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**Narratives of early career teachers in a changing professional landscape**

**The changing landscape: New Public Management and teaching in England**

The research presented in this chapter sheds light on a professional teacher training environment that has been shaped by New Public Management. A context, which amongst other things, emphasises product over process (Hood, 1995) and is associated with an organisational professionalism (Evetts, 2009). As such, contemporary education structures in England (and elsewhere) are seen to align teachers’ professionalism with high stakes outcomes, over and above the process of learning.

New Public Management has been a feature of education in England for many decades and so the word ‘new’ has become somewhat of a misnomer. New Public Management was borne out of the policies of Margaret Thatcher’s conservative government (1979-1990). Thatcherism was influential in shifting the locus of control from teachers in the classroom to managers, parents, the state and others in a free market model of education, and was achieved most notably through the 1988 Education Reform Act. This was the start of ‘what may reasonably be called the ‘new-professionalism’ era’ (Evans, 2011, pp. 851). In the decades since, state schools and teachers in England have found themselves part of a modernising project where professionalism has been used by state actors to reconstruct education in order to fit free market principles:

It involved, firstly, efforts to discredit teachers, for instance by portraying the behaviour of some teachers as unprofessional, and… making teachers more effectively accountable to others – especially central government. The second phase… under New Labour … centred on attempts to construct a new model of teacher professionalism and to win teachers’ support for it (Beck, 2008, pp. 122-123).

The result may be deprofessionalisation as power shifts from the occupational group to government and others (Beck, 2008; Evans 2008). As a result of New Public Management reforms, teachers are found to be relatively acquiescent in accepting that their professionalism is shaped by the government who have aligned teachers’ priorities to the state’s intended outcomes (Furlong, 2008).

Arguably, the modernisation project seen in England is a desire to make schools and their teachers more accountable through the adoption of private sector values. Consequently, market principles, cost-cutting and the positioning of parents and their children as ‘clients’ are foregrounded (Hargreaves, 2000). New Public Management also places policy makers at a distance from managers whose own entrepreneurial leadership becomes important, and disaggregates public services to focus on their basic functions (Osborne, 2006). It is here that a neo-conservative ideology of returning to the basics of the core subjects, or ‘3Rs’ (reading, writing and arithmetic), become juxtaposed with the neo-liberal tendencies to the market. As a result, performance against national tests in the core curriculum can be used in league tables to support the market model (Hall, Gunter and Bragg, 2013). New Public Management therefore emphasises outcomes that can be measured externally and quantified by policy makers and the professional status of teachers is further aligned to these outcomes.

New Public Management is a phenomenon indicative of a Global Education Reform Movement, and is therefore widespread in many jurisdictions around the world (Sahlberg, 2011). Whilst policy makers argue that such reforms strengthen the professionalism of teachers, it can be argued that an unintended consequence can be a loss in the type of professional autonomy that is associated with the traditional professions. For example, Hall and McGinty (2015, pp. 12) argue that teachers have been reduced through New Public Management to ‘compliant operatives’ where professionalism is ‘a manufactured and managerialist discursive co-option’. Furthermore, New Public Management’s emphasis on accountability and performativity causes conflict between ‘the professional’ and ‘the personal’ dimensions of teacher identity (Menter, 2009). Consequently, new forms of professionalism emerge to typify teachers, and others, working within an ever-changing public sector.

‘Organisational professionalism’ is one form of professionalism associated with New Public Management and therefore has contemporary relevance for understanding teachers as individuals and collectively as a professional group:

As an ideal-type organizational professionalism is manifested by a discourse of control, used increasingly by managers in work organizations. It incorporates rational-legal forms of authority and hierarchical structures of responsibility and decision-making. It involves increasingly standardized work procedures and practices, consistent with managerialist controls. It also relies on external forms of regulation and accountability measures, such as target-setting and performance review. Professional discourse at work is used by managers, practitioners and customers as a form of occupational control, motivation and expectation (Evetts, 2009, pp. 248).

Organisational professionalism, as an ideal type, can be contrasted with occupational professionalism, where ‘Occupational professionalism represents the ways scholars studying professions and the process of professionalisation have traditionally defined what it means to be in a profession’ (Torres and Weiner, 2018). Occupational professionalism is associated with autonomy, high levels of trust, collegiate working and what McClelland (1990, pp. 170) describes as coming ‘from within’ as opposed to organisational professionalism that comes ‘from above’. The top-down standards agenda is seen to reinforce an organisational professionalism because it emphasises the need for schools to ‘strive’ for 'high performance’ (Clarke and Newman, 2009, pp. 45). In short, organisational professionalism can be seen as placing paramount importance on the success of the school as an organisation over and above the individuals within it.

**Research aims and approach**

Teachers’ voices have become important as part of research on teacher identity and professionalism within a changing educational landscape in order to connect the individual self to the wider social context (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009). The research reported in this chapter derives from one-to-one interviews conducted with pre-service teachers (PSTs) and Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs). Auto/biographical research can ‘reveal the differing ways in which an individual perceives educational situations, issues and changes’ (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995 p. 189). Furthermore:

To investigate the way the self-consciousness of others is utilised to produce self-formation lies at the heart of the biographical method. The human subject can only interpret itself by interpreting the signs found in the surrounding world (Erben, 1996, p. 160).

Therefore, the research presented in this chapter connects the identity of the early career teacher as ‘human subject’ to an interpretation of local and national policy context ‘found in the surrounding world’. The aim of the research was to understand how first-hand experiences of teacher training shape conceptions of professionalism. Of importance were PST and NQT responses to New Public Management with a view to establish early interactions with ‘organisational professionalism’ (Evetts, 2009).

Prior to data collection, ethical approval was sought and the research complies with British Educational Research Association (2011) guidelines. There were two phases to the research. First, PSTs were interviewed at the end of their initial teacher training in primary education. In England, there are multiple routes to become a primary school teacher and as MacBeath (2011) notes, teacher training in England is more susceptible to market forces than any other nation. Furthermore, at the time of research, university-led programmes of teacher training were being downplayed by the government who were in favour of school-led courses. This is important contextually as universities’ position in professional training may be seen as a hallmark for the traditional professions (Freidson, 2001). Despite the plethora of routes into teaching, the participants reported here comprise PSTs enrolled on university-led programmes (seven participants enrolled on three-year undergraduate degrees with recommendation for Qualified Teacher Status, and five enrolled on postgraduate certificate); a further two participants were enrolled on a school-based route connected to the same university (a programme known in England as School Direct). Most of the participants were female, reflecting the wider workforce of primary school teachers. The interview questions were designed to illicit conceptions of professionalism through their first hand experiences of training. As Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) suggest, biographical research needs to encourage participants to be introspective. It is through their introspection that the stories of being a PST could be used to ascertain views on organisational professionalism. The following discussion focuses mainly on the experiences of PSTs as it helps to establish the training ground and context through which conceptions of the profession are formed.

In the second phase of the research, three NQTs were interviewed towards the end of their induction year. The NQTs were given an initial question about how they thought their induction year had built on initial training. This enabled a conversation to proceed in the manner of iterative auto/biographical methodology (Wengraf, 2001). It is recognised that the NQTs’ auto/biographies of initial training would have been influenced by their experiences since training but, nevertheless, interviewing teachers at different stages within their early careers has helped connect individual stories to the wider social phenomenon of becoming a professional teacher in the current educational landscape.

**Early challenges to occupational professionalism**

Prior to teacher training, young teachers and career changers are motivated typically by a desire to work with young people (Lortie, 2002; Hayes, 2004; Manual and Hughes, 2006). Many prospective teachers also tend to believe in progressive, non-didactic, teaching approaches and recognise that learning needs to be adapted for the individual child (Furlong, 2013). These conceptions are not taught through initial training and are instead embedded in the preservice teachers’ consciousness as a result of their own experiences of being a learner. As Furlong (2013, pp. 70) asserts, ‘Student teachers do not come to initial teacher education value free’ whilst Lortie (2002, pp. 61) argues, ‘[t]hose who teach have normally had sixteen continuous years of contact with teachers and professors’. Therefore new entrants into professional programmes of teacher education have, in actual fact, been learning about teaching through observation of experienced teachers since their childhood. However, early motivations to teach can be challenged during initial teacher training by socio-cultural contexts, threats to autonomy and inadequate support (Yuan and Zhang, 2017).

The pre-service teachers presented in this chapter had similar motivations to those reported more widely:

I wanted to make a difference to the wider community and society generally…I felt that the most change can be given to children of primary school age. … I was of the mindset that once a child has reached secondary school age their personality and attitudes are set …So if they have a good primary school experience they will be better learners as they go forward. I thought I can do the most positive change for someone’s life at that age (David, pre-service teacher).

To an extent, David identified the altruism and service ethic that can be associated with teaching. Such motivations are connected to occupational professionalism (Torres and Weiner, 2018). David spoke broadly about having a positive impact on children’s lives and this connects him with other PSTs who referred to the holistic development of a child. For David, this was also seen as something that is special to primary education where a teacher can influence a child’s personality. However, it is notable how David referred to his motivations in past tense, *‘I wanted…’, ‘I was…’, ‘I thought...’*, suggesting that his beliefs may have become dormant as he accommodated new conceptions of the profession. Indeed, this was echoed across the interviews with PSTs. As they experienced the realities of teaching, PSTs acquiesced to the prevailing outcome agenda in their school settings, suspending their initial motivations as they do so. For example, Carl reflected on some of the practice that he had seen and taken part in, and concluded:

I think sometimes there is so much emphasis on [the] academic side of things that the actual person behind the child is forgotten about and that is a very important part in terms of developing a child. If you don't develop the holistic side they are never going to fulfil their full potential (Carl, pre-service teacher).

Carl explicitly mentioned the holistic development of the child and this remained part of his own personal philosophy and motivation to teach. However, he interpreted England’s education system as emphasising other priorities, referred to here as the, ‘*academic side*’. The tension between children’s holistic development and academic imperatives had challenged Carl’s professional identity and it is possible to see here an early induction into New Public Management that accommodates organisational professionalism.

Another example of this accommodation was seen through Catherine’s auto/biography who, aside from altruism, also drew motivation from her experiences of being a parent and working as a teaching assistant:

As a parent, and as a TA [Teaching Assistant], a lot of what I am and what I do is the pastoral side of working with children. It is not until I have become a teacher that I am able to see why teachers do the prescriptive stuff and don’t deviate. I recognise the pressures that they are under. I don’t recognise that is the way that it should be but I do get it more now. I think that I [was] seeing primary education through rose-tinted glasses … With a boy who struggled in school, I didn’t understand why the teachers weren’t doing more to help him. But now as a teacher, I think I do see that getting 30 children through the system at a certain time brings lots of pressure and you can’t always do everything you want to, (Catherine, pre-service teacher).

Here we see a shift in values from an occupational professionalism that was conceived, *‘through rose-tinted glasses’* and the realities of organisational professionalism: Catherine has understood the organisational imperative to, *‘get children through the system’* and she has learnt that this can result in some children not receiving the help that they may need. As a result Catherine’s professional identity has shifted somewhat. Within her professional identity there has been a trade-off between a belief that teachers should ‘help’ every child and a realism that the ‘pressure’ of teaching might make this unachievable.

**Learning how to comply through the demands of organisational professionalism**

Managerialism is key to both New Public Management (Tolofari, 2005) and organisational professionalism (Evetts, 2009). Wilkinson (2006) explains that managerialism focuses on outputs, internal competition, and deploys ‘professional’ managers. Managerialism assumes:

…that efficient management can solve any problems...private sector enterprises can also be applied to be public sector...management is inherently good, managers are the heroes...and other groups should accept their authority (Sachs, 2001, pp. 151).

Managerialism emphasises the authority of managers who use their position to place subordinates under surveillance and teachers in England can be perceived as being under constant scrutiny as a result (Czerniaiski, 2011). Troman (cited in Wilkins et al. 2012, pp. 67) suggests that school managers act as 'the ever-present inspector within'. Management becomes ‘ubiquitous, invisible, and inescapable’ (Ball, 2003, pp. 223) and the links to organisational professionalism are foregrounded as school success becomes paramount:

Increasingly, we choose and judge our actions and [managers] are judged by others on the basis of their contribution to organizational performance, rendered in terms of measurable outputs. (Ball, 2003, pp. 223).

This has changed head teachers' roles in schools as they now 'spend more time on managing performance and the outward image of the school' rather than act as a 'teacher that leads a group of teaching professionals' (Tolofari, 2005, pp. 85).

Managerialism was experienced and understood by the pre-service teachers as a necessity to comply with expectations of others in a hierarchy. The most illustrative story comes from Andrea whose beliefs about enquiry-based learning was challenged by a head teacher on her teaching placement:

When I tried to use an enquiry-based approach, I was told that I wasn’t allowed because it wasn’t the way they did things in this school. I knew that my children would love it from [a previous] lesson I done and the children asked me to do more lessons like this. … I felt really restricted as a teacher … The head teacher did not believe in it. … It was in mathematics and the children normally sit in rows and I wanted them to sit in groups and work in collaboration and there was lots of discussion. He came in and basically told me off in front of the class. It was humiliating. … He wanted them back in rows with a teacher input at the start and modelling how to work out… and the children would copy off the board … That was how I had to teach and it was quite boring really…. I did [enquiry-based learning] up until the point I was humiliated, (Andrea, pre-service teacher).

Andrea associated children’s *‘love’* for learning with the enquiry based approach that she espouses. Her initial professional judgement and personal beliefs about teaching led her to adopt a pedagogy that she had implemented successfully in a previous lesson. In this way, it can be interpreted that Andrea values an occupational professionalism as she hoped to be trusted to use her professional discretion when teaching. However, the head teacher is described in a way that illustrates potential consequences of organisational professionalism. Through the authority afforded to him by managerialism, his approach resulted in Andrea being, first ‘restricted’, and then compliant in her own teaching. As a result, her professional autonomy was significantly eroded within the context of this school.

Equally concerning from Andrea’s story was her perception that other teachers working in the school were similarly disempowered as professionals: when asked about the class teacher’s response to Andrea’s humiliation, the importance of the school hierarchy was further emphasised:

[The class teacher] didn’t challenge it either. The head teacher was not really to be messed with, (Andrea, pre-service teacher).

Hierarchies of decision making are indicative of organisational professionalism according to Evetts (2009). Andrea, similar to other PSTs, felt that she was at the bottom of this hierarchy and this position was perpetuated by other structures that need to be adhered to in order to be awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The head teacher who was, *‘not really to be messed with’* was also perceived to be instrumental in authenticating the placement during her final appraisal. Therefore, as Andrea’s QTS required the head teacher’s endorsement, she was unlikely to disregard his authority. Indeed, Andrea went on to explain that once she had complied with the head teacher, she made progress on the placement and ultimately received the highest possible grade for this school placement. Therefore, not only does the school reinforce an outcome-orientated pedagogy for organisational success, the pre-service teacher is also engaged in being outcome-orientated for herself. In terms of her professional identity Andrea had become socialised in an organisational professionalism, recognising the necessity to comply with expectations from management. Her professionalism was being directed from above and the only way it manifested itself from within was through her frustration with the situation. She had not yet developed a professional identity where she would be empowered to challenge the status quo and furthermore, she witnessed how other teachers in the school were also reticent to challenge it.

**The strengthening of organisational professionalism through performative practices**

In the previous example of compliance, we also see how teachers can engage in practices of performativity where teachers position themselves in ways that are expected by others (Ball, 2008). For teacher identity, this can be damaging as it leads to 'values schizophrenia' (Ball, 2003, pp. 221) where enacted classroom practice may not match intrinsic pedagogic beliefs. Andrea, adopted a pedagogy that was discordant with her own beliefs in order to give an impression of what her head teacher expected, and as a result she succeeded in her performance. In doing so, she suspended her values of occupational professionalism in order to, as she put it, ‘*play the game’* and her willingness to do this as a PST may suggest that she will again if the need arises. PSTs can therefore be seen as entering the profession already susceptible to performativity as a feature of their professionalism.

The synergy between performativity and organisational professionalism is evident as both focus on 'accountability and externalized forms of regulation, target setting and performance review' (Evetts, 2009, pp. 263). Within the research reported here, PSTs articulated a connection between accountability that arises from the external regulator, Ofsted, and the performativity of teachers:

Are they [schools] playing the Ofsted game? I believe that a school should look at their data, their children and their school and decide what is best to use. If the senior management can’t do that, then they are flawed. If the senior management are doing this because it ticks an Ofsted box, then they are also flawed. What they should be teaching is what will help the children meet their full potential. What they shouldn’t be teaching is what will get them through an Ofsted [inspection]. However, senior management … have to get the school through the Ofsted because that is what keeps the school busy. That is what gets the children through the door, (Katie, pre-service teacher).

Katie’s use of the term ‘playing the Ofsted game’ is indicative of much practice observed by pre-service teachers in initial training. Ofsted was widely used as a reason for changes to teachers’ behaviour in school and this was perceived as being a source of pressure and anxiety for teachers:

The massive amount of accountability… is put on [teachers] by head teachers and the government and Ofsted, (Lucy, pre-service teacher).

The teacher is feeling [pressure] because of the head and the head is feeling it because of inspectors, (Catherine, pre-service teacher).

If Ofsted come in, you have to have all of your books in a certain way, done in a certain way, (Jenny, pre-service teacher).

We used to use [named website] and you’re really not supposed to use [named website], so two days before an Ofsted inspection, we spent the time taking down all of the displays, (Katie, pre-service teacher).

It is clear that schools are keen to ‘impression manage’ (Cribb, 2009, pp. 33) when it comes to Ofsted and this was seen as escalating standardised practices of pedagogy.

Standardised practices (another feature of organisational professionalism) can be defined as teachers adopting the same pedagogic approach in a school, or across schools, and often in response to a belief that the act of teaching can be reduced to a list of features. This was witnessed by Steven, a PST who described a staff meeting where a video of an Ofsted ‘Outstanding’ lesson was analysed to provide criteria that could be applied in future teaching:

The lesson was graded outstanding and then for in-service training they picked apart why they thought it was outstanding and picked apart the components that made it Outstanding, (Steven, Pre-service teacher).

Here, Steven has been socialised into believing that this is a positive approach to professional development as it helped him to understand how to be ‘Outstanding’ (the highest category used by Ofsted inspectors to grade lessons at that time). However, he did not question the notion that the criteria for teaching and learning was now being determined by an external regulator situated outside of the teaching profession.

Furthermore, his understanding of professionalism led him to believe that teaching is something that can be reduced to a formulaic criteria that can be replicated in all contexts. Antonia, another PST, similarly concluded that she must teach in a particular way:

If I don't have a plenary...I won't get a point towards ‘Outstanding’. It gets drilled into you so much... You think that it is the only way to teach. The only way to run your classroom, (Antonia, pre-service teacher).

Antonia’s use of the phrases, *‘I* *won’t get a point towards ‘Outstanding*’’ and, *‘the only way to teach*’ was particularly illuminating as it further evidences how PSTs acquiesce to standardised practices and receive metaphorical ‘points’ for those that teach to the formula.

Inevitably, the practice that Antonia described results in PSTs learning how to, ‘*play the game*’ and similar themes were echoed throughout the interviews:

Sometimes, you do jump through hoops. Sometimes you want to jump through the hoops to get through... you know if your link tutor wants to look for a specific thing, you may have covered it in a university module and you can think about it and include it in your lesson. For example, with maths the focus has been open-ended tasks so a lot of observations have been focused on that. We make sure we include this as we think that is what they want, (Rachel, pre-service teacher).

The amount of marking I had to do was not contributing to personalised learning. It was very prescriptive - I was told how to mark and my books had to tick the boxes for marking. And sometimes that had to take priority over the personalised learning for the next day because I couldn’t find time to tick the box and personalise the learning in the way that I would have liked to, (George, pre-service teacher).

For someone like me, I can jump through hoops and I will ‘play the game’ but I think it does thwart some of the creativity. It comes down to time to a certain degree. Because you are doing all of these things it takes time to do the other things. It is difficult to be creative when you have so many other things to do. There isn’t the time to do it, (Catherine, pre-service teacher).

The PSTs have learnt that it is necessary to enact performative practices in order to be seen to be doing the right thing in the eyes of others, particularly those who have the authority to make decisions about progress towards QTS. Their teacher identity has already been shaped in a way that accepts a reduction in autonomy. Rachel had included open ended maths tasks in her lessons not because she believed in this pedagogic approach but because she thought, ‘*that is what they want*’. This reduction in autonomy may also be a pragmatic response to time pressures. Specifically, George did not have time to personalise learning in the way that he wanted as he was, ‘*told how to mark… and that had to take priority*’; Catherine wanted to be more creative but she was preoccupied with playing the game. However, as Troman, Jeffrey and Raggl (2007) point out, the implementation of performativity policy, amongst other initiatives, is complex, and some teachers may even draw what Lortie (2002) terms ‘psychic rewards’ from seeing their children succeed within this performativity culture.

The experiences of the PSTs indicate that they have shifted their teacher identity to accommodate the values of organisational professionalism. Acceptance of performativity has been found elsewhere, particularly amongst younger teachers (Stone-Johnson, 2014) who are likely to have spent ‘their entire educational career in an increasingly performatized school (and higher education) system’ (Wilkins, 2011, pp. 404). It is also possible that the longer the teaching profession has had performativity and accountability, the more acquiescent teachers have become to this aspect of their role (Swann et al., 2010).

**Recognising the importance of organisational survival: teaching to the test**

So far, the stories from PSTs elucidate a socialisation into organisational professionalism. The PSTs own survival on their programmes of initial training has emerged as being part of the reason for doing this. However, it is also the case that the school environment is reinforcing the importance of organisational survival against the backdrop of New Public Management and the high accountability, high stakes testing culture that has emanated from this:

 I think it is the whole testing process, working towards Year 6. I can see it building and building. It is no longer pressure just in Year 6; I think that everyone feels it, even a lot further down, (Catherine, pre-service teacher).

The pressure of national tests was seen as resulting in undesirable teaching practice:

It was so boring. It was just repetitive and every lesson was the same... the children would work through a practice paper and they would just work in silence. It was so dull... because the head teacher felt that they were not meeting their SATs so it was practice, practice, practice.... I have seen more intervention groups; extra maths classes. Year 6 children were doing an extra hour and a half every day for maths just to make their levels... they want to get good results, (Andrea, pre-service teacher).

If it wasn't about passing the SATs we didn't do it. They were a very academic school and everything was about getting the results up… You can try and make it interesting but there is a lot of the curriculum that you don't get to do if you are in Year 6, (Jenny, pre-service teacher).

I have heard that some issues have been overlooked to focus on getting the grade, (Natalie, pre-service teacher).

Teaching on the run-up to national tests was described by the PSTs in negative terms (‘boring’, ‘dull’) and focused on organisational outcomes. By describing outcome-orientated pedagogy in these negative terms, the PSTs have alluded to their own dissatisfaction with what they see as a necessity in primary classrooms. This is far removed from their original motivations described earlier and so despite a desire to adopt interesting approaches to the curriculum, the amount of content that needs to be covered and pressure to succeed in national tests has initiated the PSTs into a different view of teaching.

The prevailing ‘standards agenda’ of the Global Educational Reform Movement (Sahlberg, 2011) is a reason for strict performance appraisal and high accountability in teachers’ work. Performance management and teacher accountability are processes within organisational professionalism that may lead to the performative practices mentioned previously:

There are certain things that teachers do, not for the benefit of the children, but are for the benefit of jumping through hoops and admin... it is required because they need the evidence...for their performance management, (Antonia, pre-service teacher).

Whilst the PSTs did not demonstrate a clear understanding of performance management, their interviews did allude to an acknowledgement that individual accountability is a by-product of school-level outcome. Antonia observed how teachers became focused on collecting evidence for performance management purposes and as a result, may have felt it was necessary to suspend their beliefs about what is of most benefit the children. Rather than addressing the children’s needs and issues – putting the client’s needs first as in occupational professionalism – Antonia recognised the way that school teachers become focused on organisational survival.

**The Newly Qualified Teacher: Opportunities for occupational professionalism?**

By the end of the initial teacher training period, many accounts of teaching and learning can be conceptualised in organisational professionalism terms and the PSTs consider this as being undesirable, yet an inevitable part of the job, for new entrants into the profession. However, the story does not end here. By listening to the experiences of Newly Qualified Teachers towards the end of their induction year, it is evident that aspects of occupational professionalism can refocus teachers in the formation of their identity. The teachers in this section have reflected on their journey through their induction year and their auto/biographies elucidate an awakening of altruistic motivations that may have been dormant during initial training.

Elizabeth is a Newly Qualified Teacher who has developed her understanding and perceptions of performativity. During her training she had engaged with organisational professionalism as she was keen to perform in a way that pleased external assessors and this led her to be focused on aspects of her training that she considered were less important than teaching:

I used to be a perfectionist so my folders would be colour coded and massive. Everything would be typed up and presented beautifully, (Elizabeth, NQT).

She did not believe that her classroom practice was strong enough and this had been reaffirmed through the external grading of her teaching, *‘[I was] never getting the ‘high’’*. The measure used by her external assessors became synonymous with the way she felt about herself and in order to compensate, an organisational professionalism emphasis on bureaucracy became a touchstone for understanding her identity. However, as an NQT, she noted how her priorities and understanding had shifted. It was a change in her self-perception that returned Elizabeth to her original motivations for teaching:

My mindset has just switched. Now I am thinking less about me and more about them [the children]. You can’t do that until you have got your children in front of you and know that they are going to be yours for the next year…. (Elizabeth, NQT).

As Evetts (2009) suggests, organisational professionalism may prevent the service ethic that has been an important component of professions; Elizabeth had regained this service ethic as she became focused on others and foregrounded the values of occupational professionalism through her relationship with the children. Having her own class was an important moment in her professional development, presumably because she was afforded more discretion in her teaching than she did as a PST who needed to demonstrate her competency through the aforementioned bureaucracy.

Another feature of occupational professionalism is collegiate working practices (Evetts, 2009). Elizabeth also found that she had entered a more collegiate professional group of teachers than she recognised or acknowledged as a PST. When training she believed that she was the, *‘lowest priority’* for teachers, ‘*that are already under so much pressure through other things’*. However, as an NQT, she was made to feel like a valued colleague and found that support was offered by other teachers more freely. She described a collective responsibility for the children’s education in her school. Most notably, this had resulted in a change to the way that training opportunities were conceived:

If you asked me [in initial teacher training] to tell you about a task, I would probably have looked at you blankly because I was too busy typing it all up and making it look like something you wanted, rather than actually immersing myself into the task and really experiencing what the children were doing. This year [as an NQT], it has been more like ‘you are going to watch phonics, don’t take a note pad, sit down with the children, get a white board and do phonics with them. This is the best way to learn’. This was more about understanding how children learn, rather than just box ticking and getting all these tasks written up, (Elizabeth, NQT).

Elizabeth’s reflections on the move away from a performativity-focused identity, that she regarded as necessary to pass initial training, towards one that focuses on the children in her class means that her professional identity has been transformed. Furthermore, Elizabeth perceives herself to be a valuable member of the school community rather than at the bottom of a hierarchy, and appreciates the collegial authority of occupational professionalism. As a result, she ceased to complete tasks superficially, or for bureaucratic ends and went onto assert that she is now, ‘*allowed to be me’*. Therefore, not only has occupational professionalism connected her to other members of staff but it has also served to strengthen her own identity as the teacher she wants to be.

Another NQT, found greater autonomy and freedoms in her induction year but discovered that autonomy raises new dilemmas:

Before teaching, I always believed that children should not have work to do over the holidays and that they needed time to be children. Then, just before this Easter, I found myself making packs with books for my readers that are not quite where they should be with a letter to the parents asking them to do things during the holidays. But then I thought, ‘what am I doing? I am going completely against what I believe in.’ So, I didn’t send them home and they are still on my desk. But it was an internal struggle. I could send them home and that’s the professional side of teaching coming out; I’d be ticking the box because they have to get to orange level by May half term. But do you know what? These children have made fantastic progress this year so why should they have to do even more just to get 75% progress in reading? Afterwards I regretted it for a while because it is so difficult to keep that side of you and I was worried about the results. But then, I felt proud of myself for not sending it out. But then the head teacher was saying ‘oh the percentage is only 63% for reading’ and I thought ‘they are just percentages to you; just numbers to you. Come into my classroom and see Max, who wouldn’t even sit on the carpet in September and see how well he is doing now’. But it was difficult and I worry - will I get swept away with the tide? (Karen, NQT).

When defining performativity, Ball (2008, pp. 67) suggests ‘[teachers] are mostly left to struggle with the difficult dilemmas involving organisational self-interests being set over and against obligations to… students’. Karen’s example above shows how she was faced with difficult decisions about setting work during holidays. She knew that the school, as an organisation, would benefit from this intervention as it would increase the percentage of children reaching national expectations. However, she also believed that, ‘*they needed time to be children’.* Weighing up the options, Karen decided to remain true to her own beliefs but at the end of this extract from her auto/biography, she leaves a question hanging in the balance – will she, ‘*get swept away with the tide?’* How long will she remain true to her beliefs when the realities of performance management set in? Decisions have to be made in light of the need to perform in a way that improves school-level data. As Karen pointed out, the head teacher remained concerned about targets and evidence and so it was Karen who had exercised her professional discretion in order to mitigate against this, but in doing so, she questioned her own professional judgment. What was also interesting from Karen’s story was that, ‘*the professional side of teaching’* had, once again, been defined in terms of, ‘*ticking the box’*; she did not seem to recognise that the ability to use her discretion was a professional attribute. Although occupational professionalism was in evidence, Karen had nonetheless framed her professionalism in New Public Management’s organisational terms.

One of the consequences of professionalism in the public sector can be that managers appeal to occupational values in order to achieve organisational control (Evetts, 2009). For example, professionalism can be constructed in a way that requires high levels of dedication, as in the professional musician who continually practises their instrument. For teachers, this aspect of professionalism can result in an assumption that they will work excessive hours for the children in their class. Indeed, as Evetts (2009) asserts, a discourse of self-control can lead to self-exploitation as any attempt to time-bound professional work can be construed as being illegitimate. However, whilst the NQTs reported that they were willing to put in this time, it was also evident that they were discouraged by colleagues and managers in their school:

When I was training I marked at home all the time… I’ve still got that student mind-set where I think that if I do take [work] home then I might feel better about myself in case I do want to work on things at night. But they [teachers and school leaders] are like ‘you don’t need to take things home; you are not a miracle worker’ (Elizabeth, NQT).

Elizabeth’s use of the phrase, ‘*student mind-set’* was interesting as it suggested that her pre-service training was the place where she developed a belief that being professional meant that she should take work home at the end of the school day. As such, she had complied with the notion that professional work is not time bound and yet, in her induction year, she was told that she was not a, ‘*miracle worker’*. This alteration in expectations requires Elizabeth to readjust her professional identity and accept the limitations on the work she is expected to do.

Whilst developing a pragmatism in their approach, the NQTs had returned to the ethical and moral dimensions of teaching that may be associated with occupational professionalism. It was evident from the NQTs’ accounts that they felt validated in their work as a result of supporting children in greater need:

I’ve got three children with severe health problems. I have an asthmatic child who does not have the maturity to ask for her inhaler. Instead she may have an attack while I am teaching the rest of the class. I need to support her but you take it on because they are your responsibility. I think ‘wow, I am doing a good job actually’, (Elizabeth, NQT).

Similarly, they recognised their contribution to society:

Now I am making such an impact on people’s lives. It is a high pressured job. We teach the doctors; we teach the scientists... It should be valued, (Hayley, NQT).

These NQTs had repositioned their professionalism in altruistic terms as they recognised the difference that their profession has in shaping society. They acknowledged the responsibility and pressure but also referred to doing good work and impacting people’s lives.

Despite evidence that the NQTs were able to demonstrate aspects of occupational professionalism, organisational professionalism was perceived to remain an issue for the teaching profession more widely. However, this was discussed through a perception of other teachers’ workloads and professional expectations, as opposed to their own experience:

I think I have been lucky with my school. I was on an NQT course the other day and [another NQT] who is at a school that’s a bit wobbly was saying that she is working from seven in the morning to seven at night in school, (Hayley, NQT).

Perceived demoralising aspects of New Public Management were therefore understood as reality for others in the teaching profession. The initial teacher training period was similarly described as establishing negative expectations:

Iwas always told that your NQT year is harder than your third year at university. The amount of people that said that to me made me scared to start in September. We all had lots of people saying similar things to us like ‘Just wait. Enjoy your university experience while it lasts because when you get into your NQT year it is going to be so hard’. Having that negativity thrown at you before you have even experienced it means you go in thinking that you just have to survive each day. But actually, you should ignore all that and just try to be you, (Elizabeth, NQT).

These auto/biographies suggested that teachers’ professional identities can be positioned and shaped in response to others. In this example, the pressures of workload were set up as an expectation that early career teachers should be fearful of. On entering the profession others had suggested that it was going to be challenging. However, the actual experience had turned out differently and a professionalism emerged that these new teachers were more comfortable with. This version of professionalism became a negotiation between the competing demands of organisational and occupational professionalism.

**Conclusion**

Evetts (2009) notes that New Public Management has consequences for professional trust, discretion and competence and the narratives of the teachers in this study show how these are concerns within the context of their early careers as professionals. Initial teacher training has many hallmarks of organisational professionalism and is a site for being socialised into this form of professionalism. Pre-service teachers comply with these demands, and believe that experienced teachers are engaged in: standardised practices, performativity, and compliance within a hierarchy and are focused on the organisation’s survival. Further, as these new teachers enter the profession as post-performative teachers, in which their entire education experience has been within the New Public Management structures borne out of the 1988 Education Act and subsequent education policy, there seems to be an acceptance that this is part of the job (Wilkins, 2011). However, it is also evident that the motivation to educate children in a holistic sense and a belief that education has a deeper more transformative power than acquiring particular performance measures, remains important to both pre-service teachers and those that are newly qualified.

Competence is at the forefront of initial teacher training because the pre-service teacher is focused intently on achieving their qualified teacher status. The PSTs in this study had limited opportunities to exercise professional discretion in order to countenance performative practices. However, Newly Qualified Teachers reported that they had regained professional discretion when they felt validated as a member of staff. Trust is therefore earned and the NQTs in this study may be seen as having a regulated autonomy, similar to that found in other studies on New Public Management and teaching (e.g. Lundström, 2015).

Nevertheless, New Public Management and organisational professionalism continue to be experienced by the teaching profession and influence the early stages of a teacher’s career. Of particular note is how standardised testing and a standards agenda in England is perceived to be inducing performativity cultures. Initial teacher training socialises early career teachers into an understanding of this and the frameworks and structures (such as keeping files of evidence) also induct new teachers into the externally-assessed, bureaucratic importance of their work.

With a backdrop of New Public Management, early career teachers’ professional identities emerge from conflicts between their personal beliefs about teaching and real or perceived challenges in the classroom. If New Public Management advances organisational professionalism (Evetts, 2009), then it is also evident that occupational professionalism remains important for these new teachers in order for them to make sense of their early careers and professional identity.

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