doing years of development it was get things out relatively quickly as we were relatively small. But no when Lloyds came in it was well you do this cause we say and it's like that not much.

*I: How do you think that affects people?*

S: Well, it caused me to leave. Because I thought well hang on a minute what's next then. I now can't do this and its well what can't I do next week? What else will you take away from me next week? So when it's like that its very, it's really is a horrible place to be.

*I: So how could it be better? How could we have more of an impact on the government?*

S: I think with the government I would have to say it that. I think the phrase is walk a mile in someone's shoes, isn't it. Put them where we are and say. Cause I know that before I got into teaching, I would take the Michael and say well you just work from 9-3 and you have all this and you don't. It's like I left the house at five to seven this morning and I get in on a normal day, I don't get in till 6 at the earliest and I am out the house for at least 11 hours a day. And you say I have an easy job. Come and have a go, come and experience it, ok I am not asking you to teach but come and be in the classroom, see what we have to go through, see what we are trying to go through as well as trying to teach.

*I: Does the public opinion of teachers affect them?*

S: I think. I would say yes. A lot of people think it is a very easy job which it isn't. I'm glad I haven't got that much hair cause I think if I did I would have either pulled it out or it would have fallen out by now.

*I: How does it affect them? How will they respond if they have this negative image built up?*

S: Well I point out what I do. And then as soon as they hear what you are actually doing for, well it's not for my benefit cause I have already got all the qualifications that I need and everyone goes on about the creativity of British Industry and its all dying and well its hang on a minute who's coming into the trade, the workforce, oh its people who are at school and they're the ones that I have a big influence over. Perhaps if you were a bit more supportive and well if it is that easy come and be a teacher.

*I: Do you think that affects teacher's confidence?*

S: Ermm, it doesn't affect mine. I just smile at them and think well how narrow minded are you. Well if that's what you find well you can think what you think. I know the job I am doing. I know what works for me. I know why I am doing it. I am very happy in what I am doing. Most of my students I think will walk out of each lesson having improved. There's always going to be a few that don't want to and are very anti but its, they are just not used to having someone there who is trying to help them.

*I: What about if you were in a meeting with other professionals? Do you think it would affect you being able to get involved if they had that perception?*

S: No, No not at all because I think, if I had followed the traditional route of school, university and then into teaching but because I have been in industry, I've been in various different parts of industry, I went from very manual labour into IT, into teaching, I am quite comfortable in any meeting I would go excuse me, I'm quite right, excuse me. So yeah I am more than happy cause I have been in industry and he has worked in the REAL world as they like to, I love that quote. You have never worked in the real world, well it's like well what am I doing? With what's just come through the door it's like well what's more real than that?

*I: So, what do you think is important for teachers within their role?*

S: It's got to be your teaching ability but there's so many sides to what we need to do. It's the one thing that we have different to other professionals. They may know some of what we need for our job but they won't have the experience and knowledge of being in the classroom. There are so many things. You have to be supportive, encouraging, almost I feel that I have to switch off with some of the comments that come my way and not take them personally as a lot of them aren't meant directed at you per say but cause they could have just had a horrible lesson, come into yours and they have just brought it with them, that aggression. So, it's like ok. Let's detach it. It's not aimed at me directly so being able to and as I said before, just having the empathy I find that very useful to go, "Yeah ok I know I had a nightmare and I struggled," so I feel I'm relatively normal so other people are going to struggle so sometimes they take things and go yeah I can do it and I go great.

*I: So, do you think its personal characteristics are more important in teaching than a skill?*

S: I think it all comes down to a, if you have a very good knowledge in your subject area then the other skills you need you can pick up. But if you already have got those skills of being able to interact and show the compassion and appear to be friendly as I know sometimes you can get teachers that appear a little standoffish. Cause I got accused of being in a mood today when I asked someone to put their phone away and it just, how am I in a mood? Cause you have asked me to put my phone away and you know what the school policies are on phones. And it's you are in a mood you are. And I'm not but I will be in a minute. But why are you saying that?

*I: So, you have said that you think teachers need a good knowledge. Do you think it's the most important things having that knowledge there?*

S: It's something that you will always learn and when you do stop learning I think that would be a worrying time for myself is when I stop feeling that I need to learn. I'm learning every single day but I need to, it's good for me. Get the experience, the understanding and the different techniques. Cause I have only seen a couple of ways of explaining stuff, whereas the more time I spend the more time I have to develop my ways.

*I: Do you think qualifications are more important or experience?*

S: It's almost a chicken and egg as without qualifications you wouldn't be allowed to be in the teaching profession but without the experience you're in theory to start off with not that useful and you are probably doing a bit more damage than you are, your intentions are right but because you haven't had the past experiences, it's scary but I'm building up a far better resource pack now of my knowledge of how to deal with situations and looking at different ways of

answering or solving questions or re-writing them so other people could understand them. So, it's, I'd say 50:50 which probably really isn't an answer but you would have to be qualified in yourself but you need experiences.

*I: What about the government pushing people to do master's degrees in teaching? Would it be more useful to do that or to have more experience of teaching?*

S: I would say it would be better to be at the coal face. Actually doing something in a school. That's probably looking from where I come from, that's I spent a couple of days in a school before I got my GTP and then it was like there we go. But I am so glad I did the GTP route and not the PGCE because I think the more time I spent in school the better I got, the better I continue to be because you can't replace experience or you can't just here you are. If someone took on your role now it would be, what do I do? Well Miss S does that, well how does she do it? It would be great if you could clone it and say well this is a template for head of SEN or a template for head of maths but experience is so so important. So, if you can get the experience as well as the qualifications. I think masters that's just a bit too far.

*I: Why do you think the government encourages people to do them?*

S: I don't think I have ever thought about that. People have asked me, well are you not doing your masters? Well I have never felt the inclination to do it. I have got what I envisage that I need. I am quite happy where I am. Perhaps I should. Good question. No, I don't think I would do for a while. I'm still learning my trade. It feels like I have been in for some time but I am still 9 months since September time.

*I: So, what professional characteristics do you think teachers need?*

S: Opened minded, passionate, enthusiastic, wanting to be there, not there because it's the pay and the pension, well I have always done it and I will stay here till and then I'll retire. As soon as that happens then the quality could quite easily give. Cause if you are just standing at the front and just going 1+1, you need to have a presence and want to be there. The kids know if you want to be there or not and you do want to be active and encourage them.

*I: Do you think that's different for other professions? Do you think they would be more focused on pay?*

S: Yeah. Causes that's, cause I know that every much it was when I was in industry, well I want that job cause it's got this amount of money with it and I lost twenty grand out of my yearly salary to become a teacher, to do my GTP and I thought what you doing. Cause originally it was oh the money cause then I can retire and do this and that and then I thought no, I'm not happy and I'd been like that for coming up to a year. It's no good, it's no good for me. If I'm not careful they will sack me and then I'll have nothing. So, I took an incredible risk, an incredible gamble and it's like well hang on a minute I was earning that and now I'm earning this and I haven't even got a job at the end of it as well. But I, I'm just talking personally for myself but the money is always nice but it's the satisfaction that you could influence someone else's life so dramatically that I love. Well I got paid for D of E this month so it's woo.

*I: So how do you see teachers slotting into society. Where are they in the hierarchy of society?*

S: I would love to say that we should be higher up than we are. We should be thought of far better than we are. We're somewhere where the judges are, we should be as high as that as we are doing something that is so important. It's not just for us it's for the whole country.

*I: Why do you think we are not there?*

S: Ermm. I think too many people still think back to how they were at school. And it oh yeah well, we only did 9-3 and its no I'm contracted, I have to be on duty from 8 o'clock in the morning and I don't leave till quarter past five at the earliest. It's even worse hours than when I was in industry. I used to start at 8 and finish at 4 so it's like I have less money, worse hours, and I am happier than I have been. I think it's letting them know what we actually do and try and get it out there that we are not lazy, we work very hard. I know I have gone home and this week I am struggling, I am feeling quite drained but I think that's after the stresses of last week. They almost need to do a documentary and show what is going on and not have things like Waterloo road. People then ask me are you watching Waterloo road and I go, "No." No, I am not watching anything like that as again it doesn't help our cause. All it does is highlight teachers who aren't doing their job properly and getting away with it. It makes you think that's all the public are going to think that about teachers. It's no wonder that we are constantly worried about everything we do. It makes it difficult to carry on sometimes as it drains you. And then when you are feeling particularly low as a result of all this, you are asked to try something new. Well no, why should I. Whatever I do it won't change people's perceptions of teachers so why take the risk.

*I: Would this affect your ability to work with other professionals?*

S: Yes, it would. Why should I try something new? I will go if that's what I have to do but don't expect me to change what I do in my classroom. Why should I let people make judgments about what I am doing as it's not going to change their view of me? I would love to see David Attenborough or someone like that and go this is what it's like and have the things that have been said to me out there in the world and go well hang on a minute that's what's happening to me almost every other lesson with T. I haven't asked for it. I haven't done anything to warrant it yet it's something that I have to put up with.

*I: What professionals do teachers have to work with from outside of school?*

S: I have no idea. I know I have to attend a meeting in a few weeks with someone but I don't know how they are going to help. I expect they will sit there and tell us what they think will work.

*I: What do you think their role is?*

S: Again, I don't know.

*I: We have this meeting coming up. How would you feel if the person running it came up and said well you should be doing this, this and this?*

S: As I've I said I am really happy to get as much, I don't know if exposure is the right word, but experience and knowledge of how to deal with situations. I'm trying my best to build up a bank or pool of strategies but I am more than happy to hear if they think that putting everything in blue is going to work then my goodness me let's have a go.

*I: It would bother you that someone is coming in to tell you how to do aspects of your job?*

S: As long as there you know (pause) so this. As long as it's an open forum where everyone can say what they think and it's not people going this is what you're doing and its ok can I tailor it, can I doctor it, can I just do this? As long as it's not that's what you are doing, I'm more than happy.

*I: Do you think it's likely to be people coming in and telling you what to do?*

S: It depends on what or who that person is. I would hope that they would come into the school and be compassionate to what we are facing and have some understanding of where we are and what we are trying to do.

*I: Why do you think they wouldn't?*

S: Well I am hoping they won't but go I'm paid twenty grand to do three hours work and this is my opinion. I think I they think they are far more important. Because of that they will probably think their role is to observe us and make judgements on what we do.

*I: Why would they think that?*

S: Ermm because they have been invited in. So, they think well if they need my help. As well if they get paid more money, they are going to think that.

*I: How you pick up on their feelings?*

S: I'm sure they would make sure we can't really contribute by the way they talk to us. I think they would use language that teachers don't really understand. If you have some new teachers there, they may not feel confident enough to ask for things to be clarified.

*I: So, it's like they can't do the job themselves they need help?*

S: Perhaps. I hope I am not the only one in that meeting.

*I: Do you think how some people think about teachers, you used the word lazy before, do you think that will come across in meetings?*

S; Possibly but I would hope they have an understanding of what we do here and how we work and hopefully they will appreciate that. And if we were lazy then I wouldn't be going to this meeting. I would be going see ya.

*I: So how should this meeting work? Should it be just one person talking?*

S: No, it should a group, maybe to start off with to set the scene and say these are the objectives and this is what we would like to do, we have some ideas, we would like to hear your ideas. Brainstorming or mind mapping and all that kind of thing. And just have an open forum with an agenda attached but nothing saying I am going to talk to you for an hour and then I am going to go home and feel really happy as I have spoke for an hour and 5 minutes of that was perhaps useful to me.

*I: Do you think teachers would say, if they were in a meeting like that? Do you think they would or wouldn't say?*

S: Getting to know what teachers are like I would say yes, they would let them go for a little but and then it would be well why are you telling us this or have you not thought about this. This isn't appropriate to our situation or our needs. So yes, becoming a bit more outspoken and saying are you talking for talking sake.

*I: When you say wouldn't be appropriate what do you mean?*

S: As teachers we have to focus on the results a student gets. I know we also have to consider the pastoral side and make sure they are happy but we can't prioritise both. One needs to win.

*I: Do you think some teachers would just resist it anyway?*

S: I think some could?

*I: Why?*

S: Again, cause they think they know best.

*I: Why do they think that?*

S: They have been teaching, they have not been challenged, their old school, they're I've been teaching, I have always done this this way and I will always do it this way. Err, times have changed.

*I: Why do you think some teachers just don't like to change?*

S: Ermm perhaps they are scared of something new or something different. It's very easy to be confident when you know what you're doing. But if you're then back being put almost in the place of the student then you're vulnerable and people don't like to show signs of weakness or vulnerability cause then they think perhaps they are trying to manage me out. The problem is with teaching at the moment is that vulnerability is encouraged as everyone is worried about keeping their jobs. This makes it much more likely that people will resist new things as they already are feeling vulnerable.

*I: In what way is vulnerability encouraged?*

S: We are constantly observed and told that we have to achieve this result and get this pupil this grade. It makes you worry about what you are doing all the time. We have to account for every student's grade. It's all on us as teachers with no room for any other factors.

*I: Do you think that's the same with other professions? Do you think they're as likely to not want to change?*

S: I think depending on the types of industry they have to adapt to exist.

*I: So why do teachers not yet other types of industry do?*

S: I think a lot of teachers do adapt. I adapt every day, in theory every hour. Because otherwise I would never get through the day. So, it depends on what sort of level you are saying teachers are adapting.



### 7.5.8 Caroline

*I: Can you describe teacher's role?*

C: Right well we need to, obviously it's to educate the children and (pause) ermm.

*I: What do you mean by educate? What do you have to do to ensure you educate children?*

C: Well make them realise what they need to do to reach the targets they need to reach and how they can actually reach those targets and show them the way they can do it in order to improve. Education is the most important part of teaching for me, so to give them encouragement in what they do and real love of what they do as well to make them to really really give them enjoyment in that subject. So, enjoyment and show them what they need to be able to achieve.

*I: So, you have described the role of educator as being based around achievement of targets. Do you agree that this forms the main part of what you do?*

C: Yes. We have to make sure kids meet targets. So, every day I will plan into my teaching ways of showing children what they need to do. But I also try and encourage them so when I mark work or feedback I am trying to make sure that they feel that they can achieve.

*I: Do you think that has changed at all over the years?*

C: Ermm well I have only been in teaching for about five years. If I think back to when I was at school, I would have said that I thought teaching was just about education but I do think this has changed and teachers have to do a variety of roles including being a parent, counsellor and social worker.

*I: Can you explain what teachers have to do in their everyday role that includes all these aspects?*

C: It's hard to say. We just have to take on these roles so that children get all the skills they need. It's what we have to do every day so it's difficult to explain

*I: What about your own experiences of school?*

C: I had very positive (pause) especially in my art lessons I had a positive teaching so that probably led to my love of the subject. If you see a good role model that's what you want to live up to, I think. I think there was more of that then as teachers had time to develop a passion for their subject in the kids. Now everything is focused on getting good grades.

*I: How are you informed about changes to your role so if the government brings in changes? Are you told about it or are you expected to find out for yourself?*

C: Errr (pause) to be honest a little bit of both I think. A little bit of both. Sometimes it filters through if any changes are needed in the curriculum or anything like that. Obviously we need to know that and if there's a new spec in GCSE or the A-level obviously that has to come through or I suppose if you go on a training course cause I went on one for GCSE because I am doing GCSE marking training course and I went on that last year and that was very interesting cause quite a lot has actually changed from the last spec they'd done as well so. I think (pause) it's a little bit here and a little bit there to be honest how you find out.

*I: How do you find out about the bigger policies at the core of teaching such as ECM? Do you think there's enough information about changes to teachers' role?*

C: I think there could be more information on that actually. DEFINATELY

*I: Do you think teachers have any control over those changes?*

C: No, I don't think we do have a great deal of control over policies to be perfectly honest.

*I: Why do you think that is?*

C: I just think its very very very government led and based on what the government thinks to be honest and it's not taken as a majority. I don't think personally they think that teachers know what's best for education and what would be the best for children. I think it's more about what the government imagine would be the best for children's education, whereas they aren't in the classroom, doing it, seeing it, teaching it. So sometimes it does make me a little bit wonder how they can put these things through and make these changes when they are not actually in the firing line all the time. We are just expected to pick up a policy and make sense of it without asking questions about how it will fit into our practice. I imagine they think schools and teachers are all the same so they can have one policy which covers all of education. Without wishing to get too political.

*I: Do you think that's different for other professions? Will they have more control over their practice?*

C: Ermm. To a certain extent in the NHS. Perhaps they might have a little bit more control than teachers. Then again, I don't think they have complete control. And I do think some of it is down to money at the end of the day at the moment. I do think it's down to the financial situation of the country which I do think is influencing them greatly at the moment.

*I: Do you think not having any control will affect teachers being able to put the changes in place?*

C: We'll still WANT to put the changes in place but I think we will have to push to get into the situation where we really put our foot down as to that's what we want. So, I suppose it will affect how policies are put into place as we might not do it in the same way that the person who wrote it might. You know if enough people do it together, we can make a stand and make a difference.

*I: Do you think people do think that way?*

C: No not really.

*I; Why?*

C: I think at the end of the day perhaps some of the time we are too pushed, have too much to do and we haven't got time to do it. Why do I think teachers don't have control, Perhaps we're not motivated enough to do it or get the encouragement to do it.

*I: Why do you think we are not motivated enough?*

C: Erhh. Motivation being perhaps that if there were more meetings to discuss this sort of thing will give us more of an opportunity to get together (pause) you know as a group rather than just individual persons here and there that probably doesn't know that that person thinks exactly the same thing and wants to do it as well. So perhaps by getting people together a little bit more and more discussion in it, it would perhaps give them a bit more strength or things to go through, to motivate people if we got a group of people together.

*I: Do you think school is the same? Do you think you have any control over policies and what happens?*

C: As individuals? Ermm. NO, I don't think there is a great deal of control over policies.

*I: Why do you think it's like that?*

C: Erhh. Again, I think it's a very much government led thing. And also, perhaps in the way that Academies are run and that kind of school. I also think that in school it's our governors that to a certain extent dictate how they want the school to be run (Pause) the direction of they want it to go in. It will affect how we use them as if we had ownership of them, we might use them more to guide what we do. I suppose as we are given them having being written by others it's harder as we have to interpret them. This is harder so we may only use them as needed.

*I: There not teachers are they?*

C: No.

*I: So, do you think that would lead people to not follow the policy always?*

C: I think it depends obviously on what the policy is, ermm, but I think to a certain extent people do sit back more than we should sit back and perhaps we should question some of these policies a lot more than we do which I think would perhaps feedback then might give more of a discussion point with the governors or whoever we are talking with. They can perhaps reflect a bit more about that certain policy and that might lead to certain changes.

*I: Why do you think it is just one set of people controlling it? Why don't people question?*

C: I think people question but I think perhaps it gets filtered back all the time or perhaps SOME of it gets filtered back but it isn't necessarily acted upon because it doesn't suit who has put the policy together at the time.

*I: So, we don't really have a voice in school?*

C: I don't feel a lot of the time that we do have a bit loud voice. We do have a voice but I don't think it's a booming huge one.

*I: Do you know about ECM and what kind of things we might be doing in school?*

C: Ermm I don't know much about it [multi-agency working] as I have never needed to. So, no not perhaps as much as I would like to. If I was in a different environment maybe it would be different but I don't really need it here but no I would like to be more well informed about it. And perhaps a bit more detail about how it works and how we can, what we can do to add to it, to help.

*I: So, it would be like an ongoing thing?*

C: Yeah.

*I: So, do you think bringing in policies like that where we are looking more at welfare, do you think that's changed teaching?*

C: I think it's got to have improved teaching as it's improved a child's situation whether it be mental or you know be it safety wise and health wise so it can only be a good thing. Really.

*I: So, if you had a concern about somebody along those lines you would know what to do?*

C: Yes, I think so, well I think I'd know who to call on, specialist help which I know they would need. So, I think THAT is very important. I do think so. Definitely.

*I: So, knowing the right people is important?*

C; Yes, I think so. Knowing who to call on YES, who to approach.

*I: What else do you think is important for teachers to be able to do their job?*

C: Err well obviously being in a safe environment. Err and feel well yeah safe around the children and the environment's safe and knowing that there's support if its needed in any quarter. I suppose support whether it's you know whether its head of department, line manager, whether its medical support for the children or yourself and obviously your side of things you know the well-being of the children, that supports very important.

*I: Do you think that kind of social thing is more important to the teaching role than perhaps knowledge or certain other characteristics?*

C: I think it's part of it, it's part of it. I don't necessarily think powers an important attribute to the child's education.

*I: So, you have to be more down to earth?*

C; Yes, I think so. I think so.

*I: What qualities and beliefs make a good teacher?*

C: Empathy, understanding, ermm, compassion, patience, emm, obviously good knowledge of your own subject and the ability to convey it. Really.

*I: From your list it seems that you believe caring is central to what you do as a teacher. Is that right?*

C: To a certain extent yes, I do. I do. Because I don't really see how you can just teach a subject if you are quite cold about it really. You have got to have passion and love of your subject otherwise I don't think you can convey it otherwise really. So, passion for your subject.

*I: When you say caring is important can you explain why?*

C: You have to care what the children are learning or they will see that and not be bothered in your lessons. You need to show that you care what they are doing.

*I: Does caring extend beyond what you do in the classroom?*

C: Yes of course. We have to care about what the students are doing elsewhere as it could impact on their ability to learn in your classroom.

*I: In what way?*

C: Well if they were struggling and having to put more work into a particular area it may mean that they haven't got time to do your work so you have to know what's going on so you can support them.

*I: Does caring ever extend to beyond what they are learning?*

C: Yes

*I: In what way?*

C: Ermm, we care about them as people and want to make sure they are ok.

*I: So, if there were issues unrelated to your subject which were impacting on them, would you intervene in any way?*

C: No. It's not my job is it? Although we can care and have sympathy for students, we can't support them with anything other than what we are doing in the classroom.

*I: What about your pastoral role?*

C: Well we have to talk to them and make sure they are ok but it still all comes down to what they are doing in subject areas. There has to be limits.

*I: Why do you believe there has to be limits to how you support students?*

C: Because I need to stick within the boundaries of my work.

*I: Why?*

C: Well how can I teach and ensure students are getting good grades if my time and attention is taken up on issues which are not part of my role?

*I: So, you are saying that if you were to work with students in issues such as welfare then the academic side of your work would suffer?*

C: Yes. There is only so much time in the day. It all comes down to who we are as teachers. I am not a social worker or a health worker. My job is to get students good grades. If this is threatened by working on wider issues then what does this mean for me as a teacher?

*I: Do you not think supporting students with wider issues goes hand in hand with helping them in the classroom?*

C: No. Whilst yes, I can talk to students, I'm not responsible for looking after their welfare. Teachers' role is to get results and that's it. This is important as without good grades students are limited to what they can do in life so I do this as vital as other professional jobs as without us teaching children where would society be?

*I: So, if you were going to describe teacher's place in society, how would you describe it?*

C: Couldn't do without. Absolutely vital.

*I: What about hierarchy of professionals in terms of status? Where would you say they are?*

C: Perhaps not as high up as they should be. Really if you think about it. How important the role is really, cause goodness knows where I would be if I didn't have decent teaching. So VITAL, vital to the country.

*I: Why is it lower than it should be?*

C: I don't know.

*I: Where would you place them in terms of professionals? Which groups would be higher or lower than them?*

C: I certainly would say on a level with doctors.

*I: Do you think that that will be most of societies opinion?*

C; No, I think they might put them lower.

*I: What's the difference? What makes you think people would put them lower?*

C:Ermm perhaps from bad press. Bad media coverage that teachers have got definitely lowers the public's image of them. [pause] Perhaps it hasn't helped us a great deal with all the striking that's just happened recently as well. That hasn't given us a very good press even though like the rest of society we should be given the freedom erm, yeah I think it's just bad media. Bad experiences themselves.

*I: So, do you think because people have had a bad experience of teachers themselves?*

C: Yes, I think so. Or whether they think that their children have been educated as well as they think they should be.

*I: So, teachers, everybody comes in contact with a teacher. Do you think that doesn't help as everybody knows what a teacher does?*

C: Yes, I think that's the case as well. Cause not all of us go and see a lawyer.

*I: What about if people come in for meetings? Do you think that low opinion of teachers will affect people in the meeting?*

C: Erhh I think that will be a positive thing to be perfectly honest. I think that would give them a better perception of teachers if they actually came in and spoke to them rather than little Billy going home and say I hate Miss ....

*I: What kind of professionals come in? Have you had any contact with anyone who has come in to support you?*

C: Actually come in ermm (pause) I can't think of anyone coming in so far, certainly not to any of my lessons so far.

*I: Do you think it would be helpful if they came in more?*

C: Erhh I think it would be interesting to see what effect they might have. Whether it would be how positive effect it might have and if it does improve anything for the children that we are teaching it can only be a positive thing.

*I: So, what do you think their role is when they come into school?*

C: Ermm I guess their role is to assess where improvements can be made. Whether it's, I don't know if it's in the way of teaching or you know things that can help a particular person improve or make things go a little bit smoother.

*I: So do you think it more about supporting staff or making judgements on teacher's ability?*

C: I would probably say more about judgements. If you're looking for what people can do to improve then you have to make a judgement on what they are doing.

*I: How would this make you feel?*

C: Quite anxious. I don't think I would want to be in that situation. We already have other teachers making judgements about us and at least they know what teaching is.

*I: Do you think all this negative press might make them come in with a bad impression which might then filter into their observations?*

C: I think that's absolutely quite possible.

*I: How would that affect you in a meeting with that person? Would you be able to speak your mind or would you be a bit hesitant?*

C: Erhh I perhaps might feel a little more hesitant. Not being quite sure where they are coming from and in what way they are going to feedback to help, possibility. I would be worried that they might think badly about my teaching.

*I: Why would you think that?*

C; We all have problems in our classes, with kids that don't want to listen and when they fail to get the grades.

*I: Why would you feel hesitant? Why wouldn't you want to put the record straight?*

C: I think you wouldn't want to put any negatives on your own place of work to a certain extent. You wouldn't want to pull your own place down and make it more negative to outside of people. You would probably not be completely honest with people as a result as you don't want people to have a negative view of you or your workplace.

*I: Do you think teachers are very aware of all these negatives and constantly thinking how are people going to judge us?*

C: Ermm I think we are aware of the negatives but I think we are used to being judged a lot. So, you know we are quite open to that, that will be the case and I think we are just tolerant of it but

*I: So, if somebody came in and had a meeting and said I think you should do this, this and this, would you feel that you could pick up those strategies? Would you want to?*

C: It depends what the strategies were and if you felt passionate, well if you felt very strongly that those strategies would be beneficial or if you feel you are prepared to test them to give them a chance. Even if you feel that they are not ideal, seeing it from another point of view is useful because we occasionally can get slightly blinkered eyes and perhaps it is good to sometimes see or hear what somebody thinks, sort an outside perceptive.

*I: So, if you were sat in that meeting, would it be better if that person just talked to you or would it be better if it was a discussion?*

C: I think that a discussion would be appropriate.

*I: Do you think, knowing how teachers can think negatively, do you think they would be prepared to do that and say "no I can't do this" or would they just sit there?*

C: I think if you can justify why you don't want to do something, I think that's important but you do need to back-up with reasons why, I think.

*I: So, it should be people working together rather than one person imposing?*

C: Yes, I think so.

*I: Do you think teachers would be funny about someone coming in and telling them to do their job? Would they perceive it as that?*

C: Yes.

*I: Why?*

C: Because I think you learnt through experience yourself either teaching people in different places, at different levels. I think it's very important, you know experience that you know, that teachers have that they have built up from various people that they have taught and situations.

*I: Perhaps that person doesn't realise the experience that you have got?*

C: Ermm.



### 7.5.9 Paul

*I: Can you tell me about teacher's role?*

P: Ermm well I think teacher's role primarily is to help students to develop and make progress, not just academically but pastorally as well. So, I suppose part of that is being a good role model and modelling the way that you believe people should behave. I also think that we are there to help students be able to access opportunities to the full extent that they can open doors for themselves. DEFINATELY in more of a facilitating role than the old school chalk talk model of imparting information. Ermm what else do I think? I suppose as well it's to support students, well I guess I have already said this, to support students pastorally so if there any issues or questions that students have not just to do with their subject but general life then I guess teachers are there to try and help students and answer some of those questions.

*I: So, it's a lot about students gain rather than your own personal gain?*

P: ABSOLUTELY, COMPLETELY. If I was just thinking about myself, I wouldn't spend so much time dealing with issues other than teaching but a large part of my role is talking to kids and almost like a counselling role.

*I: Do you think that's in contrast to other professions?*

P: I would hope so for a lot of professions. If I compare myself to a lot of peers at university for example, I would say the vast majority of those people are in careers which are less people centred than what I am. I think the majority of those people are in financially more lucrative careers but looking back on it I think there aren't as many jobs where you can have people interactions, as many people interactions for example in a lab-based job.

*I: So, doing something for somebody else rather than for your own personal gain is really important?*

P: Yeah. I think so. I think also with teaching, it's very much when I have been doing some of this volunteering work and trying to get students involved with that, I notice there seems to be a lot of elements similar to that. I think there is a lot of it that's personal game in the sense that when you help someone else you get a sense of achievement, I don't necessarily think you can separate those two but that the centre of it is the student and the reward is, especially if you take a student who has issues or been academically challenged and they come out at the end of it having made significant progress compared to themselves I think that's DEFINATELY a big thing.

*I: Do you think that affects teacher's status, that it's all for somebody else?*

P: Their status in terms of other people's perceptions?

*I: Yeah*

P: Ermm I don't know actually. I suppose in this country that would be (pause) whenever I tell people I am a teacher their first response is usually, you have great holidays or WOW I don't think I could work with some of the young people today. Err So possible it might fall into that category that they are like, you know the nursing profession or something like that where you might be

trying to help people in some ways ermm I don't think it's quite on a par with that, maybe perceived by the public but some people do.

*I: So, what's the public's perception of teachers? Good or bad?*

P: I have generally had positive responses when I say. Like I say there's a good deal of all that you get lots of holidays and you finish at three O'clock kind of thing. And I think in the media there's this big disparity between some people who think you do have these holidays, you do finish early and you do get paid reasonably well for the job that you do and then you have the other element of it where, with the unions for example, where it's constantly it's too much work, it's stressful, those kind of things. All this does is create the impression of a moaning profession. I suppose as well going back to the earlier point it's not a nine to five job really. If you go into the profession it doesn't stop and three or four, especially if you are doing a pastoral role as well. It's very much the case that some things can take, you go into them thinking they will take half an hour and they sometimes take three hours.

*I: You said that you think teacher's role has changed. How much has it changed?*

P: As teachers we have to ensure the student's well-being. Not only so that they get exam results but that they are healthy and can socially form relationships and interact with people. I think with all the recent changes to education everything has become more regulated and it stops us thinking about the whole child. How are we supposed to make sure that children are safe and happy when the only thing worth measuring, according to policies, is how well they achieve academically.

*I: Do you think education used to be very different?*

P: Well if I think about (pause) I always remember my friend's mom was a teacher and she was primary school based. I always remember her saying it used to be a lot less regulated, when there was no national curriculum, she taught before that and that's one of the reasons for her leaving them bringing in the national curriculum. So, I understand that teachers have to be accountable. I always struggle with the degree of accountability in the sense of targets and examination results because if I look at some of the work that I do with the students, especially the BTEC students, I'm conscious of the fact that there's way too much copying going on with the work that I am doing with them. And I am constantly saying to myself well I need to have the time to sit down and work out how they can access that course without me just saying for P1 you have to make a poster so copy that out. And I know I do that a little bit too much but that comes with the pressure of wanting to get them a pass or merit. So, I think from my perception, this is my twelfth-year teaching, I don't necessarily think that's its massively changed in those twelve years in terms of targets, I think it's always been there, it's gradually got more intense with targets and exam results being valued above anything else. I should imagine over the period of twenty or thirty years that it has moved a lot more towards that than it was which in some ways it's a shame, I know people have to be accountable, I know there has to be some way of measuring pupil's progress other than ticking a box for exam results so that pupil can go and get a job. I think that as a whole organisation that's at the detriment of doing the best for the student. It creates a big disparity between what we should value and what we have to.

*I: There seems to be a disparity between what you think is important, the emotional side and what is important to the government.*

P: Completely. And I think if you look at some of the students that are in the classroom, ideally for me I think I wouldn't be scared of keeping education a little bit more open than what it is. If I were to think of some of the students in my year 11 BTEC class, I don't think we should be afraid to say to them at thirteen or fourteen actually let's put you on a completely different curriculum that's a lot more pastoral and hands on. They do get some of that of course but not worrying too much about focusing on things like science and some of the more academically rigorous subjects, the examination ones. Yeah and I look at some of those and I think they are never going to use this subject again. And I think the government is very. I think they are regressing a bit and going towards the grammar school system with the E-baccalaureate and I think that's a real shame because it's almost like you are alienating forty to fifty percent of the students or at least saying to them this is what we are going to measure you against, don't really worry too much if you can't do that. We will put you on this other course and they kind of know that that's because they are failing in some way, which they are not really, they just haven't, we just are not allowing ourselves to cater for them as we should be. Which I think is a shame.

*I: Do you think it affects teachers that so much of their role is not valued by the government?*

P: Ermm. Personally it does me on occasions. I mean I look at some of the changes that they do implement and I look at some of the ways in which Ofsted judge your performance in schools. I often think that's a little bit disappointing some times. Ermm So I think so, anybody that's worked in the profession that's worth their salt knows how tiring it is and knows how much you have to give to it if you're not going to treat it as a 9-5 job. Some of the initiatives that the government has introduced I can see why they are doing them but I think it does devalue the idea of what teachers' role is and they are not just, I don't think it's just, to get that 5 A\*-C including English and maths. I mean that's very good for some students a lot of students need much more than that and they also, you know need to be recognised for that.

*I: What kind of professional attributes do teachers need to do their job well?*

P: Ermm there's lots. I think first of all relationships are a massive thing. You need to be able to develop good relationships with the kids in a respectful way. Looking at the people who struggle more so are the people who don't manage to do that well. And everybody has their own way of doing that. It doesn't mean that you have to be friends with them or authoritarian but you have to be able to develop some kind of relationship with them, so that's a big thing and the people skills to do that is important. Ermm I think tolerance, tolerance and patience are a big thing. So not all students are first of all going to get what you do with them but also sometimes that's ok. So, you look at it and say they are not getting that element of it, so looking back and trying to understand it. Ermm So I think patience and tolerance are quite important. Being organised it a big thing and, there are so many. Being hard working, people who work hard I don't think you can fault, I mean not everybody is perfect at it but people who work hard, the ones that I see are generally the ones that make a bigger impact in the classroom and on the kids. Whereas the people who just come in and do their hours and want to leave at three and I want my thirteen weeks, not all the time but a lot of those people are perhaps the ones that don't do the best for the kids.

*I: Going back to targets, do you think ECM changed the targets and the emphasis on the academic? What is multi-agency work and how does it link to what you do?*

P: Well multi-agency work goes back to the ECM agenda. There were the five things weren't there? And I remember, I think maybe, going back two or three years now. When I would plan a lesson I would always have those there and I would write what I thought was going to be there. Staying safe, economic well-being and all those things and how those would relate to what we were doing in class and some of those were quite nice like quite pastoral things as well. But the stuff that I seemed to come across and maybe this was just me filtering it out but stuff in the media and stuff you get inspected on tends not to be pastoral but very academic target driven, so I don't bother writing it in any more even though when you read some of these Ofsted reports they tend to talk about student safety, behaviour and things like that. So yeah, maybe it's just me focusing on the things that I don't like when I hear these initiatives come out, the things like what about the facts that the students have worked safely in that practical, some of them haven't necessarily got all the concepts but they have completed it which for some of them is a big thing. I think it would be nice if they moved towards that side of things a little bit more and recognise that fair enough that Joe Bloggs can do it safely and to get an A\* at it whereas student B won't ever get an A\* but they carried out the activity safely, those kind of things. I don't know, ECM to me was all about where you had the child's well-being at heart and, I don't know, trying to make sure they were making as much progress as safely as possible. Whereas I don't know. I feel there's a lot of things that I feel people when they come into your lesson they could, there obviously doing a whole list, there's more emphasis on grades and things like that. It's a shame that I don't think about it the same as I feel I am always having to react to situations rather than having a plan to fall back on.

*I: You say its changed. Do you think this aspect of your role is still important?*

P: Ermm Now this is where I am going to show my failings as I used to know more about it than I do. I know that we have had some talks about it haven't we. Was there a case that happened that instigated these five general principles that were implemented? I don't know. I think it tends to be a reactionary measure to be fair as opposed to us looking at it and going ok let's be, I don't want to say more relaxed about it but let's try and invest financially more money into the education system so we can afford to look at kids more individually. It seems to be an incident happens and then we write a set of rules for it and see if we can apply these for a short period of time and then we almost forget about it. I mean I never hear anything about ECM for the most part now from the government. Whenever you read anything such as the TES there doesn't seem to be anything like that which is a shame. In education that's what it's like. They come out with all these ideas and years later its forgotten and they come out with something else emm, sorry ask me the question again.

*I: So, do you think the policies like that were needed to change how teachers were or do you think teachers were becoming more caring and looking after the well-being without it?*

P: I think as a general rule of thumb most teachers are conscious of that and are good doing that to be fair and I'd hope that anybody going into the profession would think along those lines as well. I mean for me it was absolutely about, from a selfish point of view, what job can I do where I can interact with people and work with people on a daily basis in a people-based job and not just

being in an office and working with something that's just not tangible. So, I'd hope people went into it on that basis. I think you would always meet people that don't unfortunately and they to me are the ones that have the most problems in the classroom. So, I think that's always there, I think the government for some reason always have to put all these initiatives in place, I don't know. It's a bit like politics isn't it? They come along and look at what the last government did and say right what else do we need to do. But no, I don't know, coming back to that ECM thing I liked that at the time, still do but I never think about it so much just because after a few years doing it that I am considering all those things. So, I don't know, I think ECM is important as we need to care but rather than it being part of everything we do its limited to our roles as tutors, the pastoral part. Nowadays everything links back to results so teachers do care but we have to make sure that kids get results. It's a shame really.

*I: Do you think it's written within the policies of the school? Do you think it functions every day?*

P: I think so for the most part. Once again it tends to, I'm not the best man with policies to be fair, there tends to be quite a few of them and I read them and I tend to view them with common sense. I know there has to be a set of policies and procedures to follow. I tend to try and use common sense until I forget in a certain circumstance what I need to do and then I go back to it. I don't think you can let it dictate what you do, you need to be able to interpret it for your work practice.

*I: So, what kind of common-sense things do people do?*

P: Once again being a good judge of character is massively important. If you know the students going into the classroom you'll know that some of them won't be able to cope very well in the circumstances and that might be a dangerous situation or if you talk to them in a certain way they might react in say an aggressive manner which can then be detrimental to their learning in the classroom and be disruptive. So just being a good judge of character and also going back to the relationships thing, I think it's massively important. I think, well I read something once, an article which was talking about being present in the classroom, and it was talking about, can't remember who it was by, it was talking about say if you have 16 kids, you can quite easily if your just talking to all of them, you can quite easily overlook x, y, and z in the class, where if you actually throughout the course of a lesson try and go and be present to that student go and individually try and offer them five minutes of your time and talk to them, get to know them and try and find what makes them work, I think that's important and I think that covers a lot of things in the ECM agenda. Cause you see it with some of the kids, I see it with one student who Miss G works with my Year 11 class and he has responded brilliantly over the last two years to the fact that you take an interest in him and you'll talk to him respectfully and if he's screaming you'll stay calm, and he'll need sometimes a little bit of discipline of course but being able to judge when is a good time to use it and I think that helps with some of those kids cause a lot of them are going home to bad situations so I think using a bit of common sense, not being robotic about it, some of these teachers who have problems with these kids are not working on this ECM agenda where we're trying to create this safe environment which allows the kids to progress but they are not going to do that if they bring issues into the classroom and you give them a barrage of abuse about not having their tie done up. They don't always see that they need to be engaging with these policies and instead choose to ignore them.

*I: Why do you think some people chose to ignore policies?*

P: Well I suppose they probably don't ignore them but perhaps don't interpret them in the same way so they will focus on different things. To me ECM means to make sure all children feel safe and are able to achieve but I suppose other people may see it differently.

*I: So, it's a lot of common sense. So, these people who don't do these things, do you think it would be better if there were a more prescriptive set of rules or do you think it should be part of your professional attributes that you can do these things anyway?*

P: I think being able to interpret policies should be part of teacher professional and personal attributes ABSOLUTELY. I don't think there's anything wrong with professionally developing people, I'm not saying that everybody has the right practical set to start with but I think it takes ermm, I don't know, it takes a bit of initiative when you start teaching to realise that some things work and some things don't. And that's the whole point in being a new teachers, you learn these things and you are always learning them but I think personal attributes are a massive things cause you can have a set of rules but if you revert back to type and your personality type is, I don't know, your personality type is that you struggle to form relationships, say you take it personally what students say to you and therefore from there on in student X is blacklisted then a set of rules is not going to change that are they so I think it's important, the personal attributes is important, having a set of policies and professional development is good cause I go to a lot of these things and I go Oh I forgot about that, and it might be something that I was doing ten or five years ago that I'd kind of forgotten about a little bit but it reminds me I'll try that. But I think the personal attributes are a massive thing personally.

*I: Do you think you have any control over policies in school?*

P: Ermm that's a good question. I don't know actually. I always think that the policy makers as the knights of the round table, the SMT who you would hope would have a good grasp of what their staff are doing, so with us for example, A [line-manager] would hear in meetings things that are affecting us and they would talk about it in SMT and go from there. I don't think it's necessarily that democratic is it? So I suppose if we look at the behaviour policies that are being written at the moment, I can't think of anywhere where I have direct input into that other than I am waiting for that policy to be produced and given to me and I will look at it and go ok that's what now need to do as an organisation. So possibly no.

*I: Do you think it would be better if you could have more impact?*

P: I think it would be nice. I don't know whether they would be able to do that, whether it would be logically possible, not for everything I don't think but on occasions it would be nice if perhaps if schools could take it on the chin a little bit and do a survey of staff and see what they like or don't like, what they think might work, cause we are the ones in the classroom aren't we for the most part? So, I think that would be nice if they could do that.

*I: What about the government. Do you think teachers have any control over governmental policies?*

P: Ermm Once again I suppose it gets feed up through the system (pause). I think teachers who are proactive and keep a keen eye on the unions have the opportunity to have their say through the unions. Ermm, I actually to be fair, I do a little bit of reading around the subject so to speak but not a great deal to be honest so I'll occasionally look at what the ATL send me for example but I often tend to, wrongly so, put it aside as there's so much other stuff to do. So I suppose if I had more time, age old saying, I would pay a bit more attention to it and not be as reactionary which I think a lot of us are maybe, which is the government makes policy and we go I don't like that that's rubbish but then I could have been given an opportunity to say something but I missed it through my union.

*I: Do you think that's the same for other professions that the government has as much control over policies?*

P: I suppose civil servant-based jobs I should imagine it's similar to here, should imagine but I don't know for sure. I think in the private sector it's a different kettle of fish obviously so I would imagine there's regulations that generally govern the area but that's it its company based, their working within some European directive but then that's ok. So yeah, the government seems to be very much into, of cause you know education polices and what they think is best.

*I: Do you think that policies are written by people who are not in education make a difference?*

P: YES, I DO. I always think people should have worked in the profession to be able to makes some of these decisions on things. I also think that it has to be democratic I mean if you look at Michael Grove I don't know exactly but I'm sure I have heard that, it could be hears, but his main advisor is someone who be a headmaster as a public school something like that. And then if that's the case that you have someone making decisions that and introducing polices like that then I think that's out of touch with the vast majority of schools in the system. So, I think it would be nice for the people to, sorry the government officials to make decisions based on what's best for the whole cohort which is not easy and I suppose it takes a lot of money to not have a one size fits all. So yeah that makes me a little bit angry when I hear about those kind of things.

*I: Does it affect your ability to engage in polices if you feel angry about them?*

P: YES, it would affect how I engage with polices. I think so. Well /I am just trying to think. I guess I am lying when I say that. I guess if there's pressure to for example get 70% of students a grade A-C at GCSE I suppose I do tow the line and say well if that's what needs to be done and WITHIN reason I will try and do that. Even though if I don't necessarily think that's best for some for some of the students.

*I: Do you think all teaches would be the same or do you think some would try and resist?*

P: I think unfortunately that most people who would try and resist would be more out of I can't be bothered or its change rather than for the good of the kids. That's not everybody but the more that hear about the people who don't want to do a new policy for the most part, most of the people that I have come across for the most parts it's because its more work for them. They don't always look at it and say this is a different approach, this might be better for this group of students. But I am sure there are people out there.

*I: Why do you think teachers do resist things?*

P: Ermm because they are scared of change. They may feel vulnerable so will be scared of trying something new. I think that it's the case with some teachers that they come in and think maybe a can do a 9-3'o'clock job and I can leave at quarter past 3 in some organisations and if I have to implement that policy it will mean that I have to do some work outside of the classroom when I haven't been used to doing that for X amount of years. So, effort I suppose, a bit of lacklustre ermm resistance to change I suppose.

*I: What kind of people may come into school to support teachers with their role?*

P: Ermm well we have professional development days and external people like X for example that are brought in and paid to do professional development courses and we have had a whole range of those haven't we? So, any group of those. Who else do we have? I'm sure you work with a lot of external agencies so CAMHs, social services and people like that, I suppose their role is to support more the students but I guess also with some of the teachers as well. I suppose if you looked at Ofsted in an incredibly positive light, which unfortunately I don't, you could argue that maybe they're there to support us because they are highlighting what we do well and what we don't. But I don't see that as a supportive process as it's not ongoing as its every three years or so. To me it's just a judgement thing. I think to an extent all the people who come into school are there is judge us in some way.

*I: When they come in what are their impressions of teachers?*

P: I'm trying to think of some specific examples. I think the people who are teachers or who have been teachers tend to be, be quite positive and tend to be the people who say we know you work very hard and try this. There's this volunteering abroad organisation, lots of volunteering organisations come in and I don't know actually I don't know if they have feedback.

*I: Do you think they understand our role?*

P: Ermm I honestly don't know. I know that's not very helpful is it. If I look at the volunteering organisations that come in, the chap that does the aboard one, he's obviously comes in in a very pastoral sense, giving the students an opportunity to develop themselves and help other people and all that kind of stuff. So, I suppose, he can see part of myself in his role working with the students but I don't necessarily think he would know anything about the academic side of things and the target driven side of things. I suppose a lot of organisations would have the same perceptions as what the public do whatever that would be

*I: What do you think that is?*

P: I suppose good holidays, paid reasonably well for what they perceive we do. I don't think anyone really understands what we do unless they do it themselves. We do have our own knowledge about our profession which no-one else knows.

*I: Do you think its important to share this knowledge so that we can work with other professionals?*



P: I don't think you need to share this. I think we need to maintain that knowledge as it's what makes us teachers. If we were to share this with others then they would think that they could do our job. It's not very helpful I know.

*I: Do you think gaining knowledge about others' roles will give teachers an advantage?*

P: Not really. It may help us understand what they do more but I don't see how it would be useful for us in our role.

*I: Do you think that will affect their ability to work with us?*

P: Yes possibility. I think people will underestimate how many hours a lot of teachers put into the job. So, you know I suppose that might affect it a little bit. I think that others may underestimate what teachers do and the knowledge they have. They may not think it's very important to know how to keep a class of children quiet or what is in the curriculum. So, it will affect our feelings about working with them if we think what we know is not going to be valued.

*I: Why do you think those in other fields will devalue teacher's knowledge?*

P: I suppose it all comes back to the government. We have to rely on those outside of education to tell us what to do. It gives the impression that teachers are not capable or knowledgeable enough to be in control of their own profession. Going back to what I said earlier, I do think some teachers lack the ability to form relationships and this doesn't come across well in meetings?

*I: Why do you think some teachers can't form relationships?*

P: They just don't know how to talk to people. They try and come across as disciplinarians and you can't do that in meetings. They lack those language skills.

*I: So, if you were sitting in a meeting and you know that that person has a bit of a negative perception of what you do, how would you be able to respond to that? Would teachers be able to respond appropriately or do you think they would be quite defensive?*

P: Yes, I think so, it's very subjective, depends on the personality of the teacher. I think for myself, anybody that spends a little bit of time maybe to shadow somebody who knows the job well I think that that would be an eye opener for a lot of people. Ermm. And it is very much, on a personal level when I talk to friends they still kind of wind me up about the fact that I, they talk about these holidays and things even though they know that I constantly take work home with me, whereas they will finish at 5. So I think it depends on how you handle it, I personally would try and ignore any negativity that was coming from that external person, or agency or whoever it would be and try and just stick to the agenda I suppose which if they are coming in to support staff we would look at that, if they are coming to support students we would look at that and try and keep it simple that way.

*I: So how would you make that meeting go better?*

P: Have an agenda, have clear targets for what you hope to achieve and then I suppose review them at the end as well.

### 7.5.10 Ivy

*I: Can you describe teacher's role?*

Ivy: Well we are there to educate children but teachers have lots of roles nowadays beyond just education.

*I: What roles to teachers have to do every day?*

Ivy: Well they have to make sure that children pass exams so plan lessons and mark work. We provide feedback to parents through reports.

*I: Do you think being part of multi-agency teams is important for teachers?*

Ivy: Not really as it's not the core part of what we do.

*I: What do you think multi-agency work is?*

Ivy: Its working with other people who aren't teachers.

*I: Can you describe the kinds of roles you do which form part of multi-agency work?*

Ivy: Multi-agency work is part of our pastoral roles. Our main role is making sure kids get results but we also act as personal tutors. So, we meet children daily and make sure they are ok.

*I: What do you mean by ok?*

Ivy: Just making sure they are happy and well so they can work in lesson and achieve the results they need.

*I: What do you do to make sure they are ok and what action would you take if they weren't?*

Ivy: I look out for any changes in behaviour. For example, if other teachers are telling me they are misbehaving or are behind with work. I would talk to them and see if there is anything bothering them. If there is, I would pass this onto to other staff such as the school nurse.

*I: How would you have to work with other agencies to support children who aren't ok?*

Ivy: Well I suppose the nurse would tell me if I needed to do anything. So different agencies might tell school that they need a bit of extra help and give some advice. This would get passed onto me and I would consider what I need to do.

*I: So multi-agency work involves different professionals giving you advice?*

Ivy: Yes. We see the children and highlight if something is wrong and they tell us if we need to do anything extra.

*I: What kind of things might you need to do?*

Ivy: Watch children more carefully, talk to them. I know there are a few children here with issues so I monitor their behaviour and make sure that they are working. Other than that I wouldn't know as my role is to make sure they can learn. Its other people's roles to deal with other issues.

Ivy: I would report it.

*I: Would your role end here?*

Ivy: Yes [pause] I think it would as it becomes someone else's role.

*I: Would that child need any further support from you?*

Ivy: I could talk to them but it's not my job to give advice or anything. That's what social services or the police are for.

*I: Would you work with the police or social services to support the child?*

Ivy: I don't think so. I can't think of anything I could do to help. I'm sure they know their job better than me.

*I: Do you think there is any commonality between teacher's roles and the roles of other professionals?*

Ivy: Well I suppose we both work with children. But beyond that I don't think so. We do our bit and they do theirs.

*I: What do you mean we do our bit? How is this different to what other professionals do?*

Ivy: We are there to educate children and get them the results they need. Other professionals don't do that. They have different roles such as looking at their health or welfare. That's not what we do.

*I: Do you think that teachers sometimes need to do part of this role as well?*

Ivy: Not really. I know we have to highlight issues but that's it as far as I know. We can talk to children and make sure they are ok to go and learn in classrooms.

*I: What about if you had a child with complex issues going on outside school which were attempting their ability to learn? Do you see a role working with others then?*

Ivy: No. As a teacher what can I do to support them? It's not my job and I have to respect the professional boundaries that are in place between professionals. I would like it if someone interfered with what I was doing in my classroom and the same goes for this. It's someone else's role to work with these issues, I don't know perhaps a social worker. I might talk to the student as part of my pastoral role but that's as far as it would go.

*I: What it be better if our roles overlapped with other professionals so we could support children on these wider issues?*

Ivy: I don't see why. It's not what we do is it? It would take us away from our role in the classroom. At the end of the day that's how we get judged isn't it. So, if we are expected to do

other people's roles as well that isn't going to look good then we would have our managers questioning our ability to do our job.

*I: Do you think roles have changed at all over time?*

Ivy: DEFINATELY. I mean before it was just about education and now it's just about life.

*I: What do you think has driven the changes?*

Ivy: A lot of it is to do with the breakdown in families, that people haven't got the time anymore to pass on skills. Ermm I think with the boom in the eighties and everybody was out to earn as much money as they could and nobody spent any time with children. Children were left to let themselves in. Television has had an impact, technology has had an impact but generally people not having skills passed down to them from generation to generation, I think is impact.

*I: So, who do you think changed teacher's roles? Was it teachers themselves or the government?*

Ivy: Partly it was the government but partly it was the evolution of people, how they behave, what they did, emm the opportunity for you to go and earn lots of money meant that people became very selfish and money orientate. The government is power now is only worried about getting everyone the grades they need to get a job and earn money. Young people are especially orientated by money and things that they can buy other than appreciating the finer things that make you a better well-rounded person. The result is we have young teachers going into teaching to earn money and not for the other reasons. These are the people who are only bothered about exam results and advancing their career.

*I: Do you think teachers move away from that looking at other aspects of job satisfaction?*

Ivy: I think young teachers do as they think they are guaranteed a job. And yes, they like kids and they like the idea of perhaps nurturing and passing on their knowledge but I don't think necessarily they have got the skills, I think they could have done the traditional role but I don't think they have the skills to do what is required. Some have but many are just children themselves.

*I: How could that be made better? Could it be driven by the government through policies or through training?*

Ivy: For teachers coming into the teaching profession I think they have to have more experience in other things other than just teaching, maybe they have to do a period of voluntary work, they have to work in somewhere residential, they might have to do work with parents, negotiating skills, a lot more, and even children with behavioural problems before they come into school but from the government's side they need to make it so they are empowered and feel worthy enough to go out and get a job so they are good examples to their children and be able to pass on life skills even if it means within the curriculum we learned about parenting that would be important. I mean I think every child should see that programme teen moms, why that isn't part of health and social education cause I think that would put a few people off.

*I: Do you think that could be brought in, in any way? Have teachers got any control over government policies?*

Ivy: I don't think so.

*I: Why?*

Ivy: Because if they had they would listen to what the teachers and lobbyists and the fact they were struggling to get people into the jobs of teaching, the having to advertise, I will give you more money if you will come and work here proves that it isn't something that people are choosing naturally to do. And sometimes the better teachers are those who have been in industry and they perhaps have more skills to offer. But I don't think the government should, because many of the people in government positions have only gone from university to their job tell us what to do, and they haven't worked in a job or in a school. The people that are making policy decisions need to come and work in a school and need to perhaps be parents before they can say you're not doing it right. If we want to care and look at things other than results we have to do it in our own way as we aren't given the space or encouragement to do it within school.

*I: So, do you think policies don't quite match up to real-life?*

Ivy: Policies don't match up to real life and NOW we have basically got teachers doing kids work to get the grades because schools are driven and policies are driven and everything is driven by, you're only as good as your latest GCSE result. How can we be professionals if we are having to do that because that's what we're told we have to do? The things that are important are no longer valued in schools. Well YOU can't necessarily get your best GCSE results because you don't know who's going to be in each class. Classes are handpicked by people who are in a better position higher than you so you may get the best GCSE results you have got but because it doesn't look good on paper because you got all the shitty kids in your class you aren't considered the best teacher. THAT'S not right is it?

*I: So, do you think the emphasis on targets and academic targets is wrong and it should be wider?*

Ivy: It should be and not everybody should be predicted a grade in a subject based on their ability in reading and writing at English, maths and science when they are at junior school as they are not related. Ok yes you are not going to succeed and get high grades in subjects if you have got to put all those skills together but you could be a great maker in technology and make something wonderful, you need to do all that other bit and if your rubbish at all that other bit it makes it really hard.

*I: Do you think ECM tried to change it a little bit?*

Ivy: No and I think the bit about inclusion is stupid because children who should quite definitely need special teaching and understanding are stuck in the middle of a mainstream secondary school and are still isolated because they have got to go to special lessons. They go and have somebody with them and that's not inclusion. I have worked in a school where they have had all the SEN kids meeting for a lunchtime PE session and there wasn't any and they go out of lessons early to get to where they have got to go, they don't have to come into conflict with anybody else, they can sit and have their lunch together. That's not inclusion. And those people needed much more important skills such as being able to make their own food, being able to do this, which they then still have to go and learn once they have left their mainstream education and their maths skill which they have a GCSE they still haven't got any benefit to them whereas independence

would be. That's not to say some people with special needs should not be in mainstream school. I don't think ECM is addressing every child. People in here, like I keep writing emails about R. No-one is bothered that he comes in here without a folder, a planner, a name badge, eating when he turns up. And I have written that many emails saying we are letting him down, failing him. He matters to no-one.

*I: Do you feel sometimes that people don't listen in school?*

Ivy: Teachers?

*I: Teachers or staff.*

Ivy: They are not interested. A lot of them now just come and it's a job, it's a job. It's a job that pays the mortgage and they walk away. And more so higher up because unless it's something awful they don't want to know. And when it happens it's like, "How did this happen?" And we are like we have been telling you this is going to happen. It's like kids that we R, M or M. I said in year 8 that M needs help, I've noticed this decline, we get to year 11 and he's not passing his, and we are no he's not but we told you ages ago.

*I: Why do you think people don't listen?*

Ivy: They don't know what to do about it.

*I: So, do you think they don't have the skills to deal with these kind of things?*

Ivy: They don't necessarily have the skills but in this school the set-up isn't there to support you. It's so structured or so rigid that the set-up isn't there. It's YOUR fault if a child isn't behaving properly, as a teacher you can't predict if they have come to school and their mom's split up with, they have fallen out, they have had a bad day, you can't predict that their dads left and they don't like the world. You can't predict that, you can try and encourage them but at the end of the day they can choose not to and if they want to break things, they want to smash things, how is that your fault? How is that down to your teaching? And the thing is you haven't got the time every single lesson to spend that much time with that individual because you have the other kids and the other kids are losing out as a consequence as how many times do you have a class where you have got your A-C but who should have got their As didn't get them as they were the quiet ones who behaved, they're the ones who were sitting there doing what they should and what happens is they switch off and you see that happening more and more, why should I? That's not fair. And eventually this school will be as bad as it was before.

*I: How does it make you feel when people don't listen to you when you are flagging up these issues?*

Ivy: I still flag them up as that's my job. You know that's what they pay me for. The kid is more important than people not listening. It comes to a point where there's no point me trying anymore. You do all you can and then there's no point now because all it builds up is animosity, no-one else makes me do it, it's just you. You are the only one that's bothered about it. When they say that, you're the only one that's bothered, you think am I the fool? I've done as much, I just wish other people saw that. Just because if you can get it before you get to that point than

you wouldn't have all the hassle. It's like you said the other day about D, I've never seen her blow up, I've seen her be argumentative, I've seen her try and find excuses in lesson but I've never seen that. Maybe I'm fortunate. When T's in the lesson and Mr M's not there T's a dam site better behaved. So sometimes the support that you give people only reinforces that they can misbehave.

*I: Is that the same with staff? Sometimes if you give people too much support it takes the responsibility off them?*

Ivy: Yeah. How is it that some staff have nothing to do while other staff are given so much to do?

*I: Do you feel like you have any control over things happening in school?*

Ivy: No. I don't think we have even got the smallest amount of control over anything we do. We are expected to go along with what others tell us is best for the school or profession. We are told that people will listen to what we have to say but when it comes down to it, we have to fit in with what the powers that be want. We went to a PD over when we went to all those academies. Over at the one I sat in, the culmination was, the department would only be good if you sit down and listen to everybody speaking. And that was like yeah you all need to sit down; you all need to have an input. It's important that your voice is heard and you work as a team. And we came back in and had a meeting and we said, we sat down as a group and said we have been discussing this and us three think this may work better if we did this this. Hum I'll have to make that decision. Well what was the bloody point in going? And that's what everything is in this department, it's like a control thing. If you leave it to somebody else well it's not in your control. Well it didn't used to be like that in this department.

*I: Do you think there's too much control in teaching generally?*

Ivy: I think there is too much control in all schools but I feel very strongly about it in this school because it's driven by the online curriculum which is used to sell the school to parents. There isn't the ability or the space for teachers to adapt, to go off on a tangent if that's the way the kids are going and that's what's motivating them. We have to follow what we are told to. Because especially in this carousel thing, if they are away two weeks if they have been ill, they don't finish their work. That's so sad. I'm really lucky, I have a year 9 group who also do art. It's like the first time with those two groups so I'm not in that carousel, I have another year nine group that is in the carousel but I have been able to extend projects and go down different routes and they are all learning so much more, there's more time and it isn't like, "oh I have to get it finished." They keep saying to me when have we got to get this finished by and I say well we will try and get it done by then, then we have got that week as well, then they are open whilst before it was just I have got to get it finished. And they just want to get things finished at the expense of learning something. We have we got to finish everything, why aren't they learning things. It's like they have to go to Abverdovy these kids who need extra support they have to go to Abverdovy. Well I have asked the question is there any proof that when those individuals that needed that extra time and care, is there any proof that it's been a benefit? Where's the feedback? Have we ever had any feedback? We have had it once, so and so did this, so so did that but as a consequence how's that changed them in school? Are they calm? Are they better? And the good kids say well, "if your naughty you get to go," and you're like not exactly but then the ones that would have really

benefited the parents opt out, "it's too cold." You know that's not right either. Why aren't there rewards for people who do well in this school? There are very little.

*I: What does this mean for how you engage with multi-agency working?*

Ivy: We have to do what we are told to do and those aspects of teachers' role is not valued by those in power. It doesn't do anything for the school. You know it doesn't help in the league tables so why would they push this part of the role. We have to conform with what they want so no we don't really get involved in meetings, all we do is focus on delivering the curriculum that we are told.

*I: Do you think that's the same for teachers as well? Do you think the government is all about the negatives?*

Ivy: You're only as good as your last mistake. Yeah. You are only as good as, it's all teachers fault that kids behave but we haven't got any powers to dictate have we. We can't take privileges away from kids, can we? When we speak to parents and they ask, "what can we do?" We say well can't you take that, and they say well we can't do that, why not? Well they say they need it for their homework. Well you get them downstairs and sit with them while they are doing their homework. Well if they are not going to manage their own children what hope in hell have we got to try and enforce it in the few hours that we have got with them? And I think that comes from higher up. It's all very well writing it down on paper, we are going to do this and going to do that but it's how are we going to enforce that and if it doesn't happen what's the consequence? So that's what we haven't got here, what is the consequence when that doesn't work? There's no plan B here is there? It's your fault.

*I: Does that make people quite defensive do you think?*

Ivy: Everybody is trying to cover their backs. And then it's the blame game and you hear that on a regular basis. In the restaurant the blame game. Well they should have done that and they should have done that. I got it the other week. I was told that with some kids that weren't performing. I've tried emailing people and got told just phone home. My head of department is in and said just start phoning home and then you get will you stop phoning parents. Do it through the PTs. And I was well my line manager has told me to phone home and I can only do what I'm told can't, I and then I have to stop arranging for students to come in, they have to stick to the timetable. And I said I'm not I am just telling them when they can come in and I'm having to send emails left and right to cover my tracks. I shouldn't have to worry about that. If somebody tells me to do something, I have got to do it. And you have got nowhere to go. You've got to your line manager. That's bad.

*I: Because you feel that if you have issues with your line manager you're in trouble don't you?*

Ivy: Yeah. You can't go anywhere.

*I: So, what characteristics do you feel teachers need to do a good job?*

Ivy: They need patience but they DO need to be firm. They do need to be flexible but they do need to know the boundaries and they need to be the same with everyone. They can't let a kid



that's really naughty get away with it because it's better than when they are not. It's not fair on other people; it doesn't set a very good example. Yes, you try and bring them round let them know why it's unfair of them and if you are not seen to be dealing with something then you are storing up problems for yourself in the long run. But you have got to be, when you are walking outside that classroom you have not got to be their teacher anymore. You have got to start every day from scratch. It's no good holding grudges, some teachers do and if you do it's just going to be a problem. Every day is a new day, I think. They can come in and upset you and not do it again and you are back to square one but you have got to give them that new start every time. You have got to hope that you will see the light. I think.

*I: So what kind of people may come in to support you in school? We were talking about inclusion or people who come and support you with strategies.*

Ivy: I think we could do with more technicians in this department that could help people. Like if we show them as a teacher what we should be doing and then we leave them to it they will do it wrong and it's not necessarily down to your teaching. Even just volunteers, even older people who have been in industry or who have been working manually, grandparents who might come in, it's not in their interest, they just want to part with their knowledge. Like a workshop, are you interested in going into this? Like a vocational thing but something that's not assessed. Something's that not you know given a pass or you're not it's like tinkering, like they have been doing with that car but within even the school day. That, you know, you can reflect on in the lessons. If somebody's got poor literacy skills and they are not going to be taking French and when they would be taking French, if they had more volunteer people. I know it can be difficult with CRB checks and everything but it's that sort of thing. People in the community, even if it's someone's dad, someone's granddad but they come in and take them and say this is what we do, to get a job here you have to do this.

*I: Do you think people in the community have a good idea about what we do?*

Ivy: No, I don't think they have any idea. I think some do as they say I couldn't do what you do because they do have an idea and they are aware. But I don't think a lot of parents do.

*I: What do you think their perception is of what we do?*

Ivy: I think there's some really low down on the social scale who just struggle to get through each day and make ends meet who think well they're there. If they learn more than me that better than nothing. Then there's some that think, they should be doing this and they should be doing that but they don't do that themselves and they are hoping that we can do the bits that they can't. And then there's the parents that are really, really busy who are working and haven't got time but know what they should be doing but aren't necessarily monitoring it but are aware and only want the best for their child, thinking only of their child in isolation and are shocked when, I mean I had a call, I spoke to a parent the other day and he said that he feels really let down by this school. He can't believe in this day and age in internet and everything that we are like a carrier pigeon. And he said well why aren't we doing everything by email and I said well some people haven't even got a computer. I said that you are in a fortunate position. He said that we get commendations for people that aren't even our children and when we get that we phone up and they say well send them back. And I said well that's wrong and it should be an immense

apology and it should be written down and that's means the persons that's meant to be getting it isn't getting it. And I think down here, up there doesn't know what's going on. I really do think that's the case. I don't even think that one side of the school classroom knows what's going on the other side of the classroom. And they have structured that so. They don't want staff to mix, they don't want staff to talk to each other because then they get stronger in numbers. It's why they don't want a staff room. Because it's a place or work and they want their pennies worth don't they. And they don't want that. If you have staffroom people go in it and talk, people find. It's like the PD days, people do find common ground don't they and then they can try and help each other. But if you're always isolated you can't even share good practice. If you never meet with anybody, and then they come back and say how did that go, and if they don't make time for these shared observations, and they don't make time for people to go and see peoples whose lessons are really good. If you have got to somehow try and fit it in to those two free sessions that you have got a week, that half of them are taken in cover and the other half is a PD day when are you supposed to do it. You are not a miracle worker.

*I: So, sharing good practice is a good thing then?*

Ivy: It would be yeah.

*I: What about if we had for example educational psychology or social workers in, could we share good practice with them? Would that be useful?*

Ivy: Yeah but we need case studies, we need to see, have like a live case study, have like a, "we have this student now, what do we do about it?" How are they in your lesson, how are they in your lesson? What are you doing? Is it cause of who they are with? Is it what's going on or how are they supported? Is having a pencil case in the room for them every week the answer and then you pass it round. Just simple things at first but we never get together. We get together in a taught task, we get together and told but we are never got together and listened to. EVER.

*I: How do you think other professionals might view us if they come in?*

Ivy: I think they come in and are always wowed by our building. I mean like Ofsted were obviously wowed by it. But before Ofsted came into here, I had to go out and buy pencils because our department hasn't got any. We haven't got any, those are the only glue sticks we have in the whole department and they have to last us up to September. That's says it all doesn't it. We have big expensive pieces of equipment, we are all singing, all dancing but we can't get more than six glue sticks.

*I: How do you think teachers might feel about having someone who is not a teacher come in to support them? Do you think some teachers might feel defensive because it's all about blame?*

Ivy: Well the only reason teachers may feel defensive was if they weren't doing what they were supposed to be doing. If they were doing what they were supposed to be doing as well as they could they can't do anymore.

*I: So, do you think because people think well I am doing everything I could, they might not always take on board what people say if they suggest doing something differently?*

Ivy: They can listen to it. Somebody might suggest doing something differently but you might know already that it doesn't work but it depends what they are suggesting. I mean it's got to fit within the parameters of the POLICIES hasn't it? I think that the people coming in can't just come in per say and say this is what we are working towards. They need to have an awareness, they need to have a little bit of briefing or training. They're not there to implement change, they're not there to assess, they're there to assist. I mean, our head of departments had a year 11 group, handpicked girls who are very nice and she's had Zoe in with her every single lesson. Well if you have two staff, already your work load is cut. If we had had two staff in with the group of boys, the Ps, the Ns who are all a group. That would have benefited them. There doesn't seem the logic.

*I: Do you think you can stand up and say things if you are not happy with them?*

Ivy: Not ANYMORE. I don't say anything anymore.

*I: Why?*

Ivy: There's no point.

*Do you think that they would treat you negatively because of it?*

Ivy: Ermm People in general no. Cause, I've always stood up before and said things in a meeting and people have always gone, go on go on. No in a public forum I would say it but I have said things in a one-to-one meetings and in larger meetings but the reaction you get is always negative. it's always we'll note that down but we won't discuss it so there's no point. It doesn't make you feel a valued member of staff. In the end you give up. There's no point. I will stick to what I am paid to do, the teaching and they can stick to their area.

*I: What do you understand about MATs and how they affect you in school?*

Ivy: I don't know. I think it would just be another power thing where these people come in, talk at you and you are expected to listen. I don't see how they can help us or the student. I think it's more to do with us having to try and do more as society changes and children come into school with more issues. We have to look at how children develop in all ways.

*I: How do you think multi-agency working has changed teachers' roles?*

Ivy: In the past I would have just said teaching was just about education but now I think teachers role as a result of policies such as ECM encompasses everything from parents to tutor to police to liaison officer to crowd control but I think the most important is help develop the individual in any way shape we can.

*I: How do you feel about having to carry out wider aspects of the teaching role?*

Ivy: We shouldn't have to do all these other jobs. It should be the responsibility of others but we have to and we need to look after each child and make sure they develop. We are sometimes the only ones doing the right thing.

*I: Do you think this is what everyone considers teachers role to be or will it be different?*

Ivy: No, I don't think the general public are aware how much we are expected to do from the parenting side and the general social skills side because parents haven't got the skills themselves because of it not being enforced. Sometimes we are the only people doing the right things and people don't realise how much we do. We get people coming in and judging us saying why hasn't this child got this grade when you feel like saying well actually by just making sure they are in the classroom and able to learn is an achievement. They don't know half of the things we have to do. We get no credit for them. It's not right. It makes you feel like saying no I'm not going to do this anymore but you know you will.

*I: So, if we were to set up these meetings about a student what would make it go well?*

Ivy: If people were actually interested.

*I: How could we make teachers interested because I know it's difficult if I try and call teachers for one student?*

Ivy: I don't think it's going to work if, I think it's best to get a group of people that wanted to do it. And somehow it is planned into their timetable. It had to be planned into their timetable. It wasn't something that they have got to fit in over and above everything else they have to fit in. THAT would work. And there should be an opportunity to, after a mini case study to go and somebody else be invited in. That would work, it's not something that they have to sign up to forever and ever and ever. But do you teach this person at the minutes, they are having problems, we want to try and work through it, you have time-out to come and do it. Let's say what works well. But I think at some point them student has to be there as well.

*I: So, they can take on board what was said.*

Ivy: We need to get their statement first. This is their statement. That's how it should happen. I think. But us as teaches aren't always aware of why a child is misbehaving. It's like with the autism thing, they are on the autistic spectrum but to what extent. You don't see as a PT, as a PT you see the comments but you don't necessarily see all the comments for a student that you are commenting on. If you know what I mean. You're writing improve organisation, someone else is writing, but you are not seeing that. Maybe that should, when you log on, whose report it is, it comes up, cause that would make a difference. Cause I know if I teach somebody T, I am much more informed. Especially at the minute I teach the same group, I teach them Art and tech. And some people are different from one to another, some people are the same and some people aren't and that makes a difference cause you can big up their strengths and say that's not happening there. But I don't think that we know enough about our students who are having problems. Like I only know about L because Mr G has had to occasionally tell me that dad was coming in and I had to keep him in the back and things like that. Cause of what you said about the snooker and I am trying to get hold of a second hand snooker que. I had to feed him the other day, he was in the workshop and he was moving around and he said, "Miss I am really cold can I put my blazer on while I am doing a practical?" And I said, "not really because you will get dirty, I will get you one of these." And he said, "That will be great Miss." I said, "Why are you so cold, is it because you have no energy, have you not had anything to eat today?" and he said, "not really," so I gave him a banana and he was alright after that. It was like he couldn't focus. I said, "Do you

want a banana?" and he said, "I would love one." He just sat there over the bin and then he went off and carried on working.

*I: It's difficult as we have to be careful what we share but if we could be more open.*

Ivy: We don't need to know he's in care down the road in E with people and they are not being very nice. We need to know that he might be hungry some days, he might not be focused, he might not always have the right equipment cause nobody is checking and we say this is his pencil case and we set one up. It's those sort of things. Emergency kits for people, the funding has to be there for that sort of thing. You know what I mean. Even if it's outside agencies, like a shop with volunteers. We have these kids, they are in care, they come to school with no equipment. Have you got anything? Do you want to sponsor a child? Something like that. I mean we send all that stuff off to Africa every year and we don't do anything here. It's all show here.

*I: We do have things here.*

Ivy: But people don't know that. Do you know what I mean?

*I: Yeah.*

Ivy: Nobody knows what's going on in this school. Everything is a secret. Everything is always hush hush. We need to be looking out for things, have they eaten, are they in pain. You don't need to tell everybody but, I don't think young staff think about things like that.

*I: They just think everybody is coming in the same.*

Ivy: Yeah, they laugh and joke with the kids and be their friend. Yes, you have to be their friend but there's a boundary and I don't think young staff always know that boundary. And I don't think it's sensible for staff, young staff, to be out socialising in the same place. I think that really does lower the respect. At the end of the day they are children. You are like their surrogate carer for the day and that's a huge responsibility. It's different with your own child cause you know your own child, it's more important because it's not your child. It's like borrowing someone's dress, if it's your own dress and you spill something down it it's your own fault but if you borrow it and spill something down it, it's your job to get it sorted. And I think many teachers do it because they want to do it. And I know that staff, many staff are really angry and you know that by you just say the simplest thing to them and they give you a mouthful back.

*I: Why are they so angry?*

Ivy: Older staff sometimes don't like the change, do they? They have seen it, they get very reluctant to make changes for changes sake. Sometimes it's not for changes sake it's the better of things as a whole or as a result of a directive and you have to do it whether you like it or not. BUT they resent being told to do things by people they don't value or respect in more senior positions and if there was a staff room or a forum or just some time in the day where people. I mean the fact that you're sitting in the restaurant and somebody is listening to your conversation. There's no time in your day where you are off limits is there? Only recently we have had the issue where somebody has said something too much in the restaurant and they are not here anymore. But the thinking is it all gets passed down as gossip. But you don't ever hear the real story so gossip,

passing from one to another gets out of all proportion. And then things seem so much worse than they are and people do more of that. Just sit and listen I say. I never say anything important anymore unless I am really really cross or in the meeting like we were in and I asked questions like can this or what if? And that's because I want to know how to make me do better but I got the gist that many people sat there in that meeting just waiting for us to shut up so that they could go away again. The same people that don't respond to emails for individual students so we are not working collectively because we are not supported collectively because some departments. But some departments are supported, when they have got problems they are supported others aren't.

*I: Why do you think people were just waiting to leave and not fully engaging in the meeting?*

Ivy: Inclusion isn't valued, is it? People only value what they get rewarded for and judged upon and that isn't making sure children are developing into well rounded adults just that they get the results the school needs. It's all about the results so that school and the government look good.

*I: Do you think results have affected people's ability to engage in such meetings?*

Ivy: Yes. What's the point in sitting there talking about what we can do to include that student when you know that what you are doing isn't going to be valued. If meetings just become another way of making you accountable and judging you then no, I don't want to be involved. We have enough of that already.

## 7.6 Ethics Approval Letter



## RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE SERVICES

27 February 2012

Ms Rebecca Somerfield  
11 The Ridings  
Cannock  
Staffs  
WS11 8JG

Dear Rebecca

**Re: 'A study of how teachers function as part of multi-agency teams and factors which impact on their ability to engage'**

Thank you for submitting your revised project for review.

I am pleased to inform you that your project has been approved by the Ethics Review Panel.

If the fieldwork goes beyond the date stated in your application (October 2012) you must notify the Ethical Review Panel via Michele Dawson.

If there are any other amendments to your study you must submit an 'application to amend study' form to Michele Dawson. This form is available from Michele (01782 733588) or via <http://www.keele.ac.uk/researchsupport/researchethics/>

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Michele Dawson in writing to [m.dawson@uso.keele.ac.uk](mailto:m.dawson@uso.keele.ac.uk)

Yours sincerely

PP Dr Roger Beech  
Chair – Ethical Review Panel

CC RI Manager, Supervisor