

## Conference: Discourse Power Resistance 5 Research as a Subversive Activity

20 – 22 April 2006 - Manchester Metropolitan University - UK

### 'Settling in'? Unsettling experiences in inducting new teachers

Brian Corbin, Education and Social Research Institute, Manchester Metropolitan University

Draft paper only – not to be quoted without permission

#### Abstract

This paper is about new teachers in their induction year and focuses on instances of what they present as unsettling experiences in their accounts, and whether and in what ways these might be seen as subversive. These raise issues about what might count as 'subversive', their possible consequences for early professionalism, and the discursive contexts related to their particular occurrence. As the new induction policy invokes discourses of both competence and reflective practice, these are linked to recent theorising of professionalism as conflicted. Though such instances seem to have consequences for new teacher practice and identity, aspects of maintenance as well as subversion of professional self are also always in play. Such aspects are inflected by contingencies of biographical experiences, school context and local interpretation of the induction process. The qualitative data used here comes from the work of teacher-researchers in Scotland with new teachers in their own schools, so there is also discussion of the uncertainties of their 'dual role', how they engage with unsettling experiences of the new teachers, and the impact these have on their more established professionalism

#### Context: the formal induction policy

I want to look at the notion of subversion in the context of an induction policy which sees itself as 'in effect beginning a new era in the development of the (teaching) profession' (GTC Scotland, 2002: 3). In doing this, I consider some evidence from the early stages of an ongoing study of early professional learning in teaching in Scotland.<sup>1</sup> The new Scottish induction arrangements were introduced in August 2002, against a context outlined as a 'complex history of neglect' (McNally 2002) and judged 'scandalous' especially in the way new entrants were too often subject to a 'multiplicity of supply posts' (McCrone Report 2000). The McCrone Report had included a wider restructuring of teacher salaries and career routes, and the General Teaching Council in Scotland (GTCS) saw the new induction policy as part of that major project: The two main components of the policy are its new arrangements and a document, the Standard for Full Registration (SFR).

The arrangements seek to provide stability and continuity of support. They guarantee entitlements to:

- A full one-year placement in a school
- A designated Induction Supporter
- CPD (Continuing Professional Development) sessions offered by Local Authorities (LAs)
- 0.3 protected non-class contact time for CPD
- Nine assessed observation sessions, plus opportunities to observe others

- Interim and Final profiles as formal evidence for full registration
- Termly reviews informed by the SFR

The SFR document has a dual intent:

*It sets out clearly what is expected of new teachers during the induction process and it provides a professional standard against which decisions will be taken on full registration ((GTC 2002: 3)*

It comprises 96 'benchmark statements and expected features (competences)' organised into the familiar trio of 'knowledge and understanding', 'skills and abilities' and 'values and personal commitment'.<sup>2</sup> Some examples are used below. Failure to reach the standard in one year (with some possibility of limited deferment) disqualifies anyone from teaching in State schools. In this process, the Induction Supporter is a key 'gatekeeper' in the assessment process (Rippon and Martin 2003: 213).

So the SFR has a hard-centred discourse of 'fitness', measuring, benchmarking, standardising context and deadlining time. The 96 illustrations of competences which dominate it are presented as discrete, definitive propositions. However other registers soften the focus. Deadlines lengthen: becoming an 'effective teacher' needs at least five years, and teacher professionalism depends on 'lifelong learning'. Place deepens and has to draw on informal practices in a 'climate of support'. New teachers do not just display of competences, but are persons, invoking processes of reflective practice, self-evaluation, values and relationships with others. The competences intentionally fall short of detailing judgements about 'fitness', but are to be used merely as 'indications' and not as a definitive 'checklist'. The Interim and Final Profiles, dominated by dates, numbers and tick-boxes, are to be supplemented by a process of informal recording and evidence collected by new teachers themselves.

The formal-informal blurring is attempted also by the inclusion of six 'holistic quality indicators'. These state that the new teacher has 'sought the respect of pupils', is 'valued' by staff, has a 'purposeful class ethos', makes a 'whole-school contribution, is 'trusted by parents, and enables pupils to make 'good progress'. This is an ethically pronounced discourse: 'valued', 'good' 'trust', 'ethos' and 'respect'. These are not part of the formal process, but aim to might 'support' practitioner judgements of new teachers perhaps more readily than as aggregates of 96 competences:. Overall, the discursive mix of the SFR seeks to operate between 'both professional development and personal growth' and between being both a 'reliable' assessment tool and a developmental support for novices.

### **Early concerns and other findings**

How is such a discursive mix be heard in 'the acoustic of the school' (Bernstein 1996)? Early academic concerns in Scotland were that it might be heard as promoting 'one correct model', heavily 'procedure-driven' and insufficiently 'person-centred'(Rippon and Martin 2003: 219) and that its 'holistic' practitioner notions might be at risk if embedded in a largely 'standards-based discourse' (McNally 2002). A similar induction model had been introduced three years earlier in England (1999). Early qualitative research was not positive about central prescription, which was seen as 'likely to encourage an 'instrumental' model of teaching (Heaney 2001: 253) and that what really mattered depended on 'being in a "good school" or "bad school"' (Jones et al 2002: 507). Local context, practices and interpretations were more favoured. These included informal discussion, supportive dialogue and 'personal stories' and more likely in schools which were 'collaborative' (Williams 2003), with the right 'institutional ethos' (Jones 2002) and a 'whole school culture' conducive to reflective practices (Harrison 2002). A major systematic review of induction research, favouring more large-scale and quantitative studies, found little evidence for a single 'definitive model of induction'. Instead it pointed to the limitations of 'central government frameworks' compared with 'local circumstances' and ' flexibility, sensitivity to context and imagination' (Totterdell et al 2004: 38).

This still leaves problems of what to do about teacher induction where local practices are not, in the terms of such discourses, 'collaborative' and how policy might help schools move towards greater 'sensitivity to context and imagination'. Such discursive themes of 'bad school/good school', 'central policy/local practice', and 'formal/informal' are already familiar at the level of educational policy and teacher professionalism as a whole. Some qualitative research has presented the impact of 'outside' policy imposition on 'inside' practices and commitments in non-binarised terms, but as imbrications, as 'resistance within accommodation' (Troman 1996: 473) and as a process of insinuation whereby 'the "auditors" can be shown to be "us"' (Strathern 2000: 290). Practitioner voices come across as discordant and strained, contingently and episodically upbeat or downbeat, with agitated movements 'hopping between discourses' (Jeffrey 1999). The consequences include teachers with self-conflicting 'discrepant identities', at best professionally mobilised as a 'pulse' between imposed registers of performance and those of more collective and personal practices (Stronach et al 2002).

## **Methodology**

In the context of such research, how might the Scottish induction policy fare, given that it comes on the basis of consultation with 'all stakeholders' and with its discourse ready-mixed? On this evidence, the possibilities of subversions of one kind or another would appear likely. To investigate such possibilities, I draw on the qualitative data from the first year of ongoing four-year 'Early Professional Learning' (ELP) project. The project's data set included more large-scale and quantitative types as well but I use what is largely based on the transcripts of interviews held between the 'insider' teacher-researchers and the three or so 'probationers' (new teachers) each worked with in their own schools in various Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in Scotland. This contact was not part of the formal induction process. I initially focused on 18 of such sets of transcripts.<sup>3</sup>

What has guided such selection? Obviously a focus on what may count as 'subversive' and here I accept the broad connotation of 'subversion' as whatever undermines or is 'unsettling' of certainties. A first problem is that new teachers find much to be uncertain about. They often know little about the school, the staff, the procedures, the pupils, the curriculum and local pedagogic practices. Yet although the year is often spoken of as an exhausting 'roller coaster', this seemed not to seriously subvert their sense of themselves as at least 'teachers-in-the making'. More particular selections were needed. I first consider new teacher encounters with formal profiling and then with the SFR itself. These fail to enthuse, yet nor are they so subversive that they totally erase the benefits of new arrangements and other resources (such as informal, relational aspects and initial commitments to teaching). I go on to consider how subversion might be used in relation to new teacher accounts.

## **Profiling professional development**

I started with the Interim and Final Profiles as these were not only key moments of formal assessments, but also provoked strong reaction. They came at the middle and end of the induction year, and were essential to full registration. They were meant to be quick and easy to complete and process, so mainly consisted of numerical coding, boxes to tick and dates to insert concerning probationary activity. This convenience was their most highly regarded aspect. Otherwise, these were the sort of comments made:

*It wasn't seeking to find out anything about me personally about my learning styles ... and that's what the whole point of teaching is ... it's about tapping into the learning styles of your pupils ... it was ticky box time (Rachael)*

*It's not really focussing on me, on what I have to do, my next stage' (Ann)*

*We're getting a page of written feedback, verbal feedback on top and to reduce it to a single line ... completely meaningless ... Do we really need to know that it was code 13 'Interaction with pupils', and 18 'Classroom ethos'? (Avril):*

*It doesn't tell them very much at all about me as a teacher. I guess that comes from (experienced teachers) in their sections (of the report) (Lewis)*

The Profiles then were seen as effacing the process of early professional learning itself, ignoring the personal in becoming 'me as teacher' and reducing the complex movements between the personal and professional to a 'splodge of dates'. Yet such unsettlement hardly subverted 'the point of teaching': for overall, resistance was mollified by other features the new arrangements (such as 'written ... verbal feedback' with 'experienced teachers'). In addition, there were often helpful 'informal' opportunities, although the degree and extent of these differed between schools. However, what they did imply was the importance to probationers of a focus on the personal: 'me as teacher'.

### **The SFR**

The SFR document, designed to inform the Profiles, hardly came in for a more positive comment. It was 'boring', 'dull', 'too hefty' and 'overwhelming' in the detail and number of its 'illustrations' of competences. Its discursive style failed to enthuse either new teachers or those working with them. Though there were no objections to any particular 'illustration', its seeming hyperreality of detail obscured rather than clarified its only intentions. Its consonance with its own more developmental register of 'lifelong learning' seemed barely discernible:

*I do think what is behind the (SFR) document is important though ... I don't think you could fulfil all these things in one year as a probationer ... so it shouldn't just stop after you are fully registered (Ann)*

Yet such longer term intent is clearly stated in the SFR. With one exception (where it was felt little that other support was offered) among the 18 probationers, it was largely marginalised as a working document. Yet unlike the Profiles, as part of the formal process, it was not seen as essential to 'passing' the induction.

Given that the SFR does address in its own way much of what probationers talked about (and further examples follow), why was it so readily set aside? For a start it was not essential to registration in the bureaucratic way that the Profiles were. Nor did its 'boring' discursive style help. Indeed this style could undermine its own substantive intent ('what is behind'), as in this illustration of a 'new' competence, namely that registered teachers

*are sensitive to the impact of their personal style of communication on pupils and others in the classroom (GTCS 2002: 22)*

Such sensitivity is rated poorly for new teachers, in whose accounts the two documentary devices do not communicate effectively with each other here, given the major criticism of the profiles is its erasure of 'the personal touch'. More likely though is that the more immediate tasks of planning, marking and administration were seen as more pressing. In addition, the SFR was not enthusiastically pushed by mentors, Induction Supporters and colleagues and such relational backing in other aspects of induction was important. So despite its key role in 'beginning a new era' (GTCS 2002: 3) if this is this subversion, it is without much unsettlement: perhaps this would consequence needs a stronger initial engagement.

Another feature of the SFR is its assumption of a smooth, linear progression from initial qualification to the induction year. Each competence is said to 'consolidate', 'extend' or 'add' a new one in this progression. For example, on self-evaluation:

*Newly qualified teachers will have become accustomed to engaging in self-evaluation within ITE (GTCS 2002: 6)*

Compare how Linda spoke of this:

*I was always bogged down with self-evaluation at Uni ... regurgitating the same old stuff ... Now in my planner I'll have what I'm supposed to be doing next week with the class and then I'll decide I need to change ... so it's self-evaluating in a very, very informal way (Linda)*

So rather than be consolidated, extended or added to, in her experience 'self-evaluation' was a competence acquired only as an alienating formality which takes on a very different significance in

her new context, and only then to be spoken of as outside the formal process altogether ('self-evaluating in a very, very informal way'). As feared by McNally (2002), Linda's comments indicate how the SFR can underestimate the 'radical impact of context'. The certainty of its 'will have become accustomed' seems undermined by her experience of it more as discontinuity than continuity. There is however a larger problem with competences and this needs addressing next

### **Competences: problems of reduction and inflation**

To work as a 'standard', competences have to specify what is expected independently of particular context. In this way, clarity and comparability are gained. In the following extract, they can be seen to apply in at least five ways:

*I think watching and listening to other teachers, that's your best gauge ... I noticed right away with (other teacher) he just has to walk into a room and silence descends and I talked to him and he admitted he doesn't know how he does it. So I just hope one day that will happen to me that your reputation goes before you and you're known as being a fair teacher (Rachael)*

Here there is a valuing of learning from others ('to seek and use advice from colleagues' as in the SFR); a concern with some kind of measure of progress (as 'gauge'); a commitment to becoming a 'fair teacher' (in the SFR to 'value and promote fairness' and also as 'holistic quality indicator' to have 'sought the respect of pupils'). What is more, her desire to establish a 'reputation' depends on the wider policy entitlement to the stability of a one-year placement. Finally, she is using a specific illustration to make her point.

However, there are also features of her discourse which sit uneasily with the SFR register of competences. There are complicated temporal shifts in her final sentence, with a past ('reputation') which 'goes before' her projected encounters with pupils. As if some kind of 'memory of the future' (St. Pierre 1997) it is at odds with a one-way sequence of 'acquire-consolidate-extend-add to'. Perhaps she is trying to convey more holistically the aspirational impact of seeing the sort of teachershe would like to be. Yet such holism also frustrates: 'he admitted he doesn't know how he does it'. She wants to know how she can become like that. She seeks some kind of disaggregation, some competence she could make start on. This is the fifth way a competence discourse is relevant. The problem is that what motivates might not always be reducible to what can be readily said or made transparent. Her account implies some tentative ideas though, that it might be something to do with a quality of pupil-teacher relationship, built up over a time difficult to specify. Yet new teachers need reassurances that they are getting there, and that these can be readily displayed and spoken of. Holistic discourse can inspire but also inflate, and she is left wanting reassuring specification – the very move made in a competence discourse:

*I found what worked for me was to stand in a certain spot in the classroom and I just clasp my hands and they know I want their attention (Rachael)*

This reads as a subcategory of a competence concerning the ability 'to communicate clearly'. And this is the way competences must proceed, breaking down into ever smaller components. Despite her own moves here, she resisted the SFR register as 'really dry ... I would just give up in disgust'. Reading someone else's list, as in the SFR, can stimulate resistance rather than engagement.

I have used Rachael because she was full of praise for her school and her induction experience. When comparing herself to other probationers she had talked with, she counted herself 'really really lucky'. Her comments suggest what is productive and inadequate about both competence and holistic discourses. Holism inflates but can inspire; competences reduce but can be reassuringly achievable. Both need the supplement of the other and this is something that new teachers have to work with. The SFR offers both but the competence discourse is favoured, to the extent that fails to fuel any positive movement between the two, at least independently of existing school practices and how they might interact with the wider arrangements supported by the induction policy. It should be noted that such arrangements, including observations, CPD and guaranteed full year placements, were appreciated, even if implemented with varying degrees of supportiveness for the probationers concerned. As one new teacher said: 'It depends on how they are used'.

## Subversions and 'atrocity' stories

If new teachers expect unsettlement during induction given their inexperience and newness, then subversion may need to be considered in a particular way. Amid such general uncertainty, I next consider subversive possibilities where new teachers feel less protected by novice status. 'Probationers' are expected to be inadequate in some skills and knowledge, but it would be more damaging if they did not already possess certain commitments, such as wanting to do a 'worthwhile' job, helping pupils to learn and develop, and the love of subject to be taught. In terms of colleagues, they would also indicate a certain mutuality of respect and support. Even those unsure about teaching itself think they are the sort of person with enough of these qualities to become teachers if they so chose. These personal and value-based qualities are evident in both our own data and that of recent research on why people chose teaching as a career (Hobson et al 2004; Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant 2003). They are present also in the SFR both as formal competence and in the informal, holistic bases for judgements.

As one new teacher, not even committed to teaching, expressed his experience of this problem as his key induction concern:

*How do I function effectively as a person in class?' (Richard)*

Richard's ideal 'democratic' self was totally subverted in his initial encounters with pupils: 'they wiped the floor with me'. His induction year was focused around trying establish some semblance of that ideal, even though 'teaching was never my be-all and end-all' as career choice. Another new teacher denied the support of probationary status and able only to teach 'on supply' expressed this most clearly:

*If you're getting into teaching because you like working with young people and you're into ideas and inspiration then don't bother ... All the guff about target setting and formative assessment ... take up so much time (Erin)*

This was the clearest case of subverted aspiration and would support the case for the new arrangements.

What those values are do not seem to be always clear to the new teachers themselves, as in these accounts:

*To be quite honest, my priority in class is just that everyone is participating and everyone is doing the best they are capable of. That hasn't changed ... I'm not sure that my values have changed all that much to be honest. I'm not sure what my values are which is one of the difficulties (Lewis)*

Here though 'values' seem not to be evident to the new 'me as teacher', wanting the 'best' from his pupils looks like a near enough commitment. Anna is also uncertain about her ideals

*:I've changed as a teacher ... but I still feel my ideas and ideals about being a teacher have stayed the same but they might have changed ... it's something that's difficult because they would be developing gradually so it's hard to think back and think, 'What were my ideas about being a teacher like a year ago?' (Ann)*

What it might mean to be a 'professional' in new teacher discourse may be gleaned from particular contexts of their uses of the term. Occasions when the term spontaneously arose in probationer discourse often featured how they were treated by other experienced teachers:

*For the depute head not to show up and never explain ... it's out of order, unprofessional and damaging to me (Erin)*

*I felt sort of undermined when I was speaking to a pupil in the corridor and a member of staff ...told me I wasn't breaking the pupil down enough ... The pupil knows that now and I felt it was really unprofessional (Geller)*

More experienced colleagues are not always models of professional values in practice, though they might help clarify a line between the personal and the professional:

*Some (personal) things she told them wouldn't come into the category "professional"...I'm often more aware about how I'm acting and how it's going to be perceived. I think it's actually*

*clarified in my head exactly what professionalism is because I'm thinking 'She did what?'*  
(Ann)

In such examples I do not hold that there is an 'authentic stable essence' to be uncovered as 'me', as much as what St. Pierre sees as 'performances accomplished in relations', in the 'constraining frameworks' of specific places and moments (1997: 366). Further, they are akin to 'moral tales, or 'atrocious stories', as in medical encounters in which the parents of sick children deal with what they experience as the subversion of their parental role. They accomplish this via accounts of themselves as more rational than the medics, and where at least in the context of talking to researchers are able to 'redress a real or perceived inequality' in power between themselves and those who have usurped their place (Silverman 1993: 200). Here the narrator's point of view is not necessarily accepted as 'the truth' of what happened, or as uncovering an 'authentic' self, as much as an accomplishment in a specific context. In this sense, my examples are of new teachers seeking to present themselves as already fully professional in some ethical sense, yet where they feel others are subverting this.

### **Subverting and maintaining as 'pulse'**

My focus is taken from St. Pierre's self-query initiated by her attempt to move through a 'stalled' ethnographic project, involving her own induction into womanhood where she had grown up. She asks:

*What part of myself must I maintain in order to subvert myself? (1997: 365)*

I use this notion of subversion as a 'pulse' (Stronach et al. 2002) between itself and maintenance. St. Pierre goes on to make it 'a 'double-trouble' (Hamilton and McWilliam 1998) which also involves the person and context:

*An authentic stable essence is no more possible in places than in subjectivities (op. cit 366)*

This play of subversion and construction, place and person has some echo in the SFR's attempt to embrace both formal policy and informal local practices, specific competences and the more holistic commitments which supply the desire to become competent. Yet there is more of the 'stable essence' about the SFR, especially if it only 'explains competency as the absence of conflict' (Britzman 2003: 7). It has been argued that the examples already given from probationer accounts have to address conflict. However, such examples from different accounts cannot give any sense of process or 'the person', so what follows is a more detailed case study, though inevitably it involves selections.

### **Avril: 'you've got to be true to yourself to a point'**

Avril was a mature new teacher of biology, married but going through 'a troublesome divorce' and bringing up three children on her own. Professional mortifications were to compound personal difficulties. She was distraught because her placement caused her an 'astronomical' journey time and her pleas fell on deaf ears. She later found that there were four unfilled biology posts much nearer her home and at the end of the induction year was considering taking the GTCS to court. She found such treatment 'offensive', totally unsettling her idea that a service ethic would underpin induction to the profession: 'we've been treated like cattle'.

Her expectations about induction entitlements were not met: 'thrown in at the deep end .... "here's your timetable, this is your room" pretty much get on with it'. Lacking information about basic procedures undermined her authority and competence in dealing with pupils: 'I've no idea what to tell them'. She and her fellow probationer were undermined by being referred to as 'students' rather than 'real teachers', yet she very much felt a full responsibility during her induction: 'that's a year of these kids' education ... we can really mess it up for them'. Only the fact she 'really enjoyed' teaching gave her 'confidence': she began to hear herself say 'things that were so "teachery" ... yeah I do feel like a teacher'.

She recalled earlier attempts to subvert herself-doubting, after 'a really grotty marriage' and 8 years of domestic confinement, to first even to become a student teacher and eventually to confirm herself as 'an intelligent capable woman'. She attempted to maintain that determination in her fraught 'internal dialogues'. She still needed her 'stubborn defiance' in resisting 'quite a hostile

environment' and feeling' very, very isolated' both in the department and a largely gender segregated staffroom. Yet what drew on was more than past triumphs and immediacy of 'the fact that I really, really need the job and it fits in well with the kids':

*That to me is not why you come to work if you're a teacher ... Because if you've not got that enthusiasm both for your subject and for the kids in front of you then your job's gonna be a nightmare ... and you're not doing them justice.*

In her third month, two contingencies helped support her 'nightmare' struggle: there was a change of induction supporter so curricular and pedagogic 'dialogues started up'. Also on a Local Authority CPD course, she was 're-enthused' by a retired headteacher's 'complete love' for the job.

With these changes she began to resist 'the attitude of other teachers' as well as her own pedagogic 'regimentation' of strictly planned lessons and 'the script of the workbook':

*because there's something worth doing or to take longer on something because the kids are enjoying so it's lovely to have that flexibility*

Further reassurance followed when her test results were similar to those of her colleagues. Overall she felt she was 'doing a reasonable job', especially in her 'relationship with pupils ... the most important thing'.

The importance of the play between the personal and the professional in her narrative remained an insistent feature of her learning. Her personal life was associated with what she had needed to overcome: the emotional trauma of a 'grotty marriage', and a confidence-sapping domestic routine. Tentatively, she now began to subvert this strict home-school demarcation:

*I brought in pens ... I said 'You look after them because these belong to my kids' ... So they were all quite impressed ... really respectful*

She also resisted the metaphor suggested to her that teaching was all 'about acting ... taking on a role':

*I don't agree with that because I think if you're not genuine to yourself and your own personality it just doesn't work. That you've got to be true to yourself to a point*

Learning about that 'point' became a key issue in several respects. One was in resisting something of her own emotionality. She had admitted that:

*it was in her make-up to become over-emotional and 'explode' about things and then to get them into better perspective later*

It was also to be explored with pupils: 'there's a wee bit of banter, but it knows how far it can go' as well as pedagogic creativity. Here she drew on her earlier realisation as mature student that her learning style was to 'create little stories ... cartoons in my mind'. This aspect of herself was to be maintained, while subverting another aspect of her learning style, the 'revelation' that not everyone was 'book learner' as she was. This double movement could make for tentative and emotionally charged pedagogic moves:

*I've taken a few risks in class, like my colouring the chloroplast photosynthesis day where I did these cartoons ... I put the overhead up and I remember going bright red and feeling so nervous ... And it succeeded so well because I had taken that wee risk and shown the kids your personality a bit, and they really respond to that (Avril)*

By this time, she thought she was doing rather better than her fellow probationer, and on one occasion saw her copying up Avril's blackboard notes rather than ask for help. This surreptitious competitiveness unsettled the strongest collegial link Avril had, yet denied the kinds of observational support she sought she guiltily resorted to the same tactic in the department: going into other teachers' rooms 'and scribbling things down before the board's been wiped'. By January she had completed her part of the Interim profile for the formal induction process. The reductiveness of its format was not what she thought a record of professional progress should be and feeling the competition for a real post to be imminent, she feared there would be no formal record of all her hard work. Worse still, demanding curricular work she had done was formally credited to her colleague (now seeming more like a rival for a job).

With the end of her induction year in sight, she came to a critical decision:

*I increasingly think I'm not just here to teach biology and I would far rather at the end of the school time the kids were leaving socially competent adults, and I really do feel that more important than whether they get a 1 or 5 in their biology. So I do see myself kind of heading towards the guidance side of things.*

This switch seemed a radical unsettlement in key role identity. Important to this were the difference between her love of biology and its reduction as teaching to 'Levels' in the standards-based discourse. Further, she had at last found collegial support outside her subject colleagues and the 'depressing' staff room. This was with guidance staff and women in the Learning Centre. Finally despite her 'astronomical' journey time and her troubled allegiance to the school as a whole, she came to perhaps a surprising decision:

*I think if I couldn't stay next year I would be quite devastated ... I do definitely feel part of the school community, and I've never had that before.*

### **Researcher and teacher-researchers**

This case study has attempted to highlight some of the tensions and conflict inherent in becoming a teacher. It has been used to argue a case that reflection, self-evaluation and the start of 'lifelong learning' cannot be accounted for in a discourse dominated by competence acquisition that assumes the absence of such conflict. Here the notion of a 'pulse' between maintenance and subversion has been used. There are further aspects of this to be explored, and a lack of space to do so here. One of them concerns the relationship of researcher and teacher-researchers, already written about from the latter point of view (Smith et al 2005).<sup>4</sup> It shows similar tensions and it will have to suffice here to indicate this paper's indebtedness to the work of the teacher researchers. First the above case-study owes much of its focus on the 'personal' to an insight of the teacher researcher concerned. My initial interpretation focused on Avril's subversion of her subject-based identity as being largely due to her disillusion with the limitations imposed by a standards discourse of 'Levels'. The teacher-researcher saw it differently and pointed out the influence of personal issues in Avril's life. She also added a further move of Avril's that was not available to me at the time. Going back to the data I thought the teacher-researcher's insight productively unsettled mine' so it has informed mine which now attends more to 'the personal' in Avril's case. So the last word on Avril is hers:

*As Avril progressed through her induction year she began to realise that in order to be a good teacher she had to get know and learn to understand the children ... This (also) came about through coping with a very difficult and emotional family situation ... she began to believe that she was destined for a career in Guidance/Pastoral care as at the time she felt that supporting and nurturing the child as an individual was more important than teaching them biology. As her induction year neared its end she had come to the conclusion that these were not mutually exclusive and that it was possible to teach Biology whilst also supporting and nurturing the pupils as individuals and in fact this did make one a better teacher.*

The way new teachers were treated in some instances could unsettle the teacher-researchers:

*It has been a revelation to me how others (staff) have been behaving. I have had to bite my tongue ... when I see some of the ways in which a disservice is being done to probationers ... If they disagreed or spoke up for themselves they were labelled 'cheeky' in some departments ... I was very sad about having previously reckoned that ours was a warm, welcoming and supportive environment (Teacher-Researcher)*

While this was the strongest case of the research role subverting previous ideas about the school, others were disturbed and surprised to hear of such cases in any school. Yet this teacher-researcher also expressed how encouraged she was about the quality and enthusiasm of new teachers and this perhaps indicates what established teachers develop, having had years of dealing with the 'pulse' of subversion and maintenance in their professionalism. This perhaps what it means to be 'lifelong learners'

Even the school in which the existing 'informal practices' meant that the induction process was best experienced could have an unwelcome surprise in its second year of the project:

*We started with 5 probationers and still have 4 all of whom feel happy and supported. However ... just before Christmas one probationer requested a move and our school had to organise this ....Apparently he's thriving. So much depends on good relationships ... and I believe that getting him to another school was for the best ... a learning curve for us (Teacher researcher)*

This 'lost' probationer was failing and it was seen as due to a problem of the relationship between him and a particular member of staff. Despite the blow to the self-image of the generally high level of support on offer, this subversive incident was seen as something to learn from. And perhaps this is the best practitioner message for the induction policy: to be open to its own pulse of subversion and maintenance.

## References

- Bernstein, B. (1996) *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity*, London, Taylor and Francis.
- Britzman, D. P. (2003) *Practice makes practice*, New York, State University of New York Press.
- Ebbutt, D., Robson, R. and Worrall, N. (2000) Educational research partnership: differences and tensions at the interface between professional cultures of practitioners in schools and researchers in higher education, *Teacher Development* 4 (3): 319-337
- General Teaching Council for Scotland (2002) *Standard for Full Registration*, Edinburgh, GTC Scotland.
- Harrison J.K. (2002) The induction of newly qualified teachers teachers in secondary schools, *Journal of In-Service Education*, 28 (2): 255-275.
- Heaney S. (2001) Experience of induction in one education authority, *Mentoring and Tutoring*, 9 (3): 241-254.
- Hobson, A.J., Tracey, L., Kerr, K., Malderez, A., Pell, G., Simm, C. and Johnson, F. (2004) Why people choose to become teachers and the factors influencing their choice of Initial teacher Training route: early findings from the Becoming a Teacher (BaT) project, *Research Brief*, Nottingham, DfES Publications.
- Jeffrey B. (1999) Side-stepping the substantial self: the fragmentation of primary teachers' professionalism through audit accountability, in M. Hammersley (Ed) *Researching school experience*, London, Falmer.
- Jones C., Bubb S., Totterdell M. and Heilbron R. (2002) Reassessing variability of induction for newly qualified teachers: statutory policy and schools' provision, *Journal of In-Service Education*, 23 (3): 495-508.
- Jones, M (2002) Qualified to become good teachers: a case study of ten newly qualified teachers during their year of induction, *Journal of In-Service Education*, 28 (3): 509-526.
- Kyriacou C. and O'Connor A. (2003) Primary newly qualified teachers' experience of the induction year in its first year of implementation in England, *Journal of In-Service Education*, 29 (2): 185-200.
- McCrone Report (2000) A teaching profession for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: The Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Profesional Conditions of Serve for Tecahers, Edinburg, SEED)
- McNally J. (2002) Developments in teacher induction in Scotland and implications for the role of Higher Education, *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 28 (2): 149-164.
- Priyadharshini, E. and Robinson-Pant, A. (2003) The attractions of teaching: an investigation into why people change careers to teach, *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 29 (2): 95-112
- Rippon J. and Martin M. (2003) Supporting induction: relationships count, *Mentoring and Tutoring*, 11(2): 211-226.
- Silverman, D. (1993) *Interpreting qualitative data: methods for analysing talk, text and interaction*, London Sage
- Smith, C., Curwen, K., Dodds, D., Easton, L., Gray, P., Swierczek, P. and Walker, L. (2005) *Teacher-researchers in the early Learning Project: some reflections and lessons learned*, paper presented at SERA, Perth November

- St Pierre E. A. (1997) Nomadic enquiry in the smooth spaces of the field: a preface, *Qualitative studies in Education*, 10 (1): 365-383.
- Strathern M. (Ed) (2000) *Audit cultures: anthropological studies in accountability, ethics and the academy*, London, Routledge.
- Stronach, I., Corbin B., McNamara O., Stark S. and Warne T. (2002) 'Towards an uncertain politics of professionalism: teacher and nurse identities in flux' *Journal of Education Policy*, 17 (1): 109-38.
- Totterdell, M., Woodroffe L., Bubb S., and Hanrahan K. (2004) The impact of NQT induction programmes on the enhancement of teacher expertise, professional development, job satisfaction or retention rates: a systematic review of research on induction. In: *Research Evidence in Education Library*, London, EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education.
- Williams A. (2003) Informal learning in the workplace; a case study of new teachers, *Educational Studies*, 29 (2/3) 207-219.

**Contact:** [b.corbin@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:b.corbin@mmu.ac.uk)

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> This is a 4 - year project entitled ESRC-TLRP project involving Stirling and Manchester Metropolitan Universities, entitled 'Enhanced Competence-Based Learning in Early Professional Development'. Its data base is much broader than the one used here, and includes quantitative data. Its web address is: [www.ioe.stir.ac.uk/EPL](http://www.ioe.stir.ac.uk/EPL)

<sup>2</sup> The 96 competences were arrived at with 'broad approval from all key stakeholders' (GTC 2001) and are the formal assessment referents to be used by induction supporters, mentors and managers in the school. Some items relate to traditional classroom roles, such as 'can set and mark homework which is varied in form, with clear purpose in relation to class work'. Others indicate a newer breed of 'extended' professional, able to relate to 'other school staff, professionals, para-professionals, agencies and parents' organisations'. No particular statement was objected to in the data.

<sup>3</sup> The transcripts were of interviews between teacher-researchers and probationers in their own schools. These were flexibly timed, and as the teacher-researchers were 'on the spot' and had insider knowledge of the key events and rhythms of their own school, they could make more serendipitous use of their contacts. In this paper the data is not individually attributed to avoid compromising the anonymity promised to those interviewed (only the teacher-researcher names are real).

<sup>4</sup> Ebbutt et al (2000) make many points which find resonance in our experience of working together as researchers and teacher-researchers. At the end their paper concludes that the increasing of teacher-researchers might mean the 'the loss of the aura of subversion' (335) surrounding their activity. The 'aura' maybe, but not some of the substance as I have argued here, at least in the sense that any account will always involve something of both subversion and maintenance.