

TITLE OF THESIS

Selective Rebels:

The Art of Being a Teacher

A multimethod exploration of how teachers navigate their own
values and morals in the current policy climate using IPA

by

Emma Jane Ozenbrook

Canterbury Christ Church University

Thesis submitted

for the Degree of Doctor of Education

2019

Abstract

The teaching profession in England is currently facing a significant crisis; research has shown that teachers are leaving the profession at increasing rates. This study aims to explore how teachers navigate their own values and professionalism in the current policy climate. Building on previous research that uses interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), it asks how IPA can be used to explore participants' responses to images and art in educational research.

Based on a review of the literature on the relationship between teachers and policy which suggested that policy was creating an unsustainable work environment for teachers, a question was posed to teachers from three secondary schools via email circulation, in which they were asked to use an image that best describes how they navigate their own values and professionalism in the current policy climate and to include a short narrative outlining why they chose that image. These images from the nine responses received were then discussed in a focus group and sent to an artist who created an artefact from the images alone. The participants were then given the opportunity to respond to the artefact in a further focus group.

The findings offered in this research suggest the existence of selective rebellion for these teacher participants. While there needs to be a greater autonomy within the teaching profession, these teachers are carving out their own path to a journey of discovery within the profession that both embraces and subjugates policy. The teacher participants in this research never once spoke of stress or burnout, a theme which pervaded the literature,

instead they explored the ways in which they managed to thrive in their professional world by quietly subjugating policy. This prompted a reflexive response from the researcher, herself a secondary school teacher.

This study has also demonstrated that risk taking in educational research and the exploration of creative methods can result in the creation of rich data that has the capacity to allow for the growth of the researcher and the participants. Taking risks and moving away from traditional methods and pushing the boundaries of established methodologies is something that can be both celebrated and encouraged in education research.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to every selective rebel in the teaching profession – keep fighting the good fight. And to my nana, an inspiration, who always knew the value of education.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank the participants for their honesty, openness and willingness to share. Without your knowledge and expertise, this would never have become a reality.

To Kathy, who created the most beautiful art pieces with no guidance and was willing to work with a bizarre and wholly ambiguous brief, I thank you and cannot express too highly my admiration for your abilities and creative genius.

Dan, my wonderful husband and proof reader – thank you for putting up with me for the last three years (it must have been a nightmare).

To my brilliant, mad family for being wholly supportive and proud of the eternal student.

To my mam and sister who have been so supportive of all my decisions.

To Sarah Fox, who inspired me every step of the way.

To my gorgeous friends who filled me with cocktails and were there when it all got too much.

To Angela, thank you for your guidance and support and always being willing to give me your time and your infinite wisdom.

Finally, to Judy. There are no words to express how you have helped me to grow throughout this process. Thank you for listening to my ramblings, for allowing me precious time to ramble to your students, for reigning me in when I got out of hand and for teaching me that guilt is inevitable but also not helpful. You have made this process so much easier and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for believing in my mad little project.

Table of Contents

<u>Abstract</u>	i
<u>Dedication</u>	iii
<u>Acknowledgements</u>	iv
<u>Contents</u>	v
<u>Chapter 1: Introduction</u>	
1.1 Overview.....	1
1.2 Biographical Background.....	5
1.2.1 Personal Narrative.....	5
1.3 The Relationship Between Personal Narratives and Policy.....	8
1.4 Methodological Background - The Purpose of Narratives.....	9
1.5 Methodological Background – The Purpose of Images.....	10
1.6 Methodological Background – The Purpose of Involving the Artist...	11
1.7 The Relevance of this Research.....	12
1.8 Summary.....	15
<u>Chapter 2: Literature Review</u>	
2.1 The Dichotomous Definition of Professionalism in Teaching.....	18
2.2 A Question of Policy.....	20
2.3 Policy in Education: Where did it all begin?.....	27
2.3.1 1870.....	27
2.3.2 Early 1900s and beyond.....	28
2.3.3 Today.....	29

2.4 A Series of Unfortunate Themes.....	30
2.4.1 Teaching and Workload.....	30
2.4.2 What Policy Exists to Combat the Workload Crisis?.....	33
2.4.3 Stress and Burnout:	
The Second in A Series of Unfortunate Themes.....	35
2.5 Addressing Gaps in the Field Using Alternative Methods.....	37
2.6 Psychosocial Factors.....	39
2.7 Summary.....	40
<u>Chapter 3: Methodology</u>	
3.1 Ontological Perspective.....	43
3.2 My Positionality in this Research.....	46
3.3 Ways of Knowing and the Use of Visual Methods.....	47
3.4 Ways of Knowing.....	49
3.5 Looking and Seeing.....	51
3.6 How is Knowledge Created?.....	52
3.7 Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis	
and Its Use in this Research.....	54
3.8 Phenomenology.....	54
3.9 Descriptive Phenomenology.....	55
3.10 The Understanding of the Other.....	57
3.11 Being and Nothingness.....	58
3.12 Hermeneutics.....	59
3.13 The Fluidity of Interpretation.....	60
3.14 The Art of Shining a Light.....	61

3.15 The Recognition of Preconceptions.....	62
3.16 The Hermeneutic Circle.....	63
3.17 Idiography.....	63
3.18 IPA and the Methods Employed in this Research.....	64
3.19 Weaknesses of IPA.....	65
3.20 How this Applies to Sampling and Initial Data Collection.....	66
3.21 Focus Group.....	68
3.22 Finding the Artist.....	69
3.23 Focus Group Two.....	69
3.24 How Are IPA, Visual Methodologies, and Ways of Knowing Linked?...	70
3.25 Ethical Implications.....	71
3.25.1 Principle One: Minimising the Risk of Harm.....	72
3.25.2 Principle Two: Obtaining Informed Consent.....	74
3.25.3 Principle Three: Ensuring Anonymity and Confidentiality.....	74
3.25.4 Principle Four: Avoiding Deceptive Practices.....	75
3.25.5 Principle Five: Providing the Right to Withdraw.....	75
3.26 How Did these Principles Impact Ethics Approval?.....	76
3.27 Data Analysis in IPA.....	79
3.28 Initial Data Analysis Experience.....	81
3.29 Emergent Themes.....	83
3.30 Validity of the Data.....	83
3.30.1 Sensitivity to Context.....	83
3.30.2 Commitment and Rigour.....	84

3.30.3 Transparency and Coherence.....	84
3.30.4 Impact and Importance.....	85
3.31 Summary.....	85

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Overview of Findings Including the Theoretical Understanding.....	87
4.2 The Theme of Rebellion.....	88
4.3 The Lack of Autonomy in the Teaching Profession.....	93
4.4 Unrealistic Expectations.....	99
4.5 Questioning Policy and Policy Makers.....	103
4.6 Choice and Growth.....	106
4.7 The Power of Interpretations.....	111
4.8 Summary.....	114

Chapter 5: Critical Discussion of Emergent Themes

5.1 Critical Discussion in Relation to the Literature.....	117
5.1.1 The Teaching Participants’ Ideas of Professionalism.....	117
5.1.2 Autonomy.....	118
5.1.3 Doing it for the Students.....	119
5.1.4 The Importance of Personal Narrative.....	120
5.1.5 Addressing the Unfortunate Themes: The Reality of an Unsustainable Workload.....	121
5.1.6 Addressing the Unfortunate Themes: The Reality of Stress and Burnout and Creating a Rebellion.....	121
5.1.7 Addressing the Gaps in the Literature.....	122

5.2 Critical Discussion in Relation to the Methodology.....	123
5.2.1 Ways of Knowing, Using Visual Methods, and Looking and Seeing.....	123
5.2.2 Ontology.....	124
5.2.3 Epistemology.....	125
5.2.4 Positionality and the Use of the Artist.....	126
5.3 Summary.....	128

Chapter 6: Discussion of Findings

6.1 How is this IPA?.....	131
6.2 Limitations.....	136
6.3 What Does this Contribute to the Field of Educational Research?.....	139
6.4 Implications for Professionals.....	142
<u>Conclusion</u>	147
<u>Final Reflection</u>	149
<u>References</u>	153

Index of Tables

Table 1.....	2
--------------	---

Index of Figures

Figure 1.....	23
Figure 2.....	25
Figure 3.....	25
Figure 4.....	54
Figure 5.....	88

Figure 6.....	89
Figure 7.....	93
Figure 8.....	94
Figure 9.....	95
Figure 10.....	96
Figure 11.....	100
Figure 12.....	101
Figure 13.....	108
Figure 14.....	108
Figure 15.....	108
Figure 16.....	112
Figure 17.....	143
Figure 18.....	145
Figure 19.....	146
<u>Appendices</u>	
Appendix 1.....	174
Appendix 2.....	176
Appendix 3.....	185
Appendix 4.....	186
Appendix 5.....	187
Appendix 6.....	189

Chapter 1

1.1 Overview

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how teachers navigate their own values and professionalism in the current policy context. Although the fundamental basis of this thesis concerns teachers and their response to policy, it also became about risk-taking, the sometimes-serendipitous nature of educational research, vulnerability, and creativity. This research arose from my own experiences as a teacher in a comprehensive secondary school and is born of a desire to understand teachers' perceptions of educational policy and how these impact their daily personal and professional experiences. This thesis also explores the use of creative research methods in educational research.

To conduct this study, I requested the participation of teachers from non-selective schools in Kent and planned to involve a maximum of 10 teachers. To do this, I contacted the head teachers of three comprehensive secondary schools in Kent, utilising contacts that I had developed over my career as a secondary school teacher. I requested permission from these head teachers to conduct the research in their schools and subsequently asked that they cascade the information to all staff within their institution, inviting them to take part in this study. A caveat informed potential participants that the selection of data would be done on a 'first come, first served' basis, which would allow for the removal of my own personal bias from the selection of teachers. The teachers were asked to select an image which they believed demonstrated the navigation of their own values and professionalism in the current policy climate. This image could be an original photograph or a pre-existing image; the choice was not limited and was ultimately in the hands of the teaching participants. They were asked to write a brief narrative which explained their choice. To

do this, the teachers were required to think about their own interpretation of values, professionalism, and the current policy climate, and they were given a two-week period to submit their response. This was designed to reflect the need for deep thought and consideration to be given to the image and the accompanying narrative. When all initial data was gathered, I invited the teachers to view each other's images and allow an organic discussion about them and to verbalise their accompanying narrative, if they felt comfortable doing so. This discussion was recorded. The images were then sent to an artist who created an artefact that represented the themes or ideas that emerged in the series of images. The artist was not given the narrative pieces, nor were they told anything about the people who chose the images. The artist had full control and autonomy over their artefact. I then invited the participants to view the artefact and meet the artist to discuss their thoughts and feelings about it; this was also recorded. Below is the timeframe of the data collection to provide clarity concerning the steps taken in this research.

21.12.17	Ethical approval sought
31.01.18	Ethical approval granted
05.01.18	Head Teachers contacted to seek approval to approach their staff
05.02.18	Email with information and consent letters cascaded to staff of three schools
27.03.18	First data set (images and narratives) received from participants
10.04.18	Email sent to art lecturer to cascade to art students and prospective artists
05.05.18	Images sent to artist
17.07.18	Focus group 1 to discuss images with participants
25.07.18	Artefact created by artist
20.09.18	Focus group 2 to discuss artefact with participants and artist

Table 1 Chronology of Data Collection

This research utilised interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) as a methodological framework and a way to analyse the data gathered. IPA is a relatively recent qualitative methodology which champions the experience of the individual as a way to understand data; human experience is dependent upon traits such as personalities, prior experiences, and motivations (Smith and Osborne, 2003). IPA was chosen to achieve the interpretive, hermeneutic approach needed for this type of research into teachers' perceptions of values, professionalism, and the current policy climate. The terms 'hermeneutic' and 'interpretive', while intrinsically linked, cannot be seen as interchangeable concepts. Hermeneutics encompasses both the theory and methodology of interpretation, and it includes verbal and non-verbal communication (Esquivel, 2012), which reflects the way in which data was collected for this research. The use of a brief biographical narrative combined with images and focus groups allows for a hermeneutical analysis of the data. The interpretive methodology should be understood as the teachers' own interpretation of the research question and the data, the artist's interpretation of the data, and the researcher's interpretation of the data. This study sits within a hermeneutic, interpretive framework (Greenwood, Mir and Willmot, 2015). The aim of IPA research is not to test a hypothesis or make assumptions; rather, it is an exploration of the participants' experiences (Reid et al. 2005). Thus, IPA was the most appropriate choice for data analysis because of its emphasis on the perceptions of the participants and the researcher.

By using a brief biographical narrative that each participant created, data was collected which was individual to the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the participants (Reid and West, 2011). The use of narrative inquiry provided the researcher a way to explore the lives of participants through their own personal stories and experiences

(Webster & Mertova, 2007). Because of the nature of the research theme, biographical narratives allowed the exploration of teachers' lives within the current policy climate while embracing all of its complexities and depth (ibid). I wanted to explore creative ways in which this could be achieved and to create an artefact that represented the narratives of these teachers. At this point, I was interested in the artwork of Grayson Perry, and particularly how he uses art to hold up a mirror to his participants. I felt that encouraging the participants to find images that they believed were representative of their own experience encouraged them to take time to think about their image and avoid wholly reactive responses to the question. I wanted to utilise the artist to see what the responses of the teachers looked like to an outsider; I aimed to see if the artist could create something that reflected the teachers' perceptions of policy and how they would respond to being confronted with an art piece that was created both by them and for them. There was much risk involved in this, but I wanted to create something beautiful from my profession; I hoped the participants would feel as though they had helped create something and that their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions could be immortalised in an artefact that represented them. This is further discussed in Chapter 3.

1.2 Biographical Background

It is important to establish my own biographical narrative, albeit briefly, to demonstrate my hermeneutic positioning of how I navigate my values as a teacher in the current policy climate. Escaping the self is impossible when writing; writing is an encompassing of our values, culture, and context, and although a partial suppression may occur, the self remains (Richardson, 1988). The partial presence of the self allows the researcher to interact and converse with the situation through the honesty, caution,

humility, and reserve of reflexive first-person narrative (Holliday, 2007) (Schön, 1983). The following narrative is a representation of my daily life written at the beginning of this thesis. It was an exploration of my own perception of my navigation of my values in the current policy climate.

1.2.1 Personal Narrative

I do not want to be bitter. I tell myself this on an almost daily basis, but after five years, I fear that's what I am becoming. A friend tells me often over wine that, in the five years before she retired, she became bitter, and over more wine, tells me that she then became difficult; purposefully opposing senior management just to make their lives a little bit more difficult as a sort of bizarre revenge tactic. I do not want to be bitter. I do not want to be difficult. And, to be frank, I have a long road left before retirement. I wonder if, having studied for so long to become a teacher, if it was a wise career choice, or if I will still be a teacher in five years' time. On Sunday nights, I get 'the fear', a phenomenon suffered by most teachers, where sleep is evasive and replaced by an impending sense of doom, and on these Sunday nights, I often play a game of what-other-profession-could-I-do? This used to be a fun game to wile away Sunday evenings, but now it has become a symptom of an acute work-related anxiety and a game that is played with more and more urgency and less and less fun each time. But why do I feel like this? Why am I so desperate to leave a profession that I am actually quite good at?

Don't get me wrong; I love teaching, genuinely love it. I love the pupils I teach; I love teaching English; I love the unpredictable nature of teaching teenagers, and I love the hilarity that often ensues, and I'm definitely never short of a funny anecdote at a party, so why do I feel so tired and so jaded? And that is the crux. For the first time in five years, I

now wake up and feel tired and have to force myself to go to work. I have a 20-minute drive that is hampered by intense, anxiety-related nausea. I think I feel jaded because I do not believe that teachers are trusted. I believe that we are simply a commodity that must deliver sometimes-impossible outcomes (I think at this point of my lovely bottom set year 11 class). The phrase 'everyone is replaceable' seems to have become a mantra in my workplace as the management push to cut costs and save money. Paradoxically, a recruitment crisis has meant that staff are picking up the pieces on a daily basis and fighting fires that have been ignited by the supposedly well-meaning arsonists who are determined to make capitalist gains on a socialist system.

I'm tired of watching young, vibrant, and dynamic teachers fall victim to a system that chews them up and spits them out with no recognition for the brilliant teachers they are or could have been, and equally, I am tired of watching young, vibrant, and dynamic students fall to pieces under a system that is not designed to meet their specific needs. I am tired of watching students lose motivation and drive as they realise that they might never get that C that has been predicted for them based on a primary school mandate. But mostly, I am tired of feeling that, regardless of what you do as a teacher, it is never enough. No matter how many hours are put in at night-time, at weekends, during school holidays, no matter how many thousands of books get marked or how many lessons get planned, or how many tiny pieces of paper are laminated, it is never enough. We are bound by a system that always demands more; more marking, more assessment for learning, more homework, more data analysis, more interventions, more reading, more assessments, more group work, more independent learning. But sometimes, as a teacher, you get to a point where

you simply do not have any more to give. And that's where I am now, a good teacher with nothing more to give.

This brief extract of autobiographical narrative was written to explore my own feelings about my relationship with policy, and it allowed me to begin to challenge my perceptions and assumptions of the current policy climate (Bolton, 2014). This narrative also helped me explore the importance of not allowing reflections to become mere polemic confessions, and it reflects the necessity of time to think that was subsequently offered to the participants in this research. I wanted to ensure that I understood the narratives gathered in this study as independent of my own narrative, but also to recognise that I am inevitably a part of this narrative. The presence of the self does not make this data inadmissible; rather, this is inescapable, and recognising my own narrative allowed me to embark on a reflective practice in order to be fully aware of the presence of my own self within the data. Reflective practice is located in social and political structures (Goodson, 2004), and professionals are described as being expected to retain strength and stability despite existing within a masculine culture that is destructively obsessed with obtaining goals (Garvey et al., 2014). I have felt this issue over my years as a teacher, and it is directly referenced in the above autobiographical narrative via the feelings of crumbling under the weight of expectation within the profession and my concerns about the threat of replaceability. Equally, this narrative highlights the overemphasis on numerical measurability in the educational system and reveals a system that is not designed to meet the specific needs of the individual child (Crossley, 2015). It has been argued that the emphasis within the current educational system in England, and indeed globally, is not designed to understand the complex nature of humans and thus the complex nature of teaching itself (Groundwater-Smith and

Mockler, 2009). It is not a platform to recognise and celebrate the immense diversity of both teachers and students; rather, the search for standardisation and professional objectivity stifles the growth of the individual (ibid).

1.3 The Relationship Between Personal Narratives and Policy

If my autobiographical narrative reflects that teachers may feel that they operate within a system under intensive, damaging ministerial control, then it is useful to ascertain what role their values play within the current policy climate (Wrigley, 2014). This climate seems to link creativity and change to instability (Reid and Donoghue, 2004). This stifling of nuance and diversity to allow for standardisation of practice encourages the de-amalgamation of creativity, diversity, and policy. Therefore, it could be suggested that we cannot succinctly navigate and practice if our own interpretations create the way in which we understand the world (McGilchrist, 2012). Brook (2009) has alluded to the concept of legitimacy and claimed that the proper sense of education concerns the formation of authenticity, that is, what it means to be truly human. This demonstrates the respect for authenticity within education, and perhaps the notion of authenticity has prompted this research. The concept of authenticity and values can be understood as intrinsically linked, with Kreber (2007) correlating authenticity in teaching with ‘a sense of empowerment, self-actualization, and individuation, and as such, linked to larger questions of human existence and agency in the world’ (25). Kreber’s assertions of authenticity and agency highlight the potential inability of teachers to adequately maintain both their own values and the professionalism expected of them in the current policy climate. Reflexivity and the use of narrative method can be seen as ‘essentially politically and socially disruptive: it lays open to question anything taken for granted’ (Bolton, 2006: 3); thus, the teachers

selected to participate in this research have the opportunity to explore those aspects of their values and the education system that are perhaps taken for granted.

1.4 Methodological Background – The Purpose of Narratives

Personal professional narrative and the exploration of personal stories are an effective mode of reflective practice and reflexivity (Bolton, 2006). If, as Bolton has argued, ‘all professional and personal experience is naturally storied; telling or writing stories are prime human ways of understanding, communicating, and remembering’ (p.203), then to understand how teachers navigate their values within the classroom, it is important that their stories can be told in a way that encourages both critical and personal understanding. Doyle (2004) has claimed that storytelling and narratives do not simply seek a ‘truth’; rather, it is the exploration of knowledge, values, and experiences that should maintain precedence when undertaking a qualitative study, such as a biographical narrative. This allows teachers to establish their own truth within their images and narratives.

This reflexivity through qualitative, interpretative research embodies ‘an aspect of all social research’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995: 22), and Denzin (1997) has argued that reflexivity is not an optional mode within social research. If this is the case, then it is important to embrace the biographical narrative within educational research, as it strives to understand a structure which is pivotal to the functioning of our society. Effective reflective practice and reflexivity have the power to encourage participants and researchers to transcend the restraints of established systems, thus allowing the teachers participating in the research to understand the system within which they operate and how their values fit within this system (Bolton, 2006). If teachers can engage with their own stories and take time to consider their values and their own understanding of the policy climate, then they

will be better able to explore the complexity of their own values, how they relate to their practice, and how this in turn informs their navigation of their relationships with their students and colleagues (Bolton, 2005). By allowing the teachers to engage with this research over a period of time and consider the narrative and photographs they offer, I aim to avoid capturing the experience of a teacher on one particular day; rather, as suggested by Webster and Mertova (2007: 3), I aim to capture ‘the whole story’. Other methods and time frames may only communicate an understanding of a subject or phenomena at a certain point rather than embodying a potentially holistic view.

1.5 Methodological Background – The Purpose of Images

Asking teachers to take photographs of the navigation of their values within the current policy climate is an alternative way to generate rich, qualitative data to address this research theme. This use of qualitative data in the form of photographs and narratives allows teachers to ‘take possession of space in which they are insecure’ (Sontag, 1979: 9), which may offer them some control over their own views of the policy climate and allow them to explore their values in a deeper way. The very process of taking a picture may encourage teachers to consider their profession in a different way; as Sontag has said, the act of taking a picture itself is ‘soothing, and assuages general feelings of disorientation’ (1979: 11). Perhaps more importantly, in regards to my proposed research question, photographs may not have the ability to create a moral position; however, they may reinforce one and may possibly help develop a ‘nascent one’ (1979: 17). It is possible that the photographs collected from these teachers help create and/or reinforce a narrative that highlights the place of the individuals within the education system, perhaps offering a traceable explanation of how these values are navigated within the current policy climate.

Barthes has lauded the photograph as not ‘simply a product or a channel but also an object endowed with a structural autonomy’ (Barthes, 1977:15), thus demonstrating the importance of photography as a tool to analyse both a literal reality and the connotations of the image itself (Barthes, 1977). The use of images as opposed to other qualitative methods allows for a level of composure that encourages the participant to make a deftly considered response to the research question, thus allowing researcher to answer the research questions utilising carefully considered data.

1.6 Methodological Background – The Purpose of Involving the Artist

I approached this research as a listener, creator, and researcher. I wanted my participants to feel comfortable in the knowledge that I had shared elements of their experience, and that the way in which they created their narratives would be accepted and understood by someone in the same professional sphere. However, I also wanted an ‘outsider’s’ perspective to see if they could provide an objective ‘sense’ of the individual and contextually shared experiences of the primary participants. In 2003, the artist Grayson Perry won the Turner Prize and was hailed (by himself) as being ‘the first transvestite potter to win the Turner’. His work intrigued me, as did the subsequent television shows that followed. I wanted to create an art piece that encompassed the feelings of the teachers who took part in this research. I decided to enlist the help of an artist to act as an ‘outsider’ to create an art piece based on the images and to see if there were emergent themes that an artist could grasp and universalise. I was also interested in how the teachers would respond to the art piece that was created based on the data that they produced. I was curious if they would feel as though they had been captured in the artefacts and whether the artefact was representative of how they navigated their values and professionalism in the current policy

climate. I also wanted to see how an alternate interpretation would add another layer to the data collected.

1.7 The Relevance of this Research

By inviting teachers to develop their own narrative through both images and words, they are called to discuss action, thoughts, and feelings, without favouring the positivist and cognitive, thus pursuing a pathway into social processes. Although Bolton (2006) wrote about continuous professional development, the message still resonates within this research; Bolton cites the narrative method as a way to create structure and order in chaos, perhaps also allowing teachers a medium by which to understand their wider educational environment. Using these narratives and images critically identifies and challenges the dominant dialogue and central paradigm, while observing how they are shaped by the political culture in which they operate (Brockbank & McGill: 2004). Within research and writing, and particularly within the writing of narrative, our selves are intimately involved, and our interpretation of the world around us is by our intrinsic value systems. Mezirow (2000) has stated that ‘a habit of mind is a set of assumptions – broad, generalising, orienting dispositions that act as a filter for interpreting the meaning of experience’ (p.17); therefore, it could be said that the teachers in this study, through their narratives, demonstrate how their values allow them to both interpret and navigate policy. This exploration of current educational policy climate practitioners helps them understand their own professional identity and thus develop an understanding of their expectations and values within the profession. By allowing these teachers to not only create but also discuss these images, their own values can be questioned and challenged (Bolton, 2006).

Using images and narratives as opposed to other qualitative methods is an essential way to explore the lives of professionals within the education system; it allows teachers to take responsibility and control of their lives, thus creating a safe space within which to explore values and attitudes towards policy (Bolton, 2006). By using images, narratives, and an artist's interpretation, this research resists singular interpretation; it embraces the nuance and complexities of stories, which allow for multitudinous interpretation (Doyle & Carter, 2003). Therefore, using narratives and images allows for a rich data set that is open to multiple interpretational possibilities, and the navigation of values and policy can be deftly explored. By allowing the images to be independently interpreted by an artist, this data is explored from a viewpoint that can be refreshingly different from the researcher's (Bolton, 2006). The lives of human beings are understood through narrative; therefore, 'educational experience should be studied narratively' (Clandinin & Connelly 2004: 19).

By using this qualitative research method to initially gather data, I consider people and their experiences, their meanings, their understandings, and their interpretations as primary data sources (Mason, 2002). The merits of an image over other qualitative data methods have been discussed above, and the narrative pieces to be included in this work offer another layer of meaning to that image. Upon gathering the preliminary data, I then invited the teachers who provided these photographs to meet and discuss them so they could make sense of the world around them and understand values and meanings of other participants; this was meant to understand the shared meaning that constitutes their social reality (Blaikie, 2000). Some would argue that the purpose of educational research is to create a platform to make change; this study that allows educators to analyse their own practice,, and if that point of view is to be recognised then educational research should

allow educators to relate it to their own selves, cultures, and scenarios (Somekh, 2005). As Frogget and Chamberlayne (2004) have argued, ‘Biographical methods can help restore the relationship between policy and lived experience by moving between the micro- and macro- levels’ (62). Not only is it beneficial in linking the micro and the macro, it can also be beneficial in understanding human behaviour and creating an understanding of the mechanisms of the educational system. It has been suggested that a more frequent implantation of these alternative methods, such as autobiography and narrative, is necessary within educational research (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). Scholars have argued that these methods allow for a deeper understanding of the complexities of human behaviours in a variety of social contexts.

1.7 Contribution to Knowledge

Much has been written about the impact of policy on teachers in this educational setting, as is discussed in Chapter 2. While conducting this research, it became clear that, while many studies have focused on the relationship between teachers and policy, there was no evidence of research conducted in this way. IPA is generally conducted using semi-structured interviews, but in this study, I have discovered a creative way to conduct IPA research that is not limited to previous practices; I have created a way in which art and visual imagery can be used to encourage participants to explore their own engagement with policy, and also a phenomenological approach that involves collaborative risk-taking and creation, which contributes additional dimensions of understanding to qualitative research.

Another facet of this research that has contributed to knowledge is the finding that the teacher participants are embarking upon a selective rebellion to navigate their morals and values in the current policy climate. The teacher participants recognised their lack of

autonomy and in some ways took matters into their own hands; they are navigating policy in a way that helps them to achieve what they believe is best for their students. Much of the literature surrounding teachers and policy, highlights issues such as unsustainable workload, lack of autonomy and stress and burnout but the teachers in this research painted a much more positive picture of the current policy climate. They discussed issues such as workload and autonomy but it would seem that they had learned to thrive as teachers by championing the needs of their pupils over the need to fulfil policy where they saw this as contradictory.

1.8 Summary

This research is designed to create a deeper understanding of the power of narrative voice in how policy impacts the people it affects the most: the teachers who are expected to implement this policy in their daily lives. I intend to establish whether the relationship between how teachers perceive their professionalism and the current policy climate is one of symbiosis or whether the relationship is born of a necessity that does not reflect their true feelings about their profession. This research aims to explore how or whether teachers achieve authenticity within their professional lives in the current policy climate. The use of images, narratives, and the creation of an artefact produce a multi-layered data collection process, and by allowing participants to respond to and reflect upon their own and other participants' pictures and narratives throughout the process and their response to the artefact created, a deep and multi-layered data collection is forged to develop an original contribution to the field of educational research. The data gathered and its analysis may allow suggestions to be made regarding the development and implementation of policy and, indeed, how this policy impacts the teachers in this process.

This thesis utilises IPA in a different way from the traditional methods used in educational research. IPA researchers traditionally use semi-structured interviews in their educational research, whereas this study uses images, narratives, focus groups, and an artefact created by an artist. This research design gave the teaching participants autonomy to create and explore their own data; it allowed them to create visual narratives and explore the visual narratives of others. It gave them the opportunity to explain their visual narratives and question the visual narratives of others. It gave them the chance to explore and understand the values and professionalism of others in their focus groups, and to see how their collective narrative was interpreted by an 'outsider'. By giving the images to an artist who used them to create an artefact of their choice, the teaching participants and the artist were encouraged and given the opportunity to use their imaginations and create alongside each other and the researcher.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

It is almost as though some people would wish that the subject matter and purpose of education should not have public attention focused on it: nor that profane hands should be allowed to touch it. (Callaghan, J., 1976)

The following review of the literature includes studies focused on the specific experiences and issues of the relationship between teachers and policy; it examines the existing literature on the impact of policy on the lives of teachers from both academic and government-supported research alike; and it addresses the gap in the use of varying methods to understand the relationship between teachers and policy. In this study, the participants were asked the following question: *How do you navigate your professionalism in the current policy climate?*

2.1 The Dichotomous Definition of Professionalism in Teaching

Professionalism in teaching is characterised by the understanding that teachers are workers, and the school is their workplace; teachers are required to adhere to professional standards in the workplace which denote the effectiveness of their performance in the profession (Connell, 1985). Eraut (1994) and Johnson (1972, 1984) have described professionalism as an ideology. Professionalism ‘is commonly understood as an individual’s adherence to a set of standards, code of conduct, or collection of qualities that characterise accepted practice within a particular area of activity’ (McGettrick, 2005: 4). The policy that indicates the professional standards of the participants used in this research is discussed later in this chapter. The professionalism of teachers encompasses three key areas: competence, knowledge, and personal conduct (Kasowe and Muropa, 2014). Bottery

and Wright (1997) have stated that the key criteria for professionalism in teaching are autonomy and expertise. At a macro level, the workday of a teacher is highly organised and structured, and at a micro level, it contains subtle nuances determined by individual experience. The highly structured aspect of teaching helps create professional standards against which teachers can be measured (Reid, in press). A teacher's professional capability is measured against standards influenced by professional ideologies that create boundaries within which teachers can operate, thus allowing for the legitimisation of teaching practises and potentially limiting possibilities in the workplace (Shocklock, 1998).

The teaching profession and professionalism are synonymous but there is a dichotomy between teachers and professionalism, as there is an inescapable individuality within the teaching profession which prevents teachers from achieving professional absolutes (Lawn and Ozga, 1988). This observation is particularly pertinent, as it should be clear to policy makers and researchers that there are problems with a generalised, linear approach to the teaching profession (Shocklock, 1998). Professionalism can have a multi-faceted meaning in the working lives of teachers; it can be a means of control and a means of rebellion or resistance (Lawn and Ozga, 1988). These issues of the duality of professionalism, which is characterised by reality and expectation, may be at the core of teacher identity, teacher workload, and the relationships between teachers and their employers (ibid). Teacher professionalism is a highly contested term, denoting the complexities of the teachers' professionalism (Lawn, 1989). There is a need to move away from an outsider understanding of teacher professionalism and that the concept needs to come from the teachers themselves; their understanding of their own profession is key to educational research (Lawn, 1989)(Shocklock, 1998).

The role of the teacher is to encourage the growth of students' critical curiosity, to be inspiring, to be creative, and to ensure that their teaching is based on truth; therefore, evidence-based standards and targets are potentially inappropriate for defining the professionalism of teaching (McGettrick, 2005). In today's society, 'evidence' needs to be measurable, and in the teaching profession, there is more to teaching than that which is measurable in a way that is deemed socially acceptable (ibid). The way to ascertain the professionalism of teachers is via a construction which includes and embodies the narrative accounts of teachers' experiences in the classroom setting (Shacklock, 1998). A symbiotic relationship between the subject matter of teaching, teaching as pedagogy, and the individual experience of teachers themselves must exist in order to ensure that a discussion of teachers' professionalism is not limited to the objective (Soder,1991). The malleability of teachers' professionalism must be recognised to accommodate the basic ideals of the teacher as a professional (Sykes, 1987). Lawn and Ozga (1988) have also argued against a hegemonic attitude towards professionalism within the teaching profession, citing the intense complexity of individual relationships and interactions and the impact these have on teachers' professionalism and their perceptions of it. Kainan (1995) and Witherell and Noddings (1991) have demonstrated the importance of personal narrative as a way in which meaning can be created in the working lives of teachers; it helps specify the role of professionalism as a means of control, resistance, and empowerment.

Teaching is not as simple as doing things right; it is more related to doing 'the right thing' (McGrettick, 2005:6). Therein lies the dichotomous dilemma of professionalism within teaching, as alluded to in the literature surrounding teachers' professionalism; it is impossible to create a set of objective standards for a professional who deals with the multi-

faceted nature of human interaction (ibid). Educational policy has experienced a flux throughout the years that has impacted the lives of teachers, particularly in terms of accountability and control (Al-Hinai, 2007). Teachers are forced to navigate increased workloads caused by the increase in initiatives, which creates an environment of uncertainty and unpredictability (ibid). In addition to a system that is in constant flux, teachers interact with students of different backgrounds and differing behaviours on a daily basis (Day, 1997). It is important for teachers to have autonomy over their own professionalism, which would allow the narratives of teachers to inform the way in which the professionalism of teaching is established and judged (Sachs, 2000). Teachers' professionalism should reflect the complex, changing environment in which teachers work; therefore, it should reflect the needs and voices of the teachers within this environment (Barber, 1995).

In the context of the teacher professionalism of the participants in this study, a discussion of the literature surrounding educational policy and the historical implications of educational policy is pertinent.

2.2 A Question of Policy

When exploring the options for the questions posed to the participants in this research, I settled on a question posed to the participants that created a sense of ambiguity. I did not attempt to propose a prescriptive definition of policy to the participants as I wanted them to explore their own understanding of policy in response to the research question. It is important therefore, that I make clear my own understanding of policy and the understanding of policy that is subsequently explored in the later chapters of this thesis. In this section of the literature review, I will explore policy as explored in this research, policy

as an objective construct and a brief overview of the changes of educational policy over time in England.

Policy in education exists on both a micro and a macro level but can be loosely defined as a set of laws or normative guidelines that are mandated in a defining text which binds people in its guidelines (Levinson, Sutton and Winstead, 2009). These binding guidelines exist both on a governmental generally homogenous level and more nuanced school based level. I was interested to see which element of policy the participants would be more interested in exploring. There is a noted disconnect between educational research, expertise and policy making (Nagro et al., 2020). This thesis became an exploration of how policy is both interpreted and enacted by teachers; it explores what policy means to the participants and how this impacts their implementation of it in their respective classrooms. In this thesis the participants are considered both receivers of policy and agents of policy in their own classrooms (Saunders, 1987); it is an exploration of how and whether policy is being enacted in their classrooms. Teachers in schools can take up varying positions in relation to policy including positions of indifference, avoidance or irrelevance (Ball, Maguire, Braun and Hoskins, 2011) therefore this thesis explores policy in practice within the classroom of the individual teaching participants.

I recognise that there is an objective version of policy that exists; a vision that is initially created at a macro level and then filtered and selectively focused by the head teachers and senior leadership teams of individual schools. The senior leadership teams of individual schools will decide the *what* and the *how* of educational policy and there is a disparity between making policy palatable and making policy that is driven primarily by standards (Ball, Maguire, Braun and Hoskins, 2011). The interpretation of policy in this

thesis therefore, is based on how this policy is enacted in the classroom for these teachers; how do these teachers navigate this policy in practice.

In its broadest sense, policy is defined as something that is constructed within government and is a legislative document; however, in this thesis, policy refers to both government-implemented policy and policy at a local level (within schools themselves) (Evans et al, 2008). Unfortunately, the rhetoric of policy makers does not always translate into the practical implementation of policy itself (Ball, Maguire and Braun, 2012); nevertheless, the aim of this research is not to demonise policy. It is important to recognise that the point of policy is change; policy is designed to elucidate reform and to recognise something that does not work and attempt to change and improve it (Ball, 2008). Educational policy can be defined as actions related to educational issues that should be recognised and followed in order to achieve a particular goal but this view of policy is contentious, as it suggests a static nature, whereas educational policy should actually be seen as dynamic and fluid (Trowler, 2003). Both Trowler (2003) and Ball (1994) have noted the glaring issues with educational policy, with the former referencing the incompatibility of policy in words and policy in action, which leads to animosity between teachers and policy-makers, and the latter recognising that policy can only be enacted relative to individual contexts.

The creation of policy is a threefold mechanism; the issues are recognised, the government creates an action plan, and the action plan is altered to consider the value structures of the creators and the structural issues and dilemmas (Rein, 1983). The third

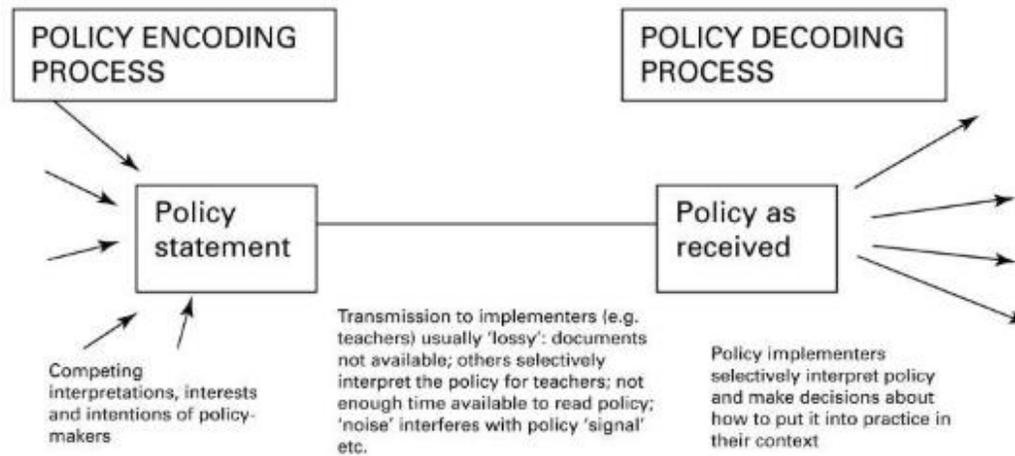


Figure 1: Policy encoding and decoding (Trowler, 2003: 97)

point of this process is reiterated by Ball (1994), as he believes that policy is the product of compromise between the values and influences of those involved in the initial policy-making process.

Figure 1 demonstrates the multifaceted layers of interpretation at play when educational policy is created and implemented, which indicates the potential for issues to arise in relation to how policy appears on paper and how it works in practice (Trowler, 2003). Thus, policy is far more complex than and should not be limited to a linear process; it is a mix of compromise and interpretations of the people who create and the people who implement (Ball, 1994). Policy is not simply a mechanical application of words to a situation; rather, it is a decidedly more nuanced creation that consists of the dynamics between compromise, values, and power (Bleiklie, 2000). Because of this multi-layered meaning, in which policy creators project their own values and influences onto policy,

Kogan et al. (2000) have argued that educational policy at a national level lacks co-ordination, and its interpretation as it is put into practice is complex.

The ideology of policy making in the English education system is important, as it is imperative to understand what drives policy makers in England to make certain decisions. Hartley (1983) has defined ideology as ‘values, ideas, and beliefs about the way society is and should be organised and about how resources should be allocated to achieve what is desired’ (p.26). Educational policy in England is inevitably linked to the political leanings of any particular government; therefore, as each new government rises, new educational policy is introduced (the history of educational policy in England is discussed later in this chapter) (Trowler, 2003). Although there are links between ideology and policy, a new government and new policy do not necessarily mean that the ideology has changed; many governments simply build upon what policy existed previously, as was seen when Ed Balls (former Shadow Secretary of State for Education), while accepting a more holistic approach to educational policy, refused to reverse course on previous educational policy (Gillard, 2018).

Educational policy is informed by a strong ideology, and thus another fundamental issue



Figure 3: Impact of Government Model on Staff (Coffield, 2006)

arises. Within the realm of educational policy, the outcomes are often unpredictable; what is written on paper may not necessarily work in the classroom (Trowler, 2003). The implementation of policy is a contentious issue, as figures 2 and 3 show (Coffield, 2006). These

figures demonstrates the pressure put upon staff to ensure that policy is implemented in a way that creates the desired outcomes, while taking into account the influential multiplicity

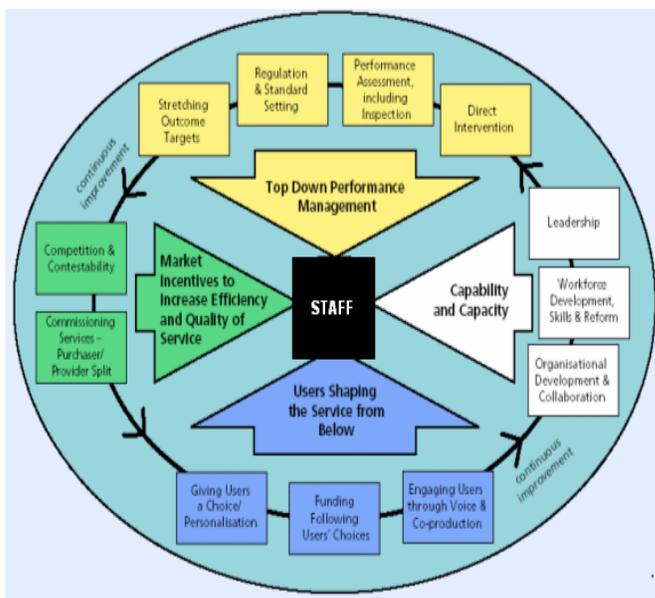


Figure 2: Government Model of Public Service Reform (Coffield, 2006)

of the policy itself. Educational policy is created both nationally and locally; however, it is always implemented by groups or individuals within the educational institution itself; usually, it is applied in a 'top-down' method (Trowler, 2003). This simple structure has its anthropological roots in the idea that successful

organisations have one shared culture which creates meaning and identity, and this cascades from the top down (Barber, 1984).

Problems arise from this top-down approach, and they exist in comprehensive secondary schools in Kent; even if the culture is fostered, the results simply cannot be guaranteed due to the nature of individuality within these structures (Tierney 1987). The culture within an institution, such as a comprehensive secondary school in Kent, is by its nature unstable in that it consists of the values and understandings of multiple individual components (Alvesson, 2002). The implementation of policy suggests a fixed method of success, which undermines the cultural individuality of the educational institution; due to the volume of individuals with differing values and experiences, the prescriptive implementation of policy encourages a stoicism that limits free thinking and creative problem solving (Wilmott, 1993). Conversely, it could be said that the implementation of research is a 'bottom-up' process because of the importance and power of those who put policy into practice, in the case of this study, the teachers. Teachers are not mere receivers of policy; they are also agents of policy in that implementation is characterised by the individual context (Saunders, 1986). A teacher under pressure may interpret a policy and select what to implement and what is the most effective way to do so. This idea of teachers as agents of change is particularly pertinent to the findings of this research; their rebellious and selective stance allows policy to be interpreted and changed to suit their own culture and context. In order to understand the systems of policy in England and how these impact teachers, it is important to map a brief history of how policy has changed throughout the years.

2.3 Policy in Education: Where did it all begin?

2.3.1 1870

Policy in the education system in England has a relatively short history. When mass education was established under the Elementary Education Act 1870, it was recognised that the following facets of education should be enforced:

- Local education boards should inspect schools to ensure sufficient places.
- Elementary education must be provided for children aged between 5 and 13.
- Schools should be publicly funded.
- Parents had to pay for their children's education unless they could not afford to.
- Attendance should be compulsory.
- Religious teaching should be non-denominational, and parents could withdraw their children from religious education.
- Schools should be regularly inspected to maintain the standard of education.

(British Library, 1870)

The basis of this, arguably the first policy, was built upon a foundation of class differences and the perpetuation of these class differences, and the curriculum never sought to become emancipatory; rather, it focused on penning students within their social class. As the politician Robert Lowe has stated, it prevented them from rising 'above their station and business in life' (Tropp, 1957). Educational policy at this time was designed to fuel the capitalist economy and provide an economic functionality while also discouraging an overly educated working class; therefore, policy ambition at this time was limited to the

effective teaching of a simple set of skills that guaranteed a workforce with basic literacy and numeracy skills (Wrigley, 2014, 2006). Teachers did not welcome this initial policy, and they railed against the strict Payment by Resulting scheme – a strict, linear inspection process which determined the wages of teachers based on pupils’ exam results – resulting in teachers’ unionisation and resistance to the policing of policy and the narrowing of the curriculum for students (NUT, 2008). Despite teachers’ obvious disapproval of this policy, the idea of an education system focused on the creation of a workforce rather than the holistic development of the person repeated throughout educational policy in England.

2.3.2 Early 1900s and beyond

After the abolition of the much-contested Payment by Results system, educational policy in England remained largely unchanged, apart from raising the school-leaving age to 14 in 1918 and the introduction of the School Leaving Age in 1917, which led to a curriculum that lauded academic rigour over practical subjects (Lawson and Silver, 1973). In 1945, the introduction of the tripartite system saw the dawn of the grammar, technology, and modern secondary schools, which operated on the basis that intelligence was fixed and genetically predetermined; in the 1960s and early 1970s the idea of children being educated together in an intellectually inclusive environment became a distinct possibility (Gillard, 2018). Unfortunately, this was not to be, as the next decade brought a reinvigoration of policy that allowed for more prescriptive governmental intervention into the schooling system in England (Jones, 2016), and the link between school and industry was reasserted. Thus, the burgeoning liberal ideas towards schooling could be partially blamed for the economic crisis in England at the time, and emancipatory, holistic education was presented a way in which both teachers and students could engage in work avoidance rather than

rigorous, measured learning (Ball, 2008). The Thatcher government focused on the educational and political ideology of creating a workforce that reflected the global identity of Great Britain to create a system that reflected the needs of the workforce (Trowler, 2003). Major's government continued the trend of the creation of an educational policy that championed competition. Blair's New Labour created a multiplicity of schools and a micromanagement of teaching itself (Gillard 2018), thus advocating a social democratic political ideology that retained the traditional, conservative political ideologies at its core. Brown's government attempted to create a holistic education system but ultimately refused to acknowledge that previous governmental policies in regard to education needed to be addressed and changed. Finally, Michael Gove attempted an overhaul of the education system in its entirety (ibid).

2.3.3 Today

Currently, educational policy is seen as an essential part of meeting the demands and pressures of globalisation, and education itself is an imperative aspect of our global competitiveness (Ball, 2008). This idea of globalisation is central not only to the education system, but also to the writing of this literature review, in which I utilise literature that is not limited to the English education system. Novoa (2002) has spoken of a 'global policyspeak' which is demonstrative of the spreading, swapping, and sharing of policy globally, in which the policies of the English system are exported, and policies from other countries are imported. This is most notable in the recent importing of maths teaching techniques and methods from countries such as China, Singapore, and Korea (Sellar and Lingard, 2013).

In recent years, education has seen a policy fever, an unprecedented level of government activity which has warranted change at an alarming pace (Coffield, 2006). When comparing the English education system to its English-speaking counterparts, Foster (2005) has found that the key difference was the lack of trust of professionals that the politicians and policy makers demonstrated, thus resulting in a system driven by extreme scrutiny. As Ball (2008) has argued, the Department for Education website lists thousands of documents related to education, which range from policy to information for parents; the pressure for schools and teachers to implement these policies is enormous. Policy is constantly churned out in this era of ‘momentum politics’ to ensure that a government never floundered and thus opened itself to ridicule or attack; this fast-paced policy making created a barrage that made and continues to make the lives of teachers frustrating and difficult (Hyman, 2005).

2.4 A Series of Unfortunate Themes

Throughout my reading for this thesis, when researching the relationship between teachers and policy, there were emergent themes of external pressure, unmanageable workloads, stress, and burnout. Both Wrigley (2006, 2011, 2013 2014) and Ball (1994, 2008, 2012, 2017) have written extensively on the history and impact of policy, both on the educational system as a whole and on teachers as professionals and individuals; the following exploration of these emergent themes draws upon aspects of their work.

2.4.1 Teaching and Workload

Workload is defined as all of the time professionals spend completing their duties and responsibilities in the work place (Johanim et al., 2018). For teachers, workload can be defined as the amount of time undertaking various tasks including classroom teaching,

extra-curricular activities, and administrative tasks, both during and outside of school hours (ibid).

As more new initiatives continue to be implemented, the question of teacher workload has become more pertinent, and is a common theme throughout the literature surrounding educational policy in England. A 2001 study commissioned by the government in response to its recognition of a retention and recruitment crisis in the education sector showed that teachers and head teachers worked more intensively than other professionals with working hours comparable to that of the education sector (PricewaterhouseCooper, 2001)(Galton and MacBeath, 2008). One of the key findings of this report was that stress caused by the lack of control felt due to the pace of change, and there seemed to be a lack of trust in teachers to perform their duties; these issues could be remedied by understanding the need for greater autonomy and risk taking (ibid). Subsequent and broader studies carried out by the NUT from 2002 to 2007 demonstrated that teachers experience pressure due to prolific, centralised reforms (Galton and MacBeath, 2008). Following the National Agreement (DfES, 2003), reforms were established to address teacher workload, and they included the abolishment of teachers being required to undertake routine administrative work – an issue highlighted in the PricewaterhouseCooper report of 2001. The focus of this landmark agreement was to limit the bureaucracy surrounding teachers and emphasise teaching and learning. The Implementation Review Unit (IRU) supported it with a view towards reviewing policy initiatives to ensure that this policy did not create an unnecessary workload for teaching staff (Butt and Gunter, 2005).

In February 2017, the Department for Education published *Teacher Workload Survey 2016* (2017) and found that 81% of the teachers surveyed felt that they spent too much time on general administrative work; this demonstrated the failure of the effective implementation of 2003's phase 1 of the National Agreement. In this report, teachers from both primary and secondary school sectors stated that they felt they spent too much time on planning, marking, and administrative work. 93% of teachers surveyed in this report stated that workload was a major problem within the teaching profession, and 86% stated that they could not complete the work assigned to them within their contracted working hours, which is indicative of major problems within the policy climate, both governmentally and locally within schools themselves. Teacher working hours have risen from 45.9 (OECD, 2014) to 53.5 (DfE, 2017), yet the hours spent teaching in the classroom have remained the same. The stalemate in classroom teaching hours and the rise in working hours suggests that external factors, such as policy, impact teacher workload. A follow-up report published in March 2018 (DfE, 2018) found that administrative work was still a major factor in teachers' unmanageable workloads. Another factor which greatly influenced teacher workload, and which is a direct result of governmental policy, was the changes to both GCSE and A-Level specifications, which coincided with the change in the grading system in England. An interesting teacher view from this 2018 report was that the tasks themselves had merit, but their volume was wholly unmanageable. Policy is not 'bad'; it is designed to change something that needs to be fixed. However the rate and volume of policy making and change in the education system is unrealistic and potentially damaging (Ball, 2008).

In their survey of secondary school teachers, Galton and MacBeath (2008) cite an overloaded curriculum as a prime cause for teacher dissatisfaction, and teachers were overwhelmingly concerned about the current policy climate of performance management and excessive paperwork and supervision. They all agreed that the basic foundation of these policy interventions was necessary, but it limited their ability to have autonomy and emancipation within their job and added exponentially to their workload. Policy is inevitable and necessary (Ball, 2008), and it is impossible to have a workload that is fully autonomous and emancipated because this would prevent all regulation within the education sector. In his review of MacBeath, Wrigley (2012) cites the need to move away from external inspection pressures and encourage a movement towards internal school evaluations; this would grant teachers increased autonomy over the policy within their professional lives. If an individual school is responsible for the creation and monitoring of its own policy, then a ‘best fit’ model could contribute to the teachers feeling more emancipation within their professional lives. This extra work was seen as having limited benefit, except to alleviate what was referred to as the ‘policy police’.

2.4.2 What Policy Exists to Combat the Workload Crisis?

The Department for Education’s (2016) website currently lists three independent teacher workload policies that address marking, planning, and data assessment. The ‘Eliminating unnecessary workload around marking’ paper (DfE, 2016) highlights that there is no single reason behind excessive workload, and that governmental policies should always be introduced with thought and planning. This report recognises the importance of a robust marking policy but also stresses the cultural challenges of such a policy; therefore, the application of marking policies must include an element of individuality. This policy

is also designed to attempt to retain teachers and thus address the recruitment and retention crisis, which is an emergent theme in the current literature surrounding teachers and policy. This paper highlights the unnecessary growth of ‘deep marking’ (DfE, 2016, p.6), a practice this paper deems unnecessary and which seems to originate in the misinterpretation and distortion of Ofsted’s goals. Marking policies were created based on what institutions believed the government wanted, and the praise for a marking method in one school could result in several other schools following suit, even if it is not the practice best suited to their context (ibid). This demonstrates the need for institutions to carefully establish what best suits their particular context, rather than attempting to create a policy designed to apply external pressures that do not meet the needs of the pupils of that institution and that may overstretch the capabilities of its teachers.

The ‘Eliminating unnecessary workload around planning and teaching resources’ paper (DfE, 2016) also highlights the fact that there is no single reason, and that the accountability system should encourage good practice rather than time-consuming fads to appease institutions like Ofsted. However, this document asserts that the burden of excessive planning is due to both real and perceived expectation by the government, which demonstrates the issues of policy on paper as opposed to policy in practise. This report asserts that changes can only alleviate teaching and planning stresses if the ‘Government and its agencies commit to sufficient lead-in times for changes for which the sector will have to undertake significant planning to implement. This includes releasing relevant materials in good time’ (DfE, 2016).

The final report, ‘Eliminating unnecessary workload associated with data management’ (DfE, 2016), describes the issues surrounding teachers and administrative

work that stem from policies which require extensive tracking and paperwork. This report recognises the necessity of data, but it also acknowledges that these policies are not used effectively; instead, they are utilised as a ‘just-in-case’ measure should the data be requested. These three reports seem to be a reaction to intense teaching pressures, which have led to the current recruitment and retention crisis; the second emergent theme is that of stress and burnout among teachers in England, which are directly or indirectly caused by excessive workload.

2.4.3 Stress and Burnout: The Second in A Series of Unfortunate Themes

It seems that teachers operate within a system that is ‘monitored to within an inch of its life’ (BBC News March 2015), where record numbers of new teachers leave the profession (BBC News March 2015). The public perception of the relationships between teachers and policy is seemingly negative, and it is vitally important to examine the literature surrounding these issues in depth.

According to Hartley, when discussing the phenomenological criticisms of the traditional view of science, ‘[s]chools – their structure, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment – should not, they argued, be regarded as reified structures which are independent of the actions of actors; instead they are but social constructions, which have the appearance of being objective givens’ (Hartley, 2006). By nature, schools are structures built upon the definitions of their inhabitants (Hartley, 2006). Within the confines of the school environment, agency and structure combine in a symbiotic relationship where the ‘objectification of the subjective’ occurs (Berger & Luckmann, 1967); this describes the process of limiting teachers’ judgement according to what their behaviours and achievements *should* be based on an objective norm. However, Mosteller, Light, and Sachs

(1996) have argued, 'We need larger scale investigations because studies carried out in single schools always have the limitation of doubtful generalisation' (1996: 22 – 823).

Teachers 11 years ago seemed to face increasing pressure and issues; demands and scrutiny seemed to become more common as teachers faced pressures that were not limited to the behaviour of the students within their classroom; this aspect is widely reflected in the education system today (Galton and MacBeath, 2008). However, there is a beauty to the current structure within schools that allows for more staff support and less isolation of individual teachers, thus resulting in a willingness to share problems and actively seek support when needed (ibid, 2008). They also argue, however, that this does not negate the reality that schools are still scrutinised by inspectorate bodies, local authorities, parents, and pupils alike. O'Neill (2002) has alluded to There is an increasing presence of accountability in measuring schools' performance; performance management holds teachers accountable for students' performance (O'Neill, 2002). The experience of the current generation of teachers can be seen as one of survival rather than one of development, with each new academic year bringing the imposition of new policy under the banner of 'raising standards' (Day, 2000).

Research indicates that teachers are more vulnerable to work-related stress, psychological distress, and burnout than many other occupational groups, and stress and burnout are mentioned throughout the literature surrounding teachers and policy in the UK (Kinman et al.,2011) (Johnson et al., 2005; Jones, Huxtable, Hodgson, & Price, 2003; Kyriacou, 2000).

2.5 Addressing Gaps in the Field Using Alternative Methods

There is a significant body of research on educational policy in England. However, a discussion of creative methods, through which the relationship between teachers and policy can be explored, is lacking. Many researchers in the humanities utilise IPA to gain a greater understanding of participants' personal perceptions; however the use of visual methodologies and IPA in educational research is distinctly lacking. Visual methods are increasingly used in the social sciences, and Metcalfe (2016) has argued that the use of the visual in educational research is essential as the world around us becomes more focused on visual communications. In my undertaking of this Education Doctorate, I became interested in exploring the use of visual methodologies and how they might contribute to IPA research. The increase in visual methodologies did not bring a distinctive increase in the methodological depths which underpinned this research, suggesting that educational researchers are more adept at utilising visual methods but do not question why it is important to utilise these methods (Pauwels, 2011). Gillian Rose, who proposed a 'critical visual methodology' that 'takes images seriously,' 'thinks about the social conditions and effects of visual objects' and 'considers your own way of looking at images' (2011: 17). A visual methodology that encompasses an understanding of the nature of knowledge can create a methodological path that is not bound by tradition (Metcalfe, 2016). Therefore, the methods utilised in this research are not bound by prior practices in the traditional disciplines.

Because of the relative modernity of the use and acceptance of visual methods in social research, their use has had a linear process (Metcalfe, 2016). The question of the lack of reality of images is moot; by its creation, each image holds a significance, and

therefore meaning can be extracted from it (Flusser, 1983). The gaps in the literature surrounding the use of visual methods in educational research seem to suggest two conclusions:

- 1) Visual methods are not widely utilised in educational research, contrary to the suggestion of Metcalfe (2016).
- 2) When visual methods are utilised, they lack a methodological depth and rely on positivist means to espouse 'validity'.

The use of visual methods in new ways is referred to as 'envisioning educational research' (Metcalfe, 2016), and researchers such as Ulmer (2016) and Powell (2015, 2016) envision educational researchers through their use of visual methods in the social sciences and through their experiences of the research. Powell (2015) believes that the technicalities of the act of her photograph development encompass the values of her research. A similar theme is seen in this research; questioning the bureaucracy is seen in the movement of the data, flowing from written words, to images, to spoken words, to art. Research is not the analysis of individual parts; rather, it is a symbiotic relationship between all elements of the research (Powell, 2016). Understanding the individual parts does not lead to understanding the whole; the relationship between the parts and their context is equally important (McGilchrist, 2010).

Perhaps one reason this use of visual methodologies in educational research is lacking is due to the fact that such methodologies do not always lead to a definitive answer to a research question (Metcalfe, 2016); therefore, perhaps researchers may shy away from this in our policy-driven educational environment. Equally, the search for definitive meaning that the academic community considers 'valid' in the positivist sense means that

the fluidity of meaning is often mistaken for a lack of meaning. Koro-Ljungberg (2015) has written candidly about her eternal quest for meaning and how it limited her as a researcher; her emancipation came when she realised that meaning is not a solid state of being but is in constant flux. I believe that a gap in the literature exists whereby alternative ways of knowing are perhaps not utilised in educational research in a way that is holistic and welcomed.

2.6 Psychosocial Factors

It is important to recognise that while it is not explicitly explored in this thesis, there is an inevitable impetus of fear and anxiety that exists when exploring attitudes to policy in educational research, particularly how that policy is implemented at a classroom level. I recognise that it is possible that fear and anxiety experienced by the participants consciously or subconsciously, potentially impacted the data collected and the findings established in this research. Educational policy incorporates cultural, contextual and political dimensions and therefore there are a multitude of psychosocial factors that impact the attitude and responses of participants in this research and this is something which I am aware of but will not be exploring in detail. Policy can be interpreted as a practice of power (Levinson, Sutton and Winstead, 2009), therefore to admit to ignoring or disagreeing with elements of policy in teaching could be interpreted as questioning of power structures within education systems. This fear of going against the status quo could easily have limited the participants in their responses to the research questions posed to them. Equally, it could have allowed them the space to explore the ideas that they otherwise felt uncomfortable sharing.

It is also important to recognise that while the participants were given space to explore their own interpretations and ideas, there is still work to be done in exploring the

other psychosocial elements that will have directly impacted these interpretations (Noom, 2018). Within the pool of participants used there were variations in gender, age, nationality and experience which would have undoubtedly impacted on the individual's experience of education on both a personal and professional level. Policy in education introduces normative practices, statements on how things should be done and punitive measures for not adhering to these practices; it defines reality for the education professionals and orders their behaviour (Levinson, Sutton and Winstead, 2009). Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis embraces the human experience and it is important to recognise that the experience of the individual is informed by their past experiences, cultural experiences and indeed educational experiences. All of these factors combined will have influenced their interpretation of the research question, their choice of image and discussions that followed however I was limited in my capacity to be able to explore the psychosocial factors that have influenced this research.

2.7 Summary

It would appear that, since 1870, which heralded the dawn of Payment by Results in England, research into teachers and policy has been substantial. Both the government and academics have conducted major research into workload, policy, and the current retention and recruitment crisis, with all sides proffering recommendations to alleviate the symptoms of a reported mass exodus. As the literature review highlighted, what matters in this research is that I am not interested in the discovery of a definitive answer to the question of the relationship between teachers and policy, nor do I assume that I will discover a 'cure' which will actively change the teaching profession.

What this research adds is a new way by which visual methodologies can be explored and used in educational research. By conducting this research in a way that embraces both left- and right-brained functionality, as proposed by McGilchrist (2010), the study moves from left- to right-brained in its very nature. Teachers rail against the administrative deluge that is the policy-bound world of modern teaching by leaving the profession in droves (BBC News March 2015); thus, the method of moving from words and theory to an art piece is representative of the journey from left to right brain, which is exactly what policy avoids. My aim is to explore new uses for interpretative phenomenological analysis in educational research and demonstrate how visual methodologies can be used to create rich and in-depth data in a way that is not commonly utilised within educational research.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methodological assumptions which underpin this research; it examines the reasons particular research methods were chosen and how they were developed throughout. To conclude this chapter, the methods for data analysis and the ethical issues are considered.

Methodology is the way in which we study and understand social systems and reality (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) or the practices, procedures, and systems that we use to investigate the aforementioned social systems (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2013). In educational research, it is imperative to acknowledge that the researcher bases their methodological choices on their overriding assumptions about how knowledge is acquired and their understanding of reality (Mertens, 2015: vii). This is particularly true in the case of educational research, which allows the researcher to immerse themselves; this is ‘a distinctive way of thinking about educational phenomena’ (Morrison, 2002:18).

The purpose of this study is to use visual methods, narratives, and focus groups to understand the relationship between teachers and policy in the current educational climate in comprehensive schools in Kent. The two research questions underpinning this study are as follows:

- *How do teachers navigate their own values and professionalism in the current policy climate?*
- *To what extent can images and narratives be used to explore the relationship between teachers and policy?*

To understand the narratives within the teaching profession regarding policy, I used images to acquire data that allowed the participants to transcend the boundaries of words and

explore the culture of education, which is demonstrative in the exchange of meanings between members of their society or group (Rose, 2016). This qualitative study utilises interpretivism so the researcher can immerse herself to ‘explore the “meanings” of events and phenomena from the subjects’ perspectives’ (Morrison, 2002:18). I also wanted to explore the participants’ images, which create space for interpretation (Flusser, 2000). The reason for adopting the interpretivist theoretical standpoint within this study is that it facilitates a more ‘people-orientated’ approach which ‘acknowledges the research’s integration within the research environment’ (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2013: 14). This research study utilised IPA to make sense of the emergent themes of the data (Noon, 2018). IPA was used because it allows participants to create a story of their experience within their own context (Quest, 2010).

3.1 Ontological Perspective

According to the interpretive nature of this research, the reality within which it is situated is a construct; it is in constant flux, impacted by the multi-faceted frames of reference of the subjects within it, and ultimately, it is multidimensional (Brundrett, 2013: 15 – 16). I believe that seeking an objective truth in educational research is difficult, as this ‘truth’ is marred by the perceived reality of diverse, reflective human beings who build relationships with each other and with the system within which they operate. The reality of the basis for this research is as follows: teachers operate within a system that has rules and guidelines they are expected to follow. These rules and guidelines exist in the form of policy, which purports to represent objective educational ‘truth’. This could be said to be the perfect way in which a teacher operates; however, ‘truth’ is far more complex than ink on paper. Bridges has defined truth as ‘something which may or may not be attributed to a

statement or proposition, an assertion of something being the case, a belief' (1999: p.598). The use of the word 'belief' indicates the incorporation of the human experience into establishing what truth is; it implies that individuals can construct truth based on their experiences. There is a marked difference in this research between truth as an objective factuality and an interpreted truth lived by the study's participants. This research explores the truth in the individual relationship between participant and policy. Foulkes (1976) has described the search for truth as the 'quest for certainty', and the certainty that I believe exists in undertaking of this research is as follows:

Policy exists in the education system, whether it is widespread governmental policy or more localised policy espoused by a school or local governing body. Part of the role of a teacher is to implement this policy in their professional environment; therefore, teachers form a relationship with policy.

This research is based on human experience and therefore demonstrates interpretive ontology, an ontological idealism where the reality is created in the mind of the observer. In this case, reality is created by the experiences of each participant in relation to the policy. The ontological 'truth' of this research must be reached via correspondence between the 'facts' of what policy requires and the individual experience of these 'facts'. The theory of truth as correspondence lends itself to the hermeneutic nature of the study; it is knowledge in which 'a proposition is true if and only if it corresponds with a fact – a state of affairs which actually exists/existed/will exist' (Bridges, 1999: 601) and a system which allows for coherency, consistency, and comprehension. This concept of reality allows the integration of the researcher's and the participants' perceptions and understanding, and it lets their voices be heard; it gives inquirers autonomy and representation (Eisner, 1992).

The ontological position of truth as correspondence is the theory which resembles a common sense understanding of the truth within individual belief; thus, adopting this ontological idea of reality allows the full consideration of the individual when establishing the truth of the data gathered (Bridges, 1999).

By nature, schools rely upon individual parts to function and are therefore built upon the experience of the individual, that is, the reality that individual constructs. According to Hartley (2006), when discussing the phenomenological criticisms of the traditional view of science, ‘Schools – their structure, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment – should not [...] be regarded as reified structures which are independent of the actions of actors; instead they are but social constructions, which have the appearance of being objective givens’ (p.270). Schools are structures built upon their inhabitants’ definitions (ibid). Within the confines of the school environment, agency and structure combine in a symbiotic relationship, leading to the ‘objectification of the subjective’ (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). This enables the process of limiting and judging inhabitants by the educational structure to a perceived objective norm. According to Berger and Luckmann (1967), when examining the ontology of the education system, there must be a truth that is relative and individual and that depends on the time and circumstances. The postmodernist critique of theories of educational research outlines the necessity of considering the subjective nature of the human condition (Ramaekers, 2006). Issues such as economic circumstances, gender, and class can be reduced to linguistic mechanisms, whereby individuals explore their truth through questioning and discussing. This highlights the importance of using qualitative data in this study to encourage participants to voice their individual truth and thus

understand the relationships within the educational system in their comprehensive secondary schools in Kent.

3.2 My Positionality in this Research

I cannot feasibly be removed from this research process. I am a secondary school teacher in a comprehensive secondary school in Kent, which I have in common with my participants. I have experienced life as a professional that is informed by policy, both governmental and local. Like the participants of this study, I have experienced the issues of navigating my own values and professionalism within the current policy climate. The relevance of what that means for me as a researcher cannot be overlooked; I have chosen to conduct this research because it means something to me. At the beginning of this study, I penned my own narrative about my relationship with policy, and it was negative; my viewpoint is deeply relevant because it was so negative, and I felt it was impossible for anyone to feel any differently. I live this life alongside the professional participants who have chosen to participate in this research and who have thus chosen to make it a reality.

Another factor which informed my positionality is watching my counterparts leave the profession; on a more daily basis, I have watched my counterparts struggle with their workload and bemoan the current educational climate. I wanted to know how policy impacted my peers, if at all. As I alluded to in Chapter 1, I have had many moments throughout my career where I struggled with the weight of being a teacher, and I worked hard to put any underlying negativity I felt aside and focus on the experiences of the participants. However, this research is an anthropocentric study of the experiences of people within a certain context (Weedon, 1987), so it is inevitable that my own experiences play a role.

I approached this research as a listener, creator, and researcher. I wanted my participants to feel comfortable in the knowledge that I had shared elements of their experience and that the way they created their narratives would be accepted and understood by someone in the same professional sphere. However, I also wanted an ‘outsider’s’ perspective to see if they could make objective ‘sense’ of the individual and contextually shared experiences of the primary participants.

In phenomenological educational research, researchers should not stand outside and look in; rather, they should embrace the quirks that the self brings and allow their findings to be accessible and malleable for the average classroom practitioner (Reid et. al, 2005). The interpretivist paradigm allows research to become accessible, and it allows the participants and researcher to share contextual insight into the data that is created; the researcher exists within and understands the context of this particular educational research.

When utilising IPA (see Chapter 1), there is a twofold approach to researcher positionality; I am both an ‘insider’ and an ‘outsider’ at various points throughout this research. Due to my professional ‘closeness’, I am an ‘insider’ (Conrad, 1987) who shares experiences with colleagues and attempts to interpret the material with an understanding of my own history. Paradoxically, the IPA researcher also stands ‘outside’ the research, parallel to the participant and observing from a different angle, questioning and attempting to analyse and understand that which is created (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

3.3 Ways of Knowing and the Use of Visual Methods

IPA is predominantly used in structured or semi-structured interviews (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), and it is perhaps used less often in visual methodologies and particularly research utilising multiple methods. In this study, I have experimented with

the idea that IPA can be used to analyse participants' responses to images and art as effectively as semi-structured interviews to establish their attitudes towards the research question. Many writers have argued that the visual is a vital aspect of Western culture that shapes the way we experience and understand the world (Rose, 2016). Culture, Hall (1997) has argued, is a way we produce and exchange meaning among the members of a group. Therefore, the education system as experienced in comprehensive non-selective schools in Kent, which is the cultural basis for this thesis, is created by the exchange of meanings between the teachers within it. In addition to the cultural implications, the visual is how we see today's world; books, film, television, advertising, etc. shape our experience of the world around us, and therein lies what Rose (2016) has described as the difference between vision and visuality. Vision is the physiological act of seeing, whereas visuality is the *construction* of what we see. Visual media do not offer windows through which we see the world; rather, they are a particular representation of the world (Rose, 2016).

Foster (1988) has referred to visuality as 'how we see, how we are able, allowed, or made to see, and how we see this seeing and the unseeing therein' (ix). These ideas surrounding the visual and visuality have a twofold resonance with the fundamental theories of IPA. First, the idea of culture representing the interpretations and exchanges of the people within resonates with the phenomenological basis of IPA. Secondly, the idea of 'unseeing' as posed by Foster (1988) is reminiscent of the Heideggarian hermeneutical idea of the revelatory power of interpretation (1962/1927), the shining of the light upon what is 'unseen'. Berger (1972) has asserted that picturing and seeing are how we come to know the world as children before we can even speak; we look and recognise before any other form of communication. Berger (1972) has also described the importance of how we

understand an image; we always look at an image in relation to ourselves and our own context and history, again embodying the Heideggerian principles of IPA.

The use of interviews in qualitative data creates a conversation with a purpose; by requesting, alternatively, that the participants of this study create an image in response to a question and write a brief narrative to accompany it, a conversation with a purpose is created (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). Some of this conversation is visual, but it is still a meaningful response to a question which opens a dialogue among researcher, participant, and, eventually, artist. The epistemological basis of this research is complex; the research question deals with a bureaucratic system of educational policy, and the research methods embrace a creative, fluid approach to educational research. By requesting that the participants in this study choose an image they believe best represents how they navigate their values and professionalism in the current policy climate, I encourage them to use the visual as a means of communicating within their culture. By using an artist to turn their images into artefacts, the use of visual communication is further compounded, as the thoughts and opinions of the participants are reflected to them in a way they are encouraged to interpret further.

3.4 Ways of Knowing

Alternative ways of knowing and understanding the world are visual methodologies, and they can be used to understand the world (McGilchrist, 2012); the epistemological understanding of the visual and ways of knowing is key to a robust methodology (Pink, 2012). Understanding the visual allows an understanding of a person as an entity; as Rosi Braidotti has stated, ‘the epistemology of the eye and the training to see is central not only to the scientific enterprise but also to the process of the constitution

of the subject as an ethical and political entity' (2011: 190). Therefore, understanding the ways of knowing become an integral part of appreciating the 'ethics of seeing' (Sontag 1977, pg. 3). The first step in understanding the epistemology of the visual method is to dissect the old adage of the left brain and the right brain. A new experience engages the right brain; the new experience speaks to the 'creative' side of the human psyche, and the left side of the brain engages with what we know (McGilchrist, 2012). The use of a different 'model' would engage the right brain and hence create different results (ibid). In relation to this research, a conversation with a teacher at the end of the school day could fail to stimulate the right brain; the conversation becomes one that has been had many times before. Therefore, the use of pictures, images, and ultimately the creation of art stimulates a new way of thinking about a known situation both for participants and researcher.

'My' knowledge and the pertinence of the self when 'knowing' are important; my experiences may cast a different light on an object or picture than the experience of another, hence the importance of sharing meaning. In the case of this research, the participants, artist, and researcher all share meaning by bringing their experience and understanding to creating and ultimately 'knowing' the images (ibid). 'Knowing' comes from the encounters between people; knowledge is not a fixed state, and it is influenced by the people who encounter it (ibid). The idea of left-brained knowledge denotes certainty, a fixed thing that can remain unchanged and that does not take into consideration the wider context, therefore dismissing a holistic 'knowing'. As with music, images do not carry a set emotional meaning; they are interpreted and understood through people's experiences, and the interpretation of each participant can hold equal intellectual weight and importance.

3.5 Looking and Seeing

Another important factor when understanding ways of knowing is the epistemology of sight itself. This research utilises visual methods to extract data and meaning; therefore, looking and seeing take on meanings other than the traditional ones. In the traditional sense, we look for something which is lost, or at least lost to us (Metcalf, 2016), and the act of looking in educational research does not simply refer to seeking something. Rather, it also refers to a sense of loss; when we look for meaning, we are acutely aware that we do not always witness everything (ibid). Therefore, it is vitally important that the participants explore the images provided to allow multiple ‘witnesses’ to work together to create meaning. The artist acts as a further extension of this process; instead of using the research questions to create their image, they use the participants’ images; they create an artefact or an image that represents the interpreted answers, thoughts, and feelings of the teacher participants.

‘Seeing’ within educational research refers to the act of ensuring that educational research is aligned with traditional practices of qualitative enquiry (Prosser, 2011). ‘Seeing’ therefore refers to the elucidation of meaning from the images themselves. Visual methodologies represent the understanding that meaning comes not only from words. Each person ‘sees’ differently, and therefore our ‘knowing’ and meaning are constructed based on our own lives and experiences. According to Metcalfe (2016), ‘the visual methodologies of looking, seeing, and envisioning embrace the idea that in research we are actively “doing something”’ (pp, 85).

3.6 How is Knowledge Created?

Within the sphere of educational research, there is a dichotomy between positivist and interpretivist philosophies and how their methodologies can be used in the field. These paradigms have been discussed in a prolonged quantitative-qualitative debate or paradigm war (Punch, 1998). Undoubtedly, there have been great debates over the use of these methodologies and their relevance in educational research (Punch, 1998). The question revolves around the weaknesses of these approaches; some see positivist, quantitative approaches as being too closed or black-and-white and unable to appreciate the richness of individuals and their environment (Gay, Mills, Airasian 2009, p.5). Interpretivism is a paradigm which looks for ‘culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world’ (Crotty, 1998: p.67). Interpretivism is concerned with developing an understanding of the world in which its participants live; it encompasses their everyday reality and allows the construction of meaning through their negotiation of the world and how sense is made of it (Blaikie, 2000).

The data a researcher collects is automatically changed by his or her persuasions, and this is reflected in what they choose to use and consider. The presence of the self does not make the data inadmissible; rather, this is inescapable, and the researcher must embark on a reflexive practice in order to be fully aware of the presence of the self within the data (Stenhouse, 1976). The interpretivist voice, which embraces the ‘inside’ stance of the researcher, also allows the use of ‘outside’ *modus operandi* to achieve the best results from the data gathered.

Each researcher brings experience and an understanding of education that is central to them to their research. This view of education is informed by their own experience;

therefore, in educational research, it is impossible to escape the self. These flaws are what make their educational research unique. The artist Grayson Perry has spoken of the importance of embracing the artist's self in art pieces. He maintains, 'Artists should imprint their handwriting on the work, because if they give a piece to a fabrication studio, the craftsmen there may actually be too perfect; you don't see the quirks that the artist would have developed' (Genn, 2015). The researcher can be seen as an artist who imprints a piece of themselves upon their work (Given, 2008). Education is not only something that each researcher has experienced; the reader has also experienced it and thus imprints their own logic, meaning, and ultimately, value upon the research.

Sartre (1946) has alluded to this as humankind's inability to move beyond human subjectivity, an inability to escape perspective. Humans tell stories, including their lives; as a result, it is important then to embrace the interpretivist ideal that qualitative research can lead to rich data that itself tells a story (Connolly and Clandinin: 1990). As Froggett and Chamberlayne have argued, 'Biographical methods can help restore the relationship between policy and lived experience by moving between the micro- and macro- levels' (2004:62). Not only is it beneficial in linking the micro and the macro, it can also be beneficial in understanding human behaviour and creating an understanding of the mechanisms of the educational system. There has been a call for more educational research that utilises alternative methods that embody the personal narrative in order to understand the complexities of human behaviour in a social context (Griffiths and MacLeod, 2008). This research uses interpretive phenomenological analysis in order to understand the behaviour and attitudes of teachers within their professional context, and it employs visual

methods and an artist’s critical perspective to explore the parts of these phenomena that cannot be expressed with words.

3.7 Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis and Its Use in this Research

IPA is a contemporary qualitative methodology which lends itself to understanding the importance of human experience and ultimately utilising the rich data that can be gathered through analysing human experience to explore emerging themes around a specific research question (Noon, 2018). The central focus of IPA is to understand the reality of the individual by embracing their experiences and the meanings they attach to them (Clark, 2010). As this research draws on human experience, IPA allows an interpretative analysis of the data under consideration. IPA has theoretical origins in three distinct interpretivist frameworks: phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography, as seen in Figure 4; these are

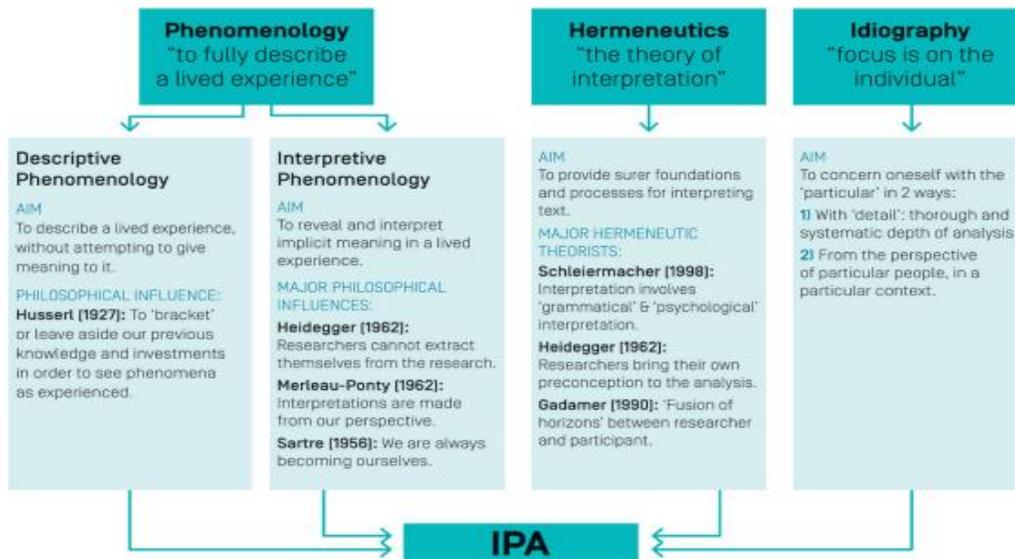


Figure 4: The three influencers of IPA (Charlick, et al., 2016: pp. 207)

explained in the following section.

3.8 Phenomenology

Phenomenology refers to the study of human experience; it is a way we can explore how humans understand the world that they experience (Langdrige, 2007). Phenomenology is

a means by which meaning can be discovered through the experiences of an individual; thoughts, feelings, and memories all form a symbiotic relationship through which meaning is uncovered (Noon, 2018). By utilising its phenomenological roots, IPA seeks to make human experience a vessel to access meaning by allowing participants to demonstrate the meanings they themselves attach (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). In philosophical phenomenology, therefore, human beings are the experts of themselves and their own experiences; they hold the key to how they perceive the world around them and thus provide rich, meaningful data. Phenomenology is not limited to the individual experience; in the case of educational research, it encourages the recognition of the contextual environment in which the participants reside and thus prompts the researcher to interpret human experience in light of its contextual factors (Quest, 2014) (Eatough and Smith, 2008). In this case, this is the reality that schools rely upon individuality to function within a hegemonic, policy-driven climate.

3.9 Descriptive phenomenology

Husserl championed the rigours of knowing and understanding one's own experience as a means to identify its qualities as key to descriptive phenomenology; this creates a means by which others can potentially understand their experience (Smith et al., 2009). The call to return 'to the things themselves' (Eatough and Smith, 2008: 3) demonstrates Husserl's desire to return to a recognition of each individual thing or object as a thing or object in its own right and how our own perceptions may influence our understanding of it (Smith et al., 2009). In short, the experience itself, an independent and individual object, and our own perception of it are important. For this research and data collection, a phenomenological approach is imperative. Both the researcher and the

participants need to be able to understand their experiences as individual and recognise the products of our own perceptions; without this, the research simply becomes a series of images rather than a series of images bound by contextual understanding and a shared history. The art of reflecting upon experiences, perceptions, and understandings is a phenomenological way of thinking which is key to the creation of a rich data pool with depth of knowledge and understanding (Smith et al., 2009).

To adopt the phenomenological way of thinking, Husserl discusses the importance of the process of ‘bracketing’. To achieve such thinking, one must be able to put to one side or ‘bracket’ the familiarity of the world around us and everything which is taken for granted to allow the questioning mind to establish the ‘consciousness’ of the world around us and what we perceive or judge (Husserl, 1927). As an insider, this presented a difficulty for me, which was addressed by being open and reflective concerning my own thoughts and feelings about the current policy climate, as my personal narrative written in chapter 1 shows. Husserl’s phenomenological assertions are grounded in the idea of commonality, that there is a general, quintessential human experience of an object. Applying this theoretical framework to this research suggests that, in this case, there is a shared human/teacher experience of policy, and therefore quintessential phenomena through which policy is understood. This recognition of the commonality of human experience creates a deeper understanding of the data for both researcher and participant; it allows us not only to reflect upon ourselves, but also to reflect upon the experience of others, which is demonstrated in the multiple data collection methods discussed later in this chapter. This understanding of commonality, combined with reflection upon our own history when understanding and experiencing phenomena, permits an understanding of our own

boundaries and an examination of our feelings towards that phenomena. In this case, the participants may ask themselves deeper questions about their relationship with policy (Husserl, 1927).

Throughout this research process, Husserl's philosophical approach was explored by revisiting and deep discussions that occurred on three separate occasions during the data collection. Doing so the participants reflect upon the differing perceptions of the others, to actually see an image that represented another person's response to the same question, and finally to see how an artist interpreted these images to create a commonality, a theme which was threaded throughout the images; thus, each teacher participant was prompted to perform a series of reflections.

While Husserl was concerned with understanding individual experience and is thus vitally important for this study in terms of the reflective nature of phenomenological thinking, Heidegger was more interested in the question of existence itself (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Heidegger (1927) believed in the interaction of humanity with the world around it; he believed that humans were always in the context of the world around them, and therefore the world around them must be considered when understanding their experiences. In this research, this idea is multi-layered: the participants' interaction with the policy in their professional world, how their own experience shapes their understanding of this policy, and how their context shapes their understanding and interactions with this policy.

3.10 The Understanding of the Other

Merleau-Ponty (1962) offers a separation between the self and the world around us; we experience the world in a holistic, individual way and are not subsumed within it. Thus,

our understanding of others is created by the meeting between the world around us and the perceptions we have of it (Charlick, et al., 2016). In IPA and its use in this research, Merleau-Ponty represents the inability to fully understand another's perspective. One's experience of the world is so encompassed in individual perception that we can recognise another's perspective but never fully understand it (ibid); thus, methods were created that allowed each participant to explain and explore their own perspective and those of others in order for me as a researcher to obtain data that did not solely rely upon my own experiential perception of the world.

3.11 Being and Nothingness

The importance of two key elements of IPA were explored in *Being and Nothingness* (Sartre, 1943). The first is that we do not strive to become a particular thing; there is no pre-existing self that can be stumbled upon. Rather, we continually learn, evolve, and create ourselves based on our interactions with the world around us and with individuals (Charlick, et al., 2016). Second, our understanding of our world cannot be limited to the individual; it is shaped by our interactions with others, and others help form our understanding of experiences and of the world around us. For any research based on IPA, phenomenology is key to understanding the data collected and to understand it. Four key thinkers in the area of phenomenology have been discussed in this chapter: Husserl (1927), who believed in the importance of understanding and reflecting upon our own experiences, and Heidegger (1962/1927), Merleau-Ponty (1962), and Sartre (1943), who develop these ideas further into our place within the world, our historical context, and how our interaction with the objects and people in the world shapes our interpretations and understanding. This phenomenological mode of thinking is crucial to both the collection

and analysis of the data in this research. The self is an important factor in how policy is perceived, but our own history, preconceptions, and interactions with the world around us cannot be ignored. The interaction of teachers with the policy to which they must adhere should be analysed in a way that is holistic and sympathetic to the multi-faceted way humans experience the world. Encouraging them to choose and create images that represent their relationship with policy allows the participants to interpret each other's images and therefore attitudes to policy; it allows them to explore the similarities and differences in their attitudes towards educational policy. In this regard, the artist becomes an integral step in the interpretation process. The use of the artist created something that demonstrated the unity among all of the participants; although their images were wholly individual and different, an artist was able to see themes that resulted in the creation of three interlinked art pieces that demonstrate a journey undertaken by all of the participants.

3.12 Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is focused on the theory of interpretation; it is separate from phenomenology but can be utilised and studied as a symbiotic entity (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Hermeneutics was initially used as a means to interpret biblical texts, but in research, it has been expanded to a wider, more general field of interpreting verbal and non-verbal works (ibid). Hermeneutics is the practice and art of interpretation (Dallmayr, 2009:23). Schleiermacher (1998) has alluded to an interpretation of a text having two strands: the literal meaning and that of the individual who created this text. Schleiermacher allows for a gravitas to be given to the meaning of the creator; it is not simply the meaning of the viewer which is important. Rather, the interpretation and the meaning a creator gives to a piece allow for a deeper contextual understanding of its creation. In hermeneutical

philosophy, therefore, the interpretation of the author is given as much credence as the interpretation of the viewer. This is particularly pertinent for this research because it allows the participants to embrace their own interpretation of their research question and create an image which represents their own interpretation of their context and policy climate. Thus, the participants are given complete autonomy over their own creation. The artist contribution to this led to another meaning of the images to be interpreted and created something entirely new. The twofold emphasis on the importance of the creator and the viewer meant that the artist had the opportunity to create something new, and it gave the teacher participants the opportunity to view an interpretation of their own images and be part of the creation of an artefact.

3.13 The Fluidity of Interpretation

Schleiermacher (1998) also celebrated the importance of the fluidity of interpretation; rules are not a necessity, and the creativity of interpretation can be embraced to create a space where intuition, in this case the intuition of teacher participants, artist, and researcher can flourish. This stance seems to be in complete contrast to post-modernist thinking that strives to diminish the impact of the author and heralds the interpretation of the reader as the true meaning of a piece (Barthes, 1967). If I were to diminish the importance of the true authors of this data, the participants, I would create a piece of research in which their input becomes invalid; the work that they have created would be limited to my own interpretation and fail to be a collaborative piece. This research is more about the interpretation of the participants than my interpretation as a researcher. I wanted to move away from the 'rules' in this research and allow interpretation to flourish at every opportunity. To ensure that this piece felt collaborative, the artist had an integral role in

offering an interpretation of the data provided by the participants, and this role did not solely depend on the researcher. The artist also offered an etic perspective in that she existed outside of the society of education, so her interpretation, while inevitably influenced by her own experience of life, was not influenced by her experiences of educational policy as a teacher. I chose to tell the artist as little as possible regarding the creators of the images and the subject of my research. I did this because I did not want her experiences of education or her ideas around what I or the teacher participants might expect from her to influence her; I wanted the artefacts to be created based on her own interpretation of the images as much as possible. I was concerned that if the artist saw the narratives, it would be obvious that the participants were teachers discussing policy, and therefore they might have external knowledge informed by negative portrayals of this relationship in the media. The use of teacher participants, an artist, and my own experience as the researcher allowed all parties to flourish, interpret, and explore our own attitudes and ideas. Schleiermacher's (1998) assertions regarding the importance of the author demonstrate the importance of the collaborative approach to research with IPA.

3.14 The Art of Shining a Light

Similarly, Heidegger (1962/1927) has asserted that hermeneutical interpretation is about understanding a text as if a light is shone upon it. There are hidden messages and qualities that can only be discovered when light is shone upon a piece, and these hidden meanings and messages belong to the piece 'so essentially as to contribute its meaning and its ground' (Heidegger, 1962/1927: 59). The participants' images in this study are illuminated by the narratives created to accompany them, the interpretations of the researcher, the focus groups to discuss the images, and the interpretation of an artist.

Heidegger's assertion of interpretation as the revelation of that which is concealed demonstrates the importance of multiple ways of seeing and understanding that combine to create a deeper meaning (Moran, 2000). There is a duality in meaning – what is seen and what lies beneath that which is seen. Heidegger believed that the 'fore-conception' was both critical and inescapable in interpretation; he believed that it was impossible for a viewer/reader/researcher not to imbue the object with preconceptions or life experiences (Heidegger, 1962: 191). While Heidegger acknowledges the presence of the self in understanding and interpreting a piece of work, he also describes not allowing the existence of presuppositions to create a barrier between the researcher and the interpretation (ibid). This is particularly important in this study because I, as the researcher, live within the sphere of education and therefore have strong feelings about the aspects of education that the participants were asked to explore and question, and I had preconceptions about the participants' potential views. To prevent my own presuppositions from being a barrier to understanding the research and, perhaps more importantly, clouding it, I needed to seek ways I could see the data from different perspectives and acknowledge and recognise my own preconceived notions. One way I decided to do this was by inviting the artist to create an artefact inspired by the images provided by the teacher participants. The use of the artist also allowed the participants to explore their own interpretations and images from a perspective outside of the culture of the education system in which they were rooted.

3.15 The Recognition of Preconceptions

The history of the interpreter, the importance of the 'fore-structure', and the relationship between the interpreter and the interpreted play a central role in applying IPA to qualitative research (Gadamar, 1990/1960). Gadamar believed that the self is always

projected into interpretation, that our personal history and human understanding impact how we interpret the objects around us. Both Heidegger and Gadamar have suggested that the interpreter's preconceptions are revealed during the process of interpretation itself, and that these preconceptions should be recognised and engaged (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). By recognising these preconceptions, a new dialogue between old and new emerges; the interpreter creates a symbiosis between their own history and the object that is interpreted (ibid). The multiple dialogues surrounding the data in this study are designed to create a continuous fluidity of ideas and understanding so that the researcher, the teaching participants, and the artist recognise a dialogue between themselves, their presuppositions, and the new knowledge created by the data.

3.16 The Hermeneutic Circle

According to Smith et al. (2009), hermeneutical philosophers widely utilise the hermeneutic circle. It represents the importance of the individual part and the whole when undertaking qualitative research. In order to understand the individual part, one must understand the whole, and to do so, one must understand the individual part (Charlick, et al., 2016). This idea has been criticised due to its seemingly never-ending circular nature; however, qualitative data of this nature requires a rigour that allows analysis and understanding of each individual aspect of the data (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009); the non-linear style of thinking is akin to the non-linear style of data collection used in this research.

3.17 Idiography

The third influential way of thinking which impacts IPA is the use of idiography. Idiography demonstrates IPA's commitment to the particular and to detail (Smith et al.,

2009). It does so by considering people in a context as its key element. The use of a small group of people is key to the particularity idiography requires (ibid). Single cases can easily be used in IPA, and this study includes both single case and group participatory elements: the participants begin the journey as individuals and combine to discover meaning and deepen knowledge as a group. Because of the detailed, time-consuming analysis required with IPA, the aim is to make a statement about the preconceptions and understandings of this particular group of people (Smith & Osborne 2013).

3.18 IPA and the Methods Employed in this Research

As idiography is a central theme in IPA, it is necessary to ensure that the data was a small, homogenous sample which held a distinct personal significance for all participants (Noon, 2018). I decided that I would use a maximum of 10 participants, as recommended by Clark (2010), who asserted that four to 10 participants was an appropriate sample size for a professional doctorate. I opted for a maximum of 10 participants, as I was concerned about being overwhelmed by an unmanageable amount of data whose analysis would not be in-depth enough or would neglect to give each piece of data the time it deserved. This ideographical approach is in line with the defining principles of IPA. The use of images, narratives, focus groups, and an artistic interpretation embraces the phenomenological and hermeneutical basis of IPA to allow human experience and interpretation to be championed within this research and provide a rich tapestry of data and analysis. IPA also permits exploration and flexibility; I do not attempt to test a predetermined hypothesis; rather, I open up a general question I believe impacts teachers in a way that is useful to address (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

3.19 Weaknesses of IPA

The first limitation of IPA is that of language. By utilising IPA, the assumption is that the participants have the necessary linguistic tools to capture their own narrative and express their true feelings about their relationship with educational policy (Willig, 2013). In this research, I opted to use a multi-method approach to avoid the limitations of language. I had early concerns about conducting semi-structured interviews, as I felt that the events of the day could markedly change the participants' answers, and I was also concerned that an interview could create a space in which a participant was not comfortable expressing themselves. I hoped to overcome this by letting the participants choose an image, write a narrative, and be a part of focus groups; however, I appreciate that the participants may have been limited in their ability to use language to express their feelings. Traditional IPA would cause difficulties when investigating the experience of young children, people with speech and language difficulties, and people for whom English is not their first language (Noon, 2018). These issues would need to be considered when deciding whether IPA is appropriate for use in specific educational research.

Another potential weakness of IPA is the duality between the idiographic nature of the data analysis and the need for a small pool of participants. Because of the small research pool, it may be difficult to highlight emergent themes and find thematic links across participants (Wagstaff et al, 2014). To ensure that an emergent theme is legitimised within the data analysis, the theme should be evident in at least three of the participants' narratives (Arroll, 2015). A smaller group size may make it difficult to identify emergent themes in the data analysis, but I experienced no difficulty in applying the idiographic method to the data that I collected. I believe that this was because of the multi-method approach to the

data collection, which allowed for a rich tapestry of data that encouraged the participants to deeply and thoroughly explore how they navigate their morals and values in the current policy climate.

When using IPA in research, there is also a risk of making generalisations. Due to the necessity of using smaller sample sizes, there are issues with a lack of transferability and the representativeness of the research (Charlick et al., 2016). While having a smaller sample size may risk the researcher making generalisations, a smaller sample size also allows a greater depth to be explored for each individual participant (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011). It is important, therefore, not to assume that IPA grants the research an understanding of all settings; and meaning comes from finding the links between the findings, the existing literature, and human experience (Smith and Osborn, 2003). IPA can begin to make general claims about the experience of educational professionals when numerous similar studies have been conducted.

3.20 How this Applies to Sampling and Initial Data Collection

I opted to approach participants who worked in non-selective schools in Kent. I did not specify the amount of experience required to allow for a broad spectrum of experience, but it was necessary for the participant to be a qualified teacher in order to assure a professional base line for the data. To gather participants, I first had to obtain permission from the Head Teachers of secondary schools to approach their employees. I did this by sending the Head Teachers the information sheet and consent form, which would be cascaded to participants to make them fully aware of the expectations (Appendix 1). I chose to initially approach Head Teachers from three comprehensive schools in Kent and expand the number if I did not receive any data.

Once the Head Teachers granted permission, they cascaded the information to their colleagues, and each copied me on their information email so that I was aware that it had been sent and when. IPA is best suited to an approach which allows participants to ‘offer a rich, detailed, first person account of their experiences’ (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009:56), and I decided that giving the participants the opportunity to explore their own ideas using a mix of images, text, and discussion would let them feel they had a way to reflect upon and create this rich data. The necessity of pragmatism, as Smith and Osborne (2013) have noted, is important here; the sample is dictated by the participants who actually wish to participate, so some flexibility is necessary on the researcher’s part. I captured what happened at the time in the following reflective commentary:

The reality of course, was entirely different. Upon sending my research request, I did not have participants beating down my proverbial door to be a part of this work. Quite the opposite. I had no responses. Not one. Not a single email to say, ‘This looks interesting, I’ll get back to you.’ I believed or hoped, really, that the potential participants had not responded because they were taking their time, really engaging with the process, and agonising over what to choose as their image. I now realise that this was not the case. Literal weeks went by, and I had no responses. I had vaguely anticipated that this would happen, as was highlighted in my risk assessment, but I never thought that it was an actual possibility. I couldn’t understand how people were not as invested in this idea as I was, and frankly, I got to the point where I had drafted an email to my supervisor to tell her that I simply could not do this; my ideas were not good enough, and no one was interested. Before sending that email, I decided to send a reminder email telling people that I still had spaces for participant responses. This was a Thursday night, and I had spent a

considerable amount of time crying. On Friday morning, I received an email with the subject 'Image' and the opening sentence: 'Sorry Emma, had completely forgotten about this...' I opened a picture of Einstein and a beautifully articulate narrative (Appendix 2) and cried, only this time with relief. I ended up with nine participants.

3.21 Focus Group

I chose to host a focus group in two distinct stages. First, I wanted to invite the participants to explore each other's narratives. To do this, I invited them to attend a focus group at a school in Kent, in which they would be shown each other's chosen images and encouraged to discuss them. I laid out all the images on different tables, and when the participants arrived, I gave them five minutes to walk around the room and look at them. I had written the question they had received on the whiteboard in the room so that the teacher participants could refer to it whenever they needed to. I organised this focus group to follow the premise of three basic questions:

- 1) Pick an image (that is not your own) which you think best represents how you navigate your own values and professionalism in the current policy climate.
- 2) Pick an image which you do not understand or you have questions about.
- 3) Pick your own image and explain why you chose it.

The use of these three questions gave the focus group a structure that was fluid, flexible, and interactive.

3.22 Finding the Artist

To find an artist, I contacted a lecturer at Canterbury Christ Church University and asked him to cascade an email to his undergraduate students and to any artists he might know who would be interested in this project (Appendix 3). I received emails of interest from a number of potential artists and settled upon two. These artists were not chosen for any particular reason, and initially, I only planned on using one artist; however meeting both showed me that I could potentially access another level of rich data by allowing the most interested people to undertake this project rather than limiting it to one person.

I met with both artists individually to explain the process in more detail, which was incredibly difficult, as I could tell them virtually nothing about myself or the participants; I did not want their artefact to be influenced by any prior knowledge, and I wanted it artefact to be informed by the images themselves. I then gave the artists the images the participants had been given to me. I did not give the artists the accompanying narratives.

3.23 Focus Group Two

The second focus group was centred on the reaction to the art piece that the artists created. I invited the participants and the artists to come together to see the art pieces and discuss them, thus reflecting the hermeneutic circle as necessary in the use of IPA. Focus groups are less often seen in IPA research but have been utilised in previous published works (Flowers, Smith and Larkin, 2009). The use of focus groups in this instance allowed the experiences of the participants to be shared and allowed them to experience each other's responses to the research question; in addition, it let them develop their own interpretation of others' experience. To focus this session, I gave the participants five minutes to look at the artefacts as the artist presented them. After, I asked them for their initial thoughts and

invited the teacher participants to ask questions of the artist in order to shape the conversation.

3.24 How Are IPA, Visual Methodologies, and Ways of Knowing Linked?

IPA is predominantly used in structured or semi-structured interviews (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), and it is perhaps less often used in visual methodologies and particularly research which utilises methods such as this one. I argue that IPA can be used to analyse images and art as effectively as interviews. Foster (1988) has referred to visuality as ‘how we see, how we are able, allowed, or made to see, and how we see this seeing and the unseeing therein’ (ix). These ideas have a twofold resonance with the fundamental theories of IPA. First, the idea of culture as representative of the interpretations and exchanges of people within them resonates with the phenomenological basis of IPA; second, the idea of ‘unseeing’ as posed by Foster (1988) is reminiscent of the Heideggerian hermeneutical idea of the revelatory power of interpretation, the shining of the light upon what is ‘unseen’. Berger (1972) has asserted that picturing and seeing are how we come to know the world as children. Berger (1972) has also discussed of the importance of how we understand an image in relation to ourselves, our context, and history, again embodying the Heideggerian principles of IPA.

According to Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009), the use of interviews in qualitative data creates a conversation with a purpose; this is done by requesting that the participants of this study create an image that responds to a particular question and write a brief, accompanying narrative. Granted, some of this conversation is visual, but it is still a meaningful response to a question which opens a dialogue between researcher, participant, and artist. It was important that the artist was not the endpoint of this research; rather, their

involvement created another layer of dialogue through which the participants explored how their images had created art pieces.

3.25 Ethical Implications

As with all social research, it was imperative to adhere to ethical principles in order to ensure that the participants were safeguarded (Layder, 2013), and visual methodologies present ‘an overarching theme: confidentiality; minimising harm; consent; fuzzy boundaries; authorship and ownership; and representation and audiences’ (Cox, Drew et al, 2015, p.209). Historically, the use of visual methodologies was seen to be limited to ethnographic studies or individuals working within the sphere of media (Emmison and Smith, 2000); however, at a 2011 conference on the visual arts in Leeds, ‘nurses, educationalists, academics, sociologists, art therapists, environmentalists, criminologists, and those in the arts’ (Woodhouse, 2012: p. 20) all attended, thus demonstrating the rise in the interest in visual methodologies across a range of academic disciplines (Cox, Drew et al., 2015). Visual methodologies offer the researcher a variety of media to examine, and subsequently, the researcher has to consider how the research question fits with a given research paradigm and the method of gathering the data (Woodhouse, 2012). De Laat (2004) has alluded to the complex ethical boundaries within visual research ethical processes with research involving cameras, and participant-generated images more commonly raised ethical questions and dilemmas (Cox, Drew et al., 2015). In order to examine the process that ensured that this research was ethically sound, I examine the principal ethical implications and how they were influenced by the decision to use image-based research methods. The ethics approval process highlighted some interesting ethical questions for this study which are also discussed in this section.

3.25.1 Principle One: Minimising the Risk of Harm

Research should not harm the participants involved, and a way to combat this is to utilise informed consent. It was important for this duty that all participants knew exactly what was expected of them when taking part in this research but did not feel pressured to be involved (Layder, 2013). According to the ESRC (2005), any potential ‘risks’ need to be highlighted prior to the beginning of the research, as there are ethical considerations when undertaking studies involving human participants; there is the potential for harm and negative consequences for them (McCarran and Robson, 2011). In order to ensure that I had minimised the risk of harm and anxiety for participants, I completed a risk assessment as part of my application to the ethics committee, which highlighted the following issues as potential risks:

- *Confidentiality and anonymity:* All data will be stored securely at the researcher’s premises in accordance with the data protection act 1998. All participants signed a consent form which outlined the confidentiality and anonymity measures that would be taken. It was agreed that no images of non-consenting adults and no images of children should be used in this research. The participants were informed that their images, but not their narratives, would be shared with two artists who would create artefacts based on the images. The storage of data proved to be more problematic in this instance, as there were questions raised about the artistic ownership of the art piece created using the data. It was decided that there would have to be a separate information sheet and consent form given to the artist to outline who had artistic ownership over the artefact that would be created. It was decided that the artist would own the piece after all data was collected, and that the

artist would not reuse or share any of the images they had been given after their art piece was created.

- *Potential stress to participants due to time frame:* Each participant had the choice to withdraw from the research at any point. This was decided upon in order to minimise the stress participants felt. The potential to extend deadlines had to be a realistic option throughout this process, as the people involved all work full time jobs which demand a large proportion of their time. This became particularly apparent when one of the artists had to have an extension for her work as her house was flooded in a bizarre, 'freakish biblical rain' which marred her process. By allowing for flexibility and the recognition of the reality of life, the stress of the participants was minimised, and this participant later chose to withdraw from the process. In order to minimise the risk and anxiety that could potentially befall the participants, they were given a time frame of two weeks to submit the consent form and offered assistance should the time frame prove unrealistic.
- *Participants do not show up or present data:* By allowing the participants to choose to be a part of this process, I hoped to minimise the risk of not receiving any data. Interestingly, being flexible and understanding came to fruition in this identified risk, as I ended up with no data on deadline day, and upon sending out a reminder, received a flurry of data with apologies as people had forgotten to send it due to work commitments. Being flexible and understanding therefore allowed this risk to be recognised, realised, and navigated.

3.25.2 Principle Two: Obtaining Informed Consent

One of the key elements of research ethics is obtaining informed consent to ensure that the participants are as aware as possible of what is expected of them during this process. According to Walker, Hogarth, and Hamilton (2008), there are limitations on the quantity of information that can be conveyed and absorbed before consent is obtained. In order to make participants as aware of the expectations of this research as possible, I contacted the Head Teachers of three non-selective secondary schools in Kent to obtain permission to approach their staff in order to cascade the information sheets and consent forms. Research based solely on volunteers has the potential to be biased, which I attempted to avoid, where possible, by asking the Head Teachers of the three schools to cascade the information (Tulum, 2012). In order to obtain consent, I ensured that my information sheet was as detailed as possible and contained the necessary information as outlined by Boynton (2005); participants were given an explanation as to the nature of the study, a copy of the consent form, and a time frame of two weeks to decide whether they wished to be involved and to return the consent form.

3.25.3 Principle Three: Ensuring Anonymity and Confidentiality

The anonymity and confidentiality of this research were not only practical but paramount, as I wanted the participants to feel as though they could submit their data openly and freely, without any fear of repercussions should they paint a negative view of their perception of the implementation of policy within their educational setting (McCarran and Robson, 2011). In order to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, their anonymity was explicitly expressed within the information and consent forms which were cascaded to the three schools. It was important to let participants know prior to obtaining

the data that it would be shared within the research itself and (albeit anonymously) with the artist who would create the artefact. As opposed to the physical damage that may be caused by particular medical research, the perceived risk from visual ethnographies tends to take the form of embarrassment or anxiety over how representations are interpreted (Pink, 2000), thus reinforcing the importance of the participants' anonymity. When bringing the participants together in a focus group to discuss the images, participants were informed that their participation was optional and that their narratives would not be discussed, only their images.

3.25.4 Principle Four: Avoiding Deceptive Practices

The use of ethical committees, consent forms, and information sheets seems to delegitimise the use of deceptive practices; however, it is important to address it because of the widespread instances of deception in research in the social sciences (McCarran and Robson, 2011). The increased existence of codes, guidelines, and handbooks around visual research methods (e.g., British Sociological Association, 2006; Thomson, 2008; Wiles et al., 2008) could demonstrate the belief that the use of visual methodologies is ethically problematic and risky. Therefore, it was important to be transparent and clear about the exact processes involved in this research and the conversations that arose from the problematic nature of the ethical implications of visual methodologies.

3.25.5 Principle Five: Providing the Right to Withdraw

In order to minimise the risk of anxiety for participants, they were informed that they had the right to withdraw at any point throughout the process. This was explicitly stated in the information sheet provided to participants and in the consent form; it was also highlighted in the risk assessment as a way to minimise participants' anxiety. Despite the fact that these

measures were in place to ensure that participants knew they had the right to withdraw, in reality, if they wanted to withdraw, they simply had to not respond to emails or not show up.

3.26 How Did these Principles Impact Ethics Approval?

The ethics approval journey for this research perpetuates the issues alluded to by De Laat (2004) and Cox, Drew, et al. (2015). Because of the use of an external artist to create an artefact using the pictures provided as data, the research ethics proposal seemed to break the boundaries of the standard ethics proposal; thus, extra ethical considerations had to be made prior to obtaining ethical approval. As highlighted by Cox et al. (2015), it became clear that the innovative, creative nature of my research was unconventional and challenging within my institution's ethical framework.

It was worthwhile to consider how I approached the teachers to find participants and ensure that they were sought in an ethical way. I was concerned about the bias of having volunteers who knew me as the researcher, as suggested by Tulum (2012); hence, I used the Head Teachers to cascade the information rather than approaching teachers myself. Fuzzy boundaries existed for me as researcher; not only am I a researcher, but I may also be a friend to some of these participants, as well as a fellow teacher who works within the confines of the educational system that I research (Curium et al., 2013). This implies the impossibility of being a passive observer of this research. This study took place in a relatively small geographical location; therefore, it was likely that I would know some of the participants. It was always possible that teachers whose interests were similar to mine would be drawn to this research, but I attempted to pre-empt this by making sure that

the question posed to participants used neutral language, and I avoided prompting individuals to be involved.

IPA allows for human experience and interpretation to be recognised and respected. I believe that requesting that participants present an image and a short narrative is as useful in IPA as a semi-structured interview, which seems to be the exemplary research method for IPA researchers (Smith and Osborne, 2013). I also believe that allowing an ‘objective’ observer in the form of the artist to see the images out of context and create an art piece based on them creates another form of interpretation and another way to involve human experience. Smith et al. (2009) have asserted that the point of IPA and its use of small sample groups represent a perspective on a particular issue. This study represents not only the insider perspective in the form of the sample group, and indeed the researcher, but also the outsider perspective in the form of the artist and their creation. If a researcher explores how people make sense of their own experiences (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2013), then I believe as a researcher that I have a duty to provide multiple ways in which the participant can do so. In this study, the participants could make sense of their own feelings about policy through images, words, and dialogue. They also making sense of their own experience through their interpretation of the artist’s work. According to Smith (2004), ‘The participant is trying to make sense of their personal and social world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of their personal and social world’ (p. 40). I believe it is important to allow the participants to attempt to make sense of how other participants see the world and to make sense of how another would make sense of how the participants themselves sees the world. This extends the idea of the

hermeneutic circle (Charlick, et al., 2016) by encouraging all participants in this study to take on the role of the interpreter at various points in the process.

According to Smith et al. (2009) IPA is defined by its focus on the participant in an inductive approach. This approach strives to embrace a method that is ‘bottom up’ rather than ‘top down’ and does not seek to test hypothesis and test prior assumptions; the participants as experts in their own experiences and understanding is key to utilising IPA (Reid et al., 2005). The participants are deemed to have the most in depth understanding of their own field and are encouraged to share their own story about their thought and feelings of this community (ibid). IPA allows for the participants voices to be heard in the context of their own lives (Quest, 2014). Earlier in this chapter, the theoretical foundation of IPA was explored and the epistemological groundings of this research were outlined. This chapter details the step by step process of the collection, analysis and grouping of the data gathered for this research. I chose IPA for this research because I believe there is a need for the voice of the frontline teacher to be heard without preconceptions or prior assumptions. As this chapter outlines, the policy climate in England has long witnessed a ‘top-down’ approach, with policy being implemented at a governmental and school wide level and being enacted by the classroom teachers; it seemed important, therefore, to allow teachers to voice their experience in a context that relied on a creative means to frame these conversations.

In order to provide a structure within which to analyse the data, I relied upon the recommendations of Reid, Flowers, and Larkin (2005) and Smith, Jarman, and Osborn (1999), who advise an analytic and evaluative process which culminates in the discussion of the set of emergent themes. This helped me interpret and discuss these themes in an

ordered, balanced manner while recognising the need to embrace both the insider and outsider perspective as a researcher. It seemed to me that creativity was vital to generate data that would oppose the linear approach to policy making in this educational setting. I wanted to ensure that the teachers and the artist involved in this research were not limited to a singular conversations or interviews; rather, I wanted to ensure that the conversations were revisited and explored in a way that allowed varying interpretations of the data to be recognised and explored.

3.27 Data Analysis in IPA

This study uses a multi-layered approach to data analysis which takes place at several points throughout this process. I established how each point of data collection is analysed in order to develop a triangulation to create succinct findings (Grix, 2004:136). Triangulation is a way to seek and achieve validity in qualitative research (Cohen, et al. 2007), thus allowing a deeper understanding of the data. In this instance, triangulation refers to the multifaceted way the data was collected and the multiple conversations and revisiting that occurred throughout the process. In the first instance, the teachers were offered the chance to create their images and write a short narrative based on the research theme. As this is a hermeneutical study, I felt it was important to allow for these teachers to interpret the issues of ‘values’ and ‘current policy climate’ in their own way. Allowing teachers to develop their own understanding of these key research terms removes any potential personal bias from the research. This, and a wider time frame, allowed participants to consider these images and their brief narrative in a way that encouraged an image that was perhaps a truer representation of their thoughts and feelings than using other, qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews. A photograph that is

considered and a short narrative that is limited in words and also considered over time have the potential to produce a more powerful piece of data, as it encouraged the teachers to self-edit; an interview would produce data that is unlimited in terms of in-the-moment exploration, but it may produce data that is the result of a bad day. By removing this editing process and handing the power of editing to the teachers involved, I allowed for autonomy over the data which encouraged self-reflection in a way that an interview might not have. Although qualitative approaches are often seen as too holistic, too open to interpretation, too focused on the self, or difficult to identify what is right and wrong, an ‘anything goes’ scenario (Feyerabend, 1975), this research concerns the human experience of values and how they merge with the current educational policy climate.

A key element of analysing data in IPA is the importance of using substantial amounts of key verbatim data from the transcripts, thus foregrounding the voice of the participant in the data analysis (Reid, et al., 2005). The researcher uses these verbatim examples as evidence and support for the claims so that the participants’ voice can be interpreted, and a deeper understanding and thematic resonance can be established (ibid). The researcher espouses both an ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ perspective throughout the process; the insider, phenomenological approach comes from gathering the stories themselves within the chosen context and allowing the voices of the participants to be heard; the outsider, interpretative approach comes from the researcher’s duty to make meaning from the participants’ voices, illuminating the way their responses answer these research questions (ibid) and making the discussions the key part of the data.

The interpretation of data in IPA is decidedly labour-intensive but the requirement of multiple readings and the analysis of each individual piece of data lets the researcher

approach the data to understand the symbiotic relationship between participants and researcher (Smith, Jarman & Osborn, 1999). In-depth analysis, care, and attention are given to the individual, and this in turn informs the emergent themes of the participants (Smith et al., 2009). It is the researcher's responsibility to analyse the participant's voice (Larkin et al., 2006) and embrace both the emic and etic approach to research. Emic refers to a perspective created within a social group, and etic refers to a perspective created outside the social group (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014). In this instance, the emic refers to the perspective of the teachers, and the etic refers to the perspective of the artist. This thesis allows a discursive interplay between both the emic and the etic.

3.28 Initial Data Analysis Experience

Upon the collection of the images and narratives, I began by thoroughly examining each picture and caption. I initially did this without making any written notes or comments on the pages; rather, I gave myself time to digest each individual narrative and image. I then re-read the narratives to underline and highlight key words or phrases that seemed particularly interesting or pertinent to the research questions. I then made commentary on the physicality of the images provided, e.g., colour, shape, and objects identified. I then summarised each narrative into a single line which outlined its most prevalent theme and the most prevalent theme of the image.

Upon the transcription of my first meeting with the participants, and the transcription of the second meeting with the participants and the artist, I read and re-read the transcription; I read it first without creating any notes or commentary and then read it again and highlighted any key or repeated words and phrases. I then divided the key words or phrases into the working document that was previously created for each participant and

assigned the words and phrases to each. This helped me track their ideas throughout this process and compare their discussions with the ideas of their initial narrative and determine whether my interpretation and understanding of their narrative and image were accurate. In order to achieve a relatively objective perspective of the regularity of words or phrases during this process, I also used the word programme Wordle in order to be able to create “word clouds” which give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text. To achieve this, I copied the completed working document of each participant into the Wordle programme to create a “word cloud” specific to each participant. This gave me an insight into the words that were most frequently used by each participant and allowed me to see whether there was a correlation between the words used and the phrases that had been selected. This method of working through the analysis also embraced the importance of the voice of the individual, which is essential in IPA.

The work of the artist was approached in a similar way. I originally garnered interest from two artists, who both signed consent forms with a view to proceed (Appendix 4). One artist was a photographer, and the other was a graduate. During the process, the photographer had the unfortunate experience of having her house flooded and therefore opted not to continue with the process. The artist who had finished university continued with the process and created a series of artefacts inspired by the images the participants provided. The artist also provided me a brief narrative which outlined the reasoning behind each piece; thus, I could treat the artist as another participant in their own right and analyse the phraseology of their narrative using the same methods as the primary participants. Thus, the artist could be part of the understanding of emergent themes.

3.29 Emergent Themes

Highlighting the emergent themes was performed following the guidelines of Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) and Quest (2014). Perhaps the most important factor of this data analysis was the establishment of emergent themes. In order to do this, I used the working documents that I created for each participant, as outlined above. Upon creating these working files, I then compared them across all participants. Any key or similar phraseology was identified, as well as any similar or shared experiences. Upon recognising an emergent theme, it was added to a list. I tried to ensure that these themes were limited to an individual word or a short phrase so that there was order and clarity to the findings; this also made the themes distinct and individual as well as indicative of an overarching narrative.

3.30 Validity of the Data

IPA research follows four broad principles that allow the data to be considered 'valid'. Yardley (2008) has outlined a comprehensive framework of the quest for validity in qualitative research. These four principles of validity are outlined below.

3.30.1 Sensitivity to Context

A key facet to IPA is recognising the context in which the participants exist; it is vitally important to understand the world in which the participant lives (Larkin et al., 2006). According to Elliot et al. (1999), a well-rounded understanding of the participants' context is the key to understanding that interpretations may be rooted in the recognition of this context. Chapter 2 demonstrates the engagement with the literature that I undertook to ensure that my understanding of the policy context in the education system in England was deep enough for me to understand the implications this had on the participants. By being aware of the context of this research, I also gave each participant time to decide on their

image and narrative, as I knew there was a danger that a one-to-one interview could be tainted by the outcome of a particularly hard day rather than the outcome of deep thought about their relationship with policy. By using the verbatim transcripts from the interviews, I allow the reader to experience the true voices of the participants and let the reader (as well as the researcher) understand and make interpretations (Quest, 2014).

3.30.2 Commitment and Rigour

Commitment and rigour have been an ever-present principle throughout this thesis. As outlined in chapter 3, I ensured that ethical approval was sought and achieved by complying with each of the ethical standards as outlined by my university. I only proceeded with recruiting my participants after receiving ethical approval for this research. The participants chose to be involved at their discretion and were given time to ‘allow rapport to be developed; allow participants to think, speak and be heard’ (Reid, et al., 2005: 22). I also ensured that I was fully prepared prior to each meeting with the participants so that I could guide the discussions with prepared open-ended questions to encourage discussion.

3.30.3 Transparency and Coherence

As is seen in the information letters and letters of consent (Appendix 1), I was clear with the participants regarding what was expected of them and that their anonymity would be respected throughout this process. I also allowed the participants to leave the research group at any time and outlined what would be expected of them at each data collection point. According to Yardley (2008), transparency and coherence in IPA research allows researchers to be flexible and innovative; further, coherence and transparency within research is the art of allowing the reader the ability to see exactly what has been done and why. Another key facet of the transparency of the data in IPA research is to ensure that the

reader is fully aware of the impact that the researcher has on understanding the context and of the data; in this research, this was done by regularly allowing the reader to understand my positioning by using my own reflexive narratives throughout. According to Lietz et al. (2006), one of the most important aspects of establishing data that is transparent and trustworthy is to ensure that the reader is made fully aware of how the researcher's positioning impacts the research process. I had regular meetings with my supervisor and received regular feedback on my work to ensure the cohesion of the piece.

3.30.4 Impact and Importance

According to Yardley (2008), there is little point in conducting research unless it has theoretical or practical implications; the research may be immediately useful for policy makers or practitioners, or it may help the reader understand something better. Smith et al. (2009) have alluded to the validation of data being evaluated according to whether the reader finds anything new or useful in the research. In order to determine the impact and importance of the research, I had regular meetings with my supervisory team to ensure its relevance. I was clear from the beginning that, as is common in IPA research, the aim was not to identify positivist outcomes; rather, the impact and importance of this data concerns the use of IPA and visual methodologies and to demonstrate a narrative around teachers and professionalism.

3.31 Summary

I was drawn to utilising visual methods and IPA for a number of reasons in this research. In terms of visual methods, I wanted to explore a method that was different and engaging for both myself as researcher and for the participants involved. I could have done

interviews but wanted to give the participants time and space to create something visual which would allow them to express themselves in a way they were perhaps not used to and to feel the liberating and perhaps cathartic experience of creating an image (Sontag, 1979). I also wanted to show the importance of their experiences and an understanding of their professional world by having their creations immortalised in an art piece. IPA offered me the theoretical framework to unlock the deep, meaningful interpretations and analysis that I wanted to garner from the images, narratives, focus groups, and artwork.

Perhaps on a more personal level, I wanted a concrete way to understand the relationship between teachers and policy. In my introductory chapter, I wrote reflectively on my own feelings towards policy as a teacher, and I wanted to have a way to understand how other teachers truly felt about their relationship with policy and whether those feelings could be captured and transformed into something visual.

This chapter outlined the steps I took as a researcher to analyse the data collected using the IPA method. I outlined how I, as an IPA researcher, conducted my data analysis and how this informs the findings. I explained in detail how I undertook the identification of the emergent themes and the process by which these themes were summarised and grouped. I demonstrated the ways in which I ensured the validity of the data and the supervision that I received for its analysis. In Chapter 4, I outline the findings of this research utilising the analysis as outlined in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 Findings

4.1 Overview of Findings Including the Theoretical Understanding

This chapter presents the way the participants created, interpreted, and understood the data for this research. The emergent themes established were of rebellion, lack of autonomy, unrealistic expectations, questioning policy and policy makers, choice and growth, and the power of interpretation. A discussion of these themes is presented in this chapter.

This chapter's theoretical basis is interpretivism, as the data was understood and interpreted by the participants, the artist, and myself as both a researcher and as an educator. This chapter focuses on the interpretations of the participants as they tried to make sense of their understanding of how they navigate their personal values in the current policy climate. It also focuses on the importance of each participant having the chance to recognise the experiences and interpretations of the other participants in this research. The literature review undertaken for this study demonstrated the emergent themes of excessive workload, stress and burnout, and lack of autonomy among teachers (as previously discussed); it pointed to a narrative in which a destructive relationship existed between teachers and policy. However, this research seems to point to something that is not quite as linear or as overtly destructive and negative. In this chapter, using direct citations from the data gathered, I discuss the deviations from this idea and instances in which the idea may have been perpetuated.

For this chapter, the emergent themes were derived from all points of the data collection process. While each emergent theme may not have been evident in each aspect of the data collection, they are included because they represented something that was a point of clear importance to the participants. The findings in this chapter describe the participants'

experiences of navigating their personal values in the current policy climate. The way the participants interacted with policy was an important factor of this data analysis, as was the way the participants interacted with other's experience of policy.

To discuss each theme, I begin with a surmising paragraph. I then discuss the findings from the initial collection of images and narratives, followed by the first and second focus groups and a concluding summary.

4.2 The Theme of Rebellion

'I think of policies as more like guidelines than actual rules' (Participant 4)

The emergent theme of rebellion seemed to underpin much of the teacher participants' thinking and discussion. Through this process, the teachers seemed to become more aware that their relationship with policy was one of quiet rebellion and defiance rather than strict compliance. It seems that they recognised that, through rebellion, they had learned to become more effective as teachers.

Initial findings from image and narrative data collection

One of the early images received for the initial data collection was an image of the character Captain Barbossa from the Disney film franchise *Pirates of the Caribbean* (Appendix 2). Participant 4 chose this image, and after watching the film, I suspected that



Figure 5: Participant 4 Image, Appendix 2

it was due to the line, 'The code is more what you'd call "guidelines" than actual rules' (*Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*, 2003). The narrative that accompanied this image of Barbossa seemed to reflect his idea of

guidelines: *'I chose this picture as I think of policies as more like guidelines than actual rules. Teaching is already a consuming profession, and for me doing everything absolutely to the letter 100% of the time would be unsustainable.'* Participant 4's understanding of policy seemed to show the need to consciously shirk elements of policy in order to remain effective as a teacher, seeing the policy that she was required to follow as guidelines rather than rules. Prior to adopting this stance, she struggled with her own idea of her professionalism, stating, *'I have learnt to prioritise much more effectively over the four years I have been teaching. When evaluating my classroom practice, I used to question whether I had done things "by the book" and would heavily criticise myself if I hadn't.'* By discontinuing this cycle of self-criticism, she learned to establish a new way to determine whether her teaching was effective *'Now my teaching is impacted more by the effect that I have on my students and boils down to two questions – "did they learn something?" and "was the lesson a positive experience for them?" If the answer to these questions is yes, then I have fulfilled my role as a teacher.'* This image and narrative



Figure 6: Participant 1 Image, Appendix 2

demonstrate that, for Participant 4, there was a need to be selective of which specific policy was observed in order to feel as though one is effective in their job as a classroom teacher.

In the image provided by Participant 1, the idea of

guidelines was also explored, albeit through a different visual representation. Participant 1

provided an image of 'Pick and Mix' sweets, portraying a vast quantity of sweets of varying colours, shapes, and sizes. The narrative accompanying this image reflects that of Participant 4, with Participant 1 stating that, as a teacher, he had learned to *'pick and choose what policies you want to include and how much of each one you adhere by based on the scenario and other factors at the time (which ones you would like to eat), therefore adapting the style continuously to suit the current climate.'* Participant 4 demonstrates the unrealistic expectations of the volume of policy in the teaching profession; in his narrative, policy represents *'an unrealistic and perfect scenario'* and *'does not take into consideration compassion or any other everyday factors.'* Although the images provided by both Participant 4 and Participant 1 were markedly different, their narratives represented an unspoken reality of selecting the policies that were actually beneficial on a given day or with a given class group.

Participant 2 also demonstrated the theme of rebellion in their image and narrative. Their image consisted of letter that had been given to them by a Year 13 student. This letter outlined the student's thanks and gratitude, as they felt that this teacher had helped them grow in confidence and as a person throughout the years. This teacher highlighted the fact that *'as a middle leader, I spend a lot of time and energy trying to circumvent policy in order to teach and treat my pupils according to my own professionalism.'* 'Circumvention' is an interesting word here, as it is the need to go around an obstacle; for Participant 2, it seems that policy is an obstacle rather than a useful tool. This admission of the need to circumvent policy indicates the need for apparent rebellion within teaching; it reflects the need to treat policy more as guidelines and to accept the necessity of abandoning some policy if it does not appear to be useful for the student or the teacher. Participant 2 then

said that if the result of their rebellion against policy was that *'pupils felt supported academically and as young humans, then I will continue to obfuscate on any policy initiative which discourage me from treating the little humans in my care as little humans.'*

Participant 2 seemed to prioritise reflecting upon the effect of policy on the students in their care; if it is not beneficial for the students, then it is not worth doing.

Initial Data Analysis from Focus Groups

During the first focus group, I asked the participants to attempt to interpret and create their own understanding of the images the participants selected. First, I asked the participants to stand next to an image that was not their own that they believed best represented their own navigation of their values in the current policy climate. Each person then discussed why they chose that particular image based on their own interpretation and understanding. The participants were then asked to move to the image which they did not understand or could not see as relevant and discuss these images. Next, the participants stood next to their own image and explained why they chose it to represent their own navigation of their values in the current policy climate.

When the participants began the initial focus group, they were reticent about offering their own interpretations of the images. Participant 5 stated that she felt she was not *'deep enough'* to understand the images. The first image the participants discussed was that of Captain Barbossa, which allowed them to become comfortable in their interpretation, perhaps due to the universality of their understanding of pirates, even without an understanding of the pop culture reference of the Disney films.

During the focus groups, the idea of rebellion was explored numerous times. In her explanation of choosing Captain Barbossa, Participant 4 asserted that he represents the

importance of *'working around policy so that you are actually doing the best for the child instead of just doing what higher-ups think is best.'* Participant 2 agreed, stating, *'the rules don't apply to pirates, so they don't have to follow a policy.'* During the initial focus group session, the participants were encouraged to explore the images and discern whether there were similarities in the interpretation. Perhaps because Captain Barbossa is a well-known pop culture reference, Participant 1 was immediately drawn to the image and was aware of its potential meaning. Participant 1 interpreted the image as follows: *'sometimes trying to follow a path of the correct things to do and the good things to do often includes piracy because sometimes piracy can be the answer.'* In my observations of the focus group, all members responded positively to this statement. Participant 2 referred to policy as something that, as a professional, a teacher needed to *'get around'*, and when discussing an image they interpreted as a negative representation of the weight of policy on teachers, Participant 2 stated that it was important for teachers to *'develop their own process to get around policy'*. When discussing their image, Participant 2 stated that they navigate their own values in the current policy climate by simply not caring about the policies that they feel are *'pointless or worthless or for some ulterior motive, other than the development of our students.'* It seems that rebellion for the sake of benefitting the students was commonplace, as the participants affirmed that they felt the same way about policy as Participant 2.

Eventually, the participants agreed that the term *'selective rebels'* was appropriate to describe how they navigate their values in the current policy climate.

4.3 The Lack of Autonomy in the Teaching Profession

'As a profession, we risk becoming increasingly deskilled because of lack of autonomy'.

The lack of autonomy in the teaching profession was another emergent theme in this research. Participants were acutely aware of the impact this lack of autonomy had on their relationship with the policy climate.

Initial findings from image and narrative data collection

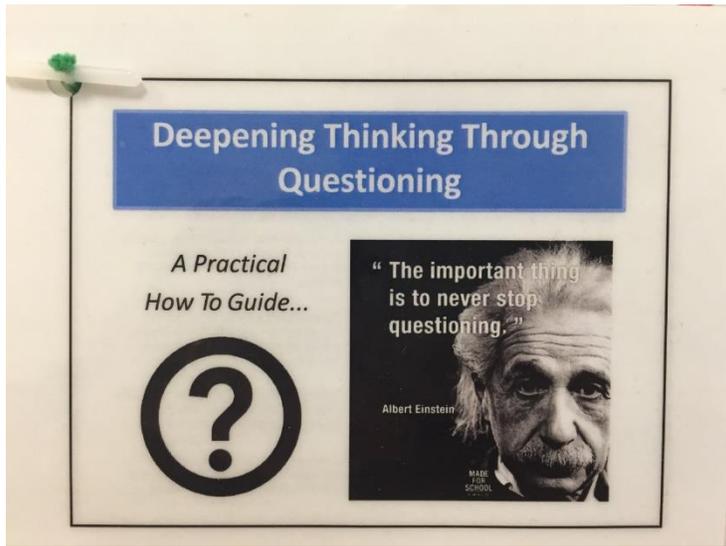


Figure 7: Participant 7 Image, Appendix 2

Participant 7 submitted an image of Albert Einstein with the title 'Deepening Thinking Through Questioning', and the image of Einstein contained the quote 'The important thing is to never stop questioning'.

Participant 7 specifically referred to a distinct lack of autonomy when discussing their concerns about the teaching profession: *'as a profession we risk becoming increasingly deskilled due to lack of autonomy and change.'* Participant 7 believed that this lack of autonomy was the result of the exercising of political power and did not consider the improvement of the life chances and outcomes for the students in their care. The *'false accountability'* on which the current policy climate is based has resulted in both students and teachers losing out.

Participant 8 also referenced the lack of autonomy in their narrative. The accompanying image was one that caused ample discussion among the participants during the focus groups due to its perceived negativity. The image was one of a drain in a street on a rainy day. The narrative referenced the ‘*lack of control*’ that teachers have over the policy, as it is cascaded to them, and this results in extremely negative feelings towards policy, at least from this particular participant.

Participant 2 presented me with an image that depicted a ‘*dissonance*’ between how homework has to be and how they believe it should be. For Participant 2, this disparity reflects how difficult it is ‘*to reconcile your own philosophy on setting homework with a prescribed format that the*

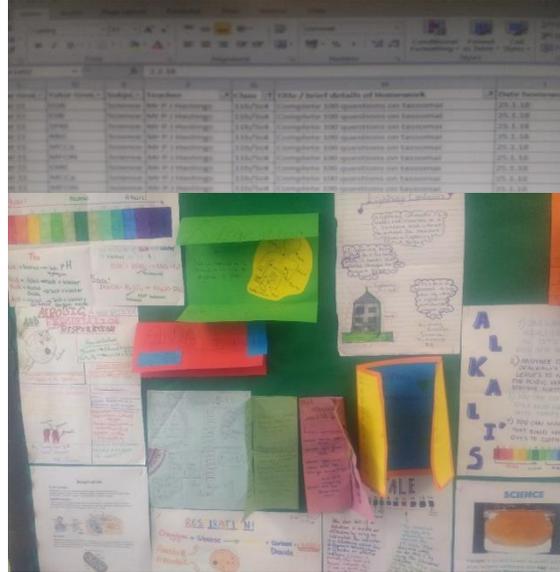


Figure 8: Participant 2, Appendix 2

school has set for teachers to follow.’ This lack of freedom to allow both teacher and student to be creative in the way homework is set and completed reflects the lack of autonomy participants feel in relation to the creation and implementation of policy. It seems that school policy does not consider the ideas and values of the staff when creating policy.

Participant 9 provided an image of what she was expected to be on display in her classroom compared to what she wanted to display. She felt that the mandatory grade



Figure 9: Participant 9 Image, Appendix 2

descriptors were a waste of space that could have been used to display students' work or images that would actively help them learn and study. The images presented by Participant 9 and Participant 2 were remarkably similar; both were a split image with half of featuring classroom expectations and the other half featuring what they wished to

show. What was particularly interesting about their images was that both participants created their images separately, were not aware of each other's narratives, and only realised the similarities some time into the initial focus group data collection.

Initial Data Analysis from Focus Groups

In the initial focus group, Participant 1 described the lack of autonomy in teaching when they asserted that, as professionals, *'we are clever enough and competent enough to be able to say, "Okay. Well, look, this is what we want to get out. We want the kids to get the best result. I'm here doing this job and I, in my professional opinion, I'm saying that this is going to be a good way to do it."'* The emphasis on 'professional opinion' is interesting here; Participant 1 feels that their professional opinion was overlooked and not respected, and that teachers are not being consulted when policy is created. Participant 1 cited a lack of trust in teachers as the reason for a lack of autonomy in the teaching profession. He

stated, *'if we were actually trusted, which you definitely get the feeling we're not.'* This statement was met with nods of approval from the focus group, who seemed to agree that the volume of policy indicated a lack of trust in teachers as professionals.

Participant 3 exercises autonomy in their job and stated that he *'didn't particularly care about the policies that I feel are pointless or worthless or for some ulterior motive, other than for the development of our students.'* Interestingly, Participant 3 also stated that he was *'happy to take the rap on the knuckles when it comes, and it comes annually, because of various things that I don't do'*. Participant 3 is comfortable being chastised or

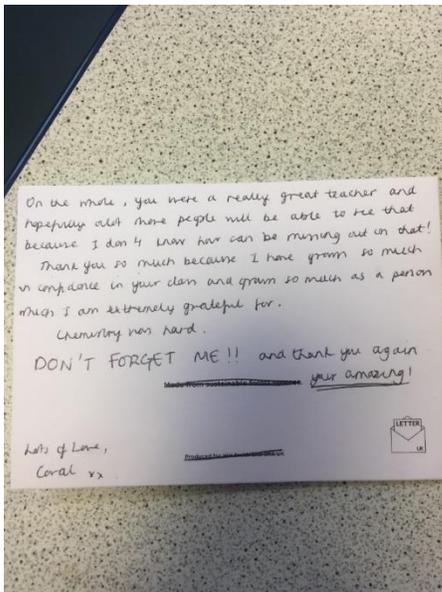


Figure 10: Participant 3, Appendix 2

disciplined in their professional life for not following policy and seemed to imply that he regularly faces issues because of this. It is difficult to surmise to what extent he took the *'rap on the knuckles'*, but it seemed that he was comfortable not doing what was requested of him on occasion if it did not benefit his pupils. The rest of the group responded to this with laughter and knowing nods, showing that this was perhaps something they were aware of or had experienced.

Participant 3 then explained that, unless a policy encourages them to help the student grow and learn, they do not implement it. Participant 9 agreed with this and also believes that *'working around policy so that you are actually doing what is best for the child instead of just doing what higher-ups think is best'*. The determination to do what is best for the students in their care far outweighed the need to impress line managers or head teachers.

Participant 9 described a member of staff who seemed to shirk the policy expectations, specifically in terms of what had to be displayed in his classroom: *'He doesn't have any of it up, any of that stuff up, but if higher ups came and checked, he'd get in trouble for the room not looking the way it should, whereas his is more beneficial to children.'* It was interesting that the participants used homogenous classroom displays as a way to demonstrate the lack of autonomy they experienced in their professional culture. The lack of control Participant 9 has over the way their classroom is presented seems to indicate the frustration caused by the lack of autonomy teachers experienced daily. Both Participant 4 and Participant 9 referred to the senior leaders in their school as 'higher-ups', which demonstrates the apparent divide that the expectations of policy implementation have caused in some school environments.

When Participant 1 explained the reasons for choosing their image, they highlighted that they believed that teachers should have the capacity to choose the policy that explicitly works within their classroom environment: *'But the whole idea is, I think, what you can do is pick the ones that you think are going to be most beneficial. Pick the ones that are going to suit you – that you think are going to work best. You pick them and you can take them with you and then, you can come back, you can choose some other ones, as and when, as opposed to having them all at once. You can just pick them as and when they are appropriate to use.'* It seems that the teachers are aware of the need for policy but voice a need for autonomy over policy they believe is appropriate for their school and classroom setting. Participant 1 described this as being like a game of football; they believed that an education system without policy is like a football game without side-lines. They believe that policy is important to point people in the right direction, but that teachers should have

the autonomy to carve a pathway to achieve goals in a way that suits their philosophy and the context of the students in their care: *'But it's one of those, unless we have rules to go by, you don't know where the goal posts are and sort of how close to the goal you are hitting [...] to me it's a bit like playing football without side-lines. To me that would be pointless.'*

Participant 2 stated that they believe that teachers should be *'trusted to have their own philosophy of education'* because *'at the core of it, they want the best for the children.'* The importance of autonomy seems symbiotically linked to the belief that teachers, at their core, want what is best for their students and should therefore be allowed to make their own decisions regarding the validity of individual policy. Participant 2 continued by saying, *'I think sometimes with policy – at least this is what I detect. I detect an element of heavy mistrust, or an element of "you have to do this and we're checking up on you, making sure that you are doing your job." Because I think most people, as you were saying, most people, they're not in teaching for any other reason than trying to help out kids. Because you're not going to last long as a teacher and you're not going to be in the job very long if you don't really care about what you are doing. You're not doing it for the pay. You're not doing it for anything else. You want these kids to succeed. So there needs to be trust from policyholders.'* This theme demonstrates a twofold feeling among the participants about: the recognition that policy is necessary, but it has also become symbolic of the lack of autonomy experienced daily.

4.4 Unrealistic Expectations

‘Doing everything absolutely to the letter 100% of the time would be unsustainable’.

Many of the participants highlighted that thought the current policy climate compounded the unrealistic expectations of the teaching profession. Many of the teachers who participated in this study recognised that the implementation of all policy as it ‘should be’ implemented is virtually impossible. The realisation of these unrealistic expectations within the profession is intrinsically linked to teachers’ need to be selective rebels to survive in the teaching profession.

Initial findings from image and narrative data collection

In the initial data collection, Participant 4’s narrative expressed the frustration that they felt concerning the unrealistic expectations teachers felt in relation to the implementation of policy. Participant 4 explicitly stated, *‘teaching is already a consuming profession, and for me doing everything absolutely to the letter 100% of the time would be unsustainable.’* Participant 1 echoed this feeling; in their narrative, they stated that they felt that the *‘current policy climate is often guidelines for an unrealistic and perfect scenario.’* These narratives suggest the frustration that comes with realising that the implementation of all of the policy that accompanies teaching is unachievable, and that policy often suggests a ‘one-size-fits-all’ narrative which fails to encompass the unpredictability of human experience.

Participant 5 submitted an image that was widely considered to be a sad, negative image by the focus group, and there was significant discussion surrounding this. The image was of the Ministry of Magic statue from the *Harry Potter* series and depicts a number of

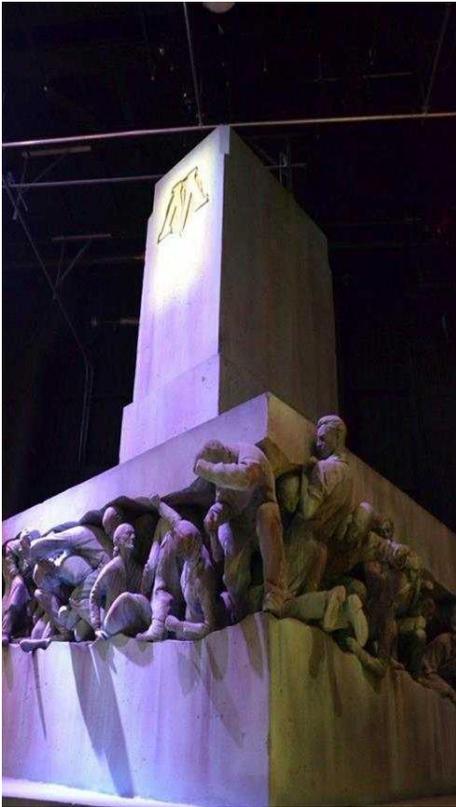


Figure 11: Participant 5 Image, Appendix 2

people squashed under the weight of the ministry or struggling to hold its weight. In their narrative, participant 5 stated that they could see that the weight of policy was a nationwide stress, as they heard it in the staff-room, saw it on social media and online, and also heard it from friends in different schools in the profession. They stated, *'with workload increasing for teachers, the people at the top are just driving pressure, making it hard to move.'* Participant 5 also stated that she had watched her colleagues go from having *'happy, smiley faces'* to *'complete and utter exhaustion in such a short*

space of time'. This was perhaps the first image I received that was reflective of the themes that emerged during the literature review, where stress and burnout were reported as prevalent in the teaching profession.

Participant 6 also referred to the unrealistic expectations and scenarios created by educational policy. They referred to themselves as an art teacher and presented a picture that the initial focus group saw as potentially negative. The participant group could also see the positive in this image, however. The picture was of a shoe covered in mud, and the participant referred to art as being *'the shit on the shoe of the education system.'* They also

referenced their feeling that, due to education policy, *'schools are under increased pressure to reduce the importance given to non-core subjects'*. Participant 6 felt it was unrealistic that they were expected to continue teaching a subject that, in their opinion, was



Figure 12: Participant 6 Image, Appendix 2

branded as having less importance than English, maths, and science.

What demonstrates the unrealistic expectations experienced within the teaching profession within this narrative and accompanying image

is the expectation that a teacher

who is passionate about their subject could be expected to continue to inject their teaching with passion and joy when their subject is considered lesser both intellectually and as less of a facet to unlocking 'good' career options in the future. The focus group questioned whether the image could represent the days of teaching that feel like wading through mud and the ability to be able to make it through.

Data Collected from the Initial Focus Group

These unrealistic expectations, while not expressly mentioned in all the participants' narratives, were an issues they all discussed at various points during the initial focus group. In the initial focus group, Participant 3 outlined the sheer amount of policy and his inability to follow each policy: *'there's just so much, the whole variety, you've got the whole spectrum of everything. But you can't have it all'*. He then said that, in actuality, he cannot follow all the policies because that seems unrealistic; he chooses the policy that he likes and that suits him best. He stated, *'I suppose then that comes down to a question*

that, what your interpretation of benefitting the children is. The philosophy of education then. That's why every school has a different ethos, every individual has a different ethos.'

He believes that the philosophy of the individual impacts their choice on which policy is important for them to follow; it is unrealistic for a teacher to agree with every policy implemented, and it is also unrealistic to expect that all teachers will follow each policy.

Participant 1 postulated that even policy makers and the 'higher-ups' of the education system must be aware that teachers cannot reasonably follow all policies created for schools, stating that, while he believed that policy was necessary for a high-quality education system, *'they clearly must know that we're not going to abide by every single one of them'*. He also stated that he believed that there is *'physically too much to do, and if you spend – if you're someone who can do all of the policies and stick to every policy, then you're clearly not spending enough time on specific problems, because you are spending too much time trying to gloss over the whole lot, as opposed to actually doing those ones well'*.

During this focus group, the GCSE exam season had started, and some of the teachers who taught year 11 had much more free time on their timetables. Participant 4 stated, *'I think there's too much policy, though. I think my best lessons have been in the last three of four weeks when I've had nothing else to do, so I've put my time into planning better lessons so that they're doing more work and I'm doing less work. I'm doing less talking and they're doing more productive work, whereas if it was a month or two ago, I have risk analysis to do. I have – I don't know, get my planner ready for a check and a grade. And doing assessments and stuff like that, doing things that aren't beneficial, whereas now that I have the time, I'm trying to make my lessons better, probably because*

I'm – well, in one way, I'm trying to make my life a little bit easier so that the kids are doing all the work rather than me, in the actual lesson. But that's because I have time to do that. It's probably more beneficial to them in the long term'. The attempts to implement policy for Participant 4 seemed to be detrimental to their ability to do their job effectively and resulted in spending time doing other tasks that did not improve her classroom teaching. This demonstrates questions about what Participant 4 believes their job is and what it could be.

Participant 4 furthered their assertions that the current policy climate was unrealistic, stating, *'if we did everything by policy, we're going to be miserable because we're going to have to be at home doing school work all the time so that we can keep up with these policies. Whereas we're just doing the best we can to keep ourselves enjoying the job as well, because if we didn't enjoy it, we're going to end up like – that's how we're going to feel, like that picture of the Ministry of Magic*'. The purpose of teaching as a profession is not to provide enjoyment for teachers, but their career longevity depends upon this. The participants appear to want to enjoy their role as educators, but that role comes with the weight of unsustainable policies.

4.5 Questioning Policy and Policy Makers

'Is it just to tick a box or is it to benefit the children?'

The theme of the importance of questioning policy did not explicitly arise during the initial collection of the images and narratives, but it became clear during the initial focus group, particularly that questioning policy was an important aspect of navigating the current policy climate.

Initial findings from image and narrative data collection

Participant 7, whose image was of Albert Einstein, is a member of SLT in a large secondary school and stated that he had '*chosen this image as I believe that educational practice and learning should be at the core of what schools do. This would seem so obvious that it should be a banal truism. Instead, I feel that the current policy climate is about false accountability in which both students and teachers lose out*'. Because of this image and the allusion to questioning, the idea of questioning policy became an important discussion point during the focus groups.

Data Collected from the Initial Focus Group

Questioning policy was a strong theme throughout the initial focus groups. The participants advocated the importance of policy being questioned not only by teachers as individuals, but also by the policy makers themselves. Ten minutes into the initial focus group, Participant 1 questioned whether '*the people who are setting policy are thinking as critically as they could? Is it very blinkered sometimes, policy?*' This statement was met with nods of approval from the rest of the participants. Participant 1 stated that this image made him question the validity of certain policy, such as whether conforming to Ofsted was key to the creation of policy. It was interesting that, within the first 10 minutes, the participants established that they felt policy was often a tick-box exercise, and Participant 1 suggested, '*maybe sometimes, we should question why exactly you're doing a thing. Is it just to tick a box or is it to benefit the children?*' Throughout the previous findings on each emergent theme, the sub-thread of benefitting the children was visible throughout.

Participant 2 showed a deep interest in the image of Einstein and the idea of questioning policy and stated, '*we have to fall into line of policy in a certain degree, some*

more than others maybe, or some people feel better about it. But I think questioning policy is very important. If we just blindly accept the policy that we're given without ever questioning it, I don't think education can improve'. He then said that all teachers not only have their own opinions and can formulate critical thought but are also entitled to them, as this was how individual pedagogy can be improved. Participant 2 then gave an example in his context; there was a strict policy around the implementation of homework, and he questioned its efficacy. He stated, *'I think in terms of maintaining staff efficacy and keeping morale up, looking at an Excel document with all of the names of all of the children who haven't done your homework is much more demoralising than looking at a lovely – or looking up from your desk and seeing a lovely wall full of homework that reminds you, the quality of work your students can produce*'. Participant 4, who presented a very similar picture and narrative, stated that she felt that completing an Excel spread sheet was not as beneficial as *'maybe putting your time into getting homework in and getting it up on the board*'. Participant 3 questioned whether policy maintains its purpose when it is eventually implemented at the ground level by teaching staff when he mused, *'you wonder like, by the time it gets down to the classroom, is it what it set out to be at all?'* The lack of questioning policy proved to be problematic for the participants; they believed such a lack could lead to the creation of policy that may not look the same in practise as it does on paper.

Participant 1 also stated that questioning policy allows the teacher to *'take their personal preference out of those policies*', thus illuminating not only the need for autonomy but also the importance of questioning policy to allow a teacher to develop their own means of policy navigation. Further, Participant 1 said that questioning policy allows teachers to use their initiative to make their job doable while upholding their values and

professionalism. Participant 4 stated that being surrounded by people who questioned policy allowed her to also question policy and created a team and atmosphere that were conducive to creating a work force that was happy and positive. Much of the discussion around autonomy could also potentially be discussed under this emergent theme, but I chose to separate the themes. I have done this because the picture of Einstein Participant 7 presented prompted a conversation specifically about the importance of questioning policy both for the benefit of students and teachers alike.

4.6 Choice and Growth

'It all comes from you'

The second focus group was structured in a different way. All of the teaching participants were invited back to the second focus group. After the initial data collection of the narratives and the images, the images were sent to an artist. The artist was an art graduate who had responded to my call for an artist for this research. I did not give the artist a specific timeframe within which to create the piece because I was conscious of not putting the artist under pressure, thus risking the creation of a piece that was the product of time restraints. The artist was given the freedom to decide on whatever medium they deemed appropriate for the creation of their piece. The artist presented three black and white lino prints as her final artefact. They also provided a brief narrative to assist each picture. This was not requested, but they felt it was a necessary part of their work. They were not aware that the initial participants had been asked to complete a narrative to accompany their pictures. In presenting the findings of this second focus group, I consider the artist as a participant in this research. In reality, they were a participant, and their creation of physical

artefacts was paramount to the growth of the teaching participants and the findings presented in the final themes of this chapter.

Data Collected from the Second Focus Group

Upon presenting me with the images she had created, the artist also presented her narrative, which reads as follows:

'This project has been a turning point in finding my personal style no longer as an art student but as a growing artist. I had nine images in which to look at and try to establish what they mean or if there's a pattern that links them in my eyes. What I kept noticing was that each image had a positive and a negative outcome linking to the situation at hand, which then led me to the idea of choices and how they can affect us depending on the decisions we make.'

The participants were not made aware of this narrative. I had not anticipated that the artist would also grow and learn from this experience, and it was interesting that she gleaned the idea of choice from the images, which became a strong discussion point in the second focus group. The theme of choice and growth seemed intrinsically linked to the ideas of rebellion, questioning, and autonomy.

As a researcher, I had not realised how nervous I was about seeing the artefacts until the morning I went to collect them from the artist. I suddenly realised that there was a possibility that I would not like the artefacts, that they would not be completed, or maybe that the teaching participants would not feel that the artefacts represented their feelings. Luckily, when I saw the artefacts, I was overwhelmed with joy, and it was another moment in this research process that brought me to happy tears.



Figure 13 Artefact 1 entitled 'Blocked'

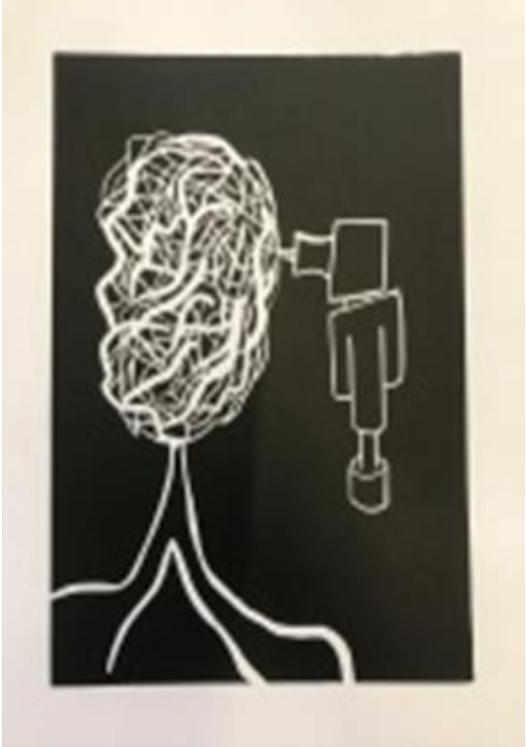


Figure 14 Artefact 2 entitled 'Process'



Figure 15 Artefact 3 entitled 'Growth'

Choice was regularly discussed throughout this process but more so in the final focus group, where the artwork was presented to the participants. Previously, the participants had discussed choice and growth within the profession as a pathway created by rebellion due to the lack of autonomy. Participant 1 stated that they were *'excited to see what the artwork was like'*. One of the initial responses to the artwork was when Participant 3 stated, *'you've got a struggle going either way, and it's like two paths, which way do you go? I'm just thinking about it because, obviously, you could just give up and go down the policy route and just do what you're told'*. It was interesting that the idea of pathways and choice was represented both in the artist's narrative and in Participant 3's initial response to one of the images presented. It is also interesting that, within that choice, choosing to adhere to all policy seemed to be the negative option and akin to 'giving up'. The artist asserted to the group that her interpretation was that *'they're all about growth and personal choices, and it all comes from you. And this was knowing nothing about you guys being teachers and the choices you face, etc.'* There was a general consensus in the group that they could see growth in each image. Participant 3 stated that they could *'just see things growing in all of them'*.

Participant 1 had previously stated that he felt there was a need for policy in education, but should help teachers grow rather than inhibiting their practice. During the interpretation of the artefacts, he saw that *'you have your roots, and then you can just sort of make them develop from your own – I'm not very good at this.'* After some further discussion, Participant 1 stated that his favourite image was the one that represented a tree to him, and the positivity of growth that spoke to him and made him feel drawn to it.

It was clear that growth and choice were an important and integral part of the participants' daily professional lives. They seemed acutely aware that they fundamentally taught the same material to pupils of the same age each year but that, as Participant 3 pointed out, *'How many times have I taught ionic bonding to 14-year-old humans? I do it every year. I just keep doing it. So in every way, my job is cyclical, but there's still room for me to grow'*. It seems that the growth Participant 3 desires is intrinsically linked to the growth of their students.

Participants also saw as a root from which to grow; rather than being a wholly negative facet of the teaching profession, it allowed a platform from which they could launch. Participant 1 stated, *'if you start your ideas of the policies as roots that you're meant to grow from [...] You have your roots, and then you can just sort of make them develop from your own.'* This reflects the previous statements of the participants, in which they agreed that there needed to be an element of policy in the education system to ensure that teachers had a similar goal towards which to aspire.

Participant 2 stated the images starkly demonstrated the power of choice and growth for him: *'Because I think, I've got my view on how it should be, and obviously, there's people who would have a very contradictory view of – policy is there for a reason and we have to do it. But I wouldn't necessarily think that sort of, our thought processes are in any way similar.'* Participant 2 recognised that there is a choice involved in how policy is implemented. Reminiscent of the football analogy Participant 1 previously used (page 95), the assertion is once again made that policy is necessary to highlight the goals of each teacher, but there should be choice in how they are achieved.

4.7 The Power of Interpretations

'That's the whole idea of it. Interpretation, isn't it? There would be no point if we just saw our own images.'

Although interpretation is integral to the basis of this research, I did not inform the participants or the artist that I would use IPA. Interpretation and its power and importance quickly became an important part of the discussions with the teachers; this discussion about interpretation often accompanied the feelings of a need for greater autonomy for the teaching profession, but was magnified in the final focus group discussion. When the artworks were revealed to the participants, their interpretations became key; although it seemed that they were initially reticent to offer opinions or interpretations, they soon embraced and realised that every aspect of this study centred on the importance of the human experience.

Data Collected from the Initial Focus Group

In the initial focus groups, the participants regularly referenced the power of interpretation in regards to policy. They were comfortable stating that interpretation was important in their daily practice and that they believed it benefitted their pupils. In the initial focus group, Participant 3 stated, *'I suppose then that comes down to a question that, what your interpretation of benefitting the children is. The philosophy of education then. That's why every school has a different ethos, every individual has a different ethos.'* This clearly indicates the importance of individual interpretation for the participants. Participant 2 stated, *'I think everyone has their own critical thoughts, they're entitled to their opinions, but I think it's important to have those in order to improve individual practice'.* Interpretation and questioning were important to Participant 2, and they also asserted that

opinions allowed practice to be improved, demonstrating the perceived benefit of interpreting policy to the growth of the professional.

Data Collected from Second Focus Group

During the second focus group, in which the participants were shown the artefacts for the first time, Participant 2 interpreted a section of one of artefacts as being reminiscent of Ogham writing. Ogham writing is the ancient Celtic alphabet in which lines were carved vertically into stone and represented words and phrases (see Figure 16). Participant 2 interpreted this as *'Right. So it's like—the Ogham writing, the policy is set in stone and the struggle against the stonework.'* He then said that it perhaps represents the struggle of teachers against policy that is set in stone. He initially seemed embarrassed by this assertion



Figure 16: Ogham Stone (historytoday.com)

and referred to himself as pretentious, but the other participants responded positively when they learned what Ogham was and how it corresponded to the image. Participant 2 is of Celtic origin, so it was interesting that his first commentary on the art pieces directly related to his roots and his own cultural identity; this perhaps demonstrates the need to find a piece of themselves in the art work.

The artist interpreted all of the images as in some way representing choice and growth. She stated that, in each image, she could see different pathways; Captain Barbosa had a choice to steal, while the pick-and-mix demonstrates the ability to eat what one wants, and choosing to eat all of them could result in diabetes. To

her, the muddy shoe told the story of an amazing, beautiful walk during which one becomes covered in mud; the mud does not ruin the experience, and one simply chooses to accept it and deal with the consequences later. When questioned about how she others' interpretations of the artwork she created, the artist simply stated, *'once I've made the artwork, it's no longer mine. It's out there and it's open to complete interpretation.'* This statement reflects the previous assertions of the focus group about the need to interpret policy and whether it truly reflects the individual teacher as implementer.

There was a definite reticence among the participants to be forthcoming with their interpretations in the beginning of this process, and I felt there was some embarrassment and a fear of 'wrong' interpretations. Both I and the artist explained that the point of the artefacts was interpretation, and that it was important to be honest about their feelings and interpretations. I believe that the worry and the fear of being wrong could reflect the fact that the participants found the initial focus group affirming and liberating; they had not spoken about their own navigation of policy because they felt as though it was 'wrong', and they were unaware that others felt the same way or shared the same views and opinions. Participant 1 visibly struggled with some elements of this focus group and was frustrated when he could not directly see his own image in the artist's images. He stated, *'it sounds really pathetic, but I'm trying to find my own image.'* This felt like an important statement at the time, as to me it seemed perhaps to reflect the inability to see oneself in policy, therefore creating a frustration with the current policy climate. This is discussed further in Chapter 6.

Participant 9 demonstrated the power of interpretation when she stated, *'my interpretation of it is that this is a brain. And there's always information coming in from*

all different directions, trickling in about all this policy stuff. And it's all mishmash. And it just is confusing. And this is a sort of person, if you like, just extracting bits and making sense of it. That was my interpretation of this one.' It seemed that Participant 9's interpretation reflected the interpretation of the artwork itself, but also the interpretation of the policy of teachers' everyday lives.

At the end of the second session, Participant 3 made some striking assertions about the art piece. He said: *'doesn't it tie in perfectly to the question, though? It's all looking through our own lens. It's the same with policy. It's the same piece of artwork. We're all looking through our own lens at it, and we've got different interpretations.'* While Participant 1 initially struggled with interpreting the images, as he could not directly see his own image within them, he said finally, *'I don't know how I felt when I first looked at them. I was kind of like just taking them in. But yeah, I do now.'* By the end, he could see the power and benefit of interpretation. He stated, *'That's the whole idea of it. Interpretation, isn't it? There would be no point if we just saw our own images. Because we already know what we thought'*. At the end of the data collection process, it seemed, that the participants made an important link between the process of policy interpretation they experienced in their professional lives and the interpretation involved in creating an artefact that directly represented them.

4.8 Summary

Many themes emerged in this research, and each is important in its own right. The themes that emerged demonstrated an overwhelming sense of positivity within the focus groups that I had not necessarily expected after the initial data collection. The themes that emerged were each closely related in terms of the experience of the participants, and while there is

perhaps some negativity associated with the themes of the lack of autonomy and unrealistic expectations, this research and the resulting focus groups started a conversation for the participants that they had not explored before. Participant 2 stated, *'we had a conversation about it afterwards, where we were saying that it was nice to just even talk to someone else about it—because it was positive, but just to get other people's views on policies to see where other people are coming from and to try and put things into perspective that way.'* He also stated that it reminded him of the reasons he became a teacher, and that although there were policies that were important to the job, it was also nice to recognise that other people also navigated these policies in order to do what they thought was right. Participant 1 stated, *'with this sort of job, you always think you're different, or if you're doing something that you're probably not meant to be doing that you're the only person.'* Through being involved in this research, the participants learned that they were not alone in their *'selective rebellion'* and that *'everyone's sort of doing the same thing or has the same opinions and expectations and stuff like that. It's nice.'*

Participant 3 also stated, *'I think that this is a very unique experience anyway that we won't, well, I don't think I'll experience anything like that again, as you said, the distillation of like the meaning of your thoughts by trying to think about it for such a long time and get an image together, then discussing it, then filtering it all down into one person's interpretation, and then producing the artwork, it's a very unique experience.'* The discussion of the teacher participants' thoughts and feelings reflected the reasons I chose to conduct my research in this way. They appreciated the time needed to select an image and realised the power and validity of their own interpretations. They also had the opportunity to explore how other teacher participants felt about policy, which they may not have done

before. They resonated with the uniqueness of the experience and recognised the power of the artist's involvement as a fellow creator and interpreter.

In this chapter, a real sense of positivity was exuded by the teacher participants. They explored not just their survival in the teaching profession, but their ability to thrive. The narratives, images, focus groups, the artist and the artefacts combined to create rich, interesting and sometimes unexpected data, the theoretical implications of which will be discussed in chapter 5.

Chapter 5 – Critical Discussion of Emergent Themes

In this chapter, I discuss how the data presented relates to the discussion of literature and theory previously explored in this thesis. To establish the participants I refer to in this chapter, I explicitly reference whether I mean the teaching participants only, the artist as a participant, or all of the participants. The use of IPA in this research is discussed further in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

5.1 Critical Discussion in Relation to the Literature

5.1.1 The Teaching Participants' Ideas of Professionalism

The participants were presented with the question, 'How do you navigate your own values and professionalism in the current policy climate?' They were then left to understand and interpret this question in their own way. The teachers in this study recognised the importance of policy as a structural feature by which professional standards can be observed (Reid, in press, 2000). The football analogy discussed in chapter 4 demonstrates the recognition of the need for rules and structure within the teaching profession and reflects the need for the legitimisation of the teaching profession and ensuring that professionals are limited within the work place (Shocklock, 1998). The teacher participants understood and recognised the importance of competence, knowledge, and personal conduct (Kasowe and Muropa, 2014) as imperative aspects of their profession, but they seemed to feel that their competence was questioned through policy. The teacher participants discussed the dichotomy between what was expected of them in the policy climate and what they felt was right, demonstrating the paradox between the individuality of teachers and the hegemonic nature of the educational policy which informs their perceived professionalism (Ball, Braun and Maguire 2010). They recognised that the

expectations of professionalism within their profession were a means by which they could be controlled and monitored (ibid) an expectation which they also recognised as a necessity in order to ensure that there were clear guidelines for teachers. They echoed the sentiments of Lawn (1989), Shocklock (1998) and Biesta (2007), that there needs to be a movement from ‘outsider’ policy making in education and a movement towards embracing the individual in educational policy. In fact, the teacher participants who participated in this research seemed to recognise this and quietly created their own understanding of what professionalism means in teaching; according to some participants, this directly correlated to understanding what was best for their students.

5.1.2 Autonomy

The teaching participants exemplified the assertions of Bottery and Wright (1997) in that they believed that autonomy and expertise were pivotal to the teaching profession. Conversely, however, the teaching participants spoke quite a bit about feeling a lack of trust within the teaching profession; the volume of policy made them feel they were not trusted by ‘higher-ups’ in their institutions (Coffield, 2006; Foster, 2005). They spoke about feeling not trusted as professionals to make decisions to improve their classroom practise and their students, something Sykes (1987) has proposed is key to defining teacher professionalism. Fundamentally, the teacher participants in this study mirror the findings of the PricewaterhouseCooper (2001) study, which recommended that, to combat the lack of autonomy teachers felt, greater autonomy needed to be granted to teachers and the need for risk-taking needed to be recognised. Teachers should be allowed to have autonomy over their own professionalism and not be measured against a set of standards that do not take individuality into account (Sachs, 2000).

Allowing teachers' narratives to inform the way teacher professionalism is established gives them a sense of autonomy and to feel as though both they and their professional judgment are trusted (ibid). Rather than creating a sense of autonomy among the teaching professionals and recognising an unpredictable environment, educational policy instead furthers the sense of unpredictability in teachers' daily lives by insisting upon hegemonic policy implementation that teachers must sift through what works to determine a 'best-fit' model (Al-Hinai, 2007). There has been a call to move towards greater autonomy for teachers and to embrace teacher voices by encouraging internal school evaluations (Wrigley, 2012).

5.1.3 Doing it for the Students

The teaching participants repeatedly discussed doing 'what was best for the students' and felt that the key to policy was whether it was ultimately beneficial to the pupils. They wanted to ensure that their lessons and classrooms encouraged a creative classroom environment and felt that some aspects of policy hindered that. The role of the teacher is to encourage critical curiosity, growth, and learning in their students, and measurable targets are often an inappropriate way to define professionalism in the teaching profession (McGrettick, 2005). The teaching participants discussed selecting the policy that they believed worked best for their pupils; it was important for them they did the right thing for their pupils (ibid).

The teacher participants also recognised that the students in their classroom were human beings and therefore interacted and were interacted with in different ways. Their students have different backgrounds and experiences and therefore display differing

behaviours highlighting the fact that a hegemonic approach to policy may not be appropriate for an individual student or a cohort of students (Day, 1997).

5.1.4 The Importance of Personal Narrative

By the time we reached the final focus group, in which the teaching participants met with the artist and viewed the artwork for their first time, Participant 3 had stated that every individual had a different ethos, and policy makers needed to recognise this. The teaching participants were presented with the culmination of the combination of their individual narratives in the form of the three artefacts. This demonstrated the importance of their individual narrative in the creation of a unified whole. This reflects of the need for individual narratives to be considered when policy is created and implemented (Sachs, 2000). As I previously stated, Participant 1 was frustrated by not being able to see his image in the art piece; he had imagined some sort of collage in which his image (or he) would be immediately recognisable. It was almost as if this was a metaphor for teachers' inability to see their individuality in policy; the complexity of the individual and the ever-changing working environment should be clearly signposted in policy (Barber, 1995). By exploring their own narratives and watching someone else explore them, the teaching participants saw that policy enactment can only take place through an individual lens, which mean that it must be interpreted individually. The exploration of each other's narratives and seeing their own individual narrative also allowed them to realise that others that felt the same way; they were empowered by the feeling that they were not alone (Kainan, 1995; Witherall and Noddings 1991; Mitchell, 2008).

5.1.5 Addressing the Unfortunate Themes: The Reality of an Unsustainable Workload

The teaching participants recognised their inability to enact every expected policy. For them, policy includes many unrealistic expectations. Participant 4 stated that they believed that the policies they were expected to enact were guidelines for a perfect scenario. This reflects the Department of Education (2017) report which investigated teacher workload and found that 93% of teachers felt that workload was a major issue in the profession. This survey highlighted that teachers were spending too much time on general administrative work. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, this report was based on recommendations outlined in 2003 and in 2018, administrative work was still cited as a major issue in the professional lives of teachers. Participant 5 submitted an image and narrative that showed teachers crumbling under the weight of the profession, reflecting the volume of policy as potentially damaging for professionals (Ball, 2008). The teaching participants discussed ‘ticking the boxes’ for the ‘higher-ups’, which mirrors Galton and MacBeath’s (2008) discussion of the ‘policy police’ and the dissatisfaction that teaching professionals feel with the unrealistic administrative workload policy creates.

5.1.6 Addressing the Unfortunate Themes: The Reality of Stress and Burnout and Creating a Rebellion

In Chapter 2, stress and burnout were highlighted as an unfortunate theme in the literature, but none of the participants mentioned them in the initial data collection or either of the focus groups. The artist participant also commented that they saw real positivity within the images presented to them; this positivity inspired artefacts that represented choice and growth rather than stress and negativity. The teacher participants described the unrealistic expectations of the current policy climate, but they were often jovial about

shirking certain policies to manage their workload. I appreciate that it is possible that an individual participant or number of participants may not have wanted to speak negatively about how they navigated their morals and values in their current policy climate for a variety of reasons. As a profession, teaching is characterised by survival rather than development, particularly with policy that regularly changes (Day, 2000); however, the teachers who attended the focus groups did not seem to be simply ‘surviving’.

Teachers are more vulnerable to work-related stress, burnout, and psychological distress which is a theme that emerges repeatedly in the literature surrounding teachers and policy (Kinman et al., 2011). The teacher participants in this research seemed to recognise that psychological distress is a genuine risk factor for them, and Participant 4 explicitly stated that teaching was an all-consuming profession, and they used to heavily criticise themselves if they did not complete all policy ‘by the book’. Their means of survival, as other participants explicitly mentioned, was to circumvent policy and trust their own decision-making, which seemed to leave them in a position to enjoy their profession by making decisions to benefit their students. It seemed that the teacher participants felt that autonomy over policy and the establishment of their own ‘best-fit’ model in their professional practice allowed them to be comfortable in their professional choices, therefore creating a sense of personal well-being that was solidified by the knowledge that they were doing what was best for the pupils.

5.1.7 Addressing the Gaps in the Literature

In chapter 2, I explored the gaps in the literature, which demonstrated the lack of visual methods used in IPA in the field of educational research. The visual is useful in educational research (Metcalf, 2016), and the data in this study demonstrate that utilising

images and visual materials can be a useful tool to generate rich data. The visual can also be used to prompt conversation around a topic, as all the teaching participants in this research chose their own image, which gave them a sense of ownership over their own interpretation. A conversation about the use of the visual in educational research is needed, as is the recognition that it creates rich, useful data (Pauwels, 2011). In this case, the use of the visual allowed the teaching participants to see the power of interpretation, and it facilitated in the creation of rich data.

The use of images in this study allowed the teacher participants and the artist to explore the power of their own interpretation; in the case of the artist, that power was used to create something new. The images in this research were a conduit through which conversations were created and interpretations were explored; the individuality of the teaching profession was demonstrated through the individuality of the images, but the teachers' sameness was also captured. They could explore how their images differed and how they were often similar; often, they pursued the same goal, and their images had a thread of similarity which could be used to create something new.

5.2 Critical Discussion in Relation to the Methodology

5.2.1 Ways of Knowing, Using Visual Methods, and Looking and Seeing

As IPA is predominantly used with semi-structured or structured interviews (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), it was difficult to postulate how the use of images would allow in-depth data analysis. The use of images in this research was multi-layered; first, the teaching participants selected their own images; second, they viewed and responded to each other's images; third, the artist participant used the images to create an artefact; and finally, the teaching participants responded to these artefacts. The visual shaped this

research design, much as the visual shapes the way we experience the world and offers a representation of it (Rose, 2016). The teacher participants and artist participant in this research both offered images and artefacts of their own interpretation of the brief, and these were then subject to further interpretation, thus creating avenues in a discussion that perhaps would not have been explored using the traditional methods of IPA. The teacher and the artist participants were made aware of what was ‘unseen’ about their chosen images and I as a researcher was made aware of what was ‘unseen’ in the professional lives of teachers by shining a light on the images (Foster, 1988). A fundamental basis of using interviews in research is to create a conversation with purpose, and in this research, the images served as a conduit through which our purpose was created (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The necessity of using idiography in IPA allowed for an in-depth analysis of each individual participant, giving equal importance to each participant to discover universal emergent themes.

I explored the literature of ‘seeing’ in chapter 2, and the response of the teacher and the artist participants to the images demonstrates the ‘seeing’ that is posited by Prosser (2011) and Metcalfe (2016). In this view, seeing is the act of elucidating meaning from data in educational research and the act of seeking meaning, both of which the teacher and artist participants in this focus group explored.

5.2.2 Ontology

From an ontological perspective, I tried to ensure that I embraced the constant flux of reality in which the teacher participants and the artist existed (Brundrett, 2013). To embrace this, I also tried to ensure that the interpretation had multiple layers. The levels of interpretation that make this thesis unique ultimately reflected the multidimensionality of

life. The initial data collection, followed by two focus groups, allowed the teacher participants to explore the ‘truth’ of their relationship with policy. They could openly discuss policy and how they navigated their values and professionalism in the current policy climate, recognising the ‘truth’ of their own experiences and how it compares to the experiences of others in a similar context (Bridges, 1999; Foulkes, 1976). The participants could identify the differences between the ‘truth’ of educational policy as guidelines for the perfect scenario (Participant 4) and their own personal ‘truth’ of how they managed it. The exploration of the individuality of ‘truth’ let the teacher participants gain a sense of the validity of their own experience and recognise it as important and valid. In Chapter 3, I discussed the importance of recognising the truth of the individual in relation to the education system as a whole (Berger and Luckmann, 1967), which is demonstrated in the findings in that the teacher participants and the artist spoke candidly about the way in which they sought their own ‘truth’ within policy; this ‘truth’ concerned choice, and for the teacher participants, the betterment of students.

5.2.3 Epistemology

The theoretical basis of this study was interpretivism, which encourages the development of an understanding of the world that the participants live in and their construction of meaning (Blaikie, 2000). The design of this research allowed multiple interpretations of the data by the participants and researcher. This study embraced the importance of narratives and exploring and interpreting personal narratives as a way to make sense of the data (Schutz, 1963). These narratives created a rich pool of data for me to explore and address the research questions.

It was important to ensure that this study embraced human interpretation and participant perspectives (Sartre, 1946), and I tried to ensure that each participant was given the space to interpret the research question in their own way, and to interpret their own narrative, those of others, and an ‘outsider’s’ interpretation of them. In this way, the data collection process led to rich conversations of the teachers’ experience (Connolly and Clandinin, 1990). This research also allowed the participants to explore their relationship with policy and those of others’ in a way that produced recognition and validation (Frogget and Chamberlayne, 2004).

There has been a call for educational research to use alternative methods and to explore the complexities of personal narratives (Griffiths and MacLeod, 2008). This research has demonstrated that it is fruitful to take risks in educational research, and that using a multi-method approach can create layers of data which both the participants and the researcher can explore.

5.2.4 Positionality and the Use of the Artist

I did not know if using an artist in this research would work or even be beneficial, but I believe it facilitated further insight into the thoughts and discussions of the teacher participants and allowed for an ‘outsider’ perspective. The work of Grayson Perry was an inspiration in the design of this research (2014). I was fascinated by his ability to meet groups of people and create an artefact that he believed best represented them and witnessed their responses to these artefacts. I was aware that I would not be able to be an outsider in this research (Reid, 2005) and that bracketing (Husserl, 1927) would be a difficult task. I attempted to embark on a reflexive practice helped me be aware of my own presence (Stenhouse, 1976). The artist created artefacts that gave both the teacher

participants and me an ‘outsider’ perspective; they interpreted the images and used them to create something new that represented the teacher participants. Thus, the teacher participants could see how their relationship with policy was perceived.

The use of the artist and the artefacts created a space for reflection for all participants in this research. As the researcher, I was able to watch the participants interact with each other’s thoughts and ideas and interact with my research questions. For the artist, they were able to see how people interacted with their artwork. The use of the artefact allowed for the teaching participants to have time to further reflect upon their images and narratives. It encouraged the participants to explore the power of interpretation and how interpretations can differ from person to person and it also allowed for them to see the importance of the ideas of the individual in relation to the finished product. As a researcher, using images allowed for me to have a definite point of discussion in the initial focus group. It also helped me to frame my questioning in a way that removed my own negative perspective. The images allowed for me to be able to create a method of questioning that was based upon the participants responses to the images rather than based on my perceptions of the research questions. In the final focus group, Participant 2 stated that *“Doesn’t it tie in perfectly to the question though? It’s like looking through our own lens. It’s the same policy. It’s the same piece of artwork. We’re all looking through our own lens at it and we’ve got different interpretations.”* The artefact demonstrated to the participants the power and the value of interpretation. Participant 2 also went on to say *“I don’t think I’ll experience anything like that again, as you said, the distillation of like the mean of your thoughts by trying to think about it for such a long time and get an image together, then discussing it, then filtering it all down to one person’s interpretation, and then producing*

the artwork.” The use of the artist and the creation of the artefact is representative of the creation of an objective object that is still subject to scrutiny and interpretation by the individual.

The use of the artefact encouraged me to remain reflective throughout this process but also demonstrated the power of positivity in the teaching profession. The artefacts themselves represented the room to grow that comes with the choices that teachers make each day. It reminded me that policy does not have to be punitive but can be a means to explore a ‘best fit’ model for an individual teacher and class. Participant 1 spoke about feeling “*spiritual*” because of the artefact but more specifically their input into the creation of the artefact. As a researcher, it made be question whether teachers would be more responsive to policy that they felt as though they were a part of, that they had autonomy over its purpose and its implementation.

5.3 Summary

This chapter has highlighted the links between the findings in this research and the pre-existing theory and literature surrounding it. Despite governmental research that clearly calls for greater autonomy for teachers and a reduction in workload, teachers still face issues raised in the literature decades ago. The teacher participants in this study demonstrated the importance of interpreting policy and of interpretation in research. The artist allowed the teacher participants to see their similarities clearly, thus providing me as a researcher a different perspective. This chapter has demonstrated that the literature around the relationships between teachers and policy seems to primarily focus on the negative impact governmental and local policy has on teachers, but this thesis has demonstrated that teachers create ways to learn to survive and thrive in the current policy

climate. This research has reinforced the need for autonomy in the teaching profession and that without autonomy, teachers will continue to seek out autonomy in their own way. Perhaps they will refuse to comply with a homework policy like Participant 9 or perhaps they will “*take the rap on the knuckles*” and shirk policy for the betterment of their pupils. This thesis has demonstrated a need to explore further the relationship with teachers and policy in a way that moves away from the current literature. On the 11th of October 2019, the Department for Education published the most recent Teacher Workload Survey. This survey concluded that while there have been attempts to reduce workload in recent years, only a small minority of teachers report that their workload has actually reduced with notable minorities reporting that their workload has actually increased due to the attempts to reduce workload. What is clear from this report and from this survey and from this research is that there needs to be a shift in the narrative around teachers and policy. Recommendations of this ilk have been made for years and are not proving successful in improving the policy climate for teachers. This research shows that perhaps there needs to be a discussion with teachers around the ways in which they are surviving and thriving in teaching.

Methodologically, this research has demonstrated that visual methodologies can be used with IPA to create and analyse rich and in-depth data. The participants created meaning by seeing the unseen in their own images and in each other’s images. This research takes a theoretical basis that is grounded in the fundamental elements of IPA and uses them to help analyse the responses of participants to visual cues. This research embodies the hermeneutical circle as discussed in chapter 3 (3.16) and represents the importance of the individual steps taken to create a holistic end result. The images, narratives, focus groups

and artefacts embodied the hermeneutical circle in new ways in terms of illuminating the relationship between individual details and overall understanding. Each individual step of this research informed the next step and allowed for in-depth interpretation and analysis of the data gathered. Each image and narrative had an important role in informing the discussion of the teacher participants and each image had an important role in informing the creation of the artefacts. As previously discussed in chapter 3, there have been criticisms of the seeming never ending cyclical nature of the hermeneutic circle. While this research had an 'end' in the form of the revelation of the artefacts in the final focus group, the data collected continues to inform my professional life and seemed to inspire the teaching participants to have conversations about their professional life more. The phenomenological, hermeneutic approach of this research which has championed the interpretations and meaning making of the participants and the researcher has demonstrated that the established methodological underpinnings of IPA can be used to explore educational research in new and creative ways. The rich data that has been created in this research is demonstrative of the ability for IPA to be used in a way that moves away from traditional semi structured interviews.

Chapter 6 – Discussion of Findings and Implications

The previous chapter demonstrates the complex and sometimes fraught relationship that the teachers in this study have with the policy that surrounds their professional lives and professional identity. We explored their ideas about policy through images and the interpretation of each other's images. Their stories, narratives, and discussions provide and insight into the attitudes and feelings of the participants about the impact policy has in their everyday lives. It demonstrates the feelings of not being trusted, of the lack of autonomy that teachers face, and the weight of expectations. It also concerns their positivity about their jobs and their recognition that the pupils must always come first. The purpose of this chapter is to explore whether this research is IPA as IPA traditionally uses structured or semi structured interviews in the data collection process, its limitations, its contribution to knowledge and the implications of this research for professionals. In this chapter, images from the participants will be used for illustrative purposes.

6.1 How is this IPA?

The most significant difficulty that I have experienced in the analysis stage of this research has been the question of whether it can be considered IPA. As I have mentioned in previous chapters, IPA is primarily used when analysing semi-structured interviews, and I struggled to find evidence of it used in this type of multi-layered research project, particularly with an emphasis on visual interpretation. While I had initial issues with generating the images and finding an artist, the research process itself ran smoothly, and the participants embraced the idea and explored their own ideas and interpretations in a way I never originally imagined. It was only after the research was completed that I began

to question whether or not this research was true IPA, or whether I applied an framework to my research that perhaps did not quite fit.

When completing the analysis stages of this research, I used the steps outlined in the IPA literature; I ensured that the number of participants was small according to the IPA guidelines, I embraced the idea of a shared interpretive experiences, and I embraced the idea of idiography in order to closely explore the interpretations of each individual within the research in order to contribute to the collective narrative surrounding teachers and policy. According to Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012), the primary role of IPA research is to investigate how individuals make sense of their experiences, which I tried to emulate in this research. By allowing the participants to be in control of their own interpretations throughout this process, they made sense of their own experiences and showed me as the researcher how they did so. Through the use of a structured exploration of their own and each other's photographs, the participants did this and compared their experience to that of others in a way that transcends individual interviews or a traditional focus group. Meeting the participants twice let them reflect upon the research process, how they felt about their own interpretations of the policy climate, and how others interpreted them. Therefore, both participants and researcher engaged in IPA, not just the researcher.

I felt that introducing the artist into this research was an interesting way to further explore the idea of interpretation. Although IPA encourages the recognition that the researcher ultimately offers interpretations of the data, I was interested in exploring the idea of having an 'objective' interpretation. This reflects the phenomenological aspect of IPA, in which there is an emphasis on how the participants perceive the events they experience on a daily basis in their professional lives. This emphasis on their perspectives

prevents the research from being a mere description of what the participants experience, and it enables an exploration of their perspective and those of others who experience the same phenomena. One facet of IPA is that the researcher steps into the shoes of the participant while being mindful of the fact that this is not entirely possible. By being active as a researcher, I obtained an in-depth view of the participant's experiences; I could listen and observe as they questioned each other, but I could also question them further if I felt I needed clarification. The act of making sense of the participants' world was both an individual and collaborative effort; the participants created their images and narratives, which were then discussed and explored as a group. The artist received their images and created the artefacts individually; the group also discussed and explored these. This dynamism is a key aspect of IPA, and in traditional IPA research, the emphasis is on the researcher's interpretations. I have tried to create an environment where the participants explore the interpretation in different ways.

This analytical process within IPA is often described as being a double hermeneutic or a dual interpretation process (Smith & Osborn, 2008), wherein the participants make meaning of the world around them; subsequently, the researcher decodes that meaning and attempts to make sense of it in relation to the research questions. In this study, however, I have added another element to this which can be embedded within the framework of IPA: exploring another interpretation using an 'outsider', in this case, the artist. I believe that this 'third interpretation' adds another layer of meaning-making to this process. When the original participants faced their artefacts, they were encouraged to explore a new interpretation of their original images. This allowed them to further explore their intended meanings and whether they had changed. The introduction of a new way in which meaning

was made from their interpretations of everyday experiences created a rich, in-depth discussion into how meaning was made and how their representations were interpreted reflecting again the power and significance of the hermeneutic circle in this research.

IPA researchers are required to offer interpretations as well as ask critical questions (Pietkiewicz and Smith 2012) surrounding the data gathered. Within this research, there was ample time for the participants to explore their intended meaning. I was concerned throughout that I would apply a meaning to a phrase or an idea that perhaps was not the participant's intention. Although the researcher's interpretation is an integral part of IPA, I questioned whether I would inadvertently create a narrative that was not an accurate reflection because I existed within the same kind of institution as the participants. The use of the artist allowed the participants to reflect on their own narratives and ideas of their relationship with policy, and it allowed me to watch how they responded to an interpretation of their images. The introduction of this threefold means of interpretation creates the rich, comprehensive analysis heralded by IPA research.

Theoretically, the third orientation of IPA is the reliance upon idiography. Initially, idiography was an alien concept to me as a researcher, but it helped me unlock the rich tapestry that the data created. Idiography is the in-depth analysis of the individual cases and perspectives of the participants, and it permits the exploration of each individual case prior to producing or making any general statements (ibid). Through the research of idiography and how other IPA research has utilised it, I embarked upon the task of creating working documents for each of my participants and compiling their input into individual documents. These gave me a clear, concise picture of each participant and their response the initial question, the focus group, and the artist interpretation. This helped me clearly

see any emergent themes or patterns across participants and find the answers to my research questions.

As the aim of IPA is not to test hypotheses or make assumptions (Reid et al., 2005), I argue that this research does warrant the title of IPA research; it is an exploration of the phenomena of the participants as teachers despite not using methods that are traditionally used in IPA research. Both the participants and I could explore these experiences and discuss them in a way that none of the participants had previously experienced. Recognising the participants' experience and the use of idiography to analyse the data gathered allowed the exploration of emergent themes (the related recommendations are explored later in this chapter).

Traditionally, IPA relies upon the use of semi-structured and structured interviews as the exemplary method of data collection. The use of both types is seen as a way in which the participant can be encouraged to explore themes and ideas in a natural way. Their use also allows the researcher to construct questions to elicit the richest answers and discussions; in the case of semi-structured interviews, it allows the researcher to change questions to suit the flow of the discussion. Although I did not use individual interviews in this research, I did utilise the methods of 'good questioning' for IPA research as outlined by Smith and Osborne (2007). I ensured that the questions I asked in the original request for images and narratives and in the focus groups were neutral; I avoided jargon and assumptions of prior knowledge; I used open questions; I ensured that the participants were given ample time to think prior to answering questions; I clearly asked each question one at a time; and I monitored the impact that each question had and used minimal probes to explore it further if appropriate. During this process, I had minimal work to do, as the

participants explored and questioned one another's ideas and opinions throughout the focus group; my role instead was to steer the group, ensure that I was present, and ensure that ethical considerations were met. I felt my role in the focus groups was more of a facilitator. Although this may not be in line with the 'traditional' methods within IPA, it still served the purpose of creating a rich, interesting dialogue between participants and researcher that created data to be analysed and interpreted. Deeper still, this focus group allowed the participants to create a symbiotic relationship in which they created meaning individually and explored it together.

During the process of analysing the data, I utilised the idiographic method espoused by IPA research. The way the data was collected allowed the exploration of emergent themes for each participant and as a whole.

6.2 Limitations

There are limitations to this research that need to be addressed and understood. First, I began this process by harbouring anger and frustration at my career and the state of the education system in England as I saw it. Initially, I found that this hampered my progress, as my writing became polemic and I made assumptions and generalisations about the attitudes and narrative I would experience in this research process. It has taken significant self-reflection and time to ensure that my research was not marred by my own preconceived ideas about the relationship teachers have with policy; instead, my own situational understanding has enhanced it (Elliott, 1993). My own career as a teacher also allowed me to bring a theoretical sensitivity to the research; I understood the world in which the teaching participants operated (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). While this became a

part of my research process, I believe that I should have been more prepared for the self-reflection needed when embarking upon research with which I have a personal relationship.

Because I am an ‘insider’ in this study, it is impossible and impractical to state that my assumptions and biases did not influence it (Conrad, 1987). I attempted to ensure that my biases were addressed throughout the process and aimed to let the participants lead discussions and question each other where possible; this ensured that I did not allow my biases and assumptions to control the process and that the participants had the space to explore their own experience (Quest, 2010). Despite my attempts to ensure that the questioning process was encouraging and free of my own bias, it is possible that the direction of the focus groups was influenced by these assumptions. It is also important to note that my positionality in this research is likely to have had a subconscious impact, including the literature discussed during the literature review and the questions asked during the focus groups.

My position as a researcher and a working teacher may have influenced the participants’ responses. Although I was not explicit with the participants about my professional capacity, I was when approaching their head teachers for permission to request research participants; this may have been cascaded in the information given to them. As a result, it is possible that their narratives, images, and responses in the focus groups were influenced by their knowledge that I was ‘one of them’. It is also possible that, if they viewed me as a complete ‘outsider’, they may have had a more open or a more closed response within the focus groups. It is also possible that the framing of the questions I asked within the focus groups and my verbal or non-verbal reactions may have influenced how the participants responded during the research process (Weedon, 1987).

During the focus groups, I attempted to frame the questions so that I could take a back-seat role and allow the participants to take control of their own interpretations. Looking back, I perhaps would have asked more in-depth or more pointed questions, as is required in semi-structured interviews (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). I tried to ensure that each participant had a chance to speak and offer interpretation; nevertheless, it was clear after my first focus group that certain participants were more comfortable with speaking in an open forum and others perhaps found it more challenging. In retrospect, I am unsure what I could have done to change or alleviate this, as I firmly believe that the voices of all participants are equally as valid and that it is counterproductive to make them feel uncomfortable with their level of participation. Perhaps it would have been useful to use more targeted questioning in order to ensure more equality among the voices. Participant 4 for example, did not speak as much as the other participants in the focus group. They seemed comfortable in the process and offered their insights during the discussion but perhaps I could have used more targeted questions to address this.

During the process of facilitating the focus groups, I focused on verbal responses and perhaps did not pay as much attention to nonverbal responses. As I previously stated, I was concerned with ensuring that each participant's voice was heard as they desired, and at various points I noted nods of approval or general nonverbal consensus from the group. I question, however, whether there were nonverbal methods of communication that I perhaps did not acknowledge which could have allowed deeper analysis of the data. Although I appreciate that I did not consider video recording the focus groups, I wonder if doing would have allowed me to note or record nonverbal communication, particularly when the participants simply looked at each other's images. If I were to conduct research

of this nature again, I would record the focus groups using both audio and visual methods. In addition, I may have unknowingly influenced the participants' discussions with my own nonverbal reactions and responses.

A potentially obvious limitation of this research is the small number of participants. A key facet of IPA research is limiting the participant pool limited, and some IPA researchers recommend 10 participants maximum. I chose to have a maximum of 10 participants, and it could be argued that such a small research pool is a hindrance to answering any research questions (Charlick et al. 2016). As I stated in previous chapters, I did not seek a definitive answer to the research questions; this study was an exploration of feelings, thoughts, ideas, and the power of interpretation. I believe that it would have been incredibly difficult to perform meaningful data analysis using a larger number of participants (Hefferon & Gill-Rodriguez, 2011); however, it would be interesting in the future to complete the same research with different participants to establish more meaningful generalisations. In the context of IPA, generalisations are approached with caution (Noon, 2018) because of the relatively small participant pool. If similar studies are undertaken, a gradual accumulation of more meaningful generalisations could be made (ibid). As with any educational research, there are likely to be limitations that I have not considered, but I am interested in exploring them in further research.

6.3 What Does this Contribute to the Field of Educational Research?

This study raised several questions for me that I intend to address in future research. I became interested in the way research methods can be altered to find new, exciting ways to conduct educational research. When I designed the research methods for this study, I knew I wanted to do something fun and creative that would allow the participants to feel

they had created something through their participation in this research. I did not set out to push the boundaries of a well-established research method such as IPA; however, this thesis contributes a way to utilise IPA that is new and dynamic. It also shows that educational research methods can be devised that both embrace the traditional methods and explore new options that allow the creation of something new.

I believe that this study demonstrates the importance of time in educational research. I made a decision when designing my research methods that I would allow the participants extended periods of time to create their image and narrative, and that I would allow ample time between the two focus groups. I wanted to ensure that I did not meet the participants on a 'bad day'. I was mindful that if I met and interviewed a participant on a particular day, any negative events during their day might have impacted their responses. By allowing the participants time to think and consider their image and narrative submissions, I felt I would receive a more 'general' view of their experience of policy rather than a response dictated by a particular day.

The most important and most difficult aspect of this research was the risk involved. I refer not to ethical risks, but rather academic or research-based risks. I did not aim to design research riddled with risk, but the multi-method approach I created required a certain amount of risk to succeed. I believe that educational research can benefit greatly from embracing risk and moving away from repetitive, narrowly applied studies and instead drawing upon multiple inquiry traditions (Harwell, 2011). This does not mean that I wish to delegitimise the educational research designs that are currently widely used; rather, I wish to demonstrate that varying research designs can be used to conduct rigorous education inquiry (ibid). Risk thus became an integral part of this research. The participants

self-selected, which could have meant that I had no participants, and I nearly had none, when no one initially responded to the call for participants. I had to risk finding an artist who would be willing to work with a thoroughly ambiguous brief, and I found two, which was ultimately fortunate because one of them had to drop out of the project. I then had to risk that the artist would produce the work in the time required and the participants would receive it well or at least be willing to discuss it. Finally, I had to take the risk that the study come together in a meaningful way and be robust enough that I could analyse the data with both depth and clarity.

Going forward, I hope that the design of this study gives future researchers the confidence to explore multi-method educational research, to explore the established methods used within methodological frameworks such as IPA, and to be confident to embrace and transcend those methods. Calling for a move away from ‘cookie cutter’ educational research methods, Harwell (2011) has asserted that educational research needs more risk-taking to ensure that what is studied and how are not limited. The removal of these limitations allowed for a freedom of exploration for both me as a researcher and the participants in this study. Traditionally, IPA calls for the use of semi-structured interviews and by attempting utilise IPA in a different way, I was able to design a research method that encouraged thought and creativity from both the researchers and the participants. It also allowed for the teacher participants and the artist to take time over their images, narratives and artefacts giving them autonomy over their own participation in this research. It also gave me as a researcher and the participants the opportunity to deeply explore and continually reflect upon how we all navigate our own morals and values in the current policy climate.

Going forward I would also like to explore more research into the ways in which teachers are learning to thrive in their profession. Both professionally and personally, this research allowed me to accept the positivity of the teaching profession and to listen to other participants stories of triumph in the profession. There is a lot to be learned from listening to teachers explore their relationship with policy and this is something that I think could be explored in further research in the future.

6.4 Implications for Professionals

As an educator and a researcher, I was inevitably interested in the implications that this research could have for professionals. In this case, I believe that the term ‘professionals’ is twofold: it refers to both the teachers as professionals and policy-makers as professionals. In Chapter 2, I discussed the idea of teachers as policy-makers (Saunders, 1986), as they are the people on the ground who enact both governmental and local policy (ibid). The participants in this research demonstrated their means of survival within the teaching profession and the ways they navigated their own professionalism and values in the current policy climate. The participants were open, honest, and forthcoming with their experiences of the current policy climate and seemed able to avoid the polemic vitriol with which I initially struggled. They showed strength and resilience in a policy climate that often seemed impossible (Galton and MacBeath, 2008).

In the initial stages of this research, I believed that it was likely that the teachers would present a narrative that demonstrated the negativity that is often associated with the policy climate in the teaching profession (BBC News March 2015). Instead, what became abundantly clear were passionate narratives of survival and rebellion. The narratives that emerged from this research were of teachers finding ways to thrive in their profession by

circumnavigating certain policies. The teacher participants did not all espouse a narrative that was angry or bitter and none of them spoke of stress and burnout. Stress and burnout (as previously discussed) was something that the teaching participants sought to avoid through their selective rebellion. Of course, there were images in the initial data collection



Figure 17: Participant 9 Image, Appendix 2

that could be perceived as negative but upon reflection in the focus groups, these images were spoken of positively and used as a tool to demonstrate the teacher participants' quiet rebellion. This research has demonstrated that while the current policy climate may have negative implications for some teaching professionals as the previously discussed news headlines report, there

are also those professionals who are thriving in this environment. They seem to be navigating their own morals and values in the current policy climate by circumnavigating policy they often see as ineffective while still maintaining their love and passion for teaching. These participants did not use the opportunity to demonstrate all the ways they struggled; rather, they used it to show the lengths to which they were willing to go to ensure that their pupils were provided an education that was meaningful and holistic, thus reflecting Galton and MacBeath's (2008) assertion that the current policy climate encourages staff to seek support and avoid being isolated. While this should be commended, it is also important to recognise that, according to the teaching participants of

this study, prescriptive policy climate is simply not effective. A linear, 'top –down' approach to policy is causing the teacher participants in this study to feel a lack of autonomy.

Although these participants are not representative of the teaching profession as a whole, they demonstrate something important about educational policy: they ignore it as they see fit. During the focus groups, the participants were clearly comfortable with their peers. They did not speak about ignoring policy in hushed tones; rather, they often laughed at what they perceived to be the ridiculous volume of policy that confronted them, and they believed such policy was absurd and not very beneficial. Thus, they tried to gain agency in a constrained world (Harker & May, 1993). Their pragmatic approach to policy seemed to be an open secret. Going forward, there should be a conversation about why particular educational policies exist; what does educational policy aim to achieve? According to the participants in this study, all policy should emphasise the betterment of the students accessing education in their setting. Policy should be written and created with the students in mind but seems to, in an attempt to demonstrate policy adherence, become a box-ticking exercise that serves a purpose during inspections rather than having a definitive impact on the daily lives of pupils (Ball, Maguire and Braun, 2010). The participants also recognised that the sheer volume of policy was impossible, as there was simply too much to follow. Instead of seeing policy as prescriptive, they opted to select the policies they deemed beneficial for their classes and perhaps this is reflective of the need for policymakers at a governmental level and policy enactment in schools to recognise the ability of teaching professionals to identify the individual policies that are beneficial for them.

The participants often felt that the volume of policy, which produced a lack of autonomy, indicated a lack of trust in teaching professionals by policy makers both at a governmental and school-wide level (Foster, 2005). While the participants in this research were good-natured and jovial about their own acts of rebellion, it seems that these acts of rebellion were born of feelings of resentment for the stringent scrutiny they experienced through excessive policymaking (Coffield, 2006). They often could not see the point of policy, and an example is Participant 4 who



Figure 18: Participant 8 Image, Appendix 2

deviated from a set homework policy, achieved 100% hand-in of homework on time; they were then informed that they needed to revert to the policy despite the original policy resulting in a drop in homework submission. This sort of linear thinking frustrated the participants and caused them to question the value and purpose of some of the policies that existed within their institution. While this analogy is reflective of an individual policy in a school setting, it was an analogy by which Participant 4 demonstrated their frustration at their own lack of autonomy. They had found something that worked but was expected to revert to policy.

I believe that, to incite change in the education profession, policymakers (both governmental and local) need to listen. There are numerous news reports and headlines which report the rising numbers of teachers leaving the profession. When I first embarked upon this research, I believed that the way to invite change was to establish the negative

impact that policy may have on teaching professionals; in fact, what I discovered were the ways teaching professionals survive and manage the current policy climate. This research became a journey of discovery about the positive mental attitude of the teaching professionals who are thriving in the field. They believe that the way to survive is to ensure that the pupils come first; many of the participants provided examples of ways they had circumvented policy to ensure that their pupils were exposed to a positive educational environment. One participant discussed his refusal to complete an element of the policy in his school and was amused that he had the same discussions regarding this particular policy with his senior leadership team each year. His reason for refusing to complete this particular task was that he felt as though it did not inform his teaching, and the time he spent completing this task would harm his planning and marking.

There is an obvious need for policy in the teaching profession: it protects staff and students alike and creates goals, but the current policy climate has made participants feel



Figure 19: Participant 4 Image, Appendix 2

that they should rebel against it. They believe that policy needs to be reframed as guidelines to allow the subjective interpretation needed for teachers to appropriately manage each class. Simply put, top-down policy does not work; there needs to be a readjustment where teachers do

not feel they are committing acts of piracy when doing what they believe is right for their students. Teachers need to be consulted about policy in order to promote genuine,

meaningful discussions about the nature of policy and policy-making in schools. There needs to be a recognition that teachers are experts in their field and should be consulted about educational policy both at a local and governmental level. The participants in this study felt that much of the policy was simply box-ticking in an effort to prepare to appease Ofsted when inspections occurred. I also argue that this emphasis on inspections and scrutiny has created a policy fever, in which schools in England desperately try to ensure that each aspect of running their school is measurable (Gillard 2018; Ball, Maguire and Braun, 2012).

Conclusion

The preceding chapter offers several suggestions on how to improve the relationship between teachers and policy. The simple act of listening seems to be a key place to start. There needs to be a dialogue with teachers that is meaningful, with a view to the creation of a better working environment and this research was an example of how this could be interestingly and meaningfully facilitated. The creation of the artefact in this thesis gave the teacher participants a sense of understanding that their individual interpretation can be used to create something new. Perhaps the embracing of the individual needs to shine in the creation of educational policy both at a local and governmental level. The participants clearly identified the feeling of a distinct lack of autonomy within their roles as educators; they want to be trusted to make decisions for the best interest of their students. They did not feel trusted to make professional decisions about what worked best in their classroom for their pupils. This lack of trust seems to have given way to an underground movement of selective rebellion that recognises policy as an important facet of professionalism but also recognises its limitations. There needs to be a re-evaluation of the

purpose of policy with a re-emphasis on the importance of the best interests of the students and a movement towards greater autonomy for teachers (Wrigley, 2014). There is much that can be achieved to improve the professional lives of teachers, which could begin with the simple act of including the teachers in a discussion about what ‘works’ in their setting. This discussion needs to be a democratic conversation that is mindful of the interrelations between policymakers, teachers and pupils and allows for setting specific considerations because what works for one may not necessarily work for another (Biesta, 2007). There needs to be further reflection on the value of the input of teachers in the creation and the implementation of policy. It is clear from this research, that the teacher participants are not engaging fully with policy that is linear, ‘top down’ (Brighton, 2000) and instigated by the ‘higher ups’ but are instead quietly picking and choosing what is working for them. There needs to be discussion with teachers about their response to policy discussion that is not punitive but rather embraces the value of teachers’ professional judgement within their context. There needs to be a recognition that policy cannot be limited to an objective ‘what works for all’ narrative and there needs to be a critical awareness that the enactment of and engagement with policy is sophisticated and nuanced. Perhaps for schools, a discussion with teachers about their ability to thrive within their setting is more conducive to establishing effective policy. This thesis has demonstrated for me the positivity that is underpinning the current policy climate. The newspaper headlines and the continuous Department for Education surveys are predominantly showing a negative side of the story but through this research it has become clear that there is also an underlying element of resilience and rebellion.

The beginning of this process was difficult and filled me with a sense of uncertainty because so many elements of this research were unknown. I believe that educational research should strive to push research boundaries. In the beginning, I did not know if my research 'counted' as educational research. I believed that my research would not be taken seriously in an academic environment. It felt too risky and too unsure but I had known from the beginning what I wanted my research to look like so I persevered. Taking a risk can result in a rich data pool that allows the participant to feel they have created something and that someone is listening.

Final Reflection

I don't want to be bitter. I tell myself this on an almost daily basis, and after nearly eight years of teaching, I am choosing not to be. This process has been a bizarre and surprising roller coaster of a journey, and at the risk of sounding twee, I have learned so much about myself and my own relationship with the teaching profession.

At the beginning of this journey, I was angry and bitter, and my writing became polemic. This was not helpful. Allowing myself to write my feelings also allowed me to purge them, which in turn allowed me to carry on writing. I thought that, as I started with a reflection, it was important to finish on one, too.

On Sunday nights I still get 'the fear', and I still play the what-other-profession-can-I-do game (although this is being replaced with the if-I-won-the-lotto game). Something feels markedly different, though. I still love teaching. I absolutely adore my classroom and the laughter and the tears and the eternal drama of the teenage world. I love it when we read a piece of poetry, and you see the light in a student's eyes when they just 'get it'. I love the triumph of good exam results and watching students start new

journeys and new beginnings, but I'm still tired. I still wake up every morning and drag myself out of bed, but the anxiety-induced nausea has abated for now; perhaps it will return in time, who knows. I still have great, witty anecdotes at parties, but I also still get regularly overwhelmed and cry at the amount of marking I have to do.

I still don't believe that teachers are trusted, and I still believe that we lack the autonomy to make this job truly work – they say that when you find a job you love, you never have to work a day in your life. Unfortunately, that's not true of teaching. What I have learned is that you have to learn to let go of the guilt.

By speaking to and listening to the amazing participants of this study, I learned that they all love the day-to-day madness of the teaching profession, and those who took part in the interview stages had just learned to let go. They all loved their jobs; that was obvious. But they were also quietly rebellious. They had learned to do things their own way and to let go of the things they could not achieve. They seemed to recognise that policy is a necessity, but that policy should be enacted in a best-fit model. One told a story of how she had flouted the homework policy, created her own homework policy, and gotten a 100% success rate on submission day with a particularly difficult year nine class. She was then berated for not following policy rather than praised for achieving what seemed to be a mammoth fit. She was clearly frustrated by this, but she was not angry, and she did not bow to it. She asserted that she was going to keep doing it her way, but quietly. And through this anecdote, she laughed.

I take great pride in my classroom. I fill it full of colour and books that I think the pupils might like. Recently, I was told that I would now be required to change the displays in my classroom. Our academy chain wanted the classroom displays to be all the same. All

blue. I stood in my classroom when I was told this and I looked around. I thought of that participant and her homework policy and I decided not to change it but I also decided not to be angry. My classroom is still the same to this day, still awash with colours and books and still not 'academy chain blue'.

The revelation of the art pieces was a moment of joy – pure, unadulterated joy. I suppose I hadn't considered that fact that I might not actually like the art once it was completed, so the morning of collecting art pieces became riddled with anxiety (much like the Sunday night fear, but maybe more concrete). When those images were revealed to me and I realised that they were all about growth and choice, I realised that something beautiful was happening. I had started this research bitter and upset, perhaps vaguely hoping that the bitterness and upset that I was feeling would be validated by my research. Instead, I was challenged to recognise the parts of my profession that I fell in love with and have loved ever since. When I presented both the art and the artist to the participants, that feeling of creating something beautiful was validated. They felt humbled, and they felt touched that someone so removed, who knew so little about them, could create something so meaningful. They were watching themselves come alive and be immortalised in art, and someone had recognised the power to choose and grow that existed in each one of them.

For me, this research has reminded me of the good in teaching and the great teachers I have met — those selective rebels who quietly subvert the presumed 'best way' of doing things and figure out their own way to grow. What was interesting is that all of the participants I spoke to did this for the good of their students. They did not do this because they were lazy, anarchical, belligerent, or wishing to be difficult. By getting to know classes and individuals (sometimes for years), they were able to decide what worked

to get the best out of those students. These selective rebels taught me that policy is not inherently bad, which is how I felt in the beginning; rather, policy can be useful, and maybe teachers are not 'doing policy wrong'. Instead, there needs to be a recognition that policy is an ideal and relies upon interpretations using professional judgement; perhaps it is this that needs to be understood better. One candidate referred to an education system without policy as a football game without side-lines – there needs to be a framework within which we all work. How we chose to play within those side-lines should be at the discretion of the individual teacher and based on individual classes. One size most definitely does not fit all.

References

- Agre, P (2004). *What Is Conservatism and What Is Wrong with It?* <http://polaris.gseis.ucla.edu/pagre/conservatism.html> [Accessed 11th of August 2018]
- Al-Hinai, A., (2007). The Interplay Between Culture, Teacher Professionalism and Teachers' Professional Development at Times of Change in *Handbook of Teacher Education Globalization, Standards and Professionalism in Times of Change*. Netherlands: Springer
- Allen, L. (2015). Losing face? Photo-anonymisation and visual research integrity, *Visual Studies*, 30:3, 295-308, DOI: 10.1080/1472586X.2015.1016741
- Alvesson, M. (2002). *Understanding Organizational Culture*. London: Sage
- Arroll, M. A. (2015). Health Psychology and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. In M.J. Langweilder. & P. W. McCarthy (Ed.), *Methodologies for Effectively Assessing Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)* (p. 43-51). London: Singing Dragon.
- Avramidis, E. and Norwich, B. (2002). Teachers' Attitudes Towards Integration/Inclusion: A Review of the Literature, *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 17.2, p. 129–47.
- Bacchi, C. (2000). Policy as discourse: What does it mean? Where does it get us? *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 21(1), 45-57.
- Ball, S. (1991). *Politics and policy making in education*. London: Routledge
- Ball, S. (1993). What is policy? Texts, trajectories and toolboxes. *Discourse*, 13(2), 10-17
- Ball, S. (1994). *Education reform*. Buckingham [England]: Open University Press.
- Ball, S. (2008). *The Education Debate: Policy and Politics in the Twenty-First Century*, London: Routledge

- Ball, S., Braun A., Maguire, M. (2010). Policy enactments in the UK secondary school: examining policy, practice and school positioning, *Journal of Education Policy*, 25:4, 547-560
- Ball, S.J., Maguire, M., Hoskins, K., Braun, A. and Perryman, J. (2012). *How schools do policy*, London: Routledge
- Ball, S.J., Junemann, C. and Santorini, D. (2017). *Edu.net: Globalisation and education policy mobility*, London: Routledge
- Ball, S.J., Maguire, M., Hoskins, K., and Braun, A. (2011) Policy actors: doing policy work in schools. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 32(4), 625 - 639
- Barber, M (1995). Reconstructing the Teaching Profession. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, vol. 21, 1, p. 75–85
- Barber, N. (1984). *The Organisation as Curriculum*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis. Wright College: Berkeley
- Barnes, J. (2012). *What Sustains a Life in Education?*, England: Canterbury Christ Church University
- Barthes, R. (1977). *Image, music, text*. London: Fontana.
- Barthes, R., (1967). *The Death of the Author*. http://www.tbook.constantvzw.org/wp-content/death_authorbarthes.pdf [Accessed on 14/05/2018]
- Bell, H.R., (2010). *Ways of Knowing*, published in *Teacher*.
<http://www.hannahrachelbell.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Ways-of-Knowing.pdf>
[Accessed on 28/08/2018]
- Berger, J. (1972). *Ways of Seeing*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation, and Harmondsworth: Penguin.

- Berger, J. (2013). *Understanding a Photograph*, London: Penguin
- Berger, P. & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality* (Harmondsworth, Penguin).
- Biesta, G. (2007). Why “what works” won’t work: Evidence based practice and the democratic deficit in educational research, *Educational Theory*, 57 (1), 1-22
- Blaikie, N. (2000). *Designing Social Research*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Bleakly, A. (2006). ‘Writing with invisible ink: narrative, confessionalism and reflective practice’, *Reflective Practice*, 1 (1), 11-24
- Bleiklie, I. (2000). ‘Policy Regimes and Policy Making’, in *Transforming Higher Education* M Kogan et al. (eds), p. 53-87.
- Bolton, G. (2014). *Reflective practice: writing and professional development*. 4th ed.. London: Sage.
- Bolton, G. (2006). ‘Narrative writing: reflective enquiry into professional practice’, *Educational Action Research*, 14(2), p. 203-218. Doi: 10.1080/09650790600718076.
- Bolton, G. (2005). Taking responsibility for our stories: in reflective practice, action learning, and socratic dialogue, *Teaching in Higher Education*, 10:2, 271-280, DOI: 10.1080/1356251052000341048
- Bottery, M. & Wright, N. (1997). Impoverishing a sense of professionalism. *Educational Management and Administration*. 25, No. 1, 7-24.
- Braidotti, Rosi. (2011). *Nomadic Subjects embodiment and sexual difference in contemporary feminist theory* New York: Columbia University Press.

Bridges, D. (1999). *Educational Research: Pursuit of Truth or Flight into Fancy?* British Educational Research Journal. 25(5). 597-616.

Brighton, M. (2000), "Making our Measurements Count," *Evaluation and Research in Education* 14, no. 3/4 124- 135

British Library, (1870). *Synopsis of the Forster Education Act 1870*. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/synopsis-of-the-forster-education-act-1870>.

[Accessed 28 August 2018]

Brockbank A., McGill I., (2004). *The action learning handbook* London: Routledge

Brook, A. (2009). 'The Potentiality of Authenticity in Becoming a Teacher.' *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 41 (1): 46–59.

Brundrett, M., (2013). *Researching Educational Leadership and Management: Methods and Approaches*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Butt, G. Corresponding Author and Gunter, H. (2005). Challenging modernization: remodelling the education workforce, *Educational Review*. 57:2, 131-137

Callaghan, J., *Education in England, the history of our schools*. (Last updated: 31 March 2010) Available at: <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/speeches/1976ruskin.html> [accessed on 28.08.2018]

Carr, W. (Ed.), (1989). *Quality in Teaching: arguments for a reflective profession*. Lewes: Falmer Press.

Charlick, S., Pincombe, J., McKellar, L., & Fielder, A. (2016). Making sense of participant experiences: Interpretative phenomenological analysis in midwifery research.

International Journal of Doctoral Studies, 11, 205-216. Retrieved from <http://www.informingscience.org/Publications/3486>

Chickering, A. W. (2006). 'Authenticity and Spirituality in Higher Education: My Orientation.' *Journal of College and Character* 8 (1): 1–5.

Chickering, A. W., J. C. Dalton, and L. Stamm. (2006). *Encouraging Authenticity and Spirituality in Higher Education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Clandinin, D. & Connelly, F. (2004). *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Clarke, V. (2010). Review of the book 'Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research'. *Psychology Learning & Teaching*, 9 (1). p. 57-56.

Coffield, F. (2006). 'Running ever faster down the wrong road: an alternative future for education and skills', Inaugural lecture, Institute of Education, University of London, 5 December

Cohen, L; Manian, L. & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education*, (6 Ed). London: Routledge

Connell, R. W. (1985). *Teachers' Work*. Sydney: George Allen & Unwin. Connelly, F. M. and Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of Experience and Narrative Enquiry, *Educational Researcher*, 19.5, p. 2–14

Conrad, P. (1987). The experience of illness: Recent and new directions. *Research in the Sociology of Health Care*, 6, 1-31.

Cox, S., Drew, S et al (2015). Exploring ethical frontiers of visual methods, *Research Ethics* 2015, Vol. 10(4) 208–213

- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (4th Ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry and research design choosing among five approaches* (3rd Ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Crossley, D. (2015). An Education Worth Having: The Aspirations and the Development of the Whole Education Network in England. *European Journal of Education*, Vol. 50, No. 2
- Crotty, M (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*, London, Sage
- Dallmayr, F. (2009). Hermeneutics and inter-cultural dialog: linking theory and practice. *Ethics & Global Politics*, 2, 23-39.doi: <https://doi.org/10.3402/egp.v2i1.1937>
- Day, C. (1997). Teachers in the Twenty-First Century: Time to Renew the Vision, in Hargreaves, A. and Evans, R. (eds) *Beyond Educational Reform. Bringing Teachers Back*. Buckingham: Open University Press, p. 44–61.
- Day, C. (2000). Teachers in the twenty-first century: time to renew the vision, *Teachers and Teaching*, 6 (1): 101-115
- De Laat S (2004). *Picture perfect (?): Ethical considerations in visual representation*. Nexus 17: 122–149.
- Denzin, N.K. (1997). *Interpretive ethnography: Ethnographic practices for the 21st century*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- DfES, (2003). *Raising standards and tackling workload: a national agreement* (London, DfES)
- DfE (2017). *Teacher Workload Survey 2016* (London, DfES)

- DfE (2018). *Exploring teacher workload: qualitative research* (London, DfES)
- DfE (2019). *Teacher Workload Survey* (London, DfES)
- DfE, (2012). *Teachers' Standards* [Online] Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/283566/Teachers_standard_information.pdf [Accessed: 11th August 2018]
- Dilthey, W. (1976). *Selected Writings* (H. Rickman. Ed., Trans. And Intro.). Cambridge: CUP
- Doyle, W. & Carter, K. (2003). Narrative and learning to teach: implications for teacher-education curriculum, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 35(2), 129–137.
- Doyle, W. (2004). Heard any good stories lately? A critique of the critics of narrative in educational research, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 13(1), 93–99.
- Eatough, V. & Smith, J.A. (2008). Interpretative Phenomenological analysis, In C. Willig and W. Stainton Rogers (Eds), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 97, 483 – 498
- Eisner, E. (1992). Objectivity and educational research, *Curriculum Inquiry* 22, p. 9-16
- Elliott, J, (1993). (ed) *Reconstructing Teacher Education*, Falmer Press: London.
- Elliott, R., Fischer, C.T. & Rennie, D.L. (1999). Evolving guidelines for publication of qualitative research studies in psychology and related fields. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 38, 215–299
- Eraut, M. (1994). *Developing Professional Knowledge and Competence*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Esquivel, L. (2012). Hermeneutics of the Designed Image, *The International Journal of the Image* Volume 2, Issue 1

- Evans J., Rich, M., Allwood, R. and Davies, B. (2008). 'Body pedagogies: P/policy, health and gender', *British Educational Research Journal*, vol 34, pp 367-403
- Feyerabend, P., (1975). *Against Method*. London: Verso
- Finlay, L. (2011). *Phenomenology for therapists: Researching the lived world*. West Sussex, UK: Wiley – Blackwell.
- Flusser, V. (2000). *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, London: Reaktion
- Foster, A (2005). *Realising the Potential: a review of the future role of further education colleges*, London: DfES
- Foster, H., (1988). *Vision and Visuality*. Seattle, WA: Bay Press
- Foulkes, P. (1976). 'Theories of Truth', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 77p. 63-72.
- Frogget, L. and Chamberlayne, P. (2004). Narratives of Social Enterprise: From Biography to Practice And Policy Critique, *Qualitative Social Work*, 3.1
- Gadamar, H. (1990/1960). *Truth and Method* (2nd rev. edn). Ew York: Crossroad.
- Gail Kinman , Siobhan Wray & Calista Strange (2011). Emotional labour, burnout and job satisfaction in UK teachers: the role of workplace social support, *Educational Psychology*, 31:7, 843-856
- Galton, G., (2008). *Teachers Under Pressure*. Sage Pubns Ltd
- Garvey, B., Stokes, P. and Megginson, D. (2014). *Coaching and Mentoring: Theory and Practise*. 2nd edn. London: Sage Publications
- Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. W. (2009). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (9th edition). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

- Genn, Robert (2015). http://www.art-quotes.com/auth_search.php?authid=6945#.VWov8dJViko (accessed 30/05/2015, last updated 30/05/2015)
- Gillard, D. (2018). *Education in England: a history*
www.educationengland.org.uk/history
- Greenwood, M., Mir, R. Willmott, H., (2015). *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy in Organization Studies*, Routledge, p. 113
- Given, L. M. (2008). *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (Vols. 1-0) Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: 10.4135/9781412963909
- Griffiths, M and MacLeod, G. (2008). Personal Narratives and Policy: Never the Twain? *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol. 42, No. S1, 2008
- Grix, J. (2004). *Foundations of research*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Groundwater-Smith, S., & Mockler, N. (2009). *Teacher professional learning in an age of compliance*. Dordrecht: Springer
- Gubrium, A., Hill, H., and Flicker, S. (2013). A situated practice of ethics for visual and digital methods in public health research and practice: A focus on digital storytelling. *American Journal of Public Health*. Epub ahead of print 15 August 2013, doi: 10.2105/APJH.2013.3010
- Hall, S., (1997). Representation: *Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage
- Hammersley, M., and P. Atkinson. (1995). *Ethnography: Principles in practice*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

- Harker, R., & May, A. (1993). Code and habitus: Comparing the accounts of Bernstein and Bourdieu. *British Journal of the Sociology of Education*, 14(2), 169-178
- Hartley, A. (1983). 'Ideology and Organisational Behaviour', *International Studies of Management and Organisation*, 13, 3, p.26-7
- Hartley, D. (2006). 'Pulling us apart? Relativism and instrumentalism in contemporary educational research 1', *Educational Review*, 58(3), p. 269-272. doi:10.1080/00131910600747952.
- Harwell, M. in Conrad, C. and Serlin, R. (2011). *The Sage handbook for research in education*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications
- Hefferon, K., & Gil-Rodriguez, E. (2011). Methods: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. *The Psychologist*, 24, 756-759.
- Heidegger, M. (1962/1927). *Being and Time*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Henning, N., Dover, A. G., Dotson, E. K., Agarwal-Rangath, R., Clayton, C. D., Donovan, M. K., . . . Dunn, A. (2018). Navigating the contested terrain of teacher education policy and practice: Authors respond to SCALE. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 26(31)
- Historytoday.com. (2015). *The Story of Ogham* | History Today. [online] Available at: <https://www.historytoday.com/story-ogham> [Accessed 20/10/2019]
- Holliday, A.R. (2007). *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Huebner, D. (1996). Teaching as moral activity, *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 11(3), p. 267-275.
- Hughes, J and Sharrock. W, (1990). *The Philosophy of Social Research*, London, Longman (Second Edition)

Husserl, E. (1927). Phenomenology. For *Encyclopedia Britannica* (R. Palmer, Trans. And revised). Accessed on: [https://www.scribd.com/doc/60798124/Husserl-](https://www.scribd.com/doc/60798124/Husserl-Encyclopedia-Britannica-Article)

[Encyclopedia-Britannica-Article](#)

Hyman, P (2005). *1 Out of 10: From Downing Street Vision to Classroom Reality*, London: Vintage

Johanim Johari, Fee Yean Tan, Zati Iwani Tjik Zulkarnain, (2018). ‘Autonomy, workload, work-life balance and job performance among teachers’, *International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol. 32 Issue: 1, p.107-120,

Johnston, G. (2016). Champions for social change: Photovoice ethics in practice and ‘false hopes’ for policy and social change, *Global Public Health*, 11:5-6, 799-811, DOI: 10.1080/17441692.2016.1170176

Johnson, S., Cooper, C., Cartwright, S., Donald, I., Taylor, P., & Millet, C. (2005). The experience of work-related stress across occupations. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 5(1), 2–5.

Johnson, T. (1972). *Professions and Power*. London: Macmillan.

Johnson, T. (1984). Professionalism: Occupation or Ideology? Chapter 2 in *Education for the Professions*. Quis custodiet? Editer Goodlad S. Surrey: SRHE & NFER-Nelson, p. 17–25.

Jones, J.R., Huxtable, C.S., Hodgson, J.T., & Price, M.J. (2003). *Self-reported work-related illness in 2001/2002: Results from a household survey*. Sudbury, England: HSE Publications.

Jones, K. (2016). *Education in Britain: 1944 to the Present* (2nd edn), Cambridge: Polity Press

- Kainan, A. (1995). Forms and functions of storytelling by teachers, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 11(2), p. 163-172.
- Kasowe, R., and Muropa, B. C. (2014). Professionalism in Teaching in *International Journal of Innovative and Applied Research* Volume 2. Issue (3): 25 - 28
- Kogan, M., Bauer, M., Bleiklie, I. and Henkel, M. (2000). *Transforming Higher Education*, London: Jessica Kingsley
- Koro-Ljungberg, M., (2016). *Reconceptualizing Qualitative Research: Methodologies Without Methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kreber, C. (2007). 'What's It Really All About? The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning as an Authentic Practice.' *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* 1 (1): 1–4.
- Kyriacou, C. (2000). *Stress-busting for teachers*. Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes.
- Laerd.com. (2012). *Principles of research ethics / Lærd Dissertation*. [online] Available at: <http://dissertation.laerd.com/principles-of-research-ethics.php> [accessed 31/10/2018]
- Landridge, D. (2007). *Phenomenological psychology: Theory, research and method*. London: Pearson Education
- Larkin, M., Watts, S., & Clifton, E. (2006). Giving voice and making sense in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 102-120. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp062oa
- Lawn, M. (1989). Being caught in schoolwork: the possibilities for research in teachers' work, in:

Lawn, M. & Ozga, J. (1988). The educational worker? A reassessment of teachers, in: J. Ozga (Ed.) *Schoolwork: approaches to the labour process of teaching*, p. 81-98 (Milton Keynes, Open University Press)

Layder, D. (2013). *Doing Excellent Small Scale Research*. London: Sage

Lawson, J and Silver, H (1973). *A Social History of Education in England*, London: Methuen

Levinson, B., Sutton, M., and Winstead, T. (2009). Education Policy as a Practice of Power, in *Educational Policy*, 23 (6), 767-795

Levinson, B., Sutton, M., (2001). Policy as Practice Toward a Comparative Sociocultural Analysis of Educational Policy

Lietz, C.A., Langer, C.L., & Furman, R.F. (2006). Establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research in social work implications from a study regarding spirituality. *Qualitative Social Work*, 5(4), 441-458.

Mason, J (2002). *Qualitative Researching*, London, Sage, Second Edition

McCartan, K. and Robson, C. (2011) *Real World Research*. UK: Wiley

McGettrick, B. (2005). *Towards a framework of professional teaching standards*. {Discussion in education series <http://escalade.ac.uk/2004>}

McGilchrist, I. (2012). *The Mater and his Emissary – The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*, Hampshire: Hobbs the Printer Ltd.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge

Mertens, D. M. (2015). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology : integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods*. 4th ed.. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

- Metcalf, A. S. (2016). Educational research and the sight of inquiry: Visual methodologies before visual methods. *Research in Education*, 96(1), 78-86.
- Mezirow, J. (2000). Learning to think like an adult: Core concepts of transformation theory. In *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*, ed. Jack Mezirow and Associates, 3 – 33. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mitchell, C. (2008). Getting the picture and changing the picture: visual methodologies and educational research in South Africa, *South African Journal of Education*, 28: 365 – 383
- Moloney, S. (2011). Focus Groups as Transformative Spiritual Encounters in *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. 2010, 10(1)
- Moran, D. *Introduction to Phenomenology*. London: Routledge
- Morrison M (2002). What do we mean by educational research? In: Coleman M and Briggs A (eds) *Methods in Educational Leadership and Management*. London: Sage
- Mosteller, F., Light, R., and Sachs, J., (1996). Sustained Inquiry in Education: Lessons from Skill Grouping and Class Size. *Harvard Educational Review*: December 1996, Vol. 66, No. 4, p. 797-843
- Nagro S., Shepherd, K., Knackstedt, K., West, J. and Nagy, S. (2020). Bridging the Gap Between Research and Policy: Fostering Advocacy and Policy Engagement in Special Education Doctoral Students, *Journal of Disability Policy Studies* 2020, Vol. 30(4) 233–243
- Näring, G., Briët, M. & Brouwers, A. (2006). *Beyond demand–control: Emotional labour and symptoms of burnout in teachers*, *Work & Stress*, 20:4, 303-315, DOI: 10.1080/02678370601065182
- Newby, P., 2014. *Research Methods for Education*. 2nd ed. Oxon: Routledge.

- Noon, E. J., (2018). Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis: An Appropriate Methodology for Educational Research? In *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, Vol 6, Iss 1, Pp 75-83
- Novoa, A. (2002). 'Ways of thinking about education in Europe', in A. Novoa and M. Lawn (eds) *Fabricating Europe: The formation of an education space*, London: Kluwer, pp 131-55.
- NUT. (2008). *NUT history*. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.teachers.org.uk/members-reps/your-union/about-the-nut/nut-history>. [Accessed 8 September 2018].
- OECD (2014). *Teaching and Learning International Survey: TALIS 2013 Technical Report*. Paris.
- O'Neill, N. (2002). *A Question of Trust*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pauwels L (2011). An integrated conceptual framework for visual social research. In: Margolis E and Pauwels L (eds) *The Sage Handbook of Visual Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, p. 3–23.
- Perry, G.: *Who Are You?*, Season 1: Episode 3. 2014. Channel 4. 5 November 2014
- Pietkiewicz, I., and Smith, J., (2014). A practical guide to using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis in qualitative research psychology in *Czasopismo Psychologiczne – Psychological Journal*, 20, 1, 7-14
- Pink, Sarah 2001 *Doing Visual Ethnography: Images. Media and Representation in Research*. London: Sage Publications.

- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995). Narrative Configuration in Qualitative Analysis, in: J. A. Hatch and R. Wisniewski (eds) *Life History and Narrative* (London, Falmer Press), pp 5–23.
- Powell K (2015). Breathing photography: Prosthetic encounters in research-creation. *Qualitative Inquiry* 21(6): 529–538.
- Prosser, J. (1998). *Image-based Research*. London: Falmer Press
- Punch, K (1998). *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. London, Sage
- PWC (2001). *Teacher Workload Study*, A Report of a review commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills, London: PricewaterhouseCooper
- Quest, A. Del, (2014). 'Out of the Way and Out of Place: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the Experiences of Social Interactions of Bisexually Attracted Young People'. Dissertations and Theses. Paper 2002
- Ramaekers, S. (2006). 'No Harm Done: The Implications for Educational Research of the Rejection of Truth', *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 40(2), p. 241-257. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9752.2006.00507.x.
- Reid, A. (in press) A labour process perspective for analysing teachers' work, in: J. SMYTH (Ed.) *Teachers' Work in a Globalising Economy* (London, Palmer Press).
- Reid, A. & O'Donohue, M. (2004). Revisiting enquiry-based teacher education in neo-liberal times, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20, 559–570.
- Reid, H. and West, L. (2011). 'Struggling for space: narrative methods and the crisis of professionalism in career guidance in England', *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 39(5), p. 397-410. doi:10.1080/03069885.2011.566321.

- Reid, K., Flowers, P., and Larkin, M., (2005). Exploring lived experience in *The Psychologist* Vol 18 No 1
- Rein, M. (1983). *From Policy to Practice*, London: Macmillan
- Richardson, L. (1998). Writing: A method of inquiry. In *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials*. Ed. N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln. London: Sage
- Rose, G., (2016). *Visual Methodologies*. London: Sage
- Sachs, J. (2000). The Activist Professional. *Journal of Educational Change*, vol. 1, p. 77–95
- Sartre, J-P, (1946). *Existentialism and Humanism*. Translated from French by P. Mairet., (2007) York: Methuan.
- Sartre, J.P. (1956/1943). *Being and Nothingness*. New York: Washington Square Press
- Schleiermacher, F. (1998). *Hermeneutics and Criticism and other Writings* (A. Bowie, Trans.). Cambridge: CUP.
- Saunders, M. (1986). ‘Developing a Large Scale ‘Local’ Evaluation of TVEI: Aspects of the Lancaster Experience’, in D. Hopkins (1986). *Evaluating TVEI: Some Methodological Issues*, Cambridge: Cambridge Institute of Education.
- Schön, D.A (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Schutz, A. (1963). Concept and Theory formation in the social sciences’, in M. Natanson (ed.) *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, New York: Random House
- Sellar, S. and Lingard, B. (2013). ‘Looking east: Shanghai, PISA 2009 and the reconstitution of reference societies in the global education policy field’, *Comparative Education*, vol 49, pp 264 – 85.

Shocklock, J. (1998). 'Professionalism and Intensification in Teaching'. A case study of care in Teachers Work in the *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*. Vol.26, Issue pp177-189

Simon, B. (1965). *Education and the Labour Movement 1870 -1920*, London: Lawrence and Wishart

Smeyers, P. and Verhesschen, P. (2001). Narrative Analysis as Philosophical Research: Bridging the Gap Between the Empirical and the Conceptual, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 14.1, p. 71–84

Smith, J.A. (2004). Reflecting on the development of interpretative phenomenological analysis and its contribution to qualitative research in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 1, 39-54.doi: 10.1191/1478088704qp004oa

Smith, J.A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretive phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. London: Sage.

Smith, J. A., (1999). Identity development during the transition to motherhood: An interpretative phenomenological analysis, *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, 17:3, 281-299, DOI: 10.1080/02646839908404595

Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2003). Interpretive phenomenological analysis. In J.A. Smith (Ed.) *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (p. 51-80). London: Sage

Smith, J.A., Jarman, M. & Osborn, M. (1999). Doing interpretative phenomenological analysis. In M. Murray & K. Chamberlain (Eds.) *Qualitative health psychology: Theories and methods*

- Soder, R. (1991). The ethics of the rhetoric of teacher professionalism, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 7(3), p. 295 - 302
- Sontag, S. (1979). *On photography*. London: Penguin
- Somekh, B. (2005). *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. London: Sage
- Stenhouse, L. (1976). *An Introduction To Curriculum Research and Development*, London: Heinemann
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Sykes, G. (1987). Reckoning with the spectre, *Educational Researcher*, 16(6), p. 19-21.
- Thomson P (ed.) (2008). *Doing Visual Research with Children and Young People*. Abingdon: Routledge
- Tierney, W.G. (1987). 'Facts and Constructs: Defining Reality in Higher Education Organisations', *Review of Higher Education*, 11, 1, p.61-73.
- Tomkins, L. (2017). Using Interpretative Phenomenological Psychology in Organisational Research with Working Carers. In J. Brook, & N. King (Ed.), *Applied Qualitative Research in Psychology* (p. 86-100). London: Palgrave
- Tropp, A (1957). *The school teachers: The growth of the teaching profession in England and Wales from 1800 to the present day*, London: Heinemann
- Trowler, P., (2003). *Education Policy*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.
- Ulmer JB (2016). *Photography interrupted: A hypermodal assemblage*. *Qualitative Inquiry* 22(3): 176–182.

- Tuffour, Isaac. (2017). A Critical Overview of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: A Contemporary Qualitative Research Approach, *Journal of Healthcare Communications*, Vol 2 No. 4: 52
- Wagstaff, C., Jeong, H., Nolan M., Wilson, T., Tweedlie, J., Phillips, E., Holland, F., (2014). The Accordion and the Deep Bowl of Spaghetti: Eight Researchers' Experiences of Using IPA as a Methodology. *The Qualitative Report*, 19, 1-15
- Webster, L. & Mertova, P. (2007). *Using narrative inquiry as a research method: An introduction to using critical event narrative analysis in research on learning and teaching*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Weedon, C. (1987). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory*. London: Blackwell
- Wiles R, Prosser J, Bagnoli A, et al. (2008). *Visual ethics: Ethical issues in visual research. Review paper* (NCRM/011). ESRC National Centre for Research Methods, Southampton, UK.
- Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology*. Maidenhead: Open University Press
- Willmott, H. (1993). 'Strength is Ignorance; Slavery is Freedom: Managing Culture in Modern Organizations', *Journal of Management Studies*, 30, 4, p.515-52
- Wetherell, C. & Noddings, N. (1991). *Stories, Lives Tell: narrative and dialogue in education*. New York: Teachers College Press
- Woodhouse, J. (2012). The use of visual methodology in nursing. *Nurse Researcher*. 19, 3, 20-25.
- Wrigley, T. (2006). *Another School is Possible*, London: Bookmarks

Wrigley, T. (2014). Policy paper: *The politics of curriculum in schools*. Class: Centre for Labour and Social Studies: London.

Yardley, L. (2008). Demonstrating validity in qualitative psychology. In J.A. Smith (Ed.) *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to methods* (2nd edn, p.235–251). London: Sage

Appendix 1:



How do you navigate your own values and professionalism in the current policy climate?

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Emma Ozenbrook. The purpose of this study is to understand the relationship between teachers and policy in non-selective schools in Kent.

I would very much appreciate your input in answering following question: *How do you navigate your own values and professionalism in the current policy climate?*

You are required to take one photograph, which you think answers this question. You may take this photograph on any medium you wish but a simple picture taken on your phone and emailed will suffice. If you wish to take part in this and require any technical assistance, please contact me and I will assist in any way I can. Once you have taken your photograph, I would like you to explain in writing why you have chosen this image in no more than five sentences although it does not need to be this long. You will have approximately two weeks to complete this task and I would like you to email your responses to me by the **25/02/2018**. If this timescale proves difficult for any reason, just let me know and I will accommodate you as best I can. Further on in this study, you will be invited to meet with the other participants to discuss the images that have been presented. You will then be invited to view the artefact as created by the artist. Dates and locations of these will be emailed to you in advance.

To participate in this research you must be a fully qualified teacher in a non-selective school in Kent. If you wish to take part in this study, please email me a completed consent form (attached).

All data and personal information will be stored securely on a password protected personal laptop owned and used solely by the researcher. Data will be stored for five years after the completion of this study. All data from this study will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed). Data will be accessible to the researcher, supervisor and examiner. The artist will have access to the images only.

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.

I am very excited about this research and hope that you find it an interesting study to be a part of. I hope that you will discover some interesting things about your own attitudes towards professionalism and policy along the way! If you have any questions, please contact Emma Ozenbrook on 07711563113 or emma.ozenbrook2@mail.dcu.ie

Supervisor:

Name: Dr. Judy Durrant

Email: Judy.durrant@canterbury.ac.uk



CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: How do teachers navigate their values and professionalism in the current policy climate?

Name of Researcher: Emma-Jane Ozenbrook

Contact details:

Address: 24 Zealand Road,
Canterbury,
CT1 3RY

Tel: 07711563113

Email: Emma.ozenbrook2@mail.dcu.ie

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential
4. I agree to take part in the above study.

5. I give permission to be voice recorded for the purpose of this study.

6. I give permission for my image to be shared with an artist as part of this study.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Person taking consent
(if different from researcher)

Date

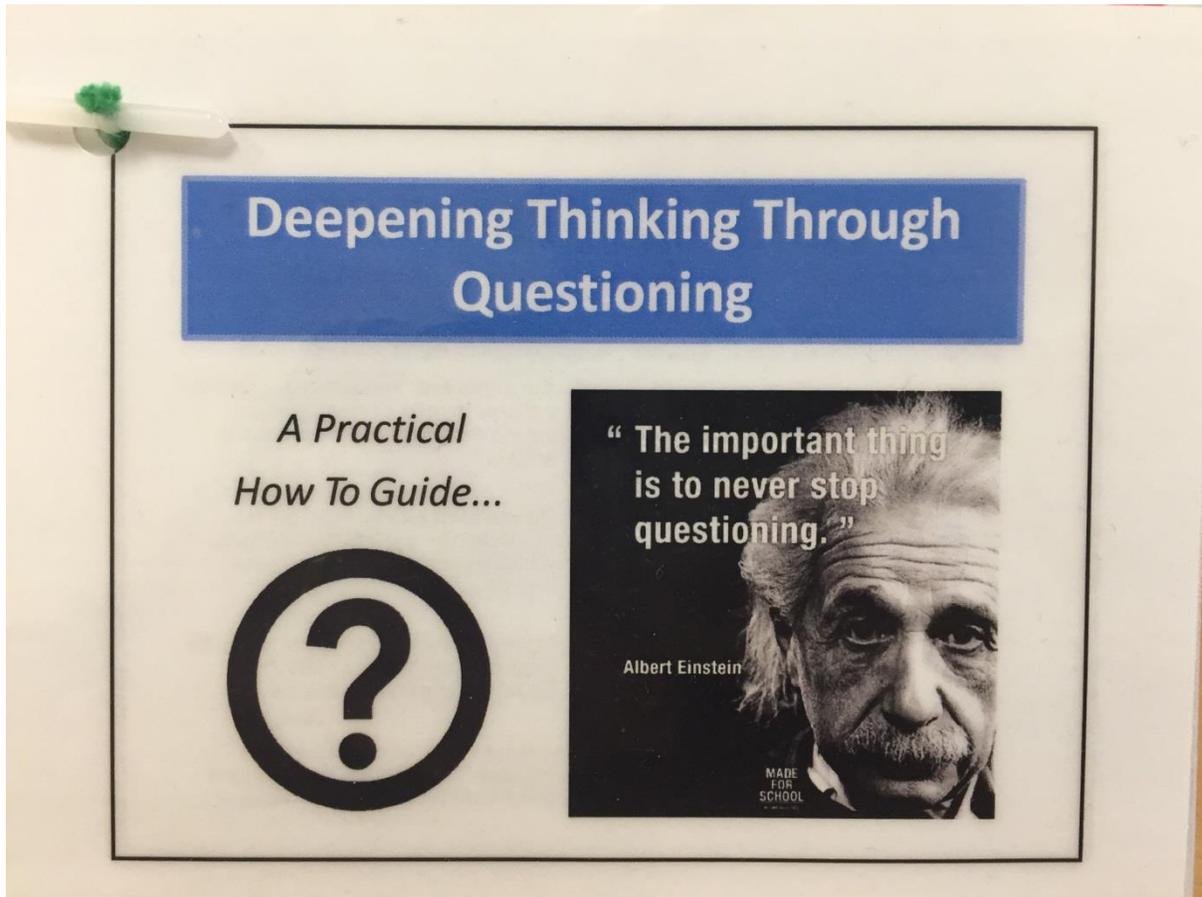
Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

Appendix 2:



I have chosen this image as I believe that educational practice and learning should be at the core of what schools do. This would seem so obvious that it should be a banal truism. Instead, I feel that the current policy climate is about a false accountability in which both students and their teachers lose out. As someone who looks to develop teachers one of my greatest fears is that as a profession we risk becoming increasingly deskilled due lack of autonomy and change. This change is about the exercise of political power rather than anything to do with improving the life chances and outcomes for our students.



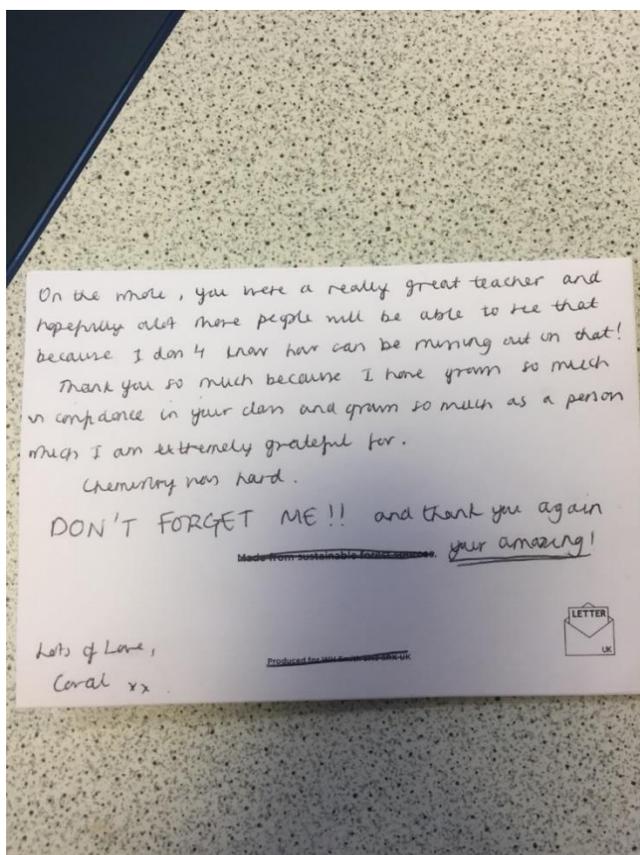
It trickles down and we have very little control of it. And shit rolls down hill!



I chose this picture as I think of policies as more like guidelines than actual rules. Teaching is already a consuming profession, and for me doing everything absolutely to the letter 100% of the time would be unsustainable. I have learnt to prioritise much more effectively over the four years I have been teaching. When evaluating my classroom practice, I used to question whether I had done things ‘by the book’ and would heavily criticise myself if I hadn’t. Now, my teaching practice is impacted more by the effect that I have on my students and boils down to two questions – ‘did they learn something?’ and ‘was the lesson a positive experience for them?’ If the answer to these questions is yes, then I am satisfied that I have fulfilled my role as a teacher



I have chosen the pick and mix image. I chose this because with current policy climate is often I feel guidelines for an unrealistic and perfect scenario. This does not take into consideration compassion or any other everyday factors. The Pick and Mix represents the fact that you pick and choose which policy's you want to include and how much of each on you adhere by based on the scenario and other factors at the time (which ones you would like to eat), therefore adapting the style continuously to suit the current climate.



This card from a year 13 student included a line 'Thank you so much because I have grown so much in confidence in your class and grown so much as a person which I am extremely grateful for'.

I, as a teacher feel extremely grateful for being involved in some small way in one young person becoming an adult and leaving to pursue their dreams through

further education.

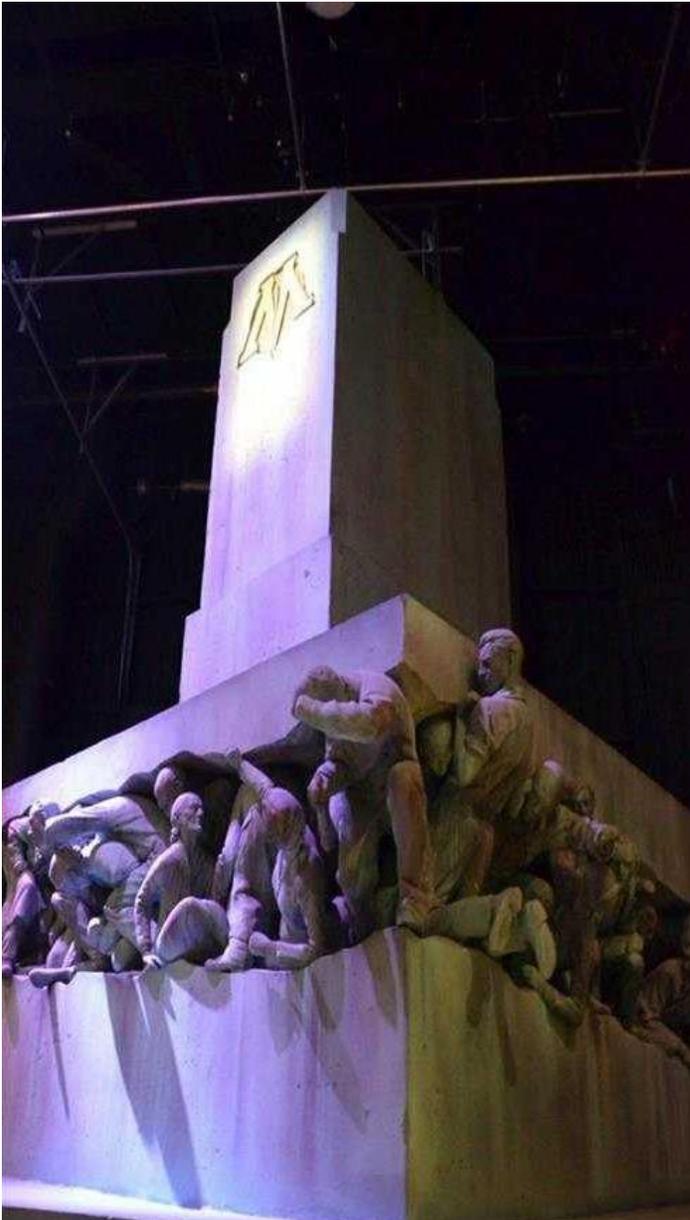
I do not believe the current policy climate encourages teachers to treat their pupils as little humans who need our help and support, rather it encourages (forces) me to treat them as units valued solely by the result they achieve in an examination.

As a middle leader within a school I spend a lot of time and energy trying to circumvent policy in order to teach and treat my pupils according to my own professionalism.

If the result of this is that my pupils feel supported academically and as young humans then I will continue to obfuscate on any policy initiatives which discourage me from treating the little humans in my care as little humans.



My photo is a collage of two sides of my classroom. One side consists of what we are required to have on display in our rooms. The other is what I want displayed in the room. I want students to see their hard work displayed rather than the ks4 grade descriptors which I doubt are ever even read by anyone. The grade descriptors take up the majority of the room and it should be students work which take up this space.



Being new to the profession, I have watched the faces of my colleagues go from happy smiley faces to complete and utter exhaustion in such a short space of time. I am in my NQT year and I am doing everything to keep my head above water; from conversations in the staff room, on social media and with friends in the profession, it is clear this is a nation wide feeling. With workload increasing for teachers, the people at the top are just driving pressure, making it hard to move.



Due to the recent changes in the UK education system, schools are under increased pressure to reduce the importance given to non-core subjects. These subjects are treated like an unimportant lower class in education. Not only is Art one of these so-called less important subjects, it is also not included as one of the five important 'EBACC' subjects. Instead it is referred to as a 'bucket' subject that students can pick to fill any leftover spaces in their GCSE choices. It is also being emphasised that taking art would be detrimental in achieving access to rassel group universities (even though this is not even true in regards to GCSE level).

Art is generally seen as un-academic 'playing'; a little bit of light relief to fill a gap in a timetable- but beware, only take it at your own risk - you may be regarded as 'stupid' and be turned away from the best universities if it contaminates your GCSE record.

As an art teacher I therefore feel that art is being promoted by the government as 'the shit on the shoe of the education system'

Appendix 3:

Email from E Ozenbrook:

Hi James,

Hope you've had some time to relax post show. The brief is this:

My thesis was inspired by Grayson Perry's work on tribes and I have collected a number of images from professionals regarding a certain question. The artist would be required to create a piece of art inspired by these images. There are 10 images in total. It can be of any medium that they chose, as I would like the piece to be a result of their interpretation, not my influence. There is no funding for this project, however I would be willing to pay for materials as needed (but within limits as I am a poor student also!). It all sounds very vague but I cannot give any details of the people who have taken the images, their professions or the questions asked as this may influence the artist. Whatever is created would then be used as part of my doctoral thesis, whereby it would be shown to the participants and their responses to it recorded but would ultimately belong to the artist in the long run and they can use it as they wish. I am very interested to see how the images I have been given would be interpreted by an artist.

If you know anyone who might be interested do pass my details along to them or vice versa. As a thesis, it's caused a bit of a stir due to it being out of the ordinary so it might be of interest for someone to collaborate on an academic piece that is a bit out there and potentially to meet the participants and discuss the interpretations and findings.

Hope that makes sense!

Response from Contact:

Okay, I've sent it out to the students. Some of them are really into Grayson Perry so you may get some interest.

Hope you are not suffering from post-performance blues. It was a great show, and you were fantastic in it.

Best wishes,

James

Appendix 4:



ARTIST CONSENT FORM

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Emma Ozenbrook. The purpose of this study and its participants is to remain confidential.

As the artist taking part in this study you will be asked to create an artefact of your choice based on your interpretation of a series of photographs/images provided by research participants. These will be provided while retaining the anonymity of the participants.

To participate in this research the following stipulations must be agreed to:

- Images are to be used for the creation of the artefact only
- Upon completion of the artefact, the artist will destroy all photographs
- Images of the artefact will be used in the thesis
- The artist will retain intellectual property of the artefact however the artefact can be used by the researcher within the research time frame

All data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's own data protection requirements. All data from this study will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed).

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.

I am very excited about this research and hope that you find it an interesting study to be a part of. If you have any questions, please contact Emma Ozenbrook on 07711563113 or emma.ozenbrook2@mail.dcu.ie

[Signed \(artist\):](#)

[Signed \(researcher\):](#)

Appendix 5

Artwork Information

'GROWTH' – A LINO PRINT DEPICTING THE IDEA OF HOW DECISION MAKING IS ENTIRELY IN YOUR HANDS AND GROWS FROM WITHIN YOU.



'BLOCKED' – A LINO PRINT ILLUSTRATING THE DIFFERENT PATHWAYS THAT EACH DECISION CAN HAVE; CONSEQUENCE PATHS LEAD OFF OF THE EACH DECISION EITHER GOOD OR BAD.

'PROCESS' – A LINO PRINT CREATED TO SHOW THE MIX OF EMOTIONS AND THINKING THAT IS CREATED BEFORE A DECISION IS DECIDED.



THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN A TURNING POINT IN FINDING MY PERSONAL STYLE NO LONGER AS AN ART STUDENT BUT AS A GROWING ARTIST. I HAD 9 IMAGES IN WHICH TO LOOK AT AND TRY TO ESTABLISH WHAT THEY MEAN OR IF THERE'S A PATTERN THAT LINK THEM IN MY EYES. WHAT I KEPT NOTICING WAS THAT EACH IMAGE HAD A POSITIVE AND A NEGATIVE OUTCOME LINKING TO THE SITUATION AT HAND, WHICH THEN LEAD ME TO THE IDEA OF CHOICES AND HOW IT CAN AFFECT US DEPENDING ON THE DECISIONS WE MAKE.



Appendix 6

Epilogue

I was advised to write a prologue to my thesis, outlining what I have learned, how I have changed and what I would have done differently. I started this process feeling very jaded and angry; I could not embrace the policy environment of the education system and I did not fully understand how I was going to survive as a teacher. This process felt like being reborn and seeing teaching from a completely new perspective. The teachers and the artist allowed me to see the joy in my profession again and see the importance of putting the pupils first. The latter part of this research also coincided with a change in my professional role. Becoming Designated Safeguarding Lead of a large comprehensive secondary school reinforced the importance of student lead actions and echoed the sentiments of the selective rebels of this research. Suddenly, I was writing schoolwide policy and working with local authorities to ensure that policy was being adhered to. My entire working life was more enveloped in policy than it had been previously but somehow I felt more at ease with it. Within the safeguarding sphere, there is no space to rally against the intricacies of policy as it is designed to allow for the adequate safeguarding of children. Interestingly, this opened up a world where policy seemed so vital to the day to day nuances of my job. My time was spent ringing safeguarding experts in order to ensure that I had appropriately responded to a given situation within the stipulated guidelines. Policy became a lifeline by which I could map out an appropriate action by which to safeguard the pupils in my care. Not only was I suddenly hyper aware of the policies that governed my professional position but it became my responsibility to brief staff on the implementation of these policies in their day to day life. I wondered if the self-reflective nature of this thesis and the exploration of policy in such intricate detail had allowed me to take on this new role and adapt to it with a fluidity that otherwise would have proven difficult.

There are of course a number of things that I would change if I was to go back and do this all again. Post viva I realised how much I had confined myself within my own research. I say this not as a means of negative self-criticism but as a genuine reflection upon my own fears as a researcher. In part I think that this was due to the struggle of trying to complete a thesis while working full time and in part it was due to a lack of confidence in my own abilities. The beginnings of this research were characterised by fear of failure,

fear of not completing the thesis and fear of not having any new knowledge to add to the sphere of educational research. If I were to revisit my thesis knowing what I do now and having those fears somewhat alleviated, I would have expanded on the theoretical friends that I used. I would have tried to incorporate more female writers into my work and expanded the boundaries of the established narrative within the theoretical framework; I stayed within the boundaries of what I knew rather than exploring further academic possibilities. In future writing I would like to focus on the exploration of the work of more female writers are writers that are representative of more marginalised people in society. Perhaps this will come with a development of my own confidence and maturity as a researcher.

It also would have been interesting to explore the impact of fear on teachers in further research. I am very aware of the psychosocial influences on the implementation of policy at an individual level. Each of the participants in my research were individuals with different experiences and fears and it would have been interesting to unpack and explore this further. Unfortunately, there is a limitation within an Education Doctorate in that the word count disallows thorough exploration of all aspects of the research but also there is limited time when working to dedicate to all the emergent aspects of the research.