AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CONSTRUCTION OF SECONDARY GEOGRAPHY TEACHER IDENTITY

by

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ABSTRACT

Over the past thirty years there has been increasing interest in teacher identity. Although there is no clear consensus of a definition of teacher identity, theoretical understanding has remained consistent for the past two decades. It is widely accepted that teacher identity is complex, multifaceted and dynamic, and is influenced by a range of factors, including:

- personal narratives and biographies;
- social and organisational contexts; and
- disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge.

This thesis investigated the construction of secondary geography teacher identity. There has previously been limited research focusing on geography along with other non-core curriculum subjects. This research aimed to contribute to the current knowledge gap by specifically drawing on the experiences of current and previous secondary geography teachers, who had taught in England, to contribute to the understanding of secondary geography teacher identity.

The two phases of data collection took place between October 2020 and March 2022 against a backdrop of educational reform and a global pandemic. During this time, there were national and local lockdowns due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, data collection took place remotely. Two hundred and thirty-seven secondary geography teachers contributed to the online survey, and fourteen of these participants undertook an interview. Participants ranged from those who were Early Career Teachers, to those with over forty years' experience of teaching.

Through the collection of their narratives, the research provides insights into participants' experience of:

- their geography education;
- their teacher education;
- their career; and.
- potentially why they have left the profession

The findings provide insight into participants' geography journey, why they decided to become geography teachers, why some have remained geography teachers and why others may decide to stop teaching geography and/or leave the profession entirely.

It is evident from this research that the development of a teacher's identity is not linear, as it shifts in time and context. In the literature, these shifts are an acknowledged part of becoming a teacher. The call for more rigorous exploration of identity is to ensure that teachers can address tensions and conflicts when they arise. If teachers are given the skills to address these tensions, it can be extremely valuable in creating greater awareness and offer a real opportunity for creativity and learning. However, if these tensions are not recognised and acknowledged, it can, at best, lead to a lack of fulfilment and disengagement, and at worst, result in a teacher leaving the profession.

Understanding the geography pipeline, and secondary geography teacher identity formation specifically, has the potential to offer practical applications not only for secondary geography

teachers, but also for schools, teacher education and policy formation, ensuring both the recruitment of future secondary geography teachers and retaining those already in the profession.

ABBREVIATIONS

AST	Advanced Skills Teacher
CCoT	Chartered College of Teachers
CPD	Continuous professional development
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfE	Department for Education
EBacc	English Baccalaureate
ECF	Early Career Framework
ECTs	Early Career Teachers
EEF	Education Endowment Foundation
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
FE	Further Education
GA	Geographical Association
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GPS	Global positioning systems
GTP	Graduate Teacher Programme
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HoD	Head of Department/Head of Geography
HoY	Head of Year
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
KS1	Key stage 1

KS2	Key stage 2
KS3	Key stage 3
KS4	Key stage 4
KS5	Key stage 5
MAT	Multi Academy Trust
NEU	National Education Union
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PGR	Post Graduate Researcher
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
RQ1	Research Question 1
RQ2	Research Question 2
RQ3	Research Question 3
RGS	Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute or British Geographers)
SAS	Student Associate Scheme
SCITT	School Centred Initial Teacher Training
SCTs	Second Career Teachers
SHAPE	Social science, Humanities and the arts for people and the economy
SKE	Subject Knowledge Enhancement course
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
TAGs	Teacher Assessed Grades
TSM	Teacher Supply Model

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 National teacher supply

In common with other parts of the world, England is facing increasing challenges in attracting and retaining qualified teachers to the profession (Gorard *et al*., 2021; Worth, Tang and Galvis, 2022). Since 2012 recruitment targets in England have not been met, with the gap between recruitment targets and those training to be teachers widening each year (Fullard, 2020). There is also growing concern that the situation will be exacerbated as the secondary pupil population is predicted to increase by 15% from 2018 to 2025 (DfE, 2019a, p.10).

1.1.1 Geography teacher supply

Since the 1990s, there has been an undersupply of secondary geography teachers (Tapsfield, 2015). After an initial shortfall in 2008, followed by several years of stronger recruitment up to 2012, under-recruitment re-emerged as a serious concern, reflecting the wider picture across secondary education (Fullard, 2020; Tapsfield, 2015). Since 2011 there has been a further increase in demand for geography teachers with the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) (DfE, 2019b). Although there was an increase in secondary geography training places, recruitment did not fill the places, with only 50% of the allocated places being filled in September 2014 (Tapsfield, 2015). In 2015, a Geographical Association (GA) research report concluded that there were, 'clear signals of a looming crisis of teacher supply in geography' (Tapsfield, 2015, p.3). Between 2010 and 2016 geography was the only EBacc subject to show a marked fall in the number of specialist teachers (Shreeve, 2018). In 2017-2018 geography was classified as a shortage subject (DfE, 2018a; RGS, 2018a). The real extent

of the shortage of qualified geography teachers is masked by non-specialist teaching (Tapsfield, 2016), which has been found to be increasing (Goddard, 2021; RGS, 2018b).

1.1.2 The impact of Covid-19 on teacher supply

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, unemployment in the wider labour market was at its lowest rate since the 1970s and employment at a record high (DfE, 2019a). During the Covid-19 pandemic many businesses faced a significant decline in revenue due to a strict lockdown policy and higher operating costs. Unemployment was high during 2021 and into 2022, with the unemployment rates returning to similar levels that were seen during the 2008 financial crisis (Fullard, 2020). Challenges in the wider labour market meant that there were relatively low levels of hiring and job security. This provided a short-term boost to recruitment and retention for the teaching profession (Worth, Tang and Galvis, 2022). Teaching became a viable and attractive career for graduates and an option for those that had not considered it previously, providing a secure job with stable wages (Fullard, 2020; Worth, Tang and Galvis, 2022). This had an immediate effect on the number of applications to initial teacher education (ITE) programmes. In 2019 there were more student teachers recruited into the profession than in the previous five years, and over 2,000 more than in the year before (DfE, 2019a). Data from May 2020 showed that the number of applicants was the highest that it had been since 2014 (Fullard, 2020). Recruitment targets for both primary and secondary teacher education courses were met for the first time in seven years (Worth, 2021).

The Bank of England forecasted that unemployment would remain elevated throughout 2022, reaching similar levels to those seen in the 2008 financial crisis (Fullard, 2020), however, as the wider labour market recovered quickly, the attractiveness of teaching as a career diminished (Worth, Tang and Galvis, 2022). Recruitment was lower in 2022 than before the Covid-19 pandemic (Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022). This may be attributed to the recovery of the wider labour market, but it was suggested (Gibbons, 2021; Worth and Faulkner-Ellis, 2022) that bursary changes, with many being withdrawn or becoming less generous than they were in 2019, had a significant impact. In geography, the 2020-2021 starting bursary was £15,000. It was removed in 2021-2022 before being reintroduced in 2022-2023 to a starting bursary of £15,000 (Gibbons, 2021). The bursary, at the time of writing, for student geography teachers in 2024-2025 is £26,000 (DfE, 2024c).

The recovery of the wider labour market also saw higher levels of teachers leaving the profession (Worth and Faulkner-Ellis, 2022). In 2022, the number of vacancies in schools was higher than before the Covid-19 pandemic (Worth, 2022). In 2022-2023, almost every secondary subject was below their recruitment target, with geography only recruiting 69% of its target (McLean, Worth and Smith, 2023, p.9). In 2023-2024, this fell further with geography only recruiting 56% of its target (McLean, Worth and Smith, 2024, p.11). The most recent application data on teacher recruitment and retention in England suggests that significant improvements in both recruitment and retention numbers are unlikely, resulting in a critical state for teaching supply being in a critical state, which would have a substantial risk to the quality of education (McLean, Worth and Smith, 2024).

1.1.3 Recruiting geography teachers

The relative attractiveness of teachers' pay matters for teacher recruitment (Worth, Tang and Galvis, 2022). Teachers' pay has fallen significantly in real terms since 2010-2011, as there were below-inflation pay rises in the 2010s and a pay freeze in 2021. In comparison, the wider UK labour market has experienced stronger growth, which has weakened the competitiveness of teachers' pay compared to other jobs, with the subsequent cost-of-living crisis having compounded the issue (McLean, Worth and Smith, 2024). Potential salary is significant to young people when considering future careers (RGS, 2022a). In July 2024, the U.K government announced a 5.5% pay increase for teachers, with a minimum starting salary of £31,650 (DfE, 2024b).

Attracting geography graduates into teaching has long been a challenge (Tapsfield, 2015). As teachers' pay in England is not differentiated by subject, the financial attractiveness of options in the wider labour market can influence the teacher supply in subjects like geography (Worth, Tang and Galvis, 2022). Many geography graduates are gaining above average rates of graduate employment working for large corporations in banking, advertising, real estate and marketing, gaining above average salaries (Dorling, 2022; Hesslewood, 2023; RGS, 2022a). Geography has been described as a 'recession-proof' degree (Tapsfield, 2015, p.8). Geography graduates are highly employable, with their knowledge and skills valued by a wide range of public and private sectors. They are trained to understand issues at the local level through to the global scale and across the spectrum of human and physical geography (Blunt and Evans, 2019).

The issue of recruiting geography teachers may be compounded by the fact that since 1992, there has been a strong move away from university-led ITE in favour of School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) (BERA, 2022; Ellis, 2010). Historically, it has been more challenging for SCITTs to recruit geography student teachers than universities (Brooks, 2017; Tapsfield, 2015), increasing the risk of recruitment targets being missed.

1.1.4 Regional variations of teacher supply

Schools serving disadvantaged communities generally experience challenges most acutely and face greater recruitment difficulties (Allen and McInerney, 2019; Biddulph and Kinder, 2020; DfE, 2019). They have above average levels of staff turnover; they tend to employ teachers with less experience and can struggle to recruit subject specialist teachers with formal teaching qualifications in shortage subjects (Biddulph and Kinder, 2020; DfE, 2019; Towers and Maguire, 2017). For example, '[i]n coastal rural areas, which are highly deprived, 7 per cent of secondary teachers are unqualified, compared with 4.6 per cent in more affluent inland areas' (Social Mobility Commission, 2017, p.40). This has led to calls to address the issue of teacher recruitment at regional rather than national scale of analysis (Biddulph and Kinder, 2020).

1.1.5 Retaining teachers

Recruiting sufficient teachers is only part of the issue of teacher supply. In 2019, there were 250,000 qualified teachers in the UK who were no working in schools (Wilson, 2019). 43,522 teachers left the state-funded sector in England in 2022-2023 (DfE, 2024d). The previous year,

unfilled teaching vacancies were at a record high (DfE, 2023d). Retention rates for Early Career Teachers (ECTs) are particularly concerning; over 20% of teachers leave the profession within the first two years of teaching, and 33% leave within their first five years (DfE, 2019, p.10; Education Support, 2018; Lynch *et al*., 2016, p.3). Most of the teacher workforce in England is aged between 30-49 (DfE, 2022a) and it is becoming harder to retain working-age teachers (Lynch *et al.,* 2016).

The number of teachers considering leaving the profession is also increasing (Lynch *et al.,* 2016). In 2022, 59% of staff considered leaving the sector due to pressures on their mental health and well-being (Savill-Smith and Scanlan, 2022, p.8). Although this will not necessarily translate into an increase in attrition rates, it does provide a barometer of teachers' morale, which is reported to be low (Towers and Maguire, 2017), and job satisfaction (Lynch *et al*., 2016). A small change in teacher retention rates can create significant additional pressure on recruitment (DfE, 2019a).

There are significant costs of not retaining teachers to the education system and the community (Buchanan *et al.,* 2013). It is costly to the sector to train new teachers (Lynch *et al.,* 2016). High teacher turnover in schools and increased levels of non-specialist teaching can have a negative impact on pupil attainment (Rushton and Reiss, 2019; Worth, 2022). It is not as simple as having consistent and sufficient teachers; they need to be effective teachers, as this has the biggest impact on pupils' attainment (Buchanan *et al*., 2013; Carter, 2015).

1.1.5.1 Retaining geography teachers

Until recently geography was regarded as having among the best retention rates for teachers (Worth and De Lazzari, 2017). Since 2011, rates of geography teachers leaving the profession have increased by 17% (Holbrey, 2019, p.56) and between 2015 and 2018, geography experienced the second-largest increase in 'leavers' of any secondary subject (DfE, 2018b). The increased attrition rates and the issues of recruiting secondary geography teachers have compounded the teacher supply problem in geography, impacting the number of specialist teachers in the classroom.

As the subject knowledge of teachers cannot easily be measured, often degrees or other post A level qualifications in a subject are used as a proxy measure (DfE, 2016a). Between 2010 and 2016 geography was the only EBacc subject to show a marked fall in the number of specialist teachers at key stage 3 (KS3) and key stage 4 (KS4); they declined from 87.1% to 83.2% and from 96.2% to 94.5% respectively (Shreeve, 2018, p.98). By 2017, geography had the third-lowest proportion of teachers holding a relevant post A level qualification (NOA, 2017).

1.1.6 Addressing teacher supply

Despite the impacts outlined, interventions and analysis continue to focus on recruitment rather than retention (House of Commons Education Committee, 2017; Lynch *et al.,* 2016) even though there are more qualified teachers out of the classroom than in them (Marsh and Derbyshire, 2019). The issues related to teacher supply are complex (Lynch *et al.*, 2016) as they are influenced by many factors (See and Gorard, 2019). If one area is addressed in

isolation without consideration to inter-related aspects, the results will only be partial and could exacerbate the problem. As See and Gorard (2019, p.3) posit: '… reducing class sizes increases the demand for teachers, while education policies, such as an increase in tuition fees for higher education (HE), may restrict supply'.

It can be difficult to address all areas simultaneously, especially where there are resource constraints, leading to inevitable trade-offs (OECD, 2005). Various initiatives have been used to try to attract student teachers to shortage areas and subjects (Gorard *et al*., 2021). Where initiatives are used as blunt tools across the sector, they do not address the complexities of individual subjects or phases. If all subjects experienced the same issues, then we would expect to see similar fluctuations in recruitment and retention figures across all subjects and phases. As this is not the case, it can be inferred that each subject will have its own pressures and opportunities which vary over time.

1.2 Personal experience of geography teacher supply

Since I completed my teacher education to be a secondary geography teacher in 2010-2011, I have witnessed first-hand the 'looming crisis' in the supply of geography teachers (GA, 2017; Tapsfield, 2015). I noticed that it was becoming increasingly challenging to recruit secondary geography teachers within my own school. This was reflected in other schools through conversations with colleagues in the geography teacher and educator community. The GA (Tapsfield, 2015) warned of this in 2015. In 2017-2018 geography was classified as a shortage subject, when only 80% of its recruitment target was achieved (DfE, 2018a; RGS, 2018a). At

the same time, school geography was gaining increased pupil uptake at GCSE and A level (Brace, 2020; RGS, 2022b). Yet, the positive trends in school geography did not continue into Higher Education and recruiting secondary geography teachers. This ignited my interest in the geography pipeline and an understanding of the journey taken by those that have become secondary geography teachers.

This research uses the experiences of those that are currently secondary geography teachers and have previously been secondary geography teachers to understand the construction of their secondary geography teacher identity, recognising that they are the experts of their specific context (Müller and Goldenberg, 2020).

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions underpin this research.

- Research Question 1 (RQ1): How and why does an individual become a secondary geography teacher?
- Research Question 2 (RQ2): Why do secondary geography teachers remain in the profession?
- Research Question 3 (RQ3): What are the reasons that lead to secondary geography teachers leaving the profession?

RQ1 and RQ2 explores the reasons that contribute to the construction of secondary geography teacher identity and sustain those in the profession. RQ3 explores the factors that may undermine secondary geography teacher identity and led to those leaving the profession.

1.4 Data Collection

Data collection for this research took place between October 2020 and March 2022. Although it is not unusual for research to take place in an evolving environment that has temporal, social and cultural contexts, disruption was the norm rather than the exception, as the data collection took place during a global pandemic, with a backdrop of educational reform. The Covid-19 pandemic led to huge disruption to the education system from March 2020, impacting all aspects of life. The pandemic was not a focus of the research, however, the timings of the data collection means that it cannot be ignored, as it had a direct impact on the data collection and on those participating in the research. Workload for teachers increased, as they found it more challenging to balance the demands from work and home life, compared to before the lockdown. This impacted negatively on teachers' personal and professional well-being. The detrimental effects – of negative media coverage and the scapegoating of teachers by some politicians – to their morale and motivation contributed to this (Müller and Goldenberg, 2020). Since the pandemic, little progress has been made on reducing workload, which has a strong impact on retention (McLean, Worth and Smith, 2024).

1.4.1 Covid-19 impact on the workforce

The pandemic saw almost a fifth of teachers with more than twenty years' experience planning to leave the classroom early despite only 6% of these teachers stating they were highly confident that they were financially ready for retirement (Wesleyan, 2021). For some, the experience of the lockdown made them reevaluate their priorities; realising that teaching

had dominated other aspects of their life and they no longer wanted this work-life imbalance to continue (Müller and Goldenberg, 2020).

In schools, the associated responses to the pandemic affected different subjects in different ways. Geography and other subjects that utilised practical work and fieldwork had to adapt their teaching strategies more extensively (Rushton, Gibbons and Hesketh, 2021). The pandemic had a significant effect on schools' ability to organise fieldwork. Ofqual removed the requirement for schools to declare that they had given GCSE, AS level and A level geography students a set number of fieldwork days. This led to the removal of students being required to answer questions on their fieldwork in their summer examinations in 2021 and 2022 (Mason, 2022).

This impacted geography student teachers and ECTs who had little or no opportunity to integrate fieldwork into their teaching. Concerns have been raised that this would impact their confidence, subject knowledge and their ability to design and lead fieldwork in the future (Rawlings Smith and Kinder, 2022). They will have to gradually build up their experience and confidence whilst relying on senior and experienced staff to guide and support them. This may be challenging as geography departments tend to be small (Brooks, 2017) and fieldwork has been slow to return to school calendars following the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.5 The findings of the research

The findings outline the reasons how and why participants become secondary geography teachers. Key findings illustrate that there was a desire amongst participants to make a difference to young people, whether this was directly through teaching geography or supporting young people through the wider role of being a teacher. Participants were inspired to become teachers based on their own educational experiences and the teachers that they had. Family and close friends were influential in their decision making to become secondary geography teachers. Their teachers, family and friends were role models to participants who modelled their practice on them, such as their academic ability in the discipline and personal attributes such as good communication skills and people skills. Work experience provided them with an opportunity to work with young people. The enjoyment of their subject was a reason for joining the profession. Becoming a secondary geography teacher was not the first career choice for all, external factors such as the wider economic climate also contributed to their decision making.

Participants shared the factors and conditions of being a secondary geography teacher that they found fulfilling. They maintained their commitment to being a secondary geography teacher and to the profession. Being a teacher involved working with different groups of people: pupils, parents and staff colleagues, during their career. Having positive relationships at work contributed to their enjoyment of their role and enabled them to have a sense of belonging and commitment to their place of work. When participants experienced periods of tension or challenge, colleagues were important in supporting them to navigate this. Finding the right school that shared their values and beliefs was important for participants to be able

to practice geography in a way that was aligned with their teacher identity. Having a positive impact on those that they taught, and on the wider school was important to participants. Where possible, within the confinements of the curriculum, participants enjoyed the opportunity to take on additional roles or engage with pupils through extra-curricular activities. Fieldwork and outdoor learning through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities formed an important part of the participants' role. It was evident that identity changed for the participants during their careers, becoming multifaceted due to their length of service and taking on additional responsibilities, but also due to roles outside of education such as becoming a parent/carer. Despite these changes, often foundational aspects of their identity were maintained and valued. How secondary geography teachers perceived themselves was not always aligned with how others perceived them. Some had a clear vision for their career and how they would transition to their future identity while others found this challenging to envision. What was clear from participants was that their secondary geography teacher identity was continually evolving.

The factors and conditions that made the role of being a secondary geography teacher challenging and less favourable were not being able to execute their role as effectively as they wished and the impact this had upon them and their teacher identity. There were several factors contributing to this such as workload and how their time was directed. The negative perception of geography in schools led to participants being frustrated by how time and resources were allocated. Over time participants felt that they had lost freedom, autonomy and the ability to take risks as accountability measures had increased standardisation and trust in teachers had been lost. It had become increasingly challenging to provide fieldwork

opportunities for their pupils. Some participants did not see themselves represented in the workforce and discipline which made it difficult for them to imagine becoming secondary geography teachers. Those that had left teaching geography raised concerns that teaching was not flexible enough to be compatible with other aspects of their lives, such as raising a family and caring responsibilities. Challenges led to an evaluation of identity and a questioning of their success as a teacher, this may lead to a teacher leaving the profession.

1.6 Purpose of the research

This research developed from my personal experiences as a secondary geography teacher. It is through pursuing the research questions that greater insight into the construction of secondary geography teacher identity is gained. Primarily, my ambition is that this research supports current and future secondary geography teachers to thrive and enjoy long careers in the profession. Through this knowledge, they may feel less alone and be able to recognise themselves in some of the experiences shared on these pages. Where they do not, they can see that there is no one pathway or reason for joining the profession or how to be a secondary geography teacher. When conflicts and tensions in their identity arise, it is important that they feel empowered to use their knowledge of their discipline and the profession to know when to challenge and to advocate for themselves, the discipline and their pupils.

This research will also help secondary colleagues who teach other subjects. Participants have raised issues of having to teach additional subjects beyond geography. It would be useful for colleagues from these disciplines to understand the impact that teaching their subject has on

secondary geography teachers and how to better support them with subject knowledge and pedagogical support. The findings may also be useful for other disciplines because as Brooks (2016, p.14) posits: '[g]eography is a useful case study for revealing trends that are applicable to other subject areas because it sits across traditional physical sciences, social sciences and humanities boundaries'. For those who are managing and leading schools, understanding the motivations of those who decide to become secondary geography teachers, together with what they have enjoyed the most and the least about their role(s), may help to better support them so that they can thrive and remain in the profession.

Teachers often feel they do not have sufficient influence over policy (Ofsted, 2019) and they do not feel that their voices are heard. When designing this research, it was important that secondary geography teachers' voices were central to the data collected and their experiences were told in their words. It is hoped that the recommendations of this research, based on participants' experiences, will be heard by policymakers which can inform policy and practice.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the current literature surrounding teacher identity, to understand why individuals become secondary geography teachers, and the reasons that can lead to secondary geography teachers leaving the profession.

The focus on teacher identity provides the general context for secondary geography teachers. There are a limited number of studies that focus specifically on secondary geography teacher identity. Where there is literature on subject teacher identity, it is predominately focused on STEM subjects (Rushton *et al.,* 2023). There will be crossover between the teacher identities of different subjects especially for geography because it: '… sits across traditional physical sciences, social sciences and humanities boundaries' (Brooks, 2016, p.14). The section on teacher identity (see '2.2 Teacher Identity') will follow the chronology of becoming a secondary geography teacher, starting at the 'subject story' (Brooks, 2017) and how this connects to statutory educational experiences of geography. The contexts that shape teacher identity formation will be explored beginning in their ITE and how the school(s) will influence their teacher identity during their careers.

There are themes that are not defined to a specific chronology of becoming a secondary geography teacher, and will have an influence of a greater and lesser extent at different times. These include relationships such as those with teachers and peers, during their own education; and mentors and tutors during ITE; and colleagues, pupils and parents/carers

during teachers' careers. Beyond individual relationships, teachers may engage in a range of communities of practice within and beyond their subject communities. Over time there will be changes such as geography's place in the curriculum and policy changes which will influence secondary geography teacher identity.

With it becoming increasingly challenging to recruit and retain qualified secondary geography teachers (Gorard *et al*., 2021; Worth, Tang and Galvis*,* 2022), it is important to understand the reasons why they become teachers and the reasons that can lead them to leaving the profession. This will help to understand the contributing factors that underpin secondary geography teacher identity, and the factors that can cause tensions and conflicts and therefore undermine secondary geography teacher identity.

There are a variety of reasons why individuals become secondary geography teachers, such as role models in their life that inspired them to become teachers (Arthur *et al*., 2015; Beijaard, 1995). This may be connected to their subject discipline of geography or perhaps more altruistic reasons of wanting to 'make a difference' (Castro and Bauml, 2009; CCoT, 2023; Day *et al.,* 2006; Gorard *et al.,* 2021). Having knowledge of the profession through relevant work experience or having close family and/or friends who are in the profession can influence individuals to become secondary geography teachers (Castro and Bauml, 2009). Initiatives may encourage some to join the profession and may support Second Career Teachers (SCTs) to be able to make the career change.

Again, there are a variety of reasons that can lead to secondary geography teachers leaving the profession. Over time there has been a decline in the status of the profession (Arthur *et al*., 2015). Concerns about workload and the lack of flexibility in how to complete this work has seen a decline in teachers' well-being (Education Support, 2019). Issues have been raised about the appropriateness of bursaries for addressing teacher retention as they may attract people who have no intention of staying in the profession. It may be that there is not just one reason, there may be an accumulation of several reasons.

2.2 Teacher Identity

Since the 1990s there has been an increased focus on exploring teacher identity (Akkerman and Meijer, 2010), with a particular growth in teacher identity research from 2010 (Rushton *et al.,* 2023). Although there is no clear consensus of a definition of teacher identity (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009), theoretical understanding has remained consistent for the past two decades (Rushton *et al.,* 2023). It is accepted that identity is complex, multifaceted and dynamic (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009; Rushton *et al.,* 2023; Sachs, 2005).

As Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004, p.107) state, '[i]dentity is not something one has, but something that develops during one's whole life', a process of lifelong learning. Identity is influenced by a range of factors which will be explored throughout this chapter. Beginning with teacher's personal identity and their biography which underpins identity formation (Knowles, 1992), becoming the basis of teacher identity (Beijaard, 1995). Personal identity relates to family and friends and to life beyond the role of the teacher (Day *et al.,* 2006).

Dimensions of identity interact and do not operate in isolation. They cannot be separated, as teachers bring their whole selves into their work as 'we teach who we are' (Palmer, 1997, p.15). As Olsen (2014, p.85) asserts: '[t]he teacher relies on her past (consciously or not) to interpret the present, and folds together various personal and professional aspects of her lived experience as she makes sense of a particular situation in which she finds herself'.

Teacher identity is a relational phenomenon and is not a fixed attribute to a person, the contexts that they engage with directly and indirectly will influence it. Identity will change over time as reflection and new knowledge gained may impact upon their emotions about events. Schön's (1983) concept of the reflective practitioner suggests that learning is not just the acquisition of new knowledge, but a process of engaging with real-world situations and the practitioner reflecting on their experiences and actions.

As Sachs (2005, p.15) posits: '[t]eacher identity stands at the core of the teaching profession. It provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be', 'how to act' and 'how to understand' their work and their place in society'. This benefits the profession as those who are aware of their professional identities are more likely to remain in the profession (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009; Richardson, 2019 cited in Rushton and Reiss, 2020). However, teacher identity remains largely undervalued in teacher education and lacking in policy initiatives addressing teacher retention and recruitment (Beijaard *et al.,* 2022; Rushton *et al.,* 2023).

Teaching is recognised as difficult and complex (Buchanan *et al.,* 2013; Mutton and Burn, 2024; Olsen, 2014; Wiliam, 2021). Sachs (2005, p.8) argues: '…that learning to be a teacher not only requires skill acquisition but also the development of an understanding of what it means to be a teacher, in one's own eyes but also in the eyes of others.' Teaching is unique in combining a range of subject discipline skills and knowledge within a wider conceptual understanding of education, teaching and learning. Teachers must have the ability to interpret all of this in their context whilst being part of a wider mission (DfE, 2019).

Teachers do not simply move from novice to expert once they have acquired a specific set of 'competencies' when they qualify. To become an excellent teacher and develop teacher beliefs, values and knowledge requires ongoing opportunities to build reflective practice throughout a career (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004; Schön, 1984). Reflection is a key component associated with the concept of self and it is through the act that '… teachers related experiences to their own knowledge and feelings, and are willing and able to integrate what is socially relevant into their images of themselves as teachers' (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004, p.114).

Teaching is a professional endeavour requiring ethical considerations as it operates in a moral space which requires reasoning on the part of the teacher (Brooks, 2017; Lambert and Jones, 2013). This is because it is a relational practice requiring moral judgements between competing and often conflicting priorities (Mutton and Burn, 2024). Teachers must know when to confront and when to adapt when faced with changeable and sometimes conflicting viewpoints, expectations and roles (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004; Brooks, 2016).

Brooks' (2016) 'professional compass' can support teachers to position themselves and decide how to proceed. A sense of purpose moves teachers beyond the role of 'technical practitioners' and creates a moral commitment (Pass, 2021).

Teachers' subject disciplines have their own cultures and can play a key role in the construction of their identity (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009; Rushton *et al.,* 2023). This is because as Counsell (2018, p.x) outlines: 'Subjects are derived from the great traditions of knowledge construction in academic and artistic fields, each with its own rules of enquiry and evidence, its own traditions of argument and debate or its own standards of performance and judgement'. There are, however, a limited number of studies that focus on geography teacher identity and other non-core curriculum subjects. This is perhaps due to the overemphasis on STEM education (Rushton *et al.,* 2023). Specialist teachers have complex identities (Brooks, 2016) so each discipline should be studied. This research aimed to contribute to the understanding of the construction of secondary geography teacher identity.

Although, there is generally no agreed definition of what makes a teacher a subject 'specialist', the Department for Education (DfE), defines it as a teacher who holds a post A level qualification relevant to their subject areas (DfE, 2016a). For a discipline as diverse as geography, determining what a 'relevant' qualification can be challenging. The premise being that effective teachers need to be experts in the subject that they teach, so that they can draw upon knowledge beyond the scope of the curriculum and can address misconceptions swiftly, providing a more in-depth learning experience for their pupils. Schön's (1983) reflective model

refers to this as 'reflection-in-action'. As Shreeve (2018, p.99) summarises: '[i]n order for students to go 'above and beyond', their teachers must know what is beyond'.

Brooks' (2016, p.13) research into 'expert' geography teachers and their practice found that:

> … there was no linear relationship between how much subject knowledge a teacher had, or indeed what 'type' of geographical expertise they had, and their practice. Instead a more complex picture emerged of how their moral and ethical stances towards teaching, generally, and teaching geography specifically, were related to their subject-based identity.

The geography teachers that Brooks interviewed all had a 'subject story' which is the point at which geography becomes important to an individual (Brooks, 2017). It is the 'shorthand' narratives which teachers use when they talk about: '…their inspiration and motivations to teach, their relationship with the academic discipline and school subject, and other aspects of their personal and professional lives' (Brooks, 2016, p.13). It is this 'subject story' that underpins their practice, values and beliefs, acting as a 'professional compass' akin to a 'moral compass' (Brooks, 2016, p.13).

2.2.1 The beginnings of a 'subject story'

A 'subject story' can begin before statutory education as young people are 'active geographers' even if they are not aware of it. They are connected to other places through their lived experience and via technology (Freeman, 2020; Hagge, 2023). It can be argued that young people in the 21st century have more background knowledge of geography than previous generations. Knowledge was once limited by a person's immediate location and their direct experiences. The improvement in communications, the availability of the internet and

social media means that young people's knowledge of places and events has widened and their interest in geographical issues has broadened. As Rushton *et al.* (2021b, p.3) highlight: '[t]he plethora of writings, television programmes and podcasts that are freely available make engaging with geography as a discipline extremely accessible'.

Lived experiences and the 'everyday' are important and have significance to a 'subject story' as Parkinson (2022, p.53, emphasis in original text) posits, '[w]ith every day that passes, we are not just living, we are ***living geography'.*** The meaning of these events can be diminished and repeated experiences can become habits and be disregarded as mundane. We can take these events for granted and fail to pay attention to them although they shape our personal and collective identities (Parkinson, 2022).

2.2.2 Statutory educational experiences of geography

Everyday knowledge has been acknowledged as valuable at all stages of geographical education (Roberts, 2017). Vygotsky (1962) names this type of knowledge as 'spontaneous', defining it as the concepts that young people develop through experience without instruction. The second type of knowledge Vygotsky identified was 'scientific', the concepts acquired with support of a teacher related to academic disciplines. This has since been referred to as 'powerful knowledge', a term coined by Young (2008) to define knowledge within academic disciplines that most pupils would not have access to beyond school, with others arguing that this is also a matter of social justice (Maude, 2016).

Vygotsky (1962) found that when 'spontaneous' and 'scientific' concepts are connected, new knowledge and understanding can be developed. Abstract disciplinary concepts are developed from related everyday concepts and disciplinary knowledge makes everyday concepts visible (Roberts, 2017).

Roberts (2017) advocates that one of the ways that geographical education can be 'powerful' is when pupils can make connections between their 'everyday' knowledge and their school geography. When geography education respects what pupils already know, and helps them to understand new geographical concepts, school geography can take pupils beyond their everyday knowledge (Roberts, 2017). Geography demonstrates how systems are interrelated and explains how an individual is a member of not only their own community but the regional, national and global community, allowing them to construct meaning for themselves by respecting their ideas and feelings. Teachers can support pupils to construct not only geographical knowledge but also a positive self-image (Smagorinsky *et al.,* 2004) because where foundational experiences in geography have been successful, a powerful sense of efficacy is established that builds confidence. Self-efficacy being the belief that one can undertake a task which will result in success.

Bandura (1977) proposed that social persuasion and vicarious influences were important and had an impact on efficacy. Social persuasion is the feedback that is received from others. Vicarious influences are from observing and comparing to others who are similar. At the start of a subject story, social persuasion will come predominately from a time when teachers were pupils themselves and from their own subject teachers and peers. Vicarious influences may

occur when they compare their performance to others within their school, such as within their class or a year group, and externally when sitting external examinations, when their performance is compared with others nationally.

If pupils experiences of social persuasion and vicarious influences are positive, they will be more inclined to accept related challenges, having a greater intrinsic motivation (Baker, 2020). During this time, pupils are developing their geographic identity and affinity to the subject, gaining greater insight into success criteria and what it means to be a geographer. Occasional failures, after this foundation has been established, will not lead to huge variations in efficacy (Schunk, 1989).

2.2.2.1 Geographical knowledge

Being able to define and differentiate between 'everyday', 'spontaneous' 'scientific' or 'powerful knowledge' in geography is challenging because: 'geographical knowledge is a construction rather than something existing "out there" simply to be found' (Roberts, 2023, p.18). There are different categorisations of geographical knowledge such as substantive knowledge, disciplinary knowledge and procedural knowledge. Substantive knowledge is established fact about the world that is not open to debate. Disciplinary knowledge is how geographical knowledge is 'formed, debated and contested'. Procedural knowledge is the knowledge of how to use geographical skills (Ofsted, 2023). Geographical knowledge is dynamic as our understanding develops and as the world changes.

The relationship between school and academic geography is complex (Maude, 2016) because there is: '… a basic epistemological divide between the aims, rationale and scope of the work of academic and school geographers' (Butt and Collins, 2013, p.295). Academic geography is at the forefront of knowledge creation and afforded '… to develop in innovative, experimental, tentative and uncertain ways' (Butt and Collins, 2013, p.296). School geography requires more objectivity, stability and durability, yet it is not neutral as education is political (Sachs, 2005). As Maude (2016, p.72) raises: '…the school subject is a selection of content from the discipline, with the selection made by educational bureaucracies, curriculum writers and teachers for social, ethical, political and pedagogical reasons, not just academic ones'. This can lead to a 'gap' between schools and universities (Goudie, 1993).

2.2.2.2 Fieldwork for pupils of geography

Purposeful and regular fieldwork experiences have been found to increase levels of self-efficacy in geography because it enhances pupils' engagement, motivation and learning, supporting them to understand the relevance of their studies (Kinder, 2013; Ofsted, 2011). Fieldwork reduces anxiety and builds confidence which fosters deeper approaches to learning and commitment to seeing through an inquiry from start to finish (Boyle *et al.,* 2007; Lambert and Reiss, 2014).

Brooks (2016) posits the 'transformative nature' that fieldwork and visiting places can have on an individual's subject story. Fieldwork can provide memorable experiences (Lambert and Reiss, 2014; MacKenzie and White, 1982). There has been comparatively little research into the cognitive gains of fieldwork over classroom-based strategies (Kinder, 2013) but fieldwork

is well-regarded among curriculum makers of the subject (Chua *et al.,* 2021) and the affective benefits of fieldwork for pupils' education experience are often highlighted (Kinder, 2013) with it being highly rated by pupils (Lambert and Reiss, 2014). It is through the act of fieldwork that pupils learn how to act and think geographically and deepen their geographical knowledge (Hammond, 2018). Nairn (1999) believes that a residential geography field trip is a key context for this to take place: at the time both 'geography work' and 'body work' take place. 'Geography work' prioritises the mind, the eyes and the hands, whereas 'body work' prioritises the eating, drinking, walking and on residential fieldwork, the sleeping (Nairn, 1999). Identity is rooted in place, which in turn is used to narrate and strengthen identities (Hammett and Jackson, 2021). Fieldwork is embodied as it is: '… part of every waking moment on a residential field trip and constitutes ways in which we/our bodies come to understand (consciously and unconsciously) what it means to think like a geographer, act like a geographer, eat and drink like a geographer, and so on' (Nairn, 1999, p.272).

2.2.3 Context

The contexts that teachers work in affect, influence, shape and impact their professional identity and their professional practice (Brooks, 2016; Day *et al*., 2006; Rushton *et al*., 2023). Individuals can participate simultaneously in different contexts with a core identity holding more uniformly across these different contexts (Akkerman and Meijer, 2010). The contexts that are explored in this research are ITE, schools and policy. There has been a call for more research of identities with situational contexts (Lauriala and Kukkonen, 2005), to understand teachers' specific experiences (Collie *et al*., 2016), as their roles and identities are often

connected to what they can do within a space. This research responds to that call by making an original contribution in the form of research into teacher identity situated in the spaces of ITE, schools, and in relation to policy.

2.2.3.1 Initial Teacher Education

Neoliberal policy agendas have seen increasing levels of marketisation in ITE which has led to a proliferation of alternative providers and the diversification of routes into teaching (Mutton and Burn, 2024). Since the introduction of reforms in 2011-2012, ITE has shifted dramatically from university to school-led ITE (GA, 2017). University-led ITE has existed in a contested and ambiguous space (BERA, 2022). Neo-liberal political agendas dispute the role of HEIs in favour of the advancement of the private sector within the teacher education market. An evolving inspection framework has prioritised statistical data over other indicators of quality (BERA, 2022; Hammond *et al.,* 2022).

The Carter Review (2015), an independent review of the quality and effectiveness of ITE reported that the procedure for applying ITE was challenging and confusing to navigate because of the complexity of applying and the lack of transparency in the process. Prospective teachers found it challenging to compare the different routes available and were overwhelmed by the amount and sources of information presented to them when they began the process (Butterfield-Tracey and Stow, 2020). Between 2015 and 2020, the number of providers increased by approximately 70%. The Carter Review (2015) stated that having a diverse provision could be a strength of the system; as student teachers are all individual with a variety of needs to consider.

However, increasing fragmentation means that providers are 'competing over a shrinking pool of applicants, by operating their own events and campaigns, recruitment behaviours are becoming increasingly ruthless and placing more and more pressure on applicants to accept places regardless of their individual needs' (Butterfield-Tracey and Stow, 2020, p.13). The increased number of routes and providers saw a reduction in the average cohort sizes of each provider. Small cohort allocations also contributed to the closure of several long-standing university-led geography courses (GA, 2017; Tapsfield, 2015). Where courses remain open, smaller cohorts often mean that there is not sufficient funding to appoint a geography specialist tutor, leading to generic training and reducing the opportunities for student teachers to access specialist training (Biddulph and Kinder, 2020; GA; 2017; Tapsfield, 2015). Ofsted (2020) found that those training with SCITTs are less likely to receive subject-specific training from a subject-specialist geography teacher educator. The development of subject knowledge and subject-specific pedagogy is an essential part of effective ITE, however, in geography ITE, the evidence shows that subject-specialist input is highly variable (GA, 2017). This will have implications for the growth and development of geography education research (Butt, 2019; Hammond *et al.,* 2022).

ITE in England has been described by recent commentators as being in a state of crisis, and 'an outlier' because of unique combinations of policies and reforms (Mutton and Burn, 2024). It is one of the most tightly regulated and centrally controlled systems of ITE anywhere in the world. Ellis and Childs (2023, p.1) refer to it as: '…a national, state franchise with a strong emphasis on fidelity to both mandatory design and content'. The voices of university ITE

providers have been distinctively absent from the governments consultations of ITE policy reform (Mutton and Burn, 2024).

2.2.3.1.1 Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Market Review

In 2019 the DfE's 'Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy' (2019, p.7) acknowledged that there was a need to 'radically simplify the process' of becoming a teacher. This lay the foundations for the 'profound' reform of ITE, outlined in the ITT Market Review report (DfE, 2021b). As part of this process all teacher education providers had to reapply for accreditation to continue to provide training from September 2024. The DfE (2021b) anticipated that this would lead to 'significant market reconfiguration'. Of the 226 providers in 2022-2023, sixty-eight providers lost or relinquished their accreditation (Zuccollo, 2022). This has not necessarily resulted in less capacity overall, as new providers were also accredited (Zuccollo, 2022) and some, that did not get reaccredited, have subsequently formed partnerships with successfully accredited providers (Worth, 2023). The GA raised concerns about the impact of the ITT Market Review on the status and professionalism of geography teaching as it felt that it undermined a critically engaged professional ITE environment that supported the subject and phase-specific development of geography teachers (Hammond *et al.,* 2022).

Although overall capacity of ITE may not change following the ITT Market Review, there is a concern that regions have been disproportionally impacted, for example, the North-East suffered a substantial loss of ITE places (Zuccollo, 2022). Removing poor ITE provision without offering high-quality alternatives will compound issues for local schools that are already struggling to recruit in shortage subjects. Local ITE provision is essential for schools as most

student teachers seek employment in the region in which they complete their ITE (Tapsfield, 2015). Half of ITE graduates move less than 25km from their ITE provider location for their first job (Zuccollo, 2022). This may further exacerbate regional variations in teacher supply across England where it has been historically hard to recruit (Ellis and Childs, 2023) for example, between rural and urban schools and distinct types of educational settings such as the state and private sectors (Allen and McInerney, 2019; See *et al*., 2020). In comparison to London, the North-East, West Midlands and the East of England are less likely to have teachers with a relevant degree teaching shortage subjects (See *et al.,* 2020).

2.2.3.1.2 School placement(s)

Student teachers and ECTs can be highly vulnerable to school culture (Engvik, 2014) as their identities are still only tentative and a school's culture can shape and reshape their identity (Akkerman and Meijer, 2010). This process is not always straightforward, and student teachers can find themselves 'torn' between demands of universities and schools, as Smagorinsky *et al.* (2004, p.9) outline:

> …these two settings are responsive to different constituents, have different overriding motives, respond to different ideals, and consequently emphasise different values and practices, with the university setting more concerned with ideals and schools with their gritty application.

The university reinforces the student role with the expectation that they are achieving good grades. In school, they are a student teacher with the goal of becoming a teacher (Smagorinsky *et al.,* 2004). Increasingly, there is an acknowledgement to support that student teachers can also act as brokers, bringing new perspectives into schools and challenging experienced teachers' preconceived ideas (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011). Student teachers are 'boundary

objects' as they move between universities and school placements. Star and Griesemer (1989, p.393) introduced the concept of 'boundary objects' to describe how intersecting practices can be bridged as:

> …both inhabit several intersecting social worlds and satisfy the informational requirements of each of them. Boundary objects are objects which are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in common use and become strongly structured in individuals site use.

Student teachers accomplish this through subject knowledge development in their own education and through new pedagogical practices that they have adopted in their ITE and on placements.

Ultimately, the demands of the schools will take precedence over their ITE provider, as there is the constant presence of the mentor, and the student teacher is operating in the school's culture and procedures daily. University tutors will only be able to influence the student teacher during observational visits and teaching days at university, which may feel disconnected from being in school (Smagorinsky *et al.,* 2024).

2.2.3.2 The influence of school(s) during careers

Schools are complex organisations (Papay and Kraft, 2017) and can impact teachers' well-being, motivation, commitment, and enjoyment (Arthur *et al.,* 2015; Collis, Elsom and Smithson, 2021; Day *et al.,* 2006). It is less about the physical environment of the school such as modern facilities and well-resourced classrooms and more to do with the aspects of the school that cannot be seen or measured that contribute to a school's culture which seem to

be most influential: the quality of relationships, the assistance from support staff and the academic and behaviour expectations of pupils (Papay and Kraft, 2017). Creating a supportive school culture is a key factor in sustaining motivation (Day *et al*., 2006). It can lead to an emotional attachment, creating a sense of belonging and security which contributes to teachers' well-being, increasing their commitment to the school (Collie *et al.,* 2016; Collis, Elsom and Smithson, 2021).

Schools can influence and coordinate individual behaviours through expectations and policies about how an individual, or group of people, ought to think, feel and behave. This could be formally through job descriptions or informally through codes of conduct, creating shared norms and values (Haslam, 2004). This can influence and change individuals; therefore, schools are more than an accumulation of the individuals' actions (Haslam, 2004). A large component of work motivation comes '…from their collective sense of who they are and what they feel compelled to do in order to maintain and promote that identity' (Haslam, 2004, p.60), therefore understanding group membership is important. There may be a strong sense of a collective purpose (DfE, 2019a). Each teacher being an individual agent that is part of a wider whole school mission (Hollis, 2004). An amass of individual actions accumulating in joint intentionality (Risjord, 2014). Discord may arise when an individual's identity does not mirror the identity of the group.

2.2.3.2.1 Fieldwork

For geography, fieldwork has been described as a 'defining feature', a 'fundamental pillar' and an 'essential component' of geography's disciplinary identity (GA, 2009; Hammond, 2018;

Lambert and Reiss, 2014). It is embedded in both the history and identity of geography and has a long and firmly established place in British geography education (Lambert and Reiss, 2014; Ofsted, 2021). Fieldwork is to geography, as experiments are to science. It is vital to geographical practice (Freeland, 2021) and is defined as any learning through first-hand experience beyond the classroom (Boyle *et al.,* 2007; Kinder, 2013; Lambert and Reiss, 2014). This could take place within a geography lesson, a day trip or as a residential trip.

Fieldwork has been referred to as the 'real world' where 'real world learning' takes place as it provides an environment for pupils to develop a sense of awe and wonder together with a greater understanding of place. Through a range of active approaches, pupils can contextualise and 'render visible' theoretical geographical concepts studied in classrooms (Kinder, 2013; Swift, 2005). Fieldwork provides a new way of discovering geography without the constraints of a regular classroom environment and the highly compartmentalised school days (Hammond, 2018).

Within classrooms, desks can act as physical barriers in the space between students and the teacher, whereas on field trips they share the space together. Purposeful fieldwork experiences inspire curiosity and fascination about the world and its people bringing learning alive across the curriculum. As Kinder (2013, p.180) states, fieldwork has a: 'sense of freedom, of breaking out from the constraints of the regular classroom environment, exposing both teachers and learners to the possibility of discovery and, perhaps, the opportunity to recover something of the spirit of exploration that helped to create the discipline we call 'geography''.

Despite research and inspection evidence suggesting that fieldwork is a vital and an enriching element of the geography curriculum (Kinder, 2013), its position in the curriculum has changed over recent years (Fuller *et al*., 2010; Hammond, 2018; Lambert and Reiss, 2016). Its place within examinations remains 'contested, unclear and sometimes under threat' (Lambert and Reiss, 2014, p.4). The arguments often being that geography can be done without undertaking fieldwork and that it is often easier not to (Lambert and Reiss, 2016).

Fieldwork is often in conflict between what is theoretically desirable and practically possible (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2019). Within teachers' specific context, fieldwork will be influenced by the needs and experiences of their pupils; curriculum requirements; and their school management (Hammond, 2018). Organising fieldwork can be very time consuming and challenging and there is often a cost incurred for the school in curriculum time, management and organisation (Ofsted, 2021). Some school managers perceive fieldwork as '[d]esirable but not a core requirement' (Lambert and Reiss, 2014, p.5), perceiving the 'real world' as unpredictable, and arguing that the opportunity costs are too high in terms of risk management (Lambert and Reiss, 2016).

Geography teachers need to take professional ownership and advocate for fieldwork within their local contexts (Hammond, 2018) as a loss of fieldwork would be 'disastrous' for the subject's identity, geography teachers' identity, teacher morale and it would negatively impact pupil attainment (Lambert and Reiss, 2014, p.17). In addition, there are benefits for young people connecting to the natural world, especially before the age of twelve as it will increase their chances of continuing to engage with it into adulthood (Jones, 2020).

2.2.3.3 Relationships

Secondary geography teacher identity cannot be explained at the individual level but only in relation to others, as teaching is a highly social enterprise (Rushton *et al.,* 2021; Sachs, 2005; Sayer, 2000). As Banaji and Prentice (1994, p.324) posit: '[h]ow one thinks about oneself at any particular time is strongly influenced by the immediate social context'. Education is a collaborative process that involves groups of people (Rushton and Reiss, 2020; Rushton and Reiss, 2019) such as policy makers, academics, teachers, parents/carers and pupils (Hammond and Healy, 2022).

Surprisingly, it is only recently that social identity approaches have been used for education research (Rushton and Reiss, 2020). The social identity approach has been used to provide insight into understanding how these interactions that appear 'natural and uncomplicated', may be 'highly structured' (Haslam, 2004, p.2). As Rushton and Reiss (2020, p 4) state:

> …the social identity approach asserts that an individual's sense of self is shaped by their internalised sense of social identity that they have derived from the groups to which they belong, rather than shaped only by their personal identity. This shared group identity shapes who individuals think they are, how they think and how they act.

The reason that many teachers decide to join the teaching profession is a desire to work with young people and to make a difference (Day *et al.,* 2006; Gorard *et al.,* 2021). A good relationship with pupils is essential for professional growth from an ECT to an experienced teacher. Teachers should be willing to act as role models for their pupils (Arthur *et al*., 2015; Beijaard, 1995).

For a student teacher, mentors in school placement, tutors from teacher education, colleagues on placement and peers in their ITE cohorts are important source of support and knowledge. Through dialogue with them and others, student teacher knowledge develops (Bakhtin, 1981). This helps them to develop as competent and confident professionals (Mutton and Burn, 2024). For cohorts of student teachers there is a 'thrown togetherness' (Massey, 2005). They are tied together through a mixture of chance and design who experiences form part of their identities as a cohort (Brown and Kraftl, 2019).

Evidence shows that ECTs who receive support improve at faster rates and are more likely to stay in the profession than those who do not (Papay and Kraft, 2017; Smith and Ingersoll, 2004; Watters and Diezmann, 2015). School mentors and their subject and pedagogical knowledge and skills are an important part of geography ITE; they facilitate the progress of proficiency and identity through supporting ECTs' teaching performance. They mediate the transfer of knowledge from teacher education into the school's context and support personal and professional well-being (Watters and Diezmann, 2015).

Relationships and connections continue to be important throughout a teacher's career. These interactions shape and reshape identity (Mann, 2018; Rushton *et al.,* 2021). It is through these connections with others, and in contrast to others, that teachers come to know themselves (Akkerman and Meijer, 2010; Garza, 2021). To sustain these relationships with others, they require a good relationship with themselves (hooks, 2005). Mid-career teachers place greater importance on developing connections with colleagues than late-career teachers whose identity is connected more to their institutional identity. This may be because late-career

teachers hold roles which position them as authority figures within and beyond their school (Richardson, 2019).

For secondary geography teachers, sharing fieldwork experiences with others is important for social gains. As pupils themselves it was an opportunity to engage in teamwork which can develop constructive relationships (Boyle *et al.,* 2007; Dunphy and Spellman, 2009; Lambert and Reiss, 2014). Fieldwork does not follow the usual format of a school day which can be highly compartmentalised (Hammond, 2018), providing an opportunity for pupils and teachers to socialise (Dunphy and Spellman, 2009). Relatedness in teaching may be quite different from other professions as teachers are often isolated from their colleagues during much of the working day (Collie *et al.,* 2016; Smith and Ingersoll, 2004) so fieldwork provides an opportunity for teachers to spend time with their colleagues.

Relatedness which is connected to support from colleagues is an important psychological need that underpins intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2008). Being able to ask for help and support is important to maintain teachers' resilience, commitment and effectiveness (Day *et al.,* 2006; Raheem, 2022). Resilience is collective and is strengthened when we feel that we belong and are supported by those around us (Daisley, 2022). To support self-seeking behaviour, strong relationships are needed (Raheem, 2022). The more resilient teachers are, the more likely they are to continue teaching (Smith and Ulvik, 2017).

2.2.3.4 Policy

Policies contribute to '… the construction of a social world of meanings, of problems, causes and effects, of relationships, of imperatives and inevitabilities' (Ball, 2013, p.17). It is by definition 'restless and future oriented' (Ball, 2013, p.63). As policy constantly evolves, teachers must reflect this and the meaning of their work and their identities must be reshaped (Ball, 2013; Rushton *et al.,* 2023). Over time, teachers' roles have become broader, considering: 'the individual development of children and young people, the management of learning processes in the classroom, the development of the entire school as a 'learning community' and connections with the local community and the wider world' (OECD, 2005, p3).

In practice, new policies add to and overlap existing policies, and new ideologies are merged with older principles that can leave teachers with discrepancies and contradictions by having to resolve what changes and what stays the same (Ball, 2013). Teachers must therefore act as mediators between policy and practice (Stillman and Anderson, 2015) as they 'interpret, adapt, and even transform reforms as they put them into place' (Coburn, 2001, p.145). Policy itself does not guarantee quality outcomes for learners. Success requires subject specialists who can interpret and implement the policy in their own context.

2.2.3.5 Geography's place in the curriculum

All school subjects have a 'curriculum story' and experience periods of uncertainty about their status and appeal (Butt and Collins, 2013). As England has a knowledge-led curricula, it creates strong boundaries between subject areas (Bernstein, 1973) which results in a ranking of

subjects and subsequent weighting of curriculum time (Trowsdale, McDonald and McCrory, 2024). Geography's position in the curriculum has changed over time, fluctuating between greater and lesser prominence.

Geography was a popular GCSE subject from the 1950s (Ofsted, 2021), until the mid 1990s when its numbers started to decline: 'From 1995 to 1999 geography entries at GCSE declined by 12.85 per cent, whereas the total cohort of pupils increased by 15.34 per cent' (Gardner, 2013, p.48). This was attributed to the increase in the number and range of courses at the time (Butt and Collins, 2013; Gardner, 2013; Hopkins, 2013; Weeden and Lambert, 2010). In 2010, the Coalition government introduced the EBacc, which increased the take-up of 'core' academic qualifications that they considered would best prepare pupils for progression to further study and work (Long and Danechi, 2019). Geography was included along with English language, English literature, mathematics, the sciences and a modern foreign language and history; with pupils being able to choose between geography and history (DfE, 2019b).

Despite geography being deemed a 'core' academic subject in the EBacc, it along with other subjects continues to be marginalised in favour of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects (Trowsdale, McDonald and McCrory, 2024). STEM subjects have been prioritised since the STEMS skills gap inquiry from the Science and Technology Committee found that the UK was facing STEM skills shortages, often in key growth sectors (UK Parliament, 2016). There have been some initiatives to try to address equality between subjects, for example, by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) who has recognised geography as a 'part-STEM' subject because of its teaching and research and use

of fieldwork, lab and data (Brace, 2020; RGS, 2011). In 2020, the London School of Economics and Arts Council launched 'Shape' *(Social science, Humanities & the arts for people & the economy),* a re-branding drive, to promote the humanities and social sciences. Aiming to emulate the success of the educational term STEM (Thorpe, 2020) as humanity subjects had been dismissed as 'soft subjects' (McInerney, 2019, n.p.).

The social identity theory was originally developed to understand the psychological basis of intergroup discrimination. When teachers' sense of who they are is more defined by their subject identity, they may develop an 'us' and 'them' between departments (Haslam, 2004). Competition between departments may be exacerbated when their successes and challenges are treated as their problems, rather than the wider school's issue to address. This can be further compounded by the perception that certain subjects such as English, mathematics and science have a higher status in the curriculum and are prioritised through curriculum time, resourcing, and having specialist teachers.

2.2.3.6 Communities of practice

Although spaces in education are centred on the school classroom, they also include other physical and digital settings such as universities, professional associations, conferences, podcasts and social media (Rushton *et al*., 2021). These communities of practice have an impact on teachers' professional development, allowing teachers to take control of their own CPD (Parkin and Spear, 2021).

Communities of practice offer a collaborative approach (Parkin and Spear, 2021). Working collaboratively is a need for humans as we are social animals and seek out contact with others (Haslam, 2004). As hooks (2001, p.129) posits, 'communities sustain life'. Being part of these groups will shape individuals' sense of self. As Rushton and Reiss (2020, p.2) posit: '[t]his shared group identity shapes who individuals think they are, how they think and how they act'.

2.2.3.6.1 Professional bodies

Connecting to subject professional bodies, such as the GA and the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) (RGS) is important for geography teachers as they are increasingly in smaller student teacher cohorts and geography departments in schools tend to be smaller (Brooks, 2017). Economic constraints in schools have led to a fall in the proportion of school funding allocated to teachers' Continual Professional Development (CPD). In 2018-2019, funding declined to an average of 0.55% of schools' budgets in England, which was the lowest since 2011-2012 (Tracy and Childs, 2021). This may have a detrimental impact on how individual teachers perceive the importance of their profession, as CPD sustains teachers' professional pride and is important for their professional identity (Holman, 2020) regardless of their career stage (Day *et al.,* 2006). Currently, teachers' CPD, has been focused on generic rather than subject-specific CPD. Subject-specific CPD is essential as has been previously mentioned (p.2) as each subject has: 'its own rules of enquiry and evidence' (Counsell, 2018).

The geographical professional bodies provide access to a wider network of colleagues and can provide a sense of belonging to their subject community (GA, 2023; Pass, 2021). These

communities provide a space to share and think about the subject's curriculum and its pedagogy, giving teachers autonomy (Gatward, 2020). They can act as a 'mediators' between the academy and schools (Butt and Collins, 2013).

2.2.3.6.2 Social Media

Social media platforms such as X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn provide online networks and are now an important aspect of the professional lives of teachers (Bergviken Rensfeldt, Hillman and Selwyn, 2018). They are used in a mixture of different ways such as, connecting with colleagues, locally, nationally and internationally; providing support and guidance; and the sharing of pedagogical ideas and subject knowledge (Bergviken Rensfeldt, Hillman and Selwyn, 2018; Forte, Humphreys and Park, 2012; Riggall and McAleavy, 2019). Social media allows teachers to take ownership of their professional development (Riggall and McAleavy, 2019) and facilitate a space for teachers to share their opinions and engage in discussions (Thomas and Riddle, 2019).

Social media is a flexible, asynchronous and convenient means of accessing new skills and knowledge and increasingly teachers are using it to take individual responsibility for their professional development (Bergviken Rensfeldt, Hillman and Selwyn, 2018). Having autonomy over professional development goals and being able to have opportunities to hone, develop and shape subject specific knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge is an important motivator. It is associated with higher job satisfaction and is a key driver for recruitment, retention, well-being and school improvement (Cordingley *et al.,* 2019; Pass, 2021; Tracy and Childs, 2021; Worth and Van Den Brande, 2020;).

Networks, groups and spaces together form communities of practice (Wenger, 2000). They are important for maintaining health, well-being, and identities (Rushton and Reiss, 2020); in turn, this could support teachers to remain in the profession. A study of science teachers suggested that having more complex professional social networks and being able to develop a multi-faceted professional identity contributes significantly to their sense of self-worth (Rushton and Reiss, 2020). Being able to communicate with lots of people helps enrich a teacher's identity. The negative impacts of social media on well-being will be explored later in this chapter in 2.4.3 Well-being -> 2.3.3.2 social media.

2.2.4 Change over time

Teacher identity is not a fixed and stable entity but changes '… moment to moment and context to context' making it dynamic (Akkerman and Meijer, 2010, p.3). Navigating the personal, professional, and situated factors (Day *et al.,* 2006) at various times during a career provide an opportunity for revaluation, changing priorities or a change in direction, through '… construction or reconstruction, formation or erosion, addition, or expansion' (Danielewicz 2001, p.10). Teachers' identities continually evolve as there is an ongoing negotiation as it is reshaped with experience (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009; Rushton *et al.,* 2023; Sachs, 2005). It is not a linear process (Akkerman and Meijer, 2010) and must be continually re-defined and negotiated (Sachs, 2005).

Towers and Maguire (2017) define a long-service teacher as someone who has sustained their commitment to the profession beyond five years, having successfully navigated the 'danger points' which many ECTs have struggled to negotiate, that result in the ECTs leaving the profession. The argument suggests that over time, a teacher's professional and personal identities merge, so that they feel 'natural' or 'whole' to a greater or lesser extent when engaging in their work. Successful teachers have been able to reconcile the aspects of their identities that have been in conflict so that they can maintain their commitment to the profession.

How we view these changes and tensions can vary with time and through reflection (Schön, 1983). This could be due to new experiences such as working in different contexts which provide a change in perspective and how previous events may have been interpreted (Rushton *et al*., 2021). Reflection helps to shape identity and can help teachers to become more aware of their sense of self and of their own values as it allows teachers to critically question their assumptions (Jackson, 2019). Reflection is recognised as the very core of effective teaching (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009). It has been acknowledged as a key part of teacher education for some time, yet its focus tends to be more on a student teacher's pedagogical or subject knowledge rather than their teacher identity.

For teachers, creating space and time to reflect on teacher identity beyond their ITE can be challenging but it has been found to be beneficial for individuals (Rushton, Gibbons and Hesketh, 2021). Time for reflection allows teachers to become aware of their abilities and to gain confidence in their capacities, enhancing their self-efficacy, self-confidence and self-

esteem (Römgens, Scoupe and Beausaert, 2019). Therefore, they will be better at identifying progress between previous professional selves and current selves. Areas that have been enriching and fulfilling can be identified along with addressing points for improvement and lifelong learning (Römgens, Scoupe and Beausaert, 2019). This can be motivating, and steps can be taken to move towards future aspirations and their 'ideal self' (Lauriala and Kukkonen, 2005).

Gratton and Scott (2016) summarise three key interrelated aspects of change. The first is that successful change only takes place when people understand themselves; knowing themselves now and having a clear vision of how they might be in the future. Lauriala and Kukkonen (2005) conceptualise these aspects of self into three components. The first being the 'actual self' which is the one that currently prevails. Secondly, the 'ought self' which is the one recognised by society or an external group as the goal and finally, the 'ideal self' being the one set by the individual as a target for the future. To understand themselves, one requires self-knowledge through continuous interrogation of past, present and future experiences (Gidden, 1991). Understanding of self is seen within literature specific to teaching as a key component of teacher development and the shaping of identity (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009).

Secondly, change for an individual is easier when they observe others doing it. Observing transition provides a role model and new opportunities that they may not have previously considered for their future selves. The future self is focused on individual targets which are highly socialised (Lauriala and Kukkonen, 2005). The ideal self can only be imagined from previous experiences and in relation to their social context (Sida-Nicholls, 2021). It also

potentially provides new communities and networks that an individual may access and use as a source of information and support. Observing others can have an influential impact on self-efficacy levels. Bandura (1977) called these vicarious influences. It is most powerful where there are similarities between the teacher and those they are observing because they can view a performance as a barometer for their own capability.

Our 'ideal self' will alter in relation to our current emotional state (Davidson and Milligan, 2004). Emotions are an expanding area of the literature on identity. Anderson and Smith (2001) believe that emotions have been marginalised in social science due to the gendered basis of knowledge production, which values detachment, objectivity and rationality. These traits have been implicitly masculinised, and valued over engagement, subjectivity, passion and desire which have been devalued and are frequently feminised. Arthur *et al*. (2015) posits that emotions in teaching are often in relation to passion and enthusiasm, especially for the subject. The assumption being that if teachers are enjoying their work, then they will care about the work that they do, because they are emotionally invested. However, it is more than just enjoyment, emotions shape our everyday experiences (Hall and Holmes, 2020) and inform our identity because '[o]ur sense of who and what we are is continually (re)shaped by how we feel' (Davidson and Milligan, 2004, p.534). Our emotions impact our surroundings and affect time and space (Davidson and Milligan, 2004, p.534).

Third and finally, change is not passive. People must act their way into and through change. These changes and shifts are not always seamless evolutions and can be a challenging and a conflicting process that can cause tensions (Akkerman and Meijer, 2010; Beauchamp and

Thomas, 2009). These tensions can be: 'between their own educational ideals and aspirations, personal life experiences, the leadership and cultures in their schools, pupils' behaviour and relationships and the impact of external policies on their work' (Day *et al*., 2006, p.vii). Depending on how well teachers can cope with these tensions and competing demands will impact their motivation and commitment which can increase, stagnate, or decrease (Müller *et al*., 2021).

However, if teachers are supported and given the tools to address these tensions it can be an opportunity for creativity, learning and awareness and transformation (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011; Akkerman *et al*., 2006; Alsup, 2006). Smagorinsky *et al*. (2004, p.9) emphasise the importance of putting student teachers in environments that instigate tensions to challenge their identities, encouraging them to question themselves and their beliefs, because:

> … early-career teachers are guided toward particular beliefs about teaching and learning through practices that put these beliefs into action. The teacher, in this conception, is not so solitary, instead being part of a larger social system that includes the broad educational policy context, a community's vision of education, a school's mission toward realizing it, a curriculum through which to implement it, administrators invested in enforcing it, colleagues who help to establish it, students who have been socialized to participate in it, and other relationships.

Being able to establish their own beliefs may become more challenging for student teachers as ITE has moved away from university-led ITE towards school-based ITE. Where student teachers do not experience contrasting placements, they must ensure that they develop their own professional identity and maintain their autonomy rather than becoming the teacher that the school, that they are training in, wants them to be (Till, 2018) and understanding the situated dimensions that are required (Day *et al.,* 2006).

Subject identity can provide support for teachers during periods of change and reform in their professional practice and sustain them throughout their career (Brooks, 2017). Ideas and techniques about how best to teach along with adapting to new curricula are constantly in flux (Martin, 2021; Mutton and Burn, 2024). Approaching things through a geographical lens uses the rules of knowledge construction that are particular to geography. It can support teachers to know when to contest and when to conform with factors that impact their practice (Brooks, 2017) and may challenge their identity.

2.2.4.1 Additional roles

During their careers teachers may take on additional roles, which could be connected to their geography subject specialism or have a whole school focus. These additional roles can influence identity, allowing people to change over time whilst positioning themselves differently, in various contexts, towards other people. This explains how teachers can be both 'unitary and multiple, both continuous and discontinuous, and both individual and social' (Akkerman and Meijer, 2010, p.2).

In literature, the multiple aspects of identity have been referred to as sub-identities (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004). The term 'sub' can give the impression that it is less than and therefore less important than the whole. That each of these parts only hold an aspect of identity and are not a complete entity in themselves. Bakhtin (1981) refers to these instead as 'I-positions'. These 'I-positions' do not exist in a vacuum, and they may be influenced depending on the audience or the context in which they are received. For example, through

drawing on social identity approach, Rushton and Reiss (2020) found that when science teachers became leaders, they shifted their group identification from that of a science teacher to that of a science teacher leader, whilst retaining a shared identity with the broader group of educators.

Taking on additional roles may support teachers to remain in the profession, as it has been found that those who hold managerial or supervising aspects of their jobs have higher average autonomy than teachers in non-managerial roles. Autonomy is strongly associated with higher teacher job satisfaction and job retention.

2.3 Reasons why individuals become secondary geography teachers

Understanding the reasons for joining the profession is a common topic in the literature on recruitment of teachers (Castro and Bauml, 2009). The reasons to become a teacher are often intrinsic factors connected to life goals and integrated into a sense of self (Deci and Ryan, 2008) such as working with young people and wanting to make a difference. Less influential but still relevant are extrinsic factors such as receiving material benefits like pay and career advancement (Castro and Bauml, 2009).

2.3.1 Knowledge about the profession

Having knowledge about the teaching profession or how to become a teacher is important (Castro and Bauml, 2009). This knowledge could be gained through experience of teaching in some capacity or having close friends of family members who work in the profession. Teaching then becomes attainable when it is considered through lived experience or close association

with those who teach, as they can envision themselves as a teacher (Castro and Bauml, 2009). These experiences can help those navigating the procedure for applying to ITE as the Carter Review (2015) raised concerns that it was challenging and confusing because of the complexity of applying and the lack of transparency in the process.

2.3.2 Role models

Having good teachers is also credited as one of the most important factors for choosing to continue to study geography (Gardner, 2013) and for considering teaching as a possible career (Gorard *et al.,* 2021). Teachers are advocates both for the discipline and the profession and can help parents/carers to better understand how geography can be a valid choice for future studies and careers (RGS, 2021). Teachers can be used as role models (Arthur *et al.,* 2015) whereby values and attributes can be identified which form the basis on which to model oneself (Lauriala and Kukkonen, 2005). There is not a single definitive list of characteristics that define a good teacher (Palmer, 1997).

2.3.3 Chosen subject discipline: geography

Chosen subject disciplines are often a key motivating factor in deciding to become a teacher because of a love of the subject and wanting to share this with young people (Rushton *et al.*, 2021). Becoming a teacher is an identity-forming process (Danielewicz, 2001). For ECTs, maintaining engagement with and enjoyment of a subject discipline is important for their self-efficacy and remaining in the profession (Brooks, 2017). ECTs identity develops over a longer period because, in the early stages, they have not yet had sufficient time to form identities

that are shaped by teacher group membership (Rushton and Reiss, 2020). A small-scale study of student teachers found that when thinking about their future selves, they were more focused on personal attributes rather than their professional identities (Sida-Nicholls, 2021). Perhaps because their understanding of a professional identity was undeveloped and shaped by their own experiences as a pupil.

2.3.4 Altruistic reasons

Altruistic aspirations of wanting to work with and make a positive difference to young people is also an important motivator to becoming a teacher (Castro and Bauml, 2009; CCoT, 2023; Day *et al.,* 2006; Gorard *et al.,* 2021). Teaching differs from other professions in that its recipients, the pupils, have a legal requirement to engage with its service. The relationships established between teachers and pupils are usually longer-term and have deeper connections (Collie *et al*., 2016). As the DfE (2019) posits, teaching is unique, in that every single day there is the opportunity to change lives.

2.3.5 Initiatives

Where the government have used initiatives to incentivise individuals to join the teaching profession, extrinsic motivators have been predominately utilised, such as bursaries and scholarships for shortage subjects, loan forgiveness and paid internships. They are rarely the key motivating factor for choosing to be a teacher along with adverts, media stories, and government websites (Gorard *et al.,* 2021). Bursaries are tax-free payments and can be received in addition to tuition fee and maintenance loans. Additional support may also be accessed by student teachers who are also a parent, a carer, or someone with a disability.

Concerns have been raised about bursaries as they do not have any requirement for those who received them to teach in England over the long term (GA, 2017). Some bursaries will be greater than teacher starting salaries which is not a good motivation to enter and remain in the profession.

2.3.6 Second Career Teachers (SCTs)

For some, teaching will not be their first career. In the literature, Second Career Teachers (SCTs) are defined as career changers who leave their current jobs to become teachers (Baeten and Meeus, 2016). They come from a variety of different backgrounds (Nielsen, 2016). SCTs are not defined as a separate category in ITT census data in England, so it is not possible to identify those who fit precisely into this category.

There is limited research on the reasons for SCTs deciding to teach (Castro and Bauml, 2009; Nielson, 2016 cited in Frison *et al.,* 2023). Where literature exists, it tends to be focused on the characteristics and skills that SCTs have (Castro and Bauml, 2009) and the countries that offer alternative pathways for SCTs, which England currently does not have (Frison *et al.,* 2023). The consensus is that SCTs have a positive influence on classrooms and schools (Nielsen, 2016). They enter the profession with a previously developed professional point of view and a formed identity which will become modified with time. An SCT may maintain aspects of their previous identity whilst adopting their teacher identity.

A factor to consider, between those who enter teaching as their first career and SCTs is to understand the 'Why Now?'. What are the factors that have aligned to enabled them to make the career change (Castro and Brauml, 2009)? SCTs are driven by many of the same intrinsic and extrinsic factors outlined previously (Watters and Diezman, 2015). There are additional motivators such as:

- Feeling bored, dissatisfied and underutilised in the previous profession
- Seeking a challenge
- Job security
- Time for family
- Prior experience in some form of teaching
- Access to bursaries, enabling them to leave paid employment
- Support and encouragement from friends and family
- Being ready to make a commitment to become a teacher

Bursaries have been found to be an enabler for individuals changing careers, providing them with access to funded teacher education. Support from family and friends can help SCTs during times of vulnerability and uncertainty (Castro and Brauml, 2009).

2.4 Reasons that can lead to secondary geography teachers leaving the profession

Understanding the reasons why teachers leave the profession is complex whether they are an ECT or a long-service teacher. It can be a drawn-out process and may take years to make the decision (Towers and Maguire, 2017).

Decisions to leave or remain in a school depend on several personal, professional and situated factors related to the teacher's identity (Towers and Maguire, 2017). Teaching is often considered as an occupation with a high level of turnover, especially among new teachers (Gorard *et al.,* 2021). Over 20% of ECTs leave within the first two years of teaching and 33% leave within their first five years (DfE, 2019, p.10; Education Support, 2018; Lynch *et al*., 2016, p.3). Reasons given for teachers leaving include burnout, heavy workloads, pupil behaviour, and poor leadership in schools (Barmby, 2006; Towers and Maguire, 2017;).

It is also becoming harder to retain working-age teachers. Fewer studies explore the reasons why it is that longer serving teachers decide to leave the profession. This research has not been able to fill this gap in knowledge, as it is difficult to reach these 'lost teachers' in order to hear their stories. Mid-career or long-serving teachers can sometimes experience tensions and conflicts between their professional and personal lives. When teachers are not able to reconcile aspects of their identities, they may face a 'professional identity crisis'. This crisis can occur '… as a result of a loss of motivation and commitment to the job, attempting to cope with significant work-life tensions and pressures, increasingly feeling alienated from the structures and practices of their schools, and feeling trapped' (Towers and Maguire, 2017, p.949). Changes in roles such as management or leadership roles can have significant impacts on identity and the kind of teacher that an individual is and wants to be (Towers and Maguire, 2017). If these tensions are unresolved, it can cause teachers to struggle with a sense of fulfilment, negatively impact on their resilience and if not addressed can lead to teachers leaving the profession (Alsup, 2006; Towers and Maguire, 2017).

2.4.1 Decline in status as a profession

Teaching has struggled to maintain the same status and benefits that other professions such as medicine and law enjoy (Arthur *et al*., 2015) impacting on teachers' perception of their professional identity (Till, 2018). This is a problem, as when teaching is not perceived or treated as a profession, it becomes less attractive as a career. In normal economic times, this will result in difficulty in recruiting teachers, meeting recruitment targets and lead to higher attrition rates within the profession (Ovenden-Hope, 2021). This may be attributed to the neoliberal 'turn' over the last three decades (Holloway and Brass, 2018). In ITE, reform has relied increasingly on control structures and content of courses to improve teacher quality rather than examining the pedagogical approaches underpinning the sort of curriculum that can help to produce effective teachers (Mutton and Burn, 2024). In schools, this has seen a move away from the focus on pupils' education and their experience to a focus on teachers' performance, educational achievements and struggles (Till, 2018). Holloway and Brass's (2018) study of ECTs found that new teachers saw themselves as producers of data rather than professionals with expertise. The move towards performative marketisations has seen teacher identity shift from professionals to performers, as the focus is on output of 'knowledge production' rather than valuing the process of how we teach or learn (Ball, 2021; Holloway and Brass, 2018).

A teacher's judgement is more of a technical and rationalist approach that must rely on 'what works' rather than developing an understanding of their pupils, pedagogies or of innovative

ways in approaching their subject and their philosophical underpinnings of educational theory (Arthur *et al.,* 2015). This is positioning teachers as a 'commodity' rather than as professionals (Ovenden-Hope, 2021). Dillabough (1999, p.378) wrote that when teachers are thought of in this way and labeled as 'competent' that: '[a] discursive notion of teaching 'self' is lost and the complexity of education and its socialising mechanisms remain unexplored' because as Palmer (1997, p.16) argues: 'good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity of the teacher'.

With increasing concerns about standards in education, there has been a succession of initiatives to drive up standards and improve outcomes (Arthur *et al.,* 2015; Larvin, 2021). This has led to a shift in top-down regulation and high levels of accountability measures leading towards evidence-based and data-driven approaches which have been utilised in school league tables, school inspections, international large-scale testing and pay performance and control (Arthur *et al.,* 2015; Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2014; Larvin, 2021; Towers and Maguire, 2017). The public discourse around the results of which perpetuates the notion of 'good schools' and 'bad schools' (Ball, 2013, p.133).

As aims become outcome-focused, regulation and standardisation have tried to ensure 'best practice' and quality (Booth, Perry and Boylan*,* 2019; Sachs, 2005). Top-down curriculums where prescription of content or levelled outcomes drives teaching and learning, leave little scope for individual professional judgement. While heuristics may be useful in some situations, teachers need to understand why an approach might be effective in their context or how it should be adapted to meet the needs of their pupils (Mutton and Burn, 2024). It has

led to de-professionalisation (Booth, Perry and Boylan, 2019; Brooks, 2016), and a culture of perpetually meeting, and not exceeding the standard and leading to mediocrity at best (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2014; Hennessy and McNamara, 2013) has resulted in a narrowing of the focus of education and undermining teacher autonomy and trust (Arthur *et al.,* 2015; Ball, 2021; Ball, 2013; Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2014; Cordingley *et al.,* 2019; Fox, 2021; Standish and Perks, 2021). This 'crisis of trust' is rooted in 'control rather than integrity' (Ball, 2013, p.56).

The loss of individual teacher autonomy is concerning because it is a psychological need that underpins intrinsic motivation and professionalism (Deci and Ryan, 2008). It is strongly associated with job satisfaction and a greater intention to stay in teaching (Worth and Van den Brande, 2000). In many professions, autonomy usually increases with age and experience as people become more proficient, respected and trusted throughout their career. However, for teachers in England it has been found that there is a slightly decreasing relationship between age and autonomy (Worth and Van den Brande, 2020). This may be because, as claimed by Sachs (2005, p.9): '… governments do not see it to be in their best interest to have a vocal and autonomous teaching service. When teachers do act autonomously, their behaviour is often not sanctioned by their employing authorities, but rather chastised'.

Trust in teachers is important to allow them to make the right decision for their context based on their professional and situated experience and expertise (Müller and Goldenberg, 2020). For example, selecting pedagogies that are the most appropriate for their pupils' success in

their discipline while utilising their own strengths (Martin, 2021). As Lofthouse (2020, p.39) states:

> [w]hen we feel trusted then we step outside of our comfort zone and lean towards challenges. When we feel trusted then we do not hide the mistakes we make. When we feel trusted, we are more likely to join conversations where problem solving is at the centre and where we acknowledge that we need each other to co-construct solutions for a better outcome.

Sadly, distrust in the sector is increasing and there is an increasing negative public perception of teachers (Ball, 2013; Towers and Maguire, 2017). At a time when the UK has seen a general decrease in trade union membership, the education sector has seen an increase. When issues arise, many teachers seek the support of their union rather than their school (Coughlan, 2015). The main reason why 68% of secondary teachers joined a union was 'support if there was a problem at work' (Ager and Pyle, 2013, p.8).

2.4.2 Workload

Teachers in England are among the hardest working in developed nations (Larvin, 2021). On average full-time teachers report working fifty-one hours during the week. Those with additional roles, such as senior leaders, on average, work fifty-seven hours per week (Ofsted, 2019). When tasks cannot be completed within the working day, it can impact upon personal lives, as work must be completed during evenings, weekends and holidays (Ofsted, 2019; Towers and Maguire, 2017). The issues of heavy workload were found to be a main reason why teachers were leaving teaching (Gorard, 2021; House of Commons Education Committee, 2017; McLean, Worth and Smith, 2024) and one of the most cited reasons for senior leaders and teachers thinking about leaving the profession; 83% and 66% respectively (Savill-Smith

and Scanlan, 2022). Concerns about workload is also a key factor in dissuading prospective teachers from entering the profession (Barmby, 2006).

Although it has been acknowledged that workload needs to be reduced (DfE, 2019a), it is not as simple as reducing the number of hours worked. The term 'workload' carries negative connotations and is often used to report dissatisfaction in the sector. 'Workload' is in fact an umbrella term for all tasks that must be completed to maintain self-efficacy (Sauntson, 2022). It is complex and nuanced as it depends more on the type of work, particularly associated with accountability and the level of autonomy teachers have over the work (Perryman and Calvert, 2020). Teachers' resilience can be weakened when they are not able to practise teaching according to their beliefs and values. Instead, teachers' time and energy are spent on bureaucratic demands and expectations (Sachs, 2005; Towers and Maguire, 2017). Ofsted (2019b, p.6) found: '… that teachers spend less than half of their time on teaching, while lesson planning, marking and administration tasks take up a large part of their non-teaching time'.

2.4.2.1 Additional subjects

For those teachers that must teach additional subjects as 'non-specialists,' this can negatively impact their workload, especially if they have responsibility for their own planning, as they must dedicate considerable time to researching the subject (Shreeve, 2018). The extent to which this creates additional workload, will depend on teaching experience and if there are any cross-curricular links between the additional subject and geography (Shreeve, 2018). For example, if ECTs teach additional subjects, this can slow down their progress and development as their workload increases which potentially will lead to a reduction in their self-efficacy and

confidence, having a negative impact on their geography teaching (Holman, 2020; Mitchell and Lambert, 2015).

The increased numbers of non-specialist teachers teaching geography (DfE, 2016a; Shreeve, 2018) can be challenging for Heads of Department to manage and this will increase their workload as they may have to prepare lessons or provide more detailed schemes of work than those provided to a subject specialist.

2.4.3 Well-being

Lower levels of control over workload can diminish self-efficacy, which in turn can negatively affect teachers' stress levels and emotional exhaustion (Müller and Goldenberg, 2020). Teaching staff and education professionals report the highest rates of work-related stress, depression and anxiety in Britain (Ofsted, 2019, p.4). In 2022, the Teacher Wellbeing Index reported that 67% of senior leaders and 59% of teachers had considered leaving the profession in the past academic year due to pressures on their mental health and well-being (Savill-Smith and Scanlan, 2022, p.8). A greater understanding of mental health is beyond the scope of this study but the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (no date) define stress as: 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them' and identify the general causes of stress at work as being: conflict with others, frustration at not being able to achieve something, pressure from demands that they cannot fulfil, a perceived threat which may lead to fear, uncertainty and a cognitive gap between what we think about ourselves and what we can do. 74% of education professionals

considered the inability to switch off and relax to be the major contributing factor to a negative work/life balance (Education Support, 2019, p.6). Teachers' work has intensified and is unrelenting as there is a constant pressure to perform (Sachs, 2005; Towers and Maguire, 2017). This has been attributed to higher levels of accountability and micro-managing (Jerrim and Sims, 2021; Müller and Goldenberg, 2020; Towers and Maguire, 2017). Accountability measures and performative agendas can threaten a teacher's sense of self and their identity. This can impact experienced teachers more as they are more likely to carry leadership responsibilities for raising attainment and will therefore carry more of the emotional load of trying to perform well in national tests (Towers and Maguire, 2017).

Teacher well-being focuses on the workplace (Collie *et al.,* 2016) and consists of three areas: mental and emotional well-being, physical well-being and social well-being (Humes, 2011). These can be challenging to manage on a day-to-day basis as the work of teachers is difficult intellectually, physically and emotionally (Sachs, 2005). Teachers can experience an array of emotions during the day. The job is physically demanding with constant moving and talking, and there can be the additional and unexpected pressures from colleagues, parents/carers and pupils.

Literature on teacher well-being states that there is often little regard for general well-being which is related to life as a whole. Teacher well-being and general well-being do not operate in isolation and can impact each other (Collie *et al.,* 2016). For example, the physical and emotional labour for caring responsibilities of children or elderly relatives can transgress the boundaries of workplace and home, impacting both (Davidson and Milligan, 2004). The

combination of caring responsibilities and paid work requires high levels of corporeal and temporal skills which can create additional work (Drozdzewski and Robinson, 2015). The inflexibility of teaching due to the set timetable and the envelope of the school day can make taking time off during term time challenging.

2.4.3.1 Ofsted

Educators have highlighted that Ofsted inspections are a source of stress (Ofsted, 2019). Not only the inspections themselves but also the anticipation of their visits. There is increased administrative workload and pressure ahead of, during and in the wake of their inspections (CCoT, 2023; Ofsted, 2019). The high-stakes accountability of inspections has created a culture of 'mocksteds' and intense inspection preparation (CCoT, 2023). Ofsted's judgements about schools are publicly available and their findings upon different aspects of provision will influence the priorities of the individual teacher and the school (Arthur *et al.*, 2015). It has been found that this has resulted in a loss of autonomy and a narrowing of education as an evolving inspection framework has prioritised statistical data with an excessive focus on data and examination results which tests outcomes rather than other indicators of quality (BERA, 2022; Hammond *et al.,* 2022)

Staff turnover is often found to be higher in a school with a poor Ofsted grading (Sims, 2016). A consequence of high staff turnover is a decline in the school's organisational stability and teachers' morale (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004), having negative impact on school culture. In the 2022 Teacher Wellbeing Index, 42% of staff considered their organisation's culture had a negative effect on their well-being (Savill-Smith and Scanlan, 2022, p.6; Turner and Braine,

2016). Where teachers' values and beliefs are not aligned with their school culture it can lead to feelings of alienation (Towers and Maguire, 2017). Accountability culture such as achieving good examination results can then be internalised by teachers as a measure of how good a teacher they are (Towers and Maguire, 2017).

An inquest into the death of Headteacher, Ruth Perry in January 2023, found that an Ofsted inspection had contributed to her death. The Senior Coroner reported that: 'Ruth's mental health deteriorated significantly during and after the inspection' (Connor, 2023) and described Ofsted's conduct as: 'rude and intimidating'. This prompted testimony from school leaders and teachers who shared their experiences of distress caused by Ofsted and the impact that it had on Headteachers (Gohil, 2024). The Chartered College of Teaching (CCoT) called for Ofsted inspections to be developmental rather than punitive (CCoT, 2023).

2.4.3.2 Social media

As Bergviken Rensfeldt, Hillman and Selwyn (2018, p.231) summarise: '…empirical literature to date has tended to frame teachers' uses of social media as relatively straightforward and unproblematic… Rarely, if ever, are teachers' professional uses of social media groups considered as a form of *work*'. However, 24/7 accessibility to social media can result in teachers both producing and consuming work-related content beyond their usual working hours (Bergviken Rensfeldt, Hillman and Selwyn, 2018). Social media relies on users devoting a substantial amount of time and effort to consume and produce content, whether teachers realise this or not. This may be a contributing factor to the 74% of education professionals who consider the inability to switch off and relax as a factor to a negative work-life balance

(Education Support, 2019, p.6). As Parkin and Spear (2021, p.38) advocate: '[t]his reinforces the need for schools to integrate CPD into teachers' working days, rather than expecting it to be an additional activity'. Thomson and Riddle (2019) found that although many encounters between teachers were constructive and positive, there were more aggressive and confrontational debates between those with traditional views and those with progressive views about education.

2.4.3.3 Policy

Constantly evolving policy can have a negative impact on teachers. It can lead to an increase in an already high workload if the workforce is not supported with its implementation (Ofsted, 2019). With the nature of policy being future oriented, it can devalue the present (Ball, 2013) creating tensions between professional beliefs and values (Stillman and Anderson, 2015), leaving teachers themselves feeling confused about their professional identity (Day *et al.,* 2006). Conflicts arising from the confluences of professional expertise and policy will affect some teachers more than others (Stillman and Anderson, 2015).

Policy directives have strengthened accountability whilst eroding trust (Ball, 2013; Rushton *et al.,* 2023). This can lead to apathy and a loss of motivation as teachers have reported that they do not have sufficient influence over policy which changed too quickly (Ofsted, 2019). There is a call for closer collaboration between policymakers and practitioners, recognising that teachers are the experts (Müller and Goldenberg, 2020).

2.4.4 Bursaries

Issues have been raised about the suitability of bursaries for addressing the teacher retention crisis, as analysis of DfE data found that in 2015-16 nearly £22 million was spent on bursaries for student teachers who did not go on to take up a teaching post (Weale, 2019). Those who were in receipt of the highest bursary of £25,000 were the least likely to end up in a teaching post compared with those on smaller bursaries or no financial incentive at all (Weale, 2019). Bursaries may attract people who have no intention of staying in the profession (Higher Education Policy Institute, 2017). This may be one of the contributing factors that may explain why over 20% of teachers leave the profession in the first two years of teaching (DfE, 2019, p.10; Education Support, 2018; Lynch *et al*., 2016, p.3).

2.4.5 Lack of flexible working

Evidence indicates that teachers leaving the profession often go to jobs that pay less, in search of a better work-life balance (DfE, 2019a). Surprisingly, the only retention tactic used by many schools is to offer financial incentives, rather than considering flexible working. As Marsh and Derbyshire (2019, p.115) posit that: '[a] flexible working arrangement might make the difference between a teacher feeling that the work-life juggle is manageable and feeling so overwhelmed that they give up on the profession entirely'. Flexible working has become synonymous with working part-time, but it is more accurately defined as 'arrangements which allow employees to vary the amount, timing, or location of their work' (DfE, 2024a, n.p.). Half of all teachers who have left teaching to raise families have not returned as the perception is that a teaching career is not compatible with family life (Marsh and Derbyshire, 2019).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

The literature in Chapter 2 has provided the 'lay of the land' (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2011, p.84). There has been rapid growth in teacher identity research over the past decade. As Sachs (2005, p.15) posits teacher identity: '… provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be', 'how to act' and 'how to understand' their work and their place in society'. Teacher identity research is important because those who are aware of their teacher identities are more likely to remain in the profession (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009; Rushton *et al.,* 2023), however, it remains undervalued in teacher education and educational policy (Rushton *et al.,* 2023).

Although an understanding of teacher identity has remained consistent for the past two decades, there is still a limited number of studies focusing specifically on secondary geography teacher identity along with other non-core curriculum subjects in favour of an overemphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects (Rushton *et al*., 2023). This research aims to contribute to the current knowledge gap on the construction of secondary geography teacher identity. As argued by Rushton *et al*. (2023, p.16, emphasis in the original text), 'teacher identity must be understood in *all* subjects.'

The focus on *secondary* geography teachers was selected because secondary teachers' professional identity is initially more intricately linked to the subject that they teach, the status of those subjects and the relationships with colleagues who teach the same subjects than for

primary teachers (Beijaard, 1995). This is because primary school teachers are generalists with responsibilities of teaching a range of subjects to the same class of pupils everyday (Towers and Maguire, 2017). Their professional identity is derived from the relationships they form with their students (Beijaard, 1995). Primary school teachers are also more likely to sustain their commitment over their career than secondary teachers (Day *et al.,* 2006).

As education is a devolved matter in the United Kingdom, the focus was on those that had experience of teaching in England, so that the impact of policy was able to be explored from participants' perspectives. In addition, the curriculum for geography is different in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. In England, geography is a compulsory national curriculum subject (DfE, 2014a). In Wales, the implementation of the Curriculum of Wales in 2022 saw geography replaced with the Humanities Area of Learning Experience (AoLE) at KS3 (Hwb, 2020). In Scotland, geography forms one strand of a Social Studies subject area (Education Scotland, 2023) and in Northern Ireland, geography at KS3 is under the Areas of Learning Subject strand of Environment and Society alongside History (CCEA, 2024).

3.2 Research Questions

To explore a secondary geography teacher's identity, it was important for participants to reflect on the experiences they had as learners of geography through to being secondary geography teachers, including how their relationship with geography had changed over time. Participants need also to reflect on the opportunities and experiences that had helped to develop their secondary geography teacher identity and the events that had threatened,

challenged, or changed their identity during their professional journey. The formation of a secondary geography teacher's identity is not a linear process and will be shaped by their personal philosophies and values which may be informed and shaped by their social and spatial experiences of education (Hammond and Healy, 2022). To understand the construction of secondary geography teacher identity the research aims to answer the following research questions:

- Research Question 1 (RQ1): How and why does an individual become a secondary geography teacher?
- Research Question 2 (RQ2): Why do secondary geography teachers remain in the profession?
- Research Question 3 (RQ3): What are the reasons that lead to secondary geography teachers leaving the profession?

3.3 Theoretical underpinning

During the research design process, when considering the theoretical underpinning that would shape, inform and focus the research, research paradigms were carefully considered. Interpretivism, as a research paradigm, assumes that reality is subjective, complex and socially constructed, which would enable me to understand how geography teachers experienced and interpreted their reality. In interpretive research, human beings are understood as agents not as objects (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2011). Therefore, to understand a phenomenon, such as the construction of secondary geography teacher identity, it must be experienced through participants' eyes, focusing on their perspectives (Moran, 2000), their worlds and their local

knowledge. As Borg (2003, p.81) states, '… teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically oriented, personalised, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs'.

To do this, it is necessary to relinquish control to the participants as the experts in their own lives (Schwartz-Shea, 2011), seeing things from their perspective (Della Porta and Keating, 2008) and focusing on meaning-making and the production of contextual knowledge. My role is not to just be a channel for the participants but to be a 'sense-maker' (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2011). Generalisation will therefore be limited (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and predictability is impossible since the knowledge created by the research is constantly changing in time and space (Bourdieu, 1977). Theory building and generalisation does not fully represent the richness of the experiences of the participants and the social world is complex and dynamic (Isaeva *et al.*, 2015). However, this does not mean that interpretive researchers are always on 'shaky' or 'loose' ground,' in fact, they are more in tune with the evolving world. Interpretive research designs need to therefore be flexible so that the researcher's attention is open to possibilities that cannot be anticipated (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012, p.36).

The research acknowledges that identity engages in multiple social worlds, where teachers will position themselves differently in various situations and differently towards other people (Akkerman and Meijer, 2010). The use of qualitative methods accepts that the concept of reality is multiple (Berliner, 2022; Della Porta and Keating, 2008; May, 2011). It allows for a greater diversity of interpretation, stories and narratives (Isaeva *et al*., 2015). Focusing on the meaning that teachers give to their environment, rather than the environment itself,

recognising that qualitative research is '… always context-bound, positioned and situated' (Braun and Clarke, 2019, p.591).

These complexities can be overwhelming, and it can be difficult to capture all the personal and professional nuances. For this reason, decisions must be made as to what is significant. This requires value judgments where decisions are made about where data is gathered from, who provides the data and how it should be collected. As Douglas (2011, p.514) states: '[w]e must value something to find it significant enough to measure, to pluck it from the complexity of human social life, and to see it as a set of phenomena worthy of study.'

It was important that the research design was underpinned by key theoretical literature on teacher identity. Figure 1 demonstrates the key literature that underpinned the data collection and analysis stages of the research. Although the focus of the research was on the construction of secondary geography teacher identity, the data collection methods created space for participants to share their experiences that informed their personal, professional and situated identities (Day *et al.,* 2006) as: 'we teach who we are' (Palmer, 1997, p.15) and the dimensions of identity interact and did not operate in isolation (Day *et al.,* 2006). This is represented in Figure 1, by the three overlapping circles the personal, situated and the professional. Where the three circles overlap is secondary geography teacher identity.

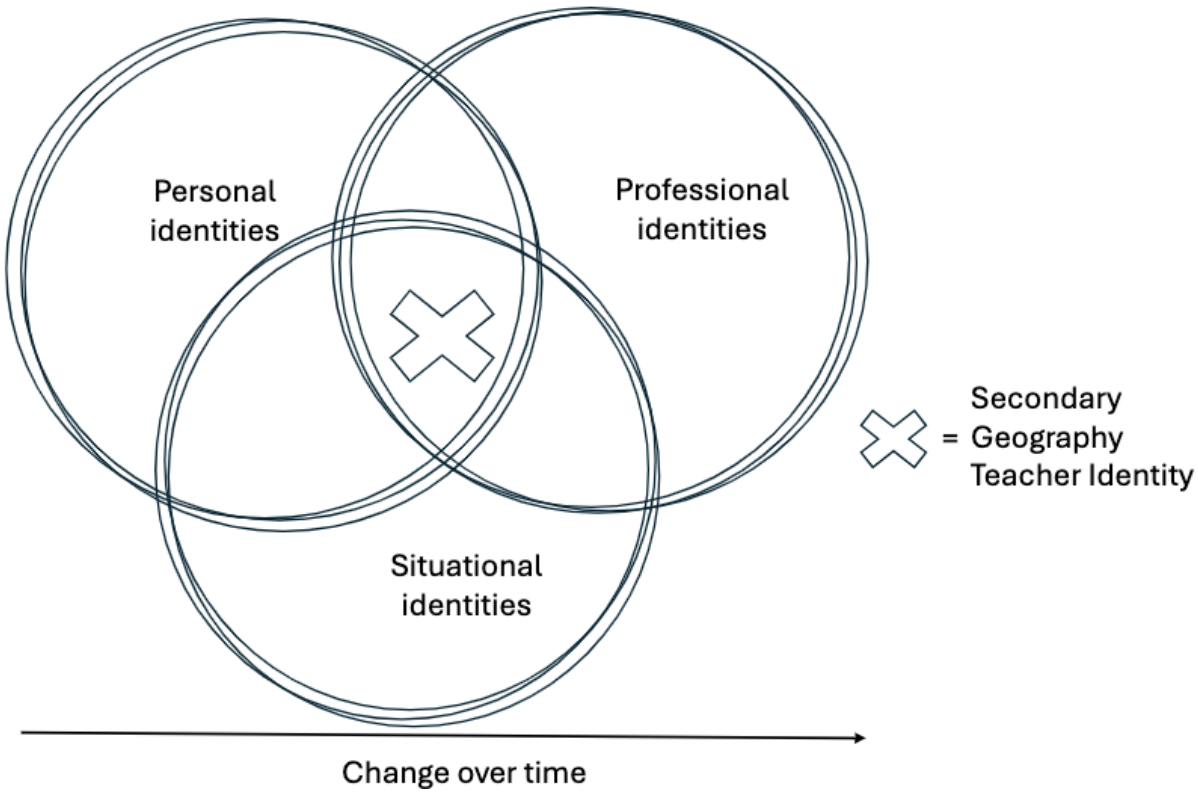

Figure 1: Secondary geography teacher identity

(Akkerman and Meijer, 2010; Day et al., 2006; Palmer, 1997)

In Figure 1 each of the three circles has multiple lines, this is to represent that within each aspect of identity it can be both 'unitary and multiple' (Akkerman and Meijer, 2010, p.2). For example, during an ITE year, student teachers will have to navigate different spaces and the situated identities such as their ITE provider, and their two contrasting placement schools. Each space will have their own cultures, values and expectations that will shape and reshape a novice teacher's identity (Akkerman and Meijer, 2010). The multiple lines of the professional identities circle represent the different roles that secondary geography teacher may have during their career. In addition to teaching geography, teachers may be form tutors, lead extra curricular activities and teach additional subjects. As they gain more experience, they may take on additional roles that shape their geography teacher identity.

The axis of 'change over time' along the bottom of Figure 1 is important to highlight that secondary geography teacher identity is dynamic (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009; Rushton *et al.,* 2023; Sachs, 2005). In Figure 1 each of the three circles are the same size, which could be inferred that each holds equal influence, however, over time some may take greater precedence. For example, if teachers become parents/carers during their careers they may have to adapt their time and energy. For example, spending less time in school outside of school hours (situated identities). For secondary geography teachers, residential fieldtrips can be a particular challenging aspect of the role for those that have caring responsibilities and if they are not able to engage in this aspect of their role it can impact their professional identity.

The formation of secondary geography teacher identity is dynamic, multifaceted and complex (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009). It can change: '… moment to moment and context to context' (Akkerman and Meijer, 2010, p.3). This is explored further at the end of next section: 3.4 The researcher's positionality in Figure 2.

3.4 The researcher's positionality

As the researcher it is important that I recognise the role that geography has had in the construction of my secondary geography teacher identity. It is important to reflect on and identify the route of my assumptions and positioning and interrogate whether this holds true for this research (Braun and Clarke, 2019). I recognise that I was an active participant in the research and therefore my experiences contribute to the knowledge produced (King, 2004). It does not make it wrong; it just means that it is situated (Braun and Clarke, 2022). In the

research I was a practitioner and insider researcher as I had been a secondary geography teacher since 2010 (Braun and Clarke, 2022). I had first-hand understanding of the role and had received training in research methods to be able to conduct this research (Punch, 2011). As Saldana, Leavy and Beretvas (2011, p.22) posit:

> The researcher, whether novice or veteran, is considered by many within the field of qualitative inquiry to be the primary instrument of the endeavour. Your autobiography and identity – life experiences, knowledge, training, emotions, values, attitudes, beliefs, gender, ethnicity, and so forth – influence and affect how you navigate through the enterprise and approach other important elements, such as the relationship between you and your participants and the analysis of your data. Who you are (or are becoming) determines to a large extent what and how you research.

As Brooks (2017) suggests, an individual's subject story begins the moment when geography became important to them. At the time, I did not realise the significance of some of the events that I am going to discuss in this section. It is only with my disciplinary perspective of statutory education that I can ground these important moments in my subject story. Through sharing my own journey to becoming a secondary geography teacher, I hope to provide a holistic picture of my experience, which should position me within this research and show how the temporal, social and culture context impacted my experience (Hendriks, 2007). Figure 2 (3.4.10 Construction of my secondary geography teacher identity) visualises my own identity in relation to personal, situated and professional contexts and how my identity developed and evolved over time.

3.4.1 Primary education

At primary school, I do not believe that I had geography lessons. However, through the disciplinary knowledge I have acquired, I can identify geographical themes and concepts that

were intertwined through broader topics for example, studying my local area. Although primary teachers were still required to train in a specialist subject (Tapsfield, 2015) when I was at primary school (1994-2000), I do not recall any of my teachers as being defined as a geography teacher. I can identify teachers being subject specialists, such as Mr C who was a maths enthusiast, Mrs B was passionate about drama and would direct the school productions, and Miss B was 'outdoorsy,' with a passion for outdoor pursuits and sport rather than a geographical focus. Since 2002, most geography specialist primary courses have ceased to exist as there was no longer a requirement to train all primary teachers to teach a specialist subject. For those training more recently the average course time for geography has been found to be below eight hours (Tapsfield, 2015, p.4).

Although I did not have geography lessons at primary school, I do not remember feeling nervous about studying geography at secondary school, unlike many of the Year 7s that I have since taught in my career. This is perhaps because my mother taught geography in a secondary school and our day trips and holidays often turned into geography field trips. My 'everyday knowledge' provided me with foundational knowledge and context for the topics we were studying in geography lessons (Roberts, 2017), developing my self-efficacy and confidence in geography (Bandura, 1977).

3.4.2 Secondary education

Throughout the seven years of studying geography at secondary school, I was fortunate that I was taught by geography specialists. This would not necessarily be the case for those studying

geography today. In November 2015, the proportion of hours taught in England to pupils in Year 7- Year 13 by subject specialist was only 79% compared to 90.3% across all subjects (DfE, 2016a). Analysis from 2017 found that geography had the third lowest proportion of teachers holding a relevant post A level qualification (NAO, 2017). Until recently geography was regarded as having among the best retention rates for teachers (Worth and De Lazzari, 2017). My school experience reflected this as there was little staff change in the geography department with three consistent members of staff during my seven years. They worked collaboratively, each with a strong subject identity and with their own areas of specialisms. Nationally, since 2011, rates of those leaving have risen by 17% (Holbrey, 2019, p.56) and between 2015 and 2018, geography experienced the second-largest increase in 'leavers' of any secondary subject (DfE, 2018b).

3.4.3 Outdoor learning experiences

I was fortunate that both my primary and secondary school valued field trips and I had access to trips every year (apart from 2001), in a range of subjects, together with optional extra trips beyond the curriculum. In 2001, my school trips were cancelled due to the Foot and Mouth outbreak which resulted in the closure of public rights of way. These opportunities were not rescheduled for our year group and were reintroduced for subsequent year groups once the restrictions were lifted. This had a minimal impact on my engagement and confidence with outdoor learning due to my previous and subsequent trips. As a family, we regularly spent time in the countryside. For those who have been studying geography since 2021, their outdoor learning opportunities have been greatly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The

examination regulator, Ofqual, removed the requirements for schools to declare that they had given GCSE, AS and A level geography pupils a set number of fieldwork days. The requirement for pupils to answer examination questions relating to their own fieldwork experience was also removed for examinations in 2021 and 2022 (Mason, 2022). Having outdoor learning opportunities in schools is important as young people today have significantly reduced opportunities to connect with nature (Jones, 2020).

3.4.4 Higher education

My field trip experiences at KS4 and key stage 5 (KS5) were the catalyst for wanting to continue to study geography at university, where I began to prefer human geography. University provided a new lens through which to approach topics and introduced new modules of geography that had not yet been incorporated into school geography. I connected to some modules at a greater depth, as they were connected to my interests and provided new insight to my lived experiences and to that of others. As Butt and Collins (2013, p.296) say, '…geography in the academy is afforded the opportunities to develop in innovative, experimental, tentative and uncertain ways with mobility that is not afforded to school geography'.

3.4.5 Work experiences

I had no clear career goal and had been privileged to make academic decisions based on what I enjoyed, and my decisions were supported by my family. Teaching had always been a career that I had considered but I received mixed messages from family members about joining the

profession. My mother loved teaching but wanted me to consider other careers that were not available to her when she had completed her degree. My aunt and uncle tried to dissuade me from joining the teaching profession; they no longer enjoyed teaching and were concerned about how the perception of the profession had changed during their careers. Their concerns were due to the reduced professional status of teaching, resulting from the increase in top-down regulation and accountability regimes (Booth, Perry and Boylan, 2019).

Two work experience opportunities at university helped me to clarify my decision to pursue a career in teaching (Castro and Bauml, 2009; Gorard *et al.,* 2021). The Student Associate Scheme (SAS), a government funded scheme administered by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA), aimed to attract undergraduates into the teaching profession through paid work experience (Advanced HE, 2005). The second was my involvement in sports coaching and I began to deliver cricket sessions at a local primary school. I enjoyed both experiences and felt a career in teaching would allow me to share my passion for my subject of geography and my wider interests of sport.

3.4.6. ITE

A variety of training routes were available to me when I was applying to train as a teacher. As the Carter Review (2015) confirms, this could have been challenging and confusing to navigate but fortunately I had family members who were already in the profession, to guide me through the different options. It could be argued that my decision was merely pragmatic as the institution where I completed my undergraduate degree also offered ITE. The city had become

my second home, and I valued an already established network of friends. Today, fewer undergraduate students may have the same option as myself as England has experienced the greatest shift from university-led ITE to school-based training since 1992 (Ellis, 2010 cited in BERA, 2022). Following the ITT Market Review (DfE, 2021b) and the reaccreditation of providers in 2022, only 80% of universities gained accreditation and will be able to provide ITE from September 2024 (Zuccollo, 2022).

During my ITE year I had experience of two contrasting school placements that were also different to my own educational experience. The support from my university tutors was invaluable. I also benefited from being one of over twenty other geographers who completed their ITE with that provider in 2010-2011. We shared experiences, resources, ideas during our sessions at university and placements; providing each other with mutual support. Our teacher identities, behaviours and roles emerged through membership of this cohort (Brown and Kraftl, 2019). As there has been an increased number of routes and providers for ITE, average cohort sizes have reduced since I trained. This has sometimes resulted in insufficient funding to appoint geography specialist tutors and leads to generic training in some providers (Biddulph and Kinder, 2022; Tapsfield, 2015). School-led ITE provision is less likely to receive subject-specific training from a subject-specialist geography teacher educator (Butt, 2019 cited in Biddulph and Kinder, 2020).

3.4.7 Teaching roles

Unlike half of the ITE graduates, who move less than 25km from their training location to their first job (Zuccollo, 2022), I moved approximately 90km to my first teaching post. I did not have any commitments, such as caring responsibilities, that would have limited my choice of jobs to one specific geographical region. During my teaching career, I worked in three contrasting schools: a large rural academy, a large inner-city urban free school and in an independent selective single-sex school. Each of these schools were different from my own educational experience. The pupils' local geography in these schools was vastly different, as was their lived experiences; these factors influenced how the curriculum was organised and taught. The perception of geography in these schools varied from the least popular subject to the most popular among pupils, parents/carers and staff. In schools where geography was not popular, teachers' perception was that there was a lack of support from the senior members of staff, as priority was given to other subjects that appeared to be valued more. This was particularly challenging when trying to arrange fieldwork opportunities for pupils, in addition to those that were a requirement at GCSE and A level.

Like my own secondary school experience, I have worked in departments that had geography specialist teachers. Each of the schools that I worked in had a sixth form and for two of the schools, it was favourable that I was a 'human geographer' as this complimented the specialisms of the other members of the department. Although the geography departments were small departments compared to other subjects in school, we were able to teach most of the school's geography curriculum with little non-specialist input. This also meant that I did not have any capacity on my timetable to teach beyond geography. Therefore, I was not

required to teach subjects in which I was not a specialist. This is increasingly becoming more unusual, as the teacher shortage of qualified geography teachers has seen an increase in non-specialist teaching (Tapsfield, 2016).

3.4.8 Additional Roles

During my career, I have had several additional roles and responsibilities which have influenced my geography teacher identity. I was a subject leader of geography in a newly established school. In our first year, I was the only geography teacher and after previously working within a collaborative geography specialist department, it required some adjustment to working independently. It was also an exciting experience to contribute to establishing a school's culture and an opportunity for us to be innovative, to challenge and adapt systems and established practices. Instead of having a school culture imposed on us, it was empowering to develop it with colleagues. Unlike extra-curricular activities in my previous school, these opportunities were built into the school day, rather than squeezed into lunchtimes or only being available to those who were able to stay after school. This allowed me the opportunity to share some of my other passions with pupils such as coaching sports and to explore geography without the confinements of a curriculum, such as collaborating with our local HEI on a research project looking at the impact of plastics on young people.

Small departments in the new school also encouraged collaborative working across subject areas, for example, on a field trip an English teacher read poems relevant to our fieldwork location and I arranged fieldwork that other subjects could also benefit from. The positive

school culture fostered a sense of belonging and security (Collis, Elsom and Smithson, 2021) increased my motivation (Day *et al.*, 2006) and well-being (Savill-Smith and Scanlan, 2022). I held mentoring roles as a NQT mentor and as a senior mentor supporting colleagues in the geography department and in other subject specialisms. I had taken on an additional role that involved leading research in school, conducting research projects with colleagues from our local university and supporting colleagues with their research opportunities. Working with colleagues in other departments influenced my practice and led to establishing cross-curricular opportunities and assimilating different pedagogical approaches.

Even though I identify as a secondary geography teacher, I am aware that for some of my pupils this may have been different, as our interactions were in relation to my other roles, as a form tutor or a sports coach during extra-curricular activities. This was similar for colleagues in my departments who also had responsibilities beyond geography such as Head of Year (HoY) or senior leaders. At times these roles created conflict with my geography teacher identity. For example, coaching sport teams involved having to take teams away for fixtures which impacted upon lessons and time during lunchtimes and after school which could have been used to support geography students or to complete my own preparation work.

The concerns and the trends I witnessed whilst teaching became the basis for my own research. Whilst I was Head of Department (HoD), I noticed that it was becoming increasingly challenging to recruit specialist teachers. This also coincided with an increased pupil uptake at GCSE and A level geography, a trend which was reflected nationally (Brace, 2020; RGS, 2022b). We struggled to convert the increased number of geography students at GCSE and A

level into applications to study geography at university. This ignited my interest to understand the geography pipeline and the journey taken by those that had chosen to become a secondary geography teacher.

3.4.9 Changing roles

Prior to commencing my doctoral research, I had worked full-time and was immersed in the wider school life through extra-curricular activities, being a form tutor and leading trips in the UK and abroad. When I commenced my doctoral research, I changed schools and taught part-time. I enjoyed focusing on teaching geography without the leadership responsibilities but missed having a tutor group and the daily 'check-in' with my tutees. Whole school events were often on days when I was not in school, and I sometimes felt as if I was not part of the school community. I missed the opportunity to build positive relationships with pupils beyond the classroom, through extra-curricular activities and trips.

Changing roles, teaching part-time as a secondary geography teacher, and becoming a postgraduate researcher resulted in a loss of clarity of my own identity. This was compounded by the fact that within seven months of starting my doctoral studies and joining a new school, the country entered a national lockdown due to Covid-19 and I had to access these spaces remotely. I struggled with the terminology around academia. Referring to myself as a Post Graduate Researcher (PGR) felt too vague and those outside of academia did not understand the term PGR. There was an element of imposter syndrome (Clane and Imes, 1978) as I did

not feel qualified to call myself an academic and so would often define myself as ‘a full-time student’.

3.4.10 Construction of my secondary geography teacher identity

Building on Figure 1, Figure 2 demonstrates how my identity has changed over time at four points before commencing this research. The focus underpinning Figure 2 is the construction of my secondary geography teacher identity.

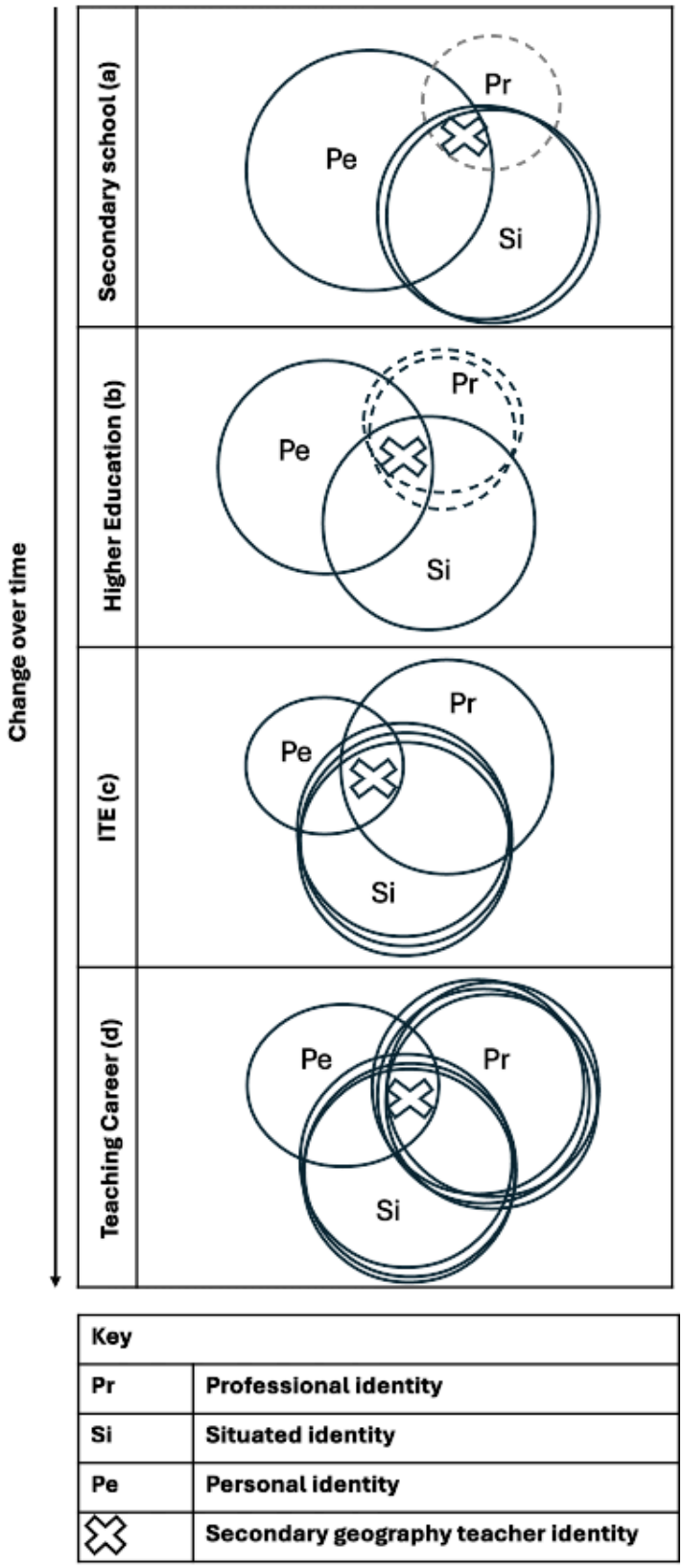

Figure 2: Construction of my secondary geography teacher identity

(Akkerman and Meijer, 2010; Day *et al.,* 2006; Palmer, 1997)

For secondary school (a), the personal identity and situational circles are the dominate aspects forming my identity. My primary school experiences underpinned my secondary experiences initially, hence the two circles for situational identities. My personal identity was heavily influenced by my everyday experiences through family trips and holidays. At this point I did not have a clear career trajectory but now reflecting on these educational experiences I can see the relevance of them on my geography teacher identity.

At university (Higher Education (b)), I had the opportunity to engage in two difference work experience opportunities: the SAS scheme and volunteering as a sports coach. These began to inform my professional identity and encouraged me to pursue a career in teaching.

During my ITE (c) I engaged with three different contexts: my institution, and two contrasting school placements. Each of these contexts supported me in developing my professional identity as a secondary geography teacher. The ITE year dominated all aspects of life in terms of time and energy so it can be seen in ITE (c) that personal identity was at its smallest at this time.

My teaching career (d) was an accumulation of the three different schools that I had worked in during my career, each of which are represented by the three situational identity circles. Each school was very different which kept me reflecting and developing my practice. During my career I held different additional roles as well as continuing to teach geography. These roles informed my teaching over time.

My experiences influenced the research, which is an inevitable part of the knowledge production process (Braun and Clarke, 2022). I was mindful of being too receptive to experiences that reflected my own and disregarding experiences that felt unfamiliar (Gorard, 2013). However, as Braun and Clarke (2022, p.8, emphasis in the original text) state, my: '…subjectivity is not a problem to be managed or controlled, to be gotten rid of, but should be understood and treated as a *resource* for doing analysis'. As a secondary geography teacher, I was an insider researcher and brought my knowledge and expertise of the role to the research. The research acknowledged that knowledge is situated and myself and participants' experiences take place in different temporal, social and culture context (Hendriks, 2007).

3.5 Research Overview and Timeframe

The data for this research was collected from 16 October 2020 – 2 March 2022 against a backdrop of educational reform and a global pandemic. With any research, disruption is normal rather than the exception, as it takes place in an evolving environment that has temporal, social and cultural context (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and identities are constructed within specific historical and institutional sites (Sachs, 2005). Figure 3 shows the key dates of the data collection and the key dates of the Covid-19 pandemic. These have been limited to those events that focused on secondary educational settings, although it is acknowledged that Covid-19 pandemic impacted all aspects of life and will have impacted on participants in many ways. It was an evolving situation with changes to government guidance and advice being

given at short notice. The flexibility of qualitative research was therefore a benefit. At the core of the decision-making about the data collection was the well-being and safety of participants and my own.

In March 2020, schools closed to all but the most vulnerable children and the children of key workers (BBC, 2020). Over one weekend, teachers and schools had to introduce new procedures and policies ready for remote teaching on Monday 23 March 2020. On 18 March 2020, it was announced that the summer 2020 GCSE, AS and A level examination series would be cancelled. Centre Assessed Grades were used to provide pupils with their grades (Ofqual, 2020).

In September 2020, schools returned to face-to-face teaching with strict Covid-19 guidelines in place, such as social distancing and adapted timetables. On 4 September 2020, the Humanities and Social Science Ethical Review Committee provided full ethical approval for this research. The pilot study of the first phase of the data collection, the online surveys, was conducted on 16 October 2020. On 5 November 2020, the second national lockdown came into force in England, but schools remained opened to all pupils. The first phase of data collection, the online survey, was launched on 8 November 2020.

On 4 January 2021, the Prime Minister announced that children would return to school after the Christmas break, but on 6 January 2021 England entered the third national lockdown. Schools in England again closed to all but the most vulnerable children and the children of key workers. It was announced that the summer 2021 GCSE, AS and A level examination series

were cancelled, but this time Centre Assessed Grades were to be replaced with Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). This increased the workload for teachers, middle and senior leaders as they had to prepare and mark examinations and collate evidence toward the grading. For GCSE and A level geography, the requirement for pupils to undertake a set number of days of fieldwork in 2021 was removed. At A level, pupils still had to undertake an individual investigation (Ofqual, 2020). The first phase of the data collection, the online survey, closed on 1 February 2021 and initial analysis began.

On 8 March 2021 schools opened to all pupils. Learning was disrupted as individuals, classes, year groups or 'bubbles' had to return to remote learning due to contact with Covid-19 or having to isolate. This meant that at times teachers had to teach entire classes remotely or had blended learning: some pupils attending a lesson, some joining remotely or they themselves having to teach remotely.

During the data collection there were national lockdowns and when schools reopened to all pupils, there were strict government protocols in place. As a result of this, I carried out both phases of my data collection online, using the Qualtrics platform for my surveys and Zoom for the interviews. Participants were in control of arranging and managing their own interview times through a booking software system, Calendly, to provide greater flexibility to participants. The time periods for both phases of data collection covered both term time and school holidays, to be accommodating to participants. Demanding pressure periods in schools were avoided for data collection, such as when external examinations in Summer 2021 were

replaced with TAGs, interviews did not commence until after schools had submitted relevant data for TAGs.

Figure 3: Data collection Timeline (BBC, 2021; DfE, 2021d; IfG, 2021)

3.6 Data collection methods

As outlined in Table 1, the data collection took place in two phases. The first phase was the online survey. The surveys gathered standardised information from all participants using a mixture of question formats such as dichotomous questions (Figure 6); multiple choice questions (Figure 7); rank order questions (Figure 8) and rating scales (Figure 9). The purpose of the survey was not to provide statistical explanations or to enable generalisations to be made (Cohen *et al.,* 2018) but to gain an understanding and insight (Saunders and Townsend, 2018). As teacher identity remains undervalued in teacher education and education policy (Beijaard *et al.,* 2022; Rushton *et al.,* 2023), I was mindful that participants may not be able to answer questions directly about their teacher identity. Instead, proxy questions were used to understand the construction of participants' secondary geography teacher identity. These questions were informed by the literature on factors that contribute to the construction of teacher identity.

The rich data captured informed the second phase of data collection: the interviews. Semi-structured interviews were used to construct narrative accounts from teachers. Narratives have been utilised across a range of subjects in the social sciences, including education and health and crime (Golsteijn and Wright, 2013). They are particularly useful in exploratory research projects (Golsteijn and Wright, 2013) such as this research. There is increased acceptance of narratives in research methodology (Peacock and Holland, 1993) and their importance in studying teacher identity.

Phase	Data collection method	Platform	Sampling strategy	Duration of data collection	Number of respondents	
1	Survey	Qualtrics	Non-probability sampling:	Pilot study: 16 October 2020	3 fully completed	
			Snowball sampling	8 November 2020 to 1 February 2021	143 fully completed (94 partially completed)	
2	Semi structured Interviews	Zoom	Non-probability sampling: Purposive sampling		Invited	Participated
				Pilot study: 15 June 2021	1	1
				Stage 1: 21 June 2021 to 31 August 2021	20	8
				Stage 2: 3 August 2021 to 31 August 2021	17	4
				Stage 3 Participants who have 5 years or less experience 2 March 2022	1	1
				Total		14

Table 1: Summary of data collection

3.6.1 First phase: surveys

The surveys were completed online using Qualtrics software. Online surveys were chosen as the first phase of data collection because they allowed access to a greater range of secondary geography teacher voices and experiences beyond my own locality. Potential participants were accessed directly through Internet-mediated access by using the Web, email, and social media (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2019). This meant that the usual gatekeepers in educational research, such as headteachers, did not have to be navigated as the research was not situated within schools (Hammond and Rawlings Smith, 2023). Participants were their own gatekeepers, and it was their choice as to whether they wanted to engage with the research. The online surveys provided greater flexibility for participants, by enabling them to complete it at a time and in a location that was convenient to them. Cohen *et al.* (2018, p.474) state that the three practical considerations of surveys are the sample, the format and the length of the survey. Each of these is now considered in turn.

3.6.1.1 The sample

Participants for this research were those that had experience of teaching geography in secondary schools in England. Having this experience was important to investigate how the context of working in the English school system and how national policy in education may have influenced and shaped teachers' professional identity. Current teachers and those who no longer taught geography in secondary schools were invited to participate in the research. As can be seen in Figure 4, participants predominately had experience of teaching geography in secondary schools, but not exclusively. 14% (n=22/154) of participants had experience of teaching younger pupils in Early Years, key stage 1 (KS1) and key stage 2 (KS2), while 10%

(n=16/154) had taught in Higher Education (age 18>). It cannot be assumed that all participants will have experience of teaching across the secondary school key stages as not all schools will have a sixth form. There will be other contributing factors, such as one participant who trained as a primary school teacher before transitioning to teach in secondary schools shared that they had *'… so far avoided taking on an A level class, mainly due to lack of self-confidence'* (S77) due to their perceived lack of degree level subject knowledge.

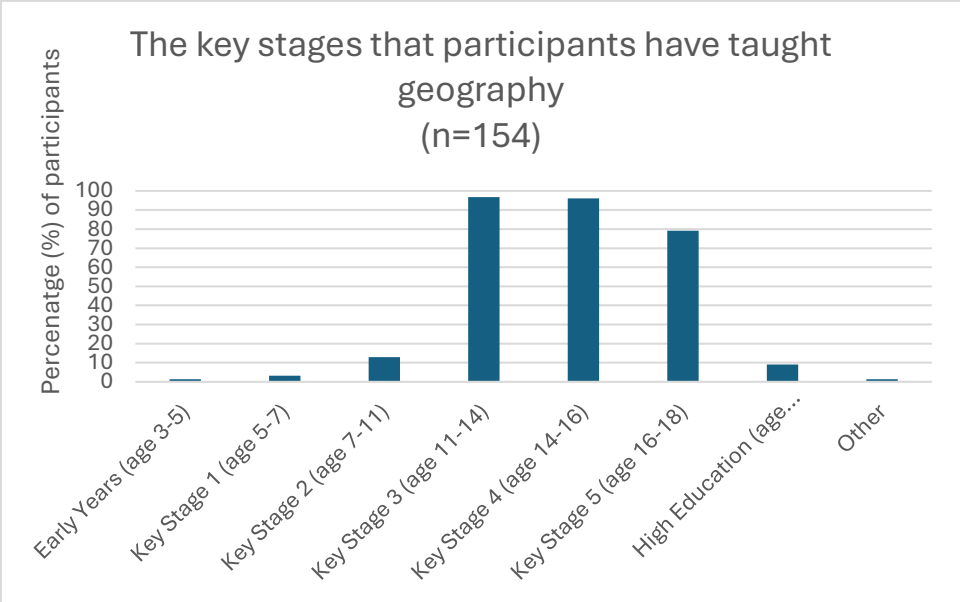

Figure 4: The key stages that participants have taught geography

Saunders (2012) acknowledges that the choice of research participants in qualitative research is usually limited by what is practicable. Participants were recruited through networks from my own teaching career and through geographical and wider educational networks. The link to the survey was shared via email and through social media platforms such as X (formerly Twitter). It was important not to rely solely on my own network of contacts. I needed to encourage others to share the survey and provide referrals with their networks through snowball sampling (Schwartz-Shea and Yannow, 2011). Snowball sampling is a non-probability

sampling method and is a common technique for qualitative data collection (Saunders and Townsend, 2018). The advantage of this, is that it reaches populations with the common characteristics that are not formally linked in existing databases (Smith and Ulvik, 2017). As Schwartz-Shea (2011, p.68) states: '… the types and degrees of access achieved position the researcher geographically in the field setting, which itself can shape access to other circumstances and groups; and this, in turn, can profoundly affect what the researcher sees or does not see, learns and does not learn'.

A limitation of using non-probability sampling is that it is not possible to gather evidence simultaneously therefore it was difficult to know how quickly or widely the survey would be shared (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2011). The survey took place between 8 November 2019 until 1 February 2020.

3.6.1.2 The format of the survey

We live our lives in episodes (Weiderberg, 2020). To help participants recall memories, the questions were structured around the three levels of autobiographical knowledge (Schacter, 1997). The highest level of the hierarchy contains lifetime periods which are lengthy segments of life, that are measured in years or decades. They help to find general (middle hierarchy) and specific knowledge (bottom hierarchy). The lifetime periods were used to group questions into chronological sections as shown in Figure 5. Within these sections, there were questions around the middle hierarchy which included general events which are measured in days, weeks, or months. These tend 'to be the natural entry points into our autobiographical memories' (Schacter, 1997, p.90). Follow-up questions were at the bottom of the hierarchy,

which are questions about specific knowledge that are measured in seconds, minutes or hours (Schacter, 1997).

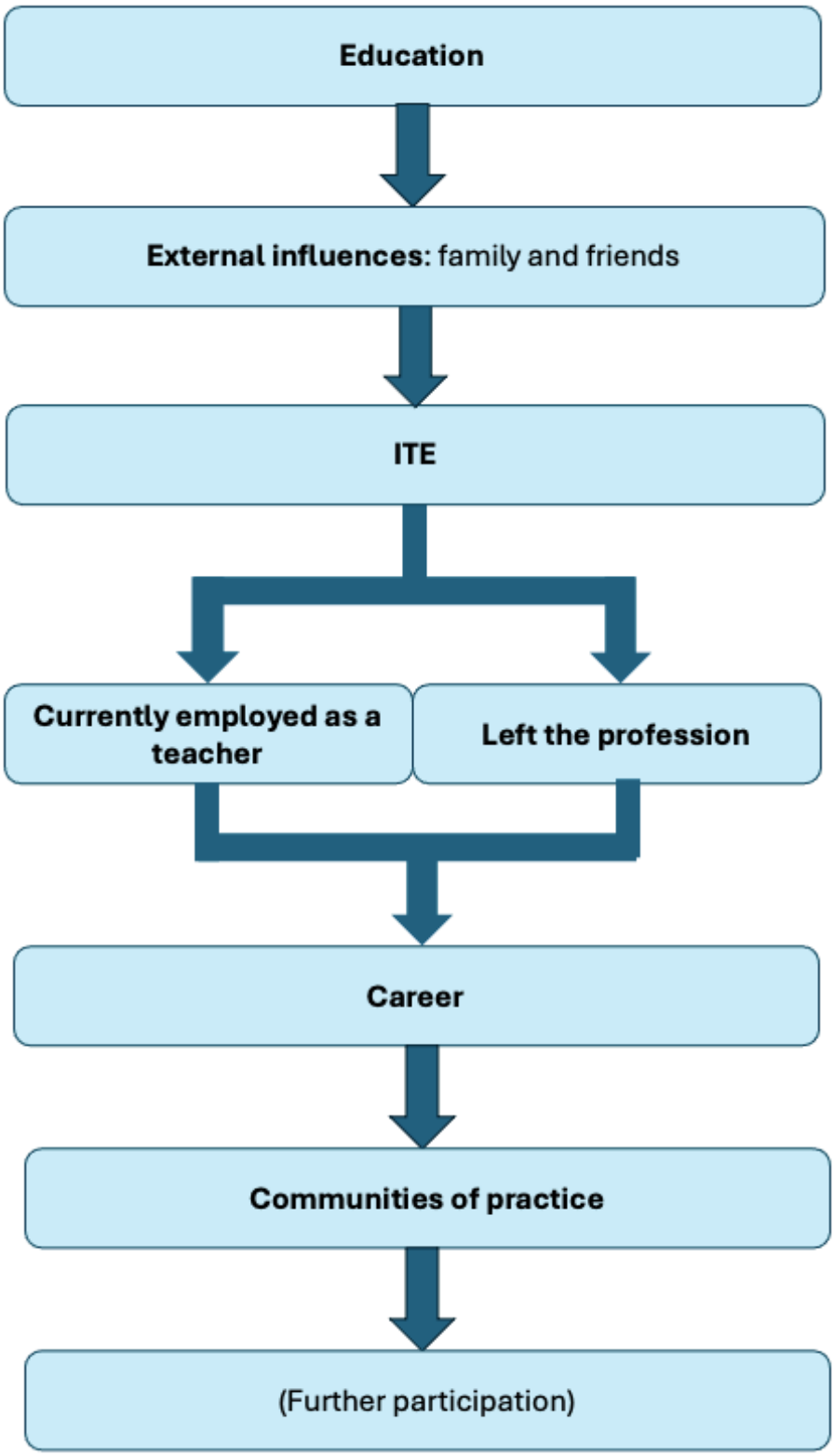

Figure 5: Survey: Lifetime periods

As Cohen *et al*. (2018, p.474) state: '… there is a simple rule of thumb: the larger the size of the sample, the more structured, closed and numerical the survey may have to be, and the smaller the size of the sample, the less structured, more open and word-based the survey can be'. However, as a non-probability sample was chosen it was difficult to know how open or closed the structure of the survey should be. The survey had a mixture of open and closed questions, allowing for open, rich responses to gain a deeper understanding, which allowed participants to provide explanations and examples where appropriate. Appendix 1: The survey contains the full list of questions.

The potential participants must also be considered. Engagement in the survey was voluntary and reliant on participants' goodwill which would only be gained if they believed that time spent on the research, and the disruption it caused, was worthwhile (Arksey and Knight, 1999; Starkey *et al.*, 2014). This is also referred to as the Leverage-saliency theory (Sheehan *et al*., 2015). If the survey was too long it could put too much strain on participants which could lead to poor-quality or incorrect responses or quitting (Cohen *et al*., 2018).

Dichotomous questions were also used to help navigate participants through the survey in the most efficient way, hopefully reducing participants' potential to withdrawal. These were questions that had two categories such as 'Yes' or 'No' (Bryman, 2012). To encourage higher rates of question responses and completion, the survey directed participants to the next relevant question. For example, if participants did not experience any outdoor learning or fieldwork during their ITE experience, the survey 'skipped' the follow-up questions as shown

in Figure 6. Where further information was needed, participants were directed to a follow-up question to gain further insight such as Q.23 and Q.24 (Cohen *et al*., 2018).

Q.22 Did you experience any outdoor learning or fieldwork during your initial teacher education experience? ❑ Yes ❑ No
If Yes, continued to Q.23 If No, skip to Q.25
Q.23 Please describe the positive experiences and/or successes of any outdoor learning or fieldwork during your schoolteacher training experience.
Q.24 Please describe the negative experiences and/or disappointments of any outdoor learning or fieldwork during your schoolteacher training experience.

Figure 6: Dichotomous question

Multiple choice questions were used when the likely range of responses were known (Cohen *et al.*, 2018) such as Figure 7. This is an example of a free choice, where participants could select as many options as necessary that were applicable to them. Other multiple-choice questions were used where a single answer was required. Champagne (2014) argues against the use of categories such as 'other' as this gives the impression that the researcher has not spent sufficient time researching the possible answers. However, as this research adopted an inductive approach, it was important to provide an opportunity for participants to have the choice of contributing to the options, so as not to restrict the data that could be generated. This is particularly important for Q31, as some participants would have begun teaching before

academies were introduced in in the early 2000s (West and Wolfe, 2018). Some participants had also taught outside of England in different schooling systems.

Q31: Please select all of the types of school(s) that you have worked in (including your current school)
(Gov.uk, 2024)

- ❑ Community/Local Authority school
- ❑ Foundation/Voluntary school
- ❑ Academy/Free school
- ❑ Grammar school
- ❑ Special school
- ❑ Faith school/Academy
- ❑ City technology college
- ❑ State boarding school
- ❑ Private/Independent school
- ❑ Other

Figure 7: Multiple choice question

Both rank ordering (Figure 8) and rating scales were used (Figure 9). They differ in that rank orderings ask participants to identify priorities across variables whereas rating scales values are entered independent of each other (Cohen *et al.*, 2018).

Q54 - Please rank the importance of the following aspects of your identity as a teacher of geography
1 being the most important. Drag and move to the correct order
Blanks included for you to add your own sub-identities

- ❑ Teacher
- ❑ Geographer
- ❑ Human geographer
- ❑ Physical geographer
- ❑ Other (optional)
- ❑ Other (optional)
- ❑ Other (optional)

Figure 8: Rank order question

Q64 - Please consider your current or most recent school that you are/were employed in....	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Geography has a high profile in my school	❑	❑	❑	❑
The profile of geography influences how I perceive my value within school	❑	❑	❑	❑
The profile of geography influences how others perceive my value within school	❑	❑	❑	❑
I support the school's policy on the teaching and learning of geography	❑	❑	❑	❑
I have freedom to teach geography in the way that I think is best	❑	❑	❑	❑
Geography contributes value to the curriculum	❑	❑	❑	❑

Figure 9: Rating Scale question

3.6.1.3 The pilot survey

A pilot study of the survey was carried out on the 16 October 2020 with three secondary geography teachers. They completed the survey live whilst on a Zoom call, so I was available to note and address any issues that arose. This was to negate the issues of the researcher not being able to address any queries, misunderstanding or problems that respondents may have. These factors can lead to participants omitting or giving up rather than trying to contact the researcher (Cohen *et al*, 2018). Being on a Zoom call meant that I could address issues immediately. I was able to amend the survey from the discussions which arose whilst respondents completed the survey. Scrutiny of their answers enabled me to consider any further amendments, especially where I felt there may have been some misunderstanding given the responses submitted. Some of the participants, for example, mistook questions

about their own educational experiences of geography as questions about their teaching of geography. Considering this, language was rephrased for clarification. The questions were restructured into lifetime periods, to support participants to move through their experiences in chronological order, from being a pupil of geography to being a teacher of geography (Schacter, 1997) as shown in Figure 5.

The survey was completed by 143 secondary geography teachers who had experience of teaching in England. An additional ninety-four participants partially completed the survey. Their responses were also included in the results and analysis because their experiences were still contributing to the construction of secondary geography teacher identity. All questions were voluntary which allowed participants to be able to skip questions that they did not feel comfortable in answering or were not relevant to them. Irrelevant questions for participants should have been minimised as the survey used dichotomous questions to assist navigation through the survey as previously explained.

The survey allowed participants to return to specific questions, giving them time to reflect and think about their responses. Participants also had the option to pause the survey and return to it at a later stage. As the survey was anonymised, participants received their own personalised link which enabled them to connect back to their initial survey. This flexibility was important to support teachers to engage in the survey, acknowledging that they may have to respond quickly to events in their school. If the survey had not been edited after one week, the survey timed-out and their partially completed survey responses were submitted. With some participants only partially completing the survey and some voluntarily choosing to not

answer specific questions, there were varying response totals for each question. When the results from questions are shared, the percentage response, along with the number of participants this equates to, will be shown in brackets, for example: 79% (n=172/218) participants studied geography at A level/equivalent.

3.6.2 Second phase: Semi structured interviews

As is usually the case when people are asked about their experiences, participants from the survey described their experiences at the level of general events (middle hierarchy) (Schacter, 1997). Questions were then developed to delve deeper into the themes (Gorard, 2013) and to gain insight into individual events (bottom hierarchy) (Schacter, 1997). Interview questions were tailored to the individual participants and the responses they provided in the survey. In some cases, additional questions were asked to explore points raised on the initial survey or to clarify the meaning of some of the participant's written responses. Unlike the surveys, interviews were held in real time online, which allowed for interaction and the clarification of points during conversations (Buchanan *et al.*, 2013). The interviews were conducted on Zoom so that I could be responsive to non-verbal cues during the interview.

Interviews are the most common method of data gathering in qualitative research (King, 2004, p.38). This is because they can do what surveys cannot do, which is '… finding out how people frame their views, why they hold those views…' (Hochschild, 2009, n.p.). There will be many factors that influence any teacher's life which lead to them developing a particular professional identity and philosophy of education, such as their experiences, relationships and

the various contexts and conditions within which they have worked (Goodson and Sikes, 2001) and interviews allowed these to be explored.

Throughout history, conversation has been used as a central tool to obtain knowledge about others. People talk with others to learn about how they experience the world, how they think, act, feel and develop as individuals and in groups, and in recent decades such knowledge-producing conversations have been refined and discussed as interviews (Brinkmann, 2013). As a participant commented the interview was, *'a chat that has felt very fluid … it is easier for me in conversation than in written answers'* (I57). Others noted that they enjoyed having a space to be able to reflect (I7). Reflection is a key component associated with the concept of self (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004). There was evidence from participants that engaging in this research was a positive and career affirming experience. The following participant who had taught for nine years noted that they enjoyed having a space to be able to reflect as: *'[i]t's been interesting thinking about my career path and how I've changed as a teacher … it's been nice to remind myself of why I do the job and what I enjoy about it*' (S7). Creating space and time to reflect on teacher identity beyond their ITE can be challenging but it has been found to be beneficial for individuals as reflection helps to shape identity and can help teachers to become more aware of their own values (Jackson, 2019).

3.6.2.1 The sample

When participants had completed the first phase survey, they were given the opportunity to provide their contact details if they wanted to participate in the second phase of the data collection, the semi-structured interviews. Ninety-one participants consented to being

contacted for an interview. It could be argued that the sample was a homogeneous group, as all participants were secondary geography teachers who have had experience of teaching in England. However, each participant's identity would have been shaped by different temporal, social and culture contexts so they were considered a heterogeneous group which Berliner (2002, p.20) argues for in educational scholarship because '… no scientific explanation of human behaviour could ever be complete'.

A purposive sampling technique was used where participants were selected based on their ability to make sense of and comprehend the research questions (Saunders and Townsend, 2018). I was mindful that by choosing certain participants, I was excluding other voices (Saunders and Townsend, 2018) which can affect what I see or do not see and what I learn or do not learn (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2011) and potentially bias the findings.

There is not a consensus in the literature on the specific number of participants required for interviewing, but there does seem to be agreement that those with heterogeneous participants require more participants than those with homogeneous participants (Saunders and Townsend, 2016). Kuzel (1992, p.49) stated that twelve to twenty participants should be included for populations considered heterogeneous whereas Saunders and Townsend (2016) stated that twelve to thirty participants should be included. Originating from Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) there is an argument that data should be collected until there is saturation, however, there is variability in how it is used and how it should be conceptualised (Saunders *et al.*, 2018). Braun and Clarke (2022, p.28) describe the concept of data saturation as 'deeply problematic'. If saturation is not met, it just means it has not yet

been fully explored instead of the findings not being valid. However, it is acknowledged that more important to this target is ensuring representativeness and quality of responses (Saunders and Townsend, 2016). Quality being that data shows sufficient depth in understanding themes further whilst also having breadth to ensure coverage across the research (Kuzel, 1999). There are a variety of practical factors that will influence the ability to meet these thresholds, such as access to a population and the participants availability to participate.

I ensured that the participants invited to interviews captured a range of lived experiences and had enough experience to provide rich data. Participants ranged from teachers in their induction year to those that had completed forty-five years of service as shown in Figure 10 (n=151). 80% (n=121/151) of participants were still employed as teachers. Participants' survey responses were studied holistically to ensure participants selected for the interviews had a range of experiences such as those who had taught in a range of different types of schools, held additional role(s), had taught additional subject(s) and held membership to professional bodies.

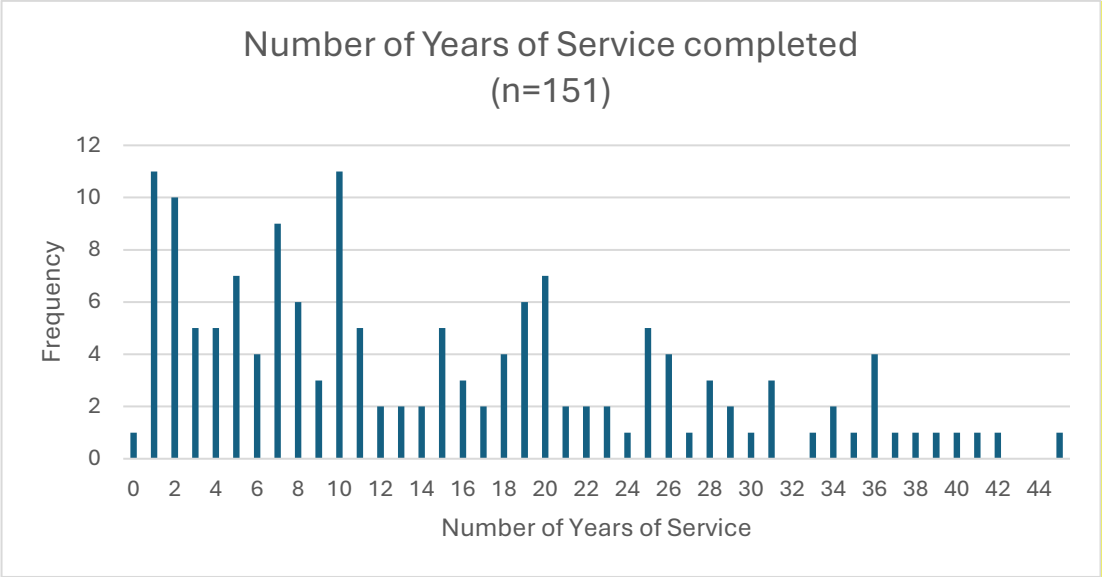

Figure 10: Number of years of service

A total of fourteen participants were interviewed. Table 2 shows a summary of the key characteristics of the participants. To protect participants' identity, information has been generalised in the table to avoid identifiable information. For example, participant 10I was employed full-time but was no longer teaching. Their specific role had not been disclosed to ensure they were not identifiable.

Interview Code	Survey Code	Completed years of teaching service	Currently employed as a teacher	Employed full time or part time	Retired
17	S7	41	Yes	Part Time	No
I105	S105	36	No	Part Time	Semi-retired
I128	S128	28	No	-	Yes
I240	S240	24	Yes	Full Time	No
I126	S126	23	No	Full Time	No
I48	S48	22	Yes	Full Time	No
I218	S218	20	Yes	Full Time	No
I44	S44	20	Yes	Full Time	No
I56	S56	15	Yes	Full Time	No
I216	S216	14	No	Full Time	No
I77	S77	9	Yes	Part Time	No
I23	S23	8	Yes	Part Time	No
I57	S57	5	Yes	Full Time	No
I241	S241	2	Yes	Full Time	No

Table 2: Summary of interview participants

The pilot study of the interviews was conducted on 15 June 2021. The interviews took place in two stages to facilitate time to transcribe and to conduct initial analysis. The first stage was between 21 June 2021 and 30 July 2021. The second stage was between 3 August 2021 and 31 August 2021 (see Table 1). This provided participants with a term time and school holiday option. It was important that the second stage was completed by the end of August, to avoid the start of the new school year as it is always a pressure point in the profession. I did not wish to increase apprehension at the beginning of this term due to the unknown impact of the pandemic. The aim was to target a window of time that would increase the response rate as participants may have had more capacity to engage with the research. An additional period of interviews was conducted for the data collection, for participants who had five years or less teaching experience on 2 March 2022, as this group had been challenging to recruit during 2021.

Despite the strategies that were put in place to secure interviews there were still some challenges in recruiting for the interview stages. Of those that consented to participate in the interviews, 66% (n=25/38) of those invited did not participate. In the first stage of data collection 21 participants were invited to be interviewed: nine interviews were conducted, two participants arranged to do interviews but failed to attend and 10 did not engage with the email invitation. In the second stage of data collection, 17 participants were invited to be interviewed: four interviews were conducted, one participant failed to attend and 12 did not engage with the email invitation.

Participants who had five years or less years of services were the most challenging group to recruit for the interviews. They represented 26% (n=39/151) of the survey of which 59% (n=23/39) consented to being contacted for the second phase of the data collection, the interviews. Of the sample 21% (n=8/38) that were invited across the two stages of interviews, none participated. Two participants booked in, one did not turn up for the interview and the other participant cancelled. Both participants were contacted to rebook but did not engage with correspondence. The remaining participants invited, did not respond to the email.

An additional interview stage was carried out in March 2022, specifically for teachers with five years or under teaching experience and one participant was secured for an interview. This group of participants may have been difficult to secure for interviews because those who undertook their teacher education in both 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 did so under particularly challenging contexts due to the pandemic. S93 and S75 were in their induction year and described how the negative experiences of their ITE due to the Covid-19 pandemic, was having limited time in placement and having to adapt quickly to an evolving situation. S93: *'[t]ime in schools cut short due to Covid-19'* (S93) and S75: *'…the disruptions of year groups being off and having to quickly change plans with little notice has been stressful'* (S75).

For teachers with under 5 years of service, the pandemic would have dominated their professional experiences, and they referred to it more frequently in their survey responses than participants who had been in the profession longer. These challenges may mean that when these participants were invited to the second phase of data collection, the interviews, they were less committed to the profession or that their workload was too great at that time. These participants

may have no longer considered that the additional time spent on the research and the disruption it would cause to them to be worthwhile (Starkey *et al.,* 2014). It may also be because more generally, ECTs are more focused on their personal attributes rather than their professional identities, so again, they may have thought that the significance of engaging with this research further was no longer relevant to them (Sida-Nicholls, 2021). As S83 highlighted, the full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the profession will take time to understand fully and there will continue to be repercussions in the years to come. S83 had taught for two years: *'[i]mpacts of the COVID pandemic has taken a toll and will continue to take a toll on teachers generally in the profession'* (S83).

3.6.2.2 The format

As King (2004, p.28) states '[f]lexibility is the single most important factor in successful qualitative interviewing'. It is a conscious and intentional strategy of 'controlled opportunism in which researchers take advantage of the uniqueness of a specific case and the emergence of new themes' (Eisenhardt, 1989, p.539). It resulted, at times, in having to respond to an unexpected comment or answer, regardless of foresight. There were unexpected answers which led to revised interview questions; this was due to a lack of control over research participants due to their own agency (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2011). As such, the interview questions were continually reviewed, and as new themes developed, additional questions were incorporated into the interviews using an inductive process (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2011, p.55). As Wagenaar (2011, p.12) states, '[i]nterviewing is not about asking questions, but about working with the respondent to produce useful data.'

The length of the interviews varied between thirty minutes and forty-five minutes. I was mindful that some participants would be undertaking the interview during the school day and so may be restricted by lesson times. I needed to be flexible around start and finishing times, especially if participants needed to respond quickly to events in school. I ordered questions in priority of data capture areas which needed clarity from participants' surveys or needed to be explored further. Interviews that were conducted in the evening, seemed to be less time restricted. The participants were often more relaxed than those participating in a school setting and more prepared to expand upon their experiences and reflect before answering.

Narratives do not only include the person who is telling the story but also those who are told the story and in turn tell the story. The data is 'co-generated' (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2011, p.79) and it is this 'collective storytelling' that produces identity (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2000; Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004; Sfard and Prusak, 2005). Reflexivity was therefore central to this process to ensure that I was always considering my own personal autobiography while guiding the interview (Golsteijn and Wright, 2013) and ensuring that I was critically interrogating my role as the researcher (Braun and Clarke, 2022). Coffey (1999) suggests that a researcher from any field cannot avoid writing themselves into the research. It would be incredibly challenging to be detached as: '…the researcher is affected by the context of the research or people who are a part of it, as well as the productive nature of the research enterprise itself … It is both the experiences of the researched and researchers which are important' (May, 2011, p.22).

3.6.3 Ethical considerations

Most social science research carries ethical issues because it usually involves collecting data from people and about people. Although ethical issues occur across all approaches to research, they are sometimes more pronounced in qualitative research because they often intrude more into people's lives (Punch, 2011). With any research it is important to consider whether the contribution of knowledge provided by the data collection justifies any negative impacts on the participants taking part (Arksey and Knight, 1999). Ethical issues occur at every point of the research process, before, during and after analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022). Before any data was collected, the research was submitted to the Humanities and Social Science Ethical Review Committee at the University of Birmingham. It was provided with full approval on 4 September 2020. At the forefront of planning for this research was protecting the interests of the participants (Arksey and Knight, 1999).

For both phases of data collection; Phase one: the survey and Phase two: the interview, participants received a 'Participation Information' sheet (See Appendix 2: survey and Appendix 3: interviews, for full participation information sheet). It contained information about the research: its aims, an explanation of who I was and the context in which I was conducting the research. Information about their data and how it was going to be used and stored together with how they could withdraw their data was outlined. The potential benefits of taking part in the research were shared. It was highlighted that questions may require participants to reflect on past experiences that may be difficult and ensuring that participants were aware that they had the right to decline any question(s). The aim of the 'Participant Information' was to ensure

transparency (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2012) and build trust which meant that participants were hopefully more willing to participate (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2019). The following sections will provide further information about the steps taken.

3.6.3.1 Consent

Participants had to provide informed consent before engaging with both phases of data collection (Arksey and Knight, 1999). For phase one of the data collection, the survey, participants were asked to ensure they had taken the steps outlined in Figure 11 before they began the survey. If they did not provide their consent, then participants were not able to proceed with the survey.

- I have read and understood the Participant Information.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I am free to withdraw at any time, without any reason before I submit my questionnaire responses.
- I understand that I do not have to answer any questions I do not want to.
- I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, and other research outputs.
- I understand that my data will be processed for the purposes detailed above, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Based on the above information, I give consent for my questionnaire data to be used in this study.

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

Figure 11: Consent

At the end of the survey, participants were given the option to participate in the second phase of the data collection, the interviews. To do this they provided their contact details, their name and email address. For those selected for the interviews, participants had to provide consent

again (Saunders and Townsend, 2018). It was acknowledged that between the first phase and second phase of data collection, participants may no longer consider that the time spent on research was worthwhile (Starkey *et al*., 2014). Covid-19 greatly impacted schools and teachers were expected to respond quickly to a constantly changing situation and so their priorities may have also changed during the data collection period. Before participants could participate in the interview, they had to provide consent through a Qualtrics survey which contained the Participation Information (See Appendix 3: interviews, for full participation information sheet) together will the bullet points outline in Figure 11. In addition to this, before interviews began, participants were verbally asked if they still consented to participating in the interview with time allowed for any questions.

3.6.3.2 Withdrawal

The withdrawal process was provided in the Participant Information for both phases of data collection (Appendix 2: Phase 1: Survey Participation Information; Appendix 3: Phase 2: Interview Participation Information). For the first phase, participants knew that after they had provided consent and began the survey, they would not be able to withdraw their data as it was anonymised. For the second phase, the interviews, participants were able to withdraw by midnight on the 28th day after their interview had taken place.

3.6.3.3 Confidentiality, anonymity and pseudonyms

Participants were informed through the Participant Information about confidentiality, anonymity and pseudonyms of their data (Appendix 2: Phase 1: Survey Participation Information; Appendix

3: Phase 2: Interview Participation Information). Participants understood that their names and any identifying information such as their schools and institutions would not be used in the thesis. This was to protect their identity and to ensure that participants felt able to talk freely and express their points of view without any concern that colleagues would be able to identify them (Arksey and Knight, 1999).

Participants names were replaced by pseudonyms. A coding system was used, with each participant being assigned a number. To distinguish between the survey data and the interview data, the participants' assigned number was proceeded with the letter 'S' for the survey data and a letter 'I' for the Interview data. For the participants who contributed to the survey and the interview the same number was assigned across the survey and interview data for example, 'S7' and 'I7'.

Where appropriate and relevant to the question, further information was provided, to give context to their quotes, whilst maintaining participants' anonymity. For example, Figure 12, provides the relevant context for I241's response about the impact that teaching additional roles had on being a secondary geography teacher. Their years of service was included to demonstrate that they were an ECT. If ECTs are not utilised in their main subject disciplines at the start of their career, it can have a negative impact on their progress, resulting in a negative impact on their self-efficacy and confidence (Holman, 2020; Mitchell and Lambert, 2015). The specific additional subjects were recorded, and previous employment was shared because this impacted I241's confidence and knowledge in the teaching of the additional subjects, Health and Social Care and

history. I241 had previously taught Health and Social Care in a FE institution before they trained to be a geography teacher, and they had no previous experience or training to teach history.

I241 had taught for two years during which time they had taught history and Health and Social Care as additional subjects. They felt confident to teach Health and Social Care because they had taught this subject in a Further Education (FE) institution before becoming a secondary geography teacher. Other than a personal interest in history they did not any specialist teacher education in the subject. They shared that they felt more confident to teach some topics than others but there was no consultation with what year groups or topics they were teaching or what they would feel most confident teaching.

Figure 12: Setting participants' context

3.6.3.4 Data storage

A Data Management Plan was submitted to Humanities and Social Science Ethical Review Committee at the University of Birmingham as part of the Ethical Approval Process for this research. At the forefront of planning for this research was protecting the interests of the participants (Arksey and Knight, 1999). The Participant Information informed participants how their data was going to be stored for both phases of data collection. It made participants aware that I would be the only one with access to their data and that the data would be kept for 10 years and then destroyed in line with the University of Birmingham's policies (Appendix 2: Phase 1: Survey Participation Information; Appendix 3: Phase 2: Interview Participation Information).

Once the data collection phase had closed, any personal data provided was separated from the data before analysis took place. For example, for phase one of the data collection, the surveys, 91 participants provided their names and email addresses as they had consented to being part

of phase two of the data collection, the interviews. Their personal data was removed from their question responses and a coding system was applied to all participants (3.6.3.3 Confidentiality, anonymity and pseudonyms). For phase two of the data collections, the interviews, the Zoom recordings contained participants' names. The files were renamed using the coding system. Before data was added to NVivo for analysis, it had been anonymised. All data was password protected with personal data being stored securely and separately. Procedures of data storage followed the policies of the University of Birmingham and GDPR regulations regarding privacy and data protection.

3.6.3.5 Validity

Validity in qualitative research differs from quantitative research (Cohen *et al*., 2018; Winter, 2000). In quantitative research, it is whether the instrument measures what it is intending to measure. This research is driven by practice rather than theory through an inductive process (Hendriks, 2007). The purpose is to understand human nature and not to discover laws linking causal relationships between variables (Bartel and Wagenaar, 2018; Della Porta and Keating, 2008). In qualitative research there are several principles to consider. The researcher is the key instrument of research rather than a research tool bringing their own positionality to the researched world. Human error is an acknowledged part of this process as to understand human life, another human is needed to make-sense of their world (Cohen *et al*., 2018). Therefore, '[t]hreats to validity and reliability can never be erased completely…' (Cohen *et al.*, 2018, p.245).

There were some factors that could undermine the validity of the data collected such as participants' memories; truthfulness of participants responses; language; participants' context; data collection instruments; research positionality; and power between participants and the researcher. Mitigating strategies were put in place to reduce the impact of these factors.

3.6.3.5.1 Participants' memories

The first step to memory is attention. Attention can influence what is seen by bringing certain things to the foreground or limiting the background. It has significance because the things that we pay attention to are encoded into our long-term memory (Jha, 2021). Memory is not static, it is a selective and interpretive process (Didau, 2016). Framing is always present and is individual (Hochschild, 2008). Every time a scene or what has happened is described, a narration is given. Narration plays an important role in establishing the construction of teachers' beliefs and knowledge (Knowles, 1992). The influence of past experiences are, however, complex and our emotions at the time influence their construction (Didau, 2016) and it is not always easy to recall the emotional state from the original event (Cohen *et al*., 2018). How we feel continually (re)shapes who we are (Davidson and Milligan, 2004, p.534).

The memories that participants shared for this research have been framed within the context of being a secondary geography teacher, reflecting on those events through hindsight with their current knowledge and experience rather than what those events meant at the time. Recollecting is therefore not only a narration of the past by also a reinterpretation (Weiderberg, 2020) of integrating the old and new experiences (Hermans and Hermans-Jansen, 1995). If participants

encountered similar situations many times, the memory may be a collective story. Memory is therefore something new which has been created in this context, it is not a replica of the event itself (Horton and Kraftl, 2006; Schacter, 1997). Even though memory can be vague in certain situations and incorrect in others, it still holds our most strongly held beliefs about ourselves (Schacter, 1997). These memories form the core of personal identity (Schacter, 1997) and through narration, identity is constructed (Hermans and Hermans-Jansen, 1995). The participant, the researcher and the reader will engage with the experience anew (Weiderberg, 2020).

3.6.3.5.2 Truthfulness of participants' responses

Participants may have provided responses to questions that were not completely truthful as a mechanism of protecting themselves from embarrassment or portraying themselves in a positive light (Cohen *et al*., 2018). This may be because accurate accounts may threaten their ought self, which is the one recognised by society or an external group as the goal or the ideal self, which is the one set by the individual as a target for the future (Lauriala and Kukkonen, 2005). This in turn may impact the accuracy of data collected (Dalton *et al.*, 1997). This issue is recognised widely, and to minimise the issues, I followed the guidance of ensuring that the research topic was important to the participants and the benefits were shared. This was provided in the written participant information as shown in Figure 13 (See Appendix 2: survey and Appendix 3: interviews for full participation information sheet). There was transparency in the process and participants knew that their privacy would be maintained and where data was used, anonymity would be provided (Saunders, 2011). This was further explored in '3.6.3.3 Confidentiality, anonymity and pseudonyms'. It is not up to me to decide whether participants' responses are truthful or not. I

am approaching the data from the perspective that participants engaged in the research in good faith and their recollections of events are their 'absolute reality' (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004, p.108).

Are there benefits or disadvantages of taking part in this study?

Your data is valuable because the project will help understand the motivations and beliefs of secondary geography teachers. It is also hoped that you will enjoy sharing your experiences, however, questions may require you to reflect on past experiences that may be difficult for you to revisit. You have the right to decline any question(s), additionally you do not have to share any information or experiences that you do not feel comfortable about sharing.

Figure 13: Participation Information Sheet: benefits in participating

3.6.3.5.3 Language

Participants are selecting what they choose to talk about and the words that they used. Although what participants select is not necessarily to be obstructive or manipulative it is also not neutral or objective (Enfield, 2022). Words are contested and their meanings change as society and culture changes (Williams, 2014). There may have been misunderstanding between the participant and myself as I have interpreted what they have said in a different way that they intended (De Saussure, 1916). When a student teacher begins their teacher education, they will use a mixture of 'local languages' and 'professional languages' which will shape their identities as teachers. Over time this will develop to being professional language. This will vary across regions, nationally and internationally and between sectors in education. This is why, what is remembered will vary with culture and time (Weiderberg, 2020). It will also change and evolve over time with the introduction of new policy (Ball, 2013). This can make it difficult for teachers

to articulate who they are. For example, the Commission of Race and Ethnic Disparities published in 2021 that the term 'BAME' should no longer be used. Stating that aggregated terms like 'BAME' (black, Asian and minority ethnic) were no longer helpful and should be dropped in favour of understanding the disparities and outcomes for specific ethnic groups. It is a term that many ethnic minorities themselves say they do not like (Race Disparity Unit, 2022). This term is not used in this text unless referencing literature or direct quotes from participants. Where available and possible specific ethnic classifications of the Census is used and where this is not possible, 'ethnic minorities' will be used as recommended by the Cabinet Office Race Disparity Unity (RDU) (Race Disparity Unit, 2022).

Terms such as Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and Initial Teacher Education (ITE) both refer to the year that is undertaken to gain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The former, ITT, is favoured by policy and the latter by higher education institutions (HEIs) (Brooks, 2017). The use of 'training' implies it is transactional, that it is something to be completed. The requirement is to undertake the training, acquire knowledge and meet the standard. In return, QTS is awarded. ITE adopts a liberal view of education which sees teachers as professionals rather than technical workers. The use of 'education' implies a continuation of learning where critical engagement is required, teachers contribute to the profession and to the field of education. These terms are used interchangeably so it cannot be assumed that those that use one term have the associated approach. It can mean that truth is hard to get at (Enfield, 2022). For clarification, in this text, the term ITE will be used, unless referencing literature or policy documentation that uses ITT or a direct quote from a participant.

Yet, language can create connections, allowing us to communicate and build shared views of the world (Enfield, 2022). As time moves on, so do attitudes (May, 2011) and '[w]e should see language, culture, and human self-understanding as emergent properties of conversations rather than the other way around (Brinkmann, 2013, p.3).

3.6.3.5.4 Participants' context

Being mindful of participants' temporal, social and cultural context (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) helps to contextualise their experiences in history. Knowledge created through narration will change over time, across contexts and depend upon relationships, underpinned by the participants' values and judgements (Akkerman and Meijer, 2010). As Garza (2021, p.4) states, '[w]e are all shaped by the political, social, and economic context of our time'. As I7 explains, their journey to becoming a geography teacher was influenced by societal and family expectations when they were completing their education in the 1970s.

I7 had taught for forty-one years:

> *At that time if you were good at something it was assumed you may go into teaching. I didn't really know what else I could do with geography if I'm perfectly honest. The expectations of the family was that teaching was a good career for a girl. I suppose, I knew I wanted to work with people, so the two things I actually considered after my degree was personnel work and teaching. In a way, there is an overlap in those two things because I knew I wanted to be involved with people, and I enjoyed the subject. We have lots of people in the family that were teachers. In fact, the family encouraged me to go to teacher training college at 18 rather than university. Nobody in our family had ever gone to university, but we had people who had gone to teacher training college. The expectation was that I would follow that route and when I said I wanted to go to university there was a deep intake of breath. We were in an unknown sphere as far as the family was concerned. Having said that, the person that I later married, their family had got two*

people who had gone to university. My future mother-in-law actually spoke to my mum and encouraged her to let me go to university (I7).

As Ball (2013, p.65) states, '[t]he periodisation of history always obscures as much as it reveals, and the division between periods are often rough and ready and tend to exaggerate the extent of change'. Having a range of teaching experiences allows us to understand changes in patterns over time (Goodson and Sikes, 2001) which will lead to new understanding and knowledge (Isaeva *et al*., 2015, p.155). Juggling multiple interpretations can be overwhelming and I needed to be able to move between practice and theory, past and future, and self and others (Hendriks, 2007). This enables me to become an active and not passive researcher (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2011) and letting go of preconceived conclusions and to consider alternative themes that develop as the research evolved (Hendriks, 2007). I was mindful of the words and phrases that I used to represent the participants' experiences.

3.6.3.5.5 Data collection instruments

The use of the online platforms may have had an impact on the quality of the data collected. A participant commented that the Qualtrics platform was difficult to complete on the phone. It is not known what device the participant used to complete their survey but if the format was unclear on their device this may have impacted question response and increased drop-out rates. I had no control over the environment in which they completed the survey for example, nor over the presence of others and noise distractions, the time of day or the level of focus whilst undertaking the survey (Cohen *et al*., 2018). For the interviews, Zoom was used and there were occasional connection issues. At times it was difficult to identify whether a participant had

'frozen,' was pausing to think, reflect or had finished speaking. If I mistook a pause for the end of their response, I may have missed further information.

3.6.3.5.6 Researcher's positionality

To maximise the chances of participants engaging with the research, I had to manage my own identity. I needed to project an image of myself that would reassure participants that I was a non-threatening person (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). Walby (2010 cited in Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2011) says there should be a balance between friendliness with self-presentation. I considered that it was important that participants knew that I was also a secondary geography teacher as it provided a mutual understanding of each other's experience. I was mindful of 'research friendships' that may arise through this shared experience (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2011). With some of the participants there was already some familiarity as they were ex-colleagues, members of shared networks or through having colleagues in common. I needed to be aware that the over familiarity did not compromise the data.

3.6.3.5.7 Power between participants and the researcher

There was the issue of power between the participants and me. As Schwartz-Shea and Yanow (2011, p.61) states '[w]ithin a research setting, power is relational, and the power of the researcher, the researched individuals, and the types of research relationships they may develop can vary considerably. Cohen *et al*. (2018) posit that more power lies with the researchers as the participant is under scrutiny but Gioia, Corley and Hamilton (2012) state that participants always have a larger agenda that they are pursuing and have the power to withhold information. There

will be situational variations within these contexts, and I was mindful of questions that may have prompted emotional distress for some participants. This will be different for each participant as what is sensitive is socially constructed and what matters is whether a participant finds it distressing for whatever reason (Arksey and Knight, 1999). In both phases participants were able to skip any questions that they did not want to answer. However, discussing upsetting events may be a cathartic experience (Buchanan *et al*, 2013). In preparing for an interview, it was important not to assume that an event would have a negative or positive reaction from the participant. A participant who has left the profession may have done so in response to negative events or because of a positive decision to change profession or in response to a work-life balance issue. Anonymity was provided to participants which may have meant that this was the first time that they had been able to discuss events freely.

3.6.3.5.8 Summary

Steps were taken throughout to ensure the research's trustworthiness. At the start of this chapter I acknowledged my own positionality in relation to the research (3.4 The researcher's positionality). Where there were barriers to collecting data, I have outlined these along with the strategies to minimise their impact. Where participant voices may have been missing, they have been acknowledged. For example, in the first phase of data collection, the surveys, it was challenging to recruit those who were no longer teaching geography. In the second phase of the data collection, the interviews, those who had 5 years or less years of service were challenging to recruit for the interviews. Lost or missing voices have been acknowledged that they are not a random sub-set of the population (Gorard, 2013, p.166). During the data collection, time was

built in to undertake initial analysis and triangulate the data collection from the 237 surveys, the 14 interviews and the literature to ensure it was able to answer the three research questions.

3.7 Data analysis

As the research was studying the construction of secondary geography teacher identity, the focus was on understanding participants' experience and how it was constructed and less on the number or frequency or measurable occurrences (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2012). Qualitative data analysis is not a straightforward process. It is '… about 'telling stories', about interpreting, and creating, not discovering and finding the 'truth' that is either 'out there' and findable from, or buried deep within, the data' (Braun and Clarke, 2019, p.591). Knowledge is constructed from the ground up as '… we move from the data to understanding, explaining and interpreting the phenomena in question' (Cohen *et al*., 2018, p.643). The interpretive research process is built on consecutive phases of learning beginning with insights from the existing literature (Gilbert, 2008) and then building on itself in a '… reiterative and recursive fashion' (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2011, p.73). It will not be too strongly rooted in what we already know, as this can restrict what we can know (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2012). If we already knew the answers, we would not have to do the research (Wagenaar, 2011).

3.7.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis was used for data analysis which is a method of developing, analysing and interpreting patterns across a qualitative dataset (Braun and Clarke, 2022). The first three phases of thematic analysis were completed on the first stage of the data collection, the surveys, ahead

of the semi-structured interviews. The first phase of thematic analysis was 'familiarisation' with the dataset through a process of immersion. This was conducted for each participant, the responses for each question and the entire dataset. The second phase was 'coding' systematically and thoroughly, capturing my initial 'analytic take' on the data. The third phase was 'generating initial themes' through identifying patterns across the dataset (Braun and Clarke, 2022). Undertaking these phases of thematic analysis of the surveys ensured that I was not overwhelmed by the data collected (Bartels and Wagenaar, 2018). This avoided the pitfall that can happen with interpretive research whereby data is collected first, and analysis is thought about later (Wagnenaar, 2011). The findings from the initial analysis informed the second stage of the data collection, the interviews. The questions were developed to explore the themes further (Gorard, 2013), clarifying specific events in the participant responses. The interviews were semi-structured which allowed for the conversation to explore new lines of enquiry, acknowledging that interpretive research is not a linear process. As Hendriks (2007, p.280) posits, '… the interpretive researcher negotiates her way along a journey whose destination for the most part is uncertain … all this demands being comfortable with the research process that is iterative, uncertain and open-ended'.

Once both stages of data collection (first stage: the surveys and second stage: the interview) were completed, a complete thematic analysis was undertaken. The first three phases of thematic analysis, 'familiarisation' 'coding' and 'generating initial themes' were undertaken of the entire data set. The next phase was 'developing and reviewing the themes' as themes do not passively emerge from the data but from analytic work actively created by the researcher through deep

and prolonged data immersion (Braun and Clarke, 2019). Along with qualitative research, thematic analysis understands the researcher's subjectivity is a resource. As Braun and Clarke (2019, p.594) state, '[t]hemes are creative and interpretive stories about the data, produced at the intersection of the researcher's theoretical assumptions, their analytic resources and skills, and the data themselves.'

The process requires our interpretations and assumptions to be questioned and queried (Braun and Clarke, 2019). Through coding cycles, the range of developing themes became clearer (Saldana, Leavy and Beretvas, 2011) during the 'refining, defining and naming themes' (Braun and Clarke, 2022). This is important to avoid 'observer drift' (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2019, p.397) and 'over-immersion syndrome' (Hendriks, 2007, p.11) during the analysis phase. Although Saunders *et al*. (2019) discuss 'observers drift' in relation to observations, it was also applicable to the interviews because they were collected over a period of time and not simultaneously. Observer drift can lead to inconsistencies when interpreting similar events across time. 'Over-immersion syndrome' (Hendriks, 2007) can lead to unintentionally misinterpreting what is happening and can create bias in the research findings (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2019; May, 2011). To minimise the impact of both observer drift and over-immersion syndrome, earlier interviews and analysis were revisited to maintain consistency of interpretation. Thematic analysis presented an ethical challenge because the process of interpretation involves transformation as it is never neutral or objective (Braun and Clarke, 2022). NVivo software was used to identify and to categorise themes and key issues from the data collected (Reeves, Kuper and Hodges, 2008) ahead of the final phase, 'writing up'.

3.8 Summary

I am in a privileged position of having access to participants' lived experiences. I acknowledge the huge responsibility to participants that comes from the power dynamics and having to accurately construct and communicate their voices, stories and experiences. In particular, those from socially marginalised groups (Braun and Clarke, 2022). I am incredibly grateful to all those who contributed and gave their time. Time is always at a premium in the teaching profession but even more with the additional workload added by the pandemic to their personal and professional lives.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the participants' experiences of being a secondary geography teacher. The chapter is structured in chronological subsections: starting at the beginning of participants' subject story; explores how and why they became secondary geography teachers; their experiences of being a secondary geography teacher; and concludes with those who may have left the profession.

This chapter shares the collective narratives of the participants. Individual participants cannot contribute to all sections as their experiences have ranged from those at the beginning of their teaching career to those who had been teaching for over forty years. Being a secondary geography teacher is more than just the participants' professional lives, as it is also influenced by their personal lives, for example, when becoming a parent/carer.

Participants' collective narratives contribute to the understanding of the construction of secondary geography teacher identity. Their reflections on their lived experiences, statutory education, ITE and career, will be captured. Common opportunities and barriers will be identified that have led the participants to becoming secondary geography teachers, exploring how these events have impacted and developed their secondary geography teacher identity. Each subject story is unique (Brooks, 2016) and personal, but there are themes that connect them throughout.

The chapter is structured around the three research questions:

- Research Question 1 (RQ1): How and why does an individual become a secondary geography teacher?
- Research Question 2 (RQ2): Why do secondary geography teachers remain in the profession?
- Research Question 3 (RQ3): What are the reasons that lead to secondary geography teachers leaving the profession?

Table 3 provides a summary of the themes along with codes that answered each research question. Themes and codes are not superordinate nor hierarchical but represent themes that emerged across the dataset and from the data of multiple participants.

RQ1: How and why does an individual become a secondary geography teacher?	
Themes	Codes
Subject story	Mundane/habitual tasks: 'the everyday' Hobbies/interests Travel/holidays Visiting family/friends Technology: internet/films/TV/radio Local geography
Statutory education	Specific key stage(s) Academic success Enjoyment of the subject Fieldwork experiences Participants own teachers
Reasons why participants became secondary geography teachers	Career guidance Work experiences Job security Enjoyment of geography Role models Altruistic reasons Bursary Influence of family and friends SCTs Lesser of evils

	Not knowing what else to do

RQ2: Why do secondary geography teachers remain in the profession?	
Themes	Codes
ITE	Type of ITE Location of ITE Identity formation Support Relationships: mentors/tutors/peers Contrasting school placements Subject knowledge development Pedagogy development Role models Outdoor learning reflection
Career of secondary geography teachers	Type/number of school(s) Positive perception of geography Alignment with school's values and practices Fieldwork Opportunity for career progression Communities of practice Positive relationships Lifelong learning

RQ3: What are the reasons that lead to secondary geography teachers leaving the profession?	
Themes	Codes
Reasons why participants considered leaving and left the profession	Workload Well-being Competition with other subjects Decline in the status of the profession Micromanaging High-stakes exams Challenges of additional roles Additional subjects Negative relationships Policy changes Lack of fieldwork opportunities Inflexibility of teaching Lack of challenge

Table 3: RQs themes and codes

4.2 The beginning of a subject story

The point at which geography becomes significant to an individual will vary and may not be initially rooted in their statutory education. As Freeman (2020, p.69) states, young people are 'active geographers' even if they are not aware of it. Individuals may only realise the significance of an event through reflection and through a subject disciplinary lens. These events may be initially rooted in the mundane, habitual tasks of the 'everyday' (Parkinson, 2022). For example, I56 who had taught for fifteen years, recalls their visits to the dentist as a child as a point when geography became significant to them and their interest in maps began: *'…it was when I used to go to the dentist, when I was a boy, and he used to have a world map on his ceiling. I used to sit there, mouth open, looking at that map. I love my maps. I do remember always looking at maps'* (I56).

Young people can be highly connected to places via their lived experiences, hobbies, technology and interests. Their lived experiences provide a context for their learning. Roberts (2017) advocates that the connection between 'everyday' knowledge and school geography is 'powerful' because it respects what pupils already know.

As the following participant shares, their everyday knowledge had relevancy to the study of geography (Roberts, 2017). S218 grew up on a farm and through their lived experience, understood the Yorkshire landscape. They brought this knowledge to their geography lessons, and this gave them confidence when studying relevant topics. They found success in the subject

which increased their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). From this initial foundation, they felt confident to explore topics beyond their lived experience. S218 had taught geography for twenty years and: *'[a]s a farmer's daughter I had grown up in Yorkshire and had a good understanding of the landscape and so found the subject quite easy. As I have studied further, I have found the subject has engaged my understanding of the wider world'* (S218).

I128, was in the Scouts; through this hobby, they connected to nature by walking and camping. They credited the Scouts as the reason for developing an interest in physical geography. In addition to studying geography, they also studied geology. As has been found in other research, an early connection to the natural world can increase the chances of continuing to engage into adulthood (Jones, 2020). I128 spoke positively about the outdoor learning opportunities they provided for their pupils during their career, particularly enjoying residential trips. I128 had taught for twenty-eight years before retiring. They were: *'…in the Scout movement. I did a lot of scouting and walking in the countryside, camping and mapwork of course. I think that's where my love of the physical side of geography started. It seemed a natural progression to carry on doing O level*' (I128).

The following examples from participants show how technology has allowed them to encounter places beyond their direct experience (Roberts, 2017). I56 was a *'big football fan'* (I56); when they were following weekly football results, they would research where the teams were located. I56 had taught for fifteen years: *'I was used to listening to the football results and tried to work out where all these towns and places were'* (I56). I23 was from a small town in Canada and had

an uncle who travelled long distances for work. He would record his journey along the trans-Canada highway. Watching the footage encouraged the participant to consider the world beyond their hometown. I23 had taught for eight years:

> *I am from Canada and he* [their uncle] *is from a really small town in Saskatchewan that was maybe a couple of thousand people. He would drive from Saskatchewan to North Alaska and he had a video recorder that he would put in his passenger seat and he would record it all the way. He would edit it, when he came back but it was still like three hours of trans-Canada highway. It was just really cool and interesting and coming from Saskatchewan where no one really left. It is one of those locations like a bubble. That really got me thinking about getting out and doing adventures* (I23).

Technology makes geography extremely accessible (Rushton *et al.,* 2021) with many participants crediting TV personalities and their documentaries for initiating a spark of interest in the subject. For example, S118 who had taught for five years, credited the work of David Attenborough and Simon Reeve as to why they wanted to study geography further, and S106 who had taught for seventeen years said that Michael Palin had been a role model who had inspired them to want to understand the world in greater detail. S23, who had taught for eight years, chose Christiane Amanpour and Katie Couric as their role models because they:

> *... found them very strong intelligent fearless people. It blew me away watching them interview dictators of countries where women have few human rights and even though they can't fix that as journalists they open the conversation and allow viewers to become more aware of these complex layers and realities around the world. They inspire me to be strong and compassionate and to not underestimate people* (S23).

4.3 Statutory education

Unsurprisingly, as the participants were all current or former secondary geography teachers, the accounts of their formal geography education were overwhelmingly positive. These experiences

contributed to their decision to become a secondary geography teacher and will have influenced the development of their own secondary geography teacher identity.

Participants' accounts of their formal geography education were predominately associated with their secondary school and university education. Primary experiences of geography were not recalled in great depth, nor for providing them with memorable geographical experiences. It did not appear that geography, in their respective primary schools, was always taught as a discrete subject, but through participants' disciplinary lenses, they were able to identify geographical themes in their primary school experiences (Brooks, 2017). I77 had taught for nine years. They were a primary school teacher before becoming a secondary geography teacher: '*I loved doing projects at primary. It was very much project-based learning. I enjoyed it when we were learning about different places. Often, they were history related*' (I77).

4.3.1 Academic Success

A positive experience of participants' geography education was their academic success in the subject. Their success was quantifiably measured by their ranking in their class, achieving high marks in internal and external examinations and gaining recognition through school prizes. Academic successes created feelings of pride and joy which increased their confidence in the subject whilst simultaneously reducing anxiety, providing them with resilience against future failures (Schunk, 1989). The following participants shared how their successes in external examinations were a positive experience of their geography education as a pupil. It was a motivator for them to continue to work hard in the subject and increased their confidence. S9

had taught for seven years: *'I scored the highest in the school in one of the three papers (pre-release paper) at GCSE which encouraged me'* (S9). S220 had taught for one year: *'I had very good scores for my Geography GCSE and A level, achieved 100% in at least one A level module. Regularly getting the highest marks in the class and feeling confident to contribute in class'* (S220).

Through these academic successes, they were able to define their own capability in relation to others (Bandura, 1977), within their class, school and in comparison to their peers nationally. Qualifications and the specific grades (or expected grades) were important barometers for decisions about continuing to study geography (Gardner, 2013; Gorard *et al.,* 2021; RGS, 2022a). Levels of efficacy are thought to influence emotions, choices of activities, levels of effort and persistence (Baker, 2020; Bandura, 1977; 1982). They are developed over time and are intensely specific and dynamically changeable (Baker, 2020, p.64).

4.3.2 Studying geography

For other participants, positive experiences came from the enjoyment of studying specific concepts or through the range of topics that geography had to offer. The discipline offers a *'mixture between science and social science'* (S156). Geography '… sits across traditional physical sciences, social sciences and humanities boundaries' (Brooks, 2016, p.14). S221 had studied geography to undergraduate level and had taught for ten years: *'Geography was broad and touched on many topics that were interesting, contemporary and I felt were relevant to me. Learning geography made me feel like I was gaining knowledge and skills that were applicable to the real world, rather than abstract academia'* (S221).

Geography allowed participants to access a world beyond their own lived experience and everyday knowledge (Roberts, 2017). S16 studied geography and education at university because they wanted to become a teacher. They had taught for thirty-seven years before retiring: *'Geography was an outlet to a wider world than my small, rural world in the depths of the Yorkshire countryside'* (S16).

4.3.3 Fieldwork experiences

Fieldwork provided participants with new experiences beyond their everyday knowledge and experiences (Lambert and Reiss, 2014). As may be expected from participants who are, or have been, secondary geography teachers, their memories of fieldwork were positive. Fieldwork helped participants to develop a sense of place, and a sense of awe and wonder (Swift, 2005), whereby theoretical geographical ideas are rendered visible in the 'real world' (Kinder, 2013). Fieldwork provides memorable experiences and participants could recall their outdoor learning experiences with clarity from their own education and throughout their career, some of which dated back over forty years (Lambert and Reiss, 2014; MacKenzie and White, 1982). The following participants' comments highlight fieldwork as positive experiences of geography as a pupil (Lambert and Reiss, 2014). S7 had taught for forty-one years: '*I was amazed to see features that I had drawn from textbooks e.g. Drumlins'* (S7). S14 had taught for six years: *'[m]y very happiest days at school were also on Geography field trips - being able to measure the world around me and link that back to theory ticked all of my curiosity boxes! (*S14). S171 had taught for two years:

'Fieldwork was inspirational. Looking at a landscape and being able to understand some of the human and physical forces that had shaped it was an amazing feeling' (S171).

Field trips were credited as being one of the reasons for continuing to study geography, providing a greater understanding of geography and a commitment to the subject. One participant could pinpoint their decision to an exact field excursion in Cwm Idwal, Snowdonia in their third year of secondary school (S80).

The details of the fieldwork that participants recalled tended to be focused on the specific locations that they visited, the 'body work' or 'memorable episodes' rather than the 'geography work' such as fieldwork tasks or geographical knowledge (MacKenzie and White, 1982; Nairn, 1999). As comments from S89 and S38 demonstrate, when they were asked to describe any outdoor learning or fieldwork experiences they had as a pupil, their dominant memory was of the weather conditions that the fieldwork took place in. S89 had taught for six years: *'It rained so much that we had to dry out questionnaires under the hand dryers in McDonald's'* (S89). S38 had taught for two years: *'I had two horrendous field work experiences at GCSE and A Level - 3 days, studying rivers, it rained the whole time – typical'* (S38).

Fieldwork and the contexts in which it takes place are an important part of the formation and development of relationships (Lambert and Reiss, 2014). As one participant said, field trips were, *'fun academically and socially'* (S134). In contrast to highly compartmentalised school days, fieldwork creates opportunities for students to work together over several hours or days, providing a different pace to the learning (Hammond, 2018). As pupils themselves, participants

highlighted that their fieldwork experiences provided time and space to be sociable with their peers (Dunphy and Spellman, 2009). It also provided them with an opportunity to get to know their teachers better and on a more personal level, as fieldwork enables pupils and teachers to communicate informally, without the restrictions of the classroom and to discuss topics that are outside the curriculum. As S77 shared about a fieldwork experience as a pupil, that whilst they sat in the front of a minibus with their teacher, they, *'… loved hearing him talk about the landscape as we drove through it. His knowledge was brilliant and that's something I aspire to'* (S77).

4.3.4 Participants' geography teachers

Participants' own geography teachers were credited with bringing enthusiasm and enjoyment to the lessons, making lessons fun and interesting through sharing their passion for the subject. Their teachers were advocates for the discipline, as the following responses demonstrate, and because of their teaching, pupils choose to continue to study geography. 77% (n=168/218) participants studied geography at GCSE/equivalent and 79% (n=172/218) participants studied geography at A level/equivalent. S114 had taught for seven years and had completed an undergraduate degree in geography and geology: *'[o]ne GCSE /A level teacher was incredibly passionate and sparked my passion and interest in studying further'* (S114). S5 had taught for two years and had completed an undergraduate degree in geography:

> *I had an amazing geography teacher during my A level, and I am fairly sure I may not have taken geography and would have had a very different life, if it were not for him. At the time, I was not 100% on taking Geography, it was a consideration, but I was very close to taking English. I do believe my teacher made the difference* (S5).

4.3.5 Higher education

79% (n=174/219) of participants studied geography at undergraduate level. 28% (n=62/219) of participants studied geography at Masters or equivalent level. 6% (n=14/219) of participants studied geography at PhD or equivalent level. The main reason given by participants for choosing their degree was their interest in the subject. Unlike the school geography curriculum, which is broad, geography at university provides an opportunity to specialise in an aspect of geography. As S218 shares, it gave them a '… *deeper understanding of the workings of the world*' (S218). S10 had taught for twenty-one years and had completed an undergraduate degree in geography:

> *At university I was able to study far more cultural geography, an aspect of geography that I had not known at school. The school I am at now focuses on very traditional topics, but I do like to make pupils aware that geography is much broader than this - geography of sport, medicine, conflict etc.* (S10).

Goudie (1993) raised concerns about any gap between schools and universities as being mutually damaging. However, there is: '… a basic epistemological divide between the aims, rationale and scope of the work of academic and school geographers' (Butt and Collins, 2013, p.295) so we should not be surprised by a gap. This is because academic geography is at the forefront of knowledge creation which is not a straightforward process. School geography requires more objectivity, stability and durability. This gap cannot be closed by aligning both geographies but through a better understanding of their differences such as S10 shared above, by making their pupils aware of geography beyond their school curriculum such as *'…geography of sport, medicine, conflict' (*S10).

Another commonly cited reason for choosing geography was connected to the range of career opportunities that their degree provided. The transferable skills that a geography degree provides, gave participants flexibility with career choices and prospects. With 'above likelihood' of gaining employment for geography graduates (RGS, 2022a), a career in teaching may not be the most appealing to students. S23 decided to change to a geography degree to increase their career prospects, rather than to explicitly become a secondary geography teacher. They had taught for eight years. S23 completed their undergraduate degree and ITE in Canada where they: *'[s]tarted outdoor rec because I was passionate about conservation and the outdoors. Then decided that was not as employable as I had previously thought, so switched in second year to geography'* (S23).

4.4 Reasons why participants became geography teachers

There are a variety of reasons as to why participants chose to teach; for example, twelve participants chose their degree because they had already decided that they wanted to teach, nine of which explicitly wanted to be geography teachers, whereas the remaining three wanted to be teachers, and geography was the subject that facilitated their choice of profession. For some participants, there were additional reasons why they decided to become a secondary geography teacher, a combination of factors which contributed to their decision at that specific time of their lives. The reasons explored will not be an exhaustive list but aim to provide an insight into some of the main reasons and influences that led participants to becoming secondary geography teachers.

Not all participants went straight into a teaching career, having pursued other careers before joining the profession such as I105 who had taught for thirty-six years and had completed a geography undergraduate degree:

> *After uni, I didn't go straight into teaching because I wasn't sure what I wanted to do so I just went and worked in a bank in London. I knew that I never wanted to work in an office. I loved geography, I didn't feel like I was specialised enough to do anything as a career specific in geography like planning or environmental management. I didn't have enough of a background. I like working with people so that's how I became a geography teacher* (I105).

Some participants were not ready to make the commitment to become a teacher immediately after completing their undergraduate degree and needed time and experience in other pursuits before they felt they were ready to teach (Castro and Bauml, 2009). I57 had taught for five years:

> *I always knew I wanted to be a teacher, but I wasn't too sure about going straight into it after university. I just wanted to have a little bit experience of the world so when I came into the classroom that I could be like, 'this is why your grades are important' and the kids weren't going to be like, 'you just went to uni to become a geography teacher', what else could they do with it? Just to give me some understanding of how other industries work* (I57).

S125 had taught for thirteen years before leaving the profession. They knew that at some point they would come back to being a teacher after pursuing other careers. S125 knew it: *'… was just always something I thought I would do. I had places on PCGE course twice (straight from graduation and then 3 years after graduation), but I then went off and did something else. It was then 10 years after graduation that the time was right for me'* (S125).

Participants were not explicitly asked if they were SCTs, so it is not possible to know what proportion of the participants were SCTs. The reasons for not going into teaching immediately were varied. SCTs were driven by many of the same factors as those entering the profession immediately after graduation (Watters and Diezman, 2015) and therefore will not be explored as a separate group. The 'Why Now?' tended to be related to a combination of factors that aligned at a particular time that enabled them to make a change (Castro and Brauml, 2009). External factors can influence the decision to join the profession. I48 joined the profession after they did not receive funding for their Masters course, which meant further academic study was not a viable option for them. I48 had taught for twenty-two years: '*I had just finished my degree and had applied for a master's in environmental science but couldn't get funding so couldn't afford to do it'* (I48).

S29 who had taught for nine years, shared that they decided to become a geography teacher, because they graduated in a recession. Challenges in the economy can mean that it is more difficult for graduates to secure jobs in a recession, as fewer businesses are recruiting. Teaching then becomes a viable option, especially as the perception of the profession is that it has good job security, stability and provides a regular income. This was most recently seen as a result of Covid-19, which saw a short-term boost to recruitment to the teaching profession because there were relatively low levels of hiring and reduced job security in the wider labour market (Worth, Tang and Galvis, 2022). Data from May 2020 showed that the number of applicants was the highest that it had been since 2014 (Fullard, 2020).

4.4.1. Subject discipline

Chosen subject disciplines are often a key motivating factor in deciding to become a teacher (Rushton *et al*., 2021). S27 and S14 had both considered primary teaching, but because of their love of geography, and primary teachers being generalists with a responsibility for a range of subjects (Towers and Maguire, 2017), they chose secondary teaching. S27 and S14 had both studied geography to undergraduate level. S27 had taught for thirty-four years and decided on secondary because of their: '*Love of the subject'* (S27). S14 had taught for six years: *'[s]ince I was about 6yrs old I liked the idea of being a primary teacher, but my love of Geography meant that I couldn't face leaving it behind, so I thought I'd see what secondary teaching was like instead (and fortunately loved it!)'* (S14).

With a world that continues to change, so must geography, making it a fascinating and challenging subject to teach (Brace, 2022). This attracted S13 to teach geography rather than another subject: *'[t]he dynamic aspect of geography studies, constantly evolving, attracted me more than teaching a subject which might become stale and repetitive'* (S13). I216 had taught for fourteen years, along with them enjoying that geography continued to change, their interests in aspects of geography had changed and evolved over time:

> *It is one of those living subjects where the more you learn about the subject and the more you explore, the more curious you become, the more you read, the more you investigate. … It is a dynamic subject that changes as we change as well. As I have grown older, the things that I am interested in have also changed as well. It is one of those things where you just develop a love of the subject around the things that you are interested in as well* (I216).

S51 had taught for fourteen years and had learnt from the ITE year to: '*[n]ot to take subject knowledge for granted as things change quickly in Geography'* (S51).

4.4.2 Role models: participants' geography teachers

Having good teachers is also credited as one of the most important factors for choosing teaching as a possible career (Gardner, 2013; Gorard, 2021; RGS, 2021). Participants predominately identified their own geography teachers as role models (Gardner, 2013), although other subject teachers along with support staff were also highlighted. Their teachers were advocates both for the profession and for the discipline. Through observing their teachers, participants identified attributes and values in their teachers that they wanted to replicate in their own practice (Bandura, 1977). By using their teachers as role models (Arthur *et al*., 2015) they created a foundation on which to model their future selves (Lauriala and Kukkonen, 2005).

The following comments from participants show the influence and the lasting impact that their teachers had on them, both for continuing to study geography and for joining the profession and becoming geography teachers. S153 (did not provide years of service) and S42 valued the subject knowledge that their geography teacher(s) had: *'… it felt like he knew everything about the world and I wanted to be like him'* (S153). S42 had taught for seven years: *'[t]he three amazing women in the school's Geography department. Mrs F, Mrs E and Mrs T. All inspirational and so knowledgeable in the subject. They are why I am a Geography teacher'* (S42).

S42 had taught for six years. They valued the passion and behaviour management that their geography teacher had: *'… my GCSE teacher was the perfect mix of extremely strict and extremely enthusiastic. They're the teachers that I hope to emulate most as a Geography Teacher myself'* (S14). S83 had taught for two years, they: *'…looked up to my teachers a lot as this was the profession I wanted to go into. I observed them a lot whilst they were teaching in terms of what they did and how they executed it*' (S83). S6 had taught for one year. Their teachers showed that geography had a purpose beyond the classroom.

> *My secondary school teacher - she was quite young and had a real passion for exploring the world and making a difference in it and was keen to get us on board with that as well. She was able to make us understand how all of us were so involved in geography without even realising it and it made me want to make others feel the same. It made me realise that I didn't have to pick between educating students and doing my bit for the planet, and that actually teaching geography can be an opportunity to do both* (S6).

From participants' responses, there is not a single definitive list of characteristics that their teachers shared that made them role models or that they could emulate to become a good teacher themselves. As Palmer (1997, p.16) summarises, '…good teachers share one trait: a strong sense of personal identity infuses their work'.

4.4.3 Career guidance

There were very few comments from participants about career advice/guidance connected to studying geography further or entering the teaching profession apart from individual examples of conversations that participants had with their own teachers. As the following examples demonstrate, participants' teachers encouraged them to raise their aspirations and to consider opportunities that they had not or did not think they were capable of or that were available to

them. S23 had taught for eight years and credited their teachers for being nurturing and believing in them during a challenging time which made them want to be able to do this for other young people:

> *My high school teachers from year 12 inspired me. I moved across the country from where I grew up in year 12 - as a result became quite apathetic and depressed - failing my year 12 year. I retook it and my teachers during the two-year term were really supportive - making sure I applied for scholarships and applied to university and then making the effort and seeing the best in me helped direct me to where I am now and made me want to pass that onto other young people* (S23).

S114 who had taught for ten years identified their HoD as someone who had high expectations and aspirations for them: *'… she pushed me to go to better universities as she knew my potential'* (S114). S28 who had taught for three years identified their geography teacher and the pastoral staff as raising their aspirations as: '*[t]hey helped me to understand that I could do whatever I wanted to do if I put my mind to it'* (S28). S94 had taught for twenty-four years and although they did not pursue a teaching career straight away, a conversation with their geography teacher had a lasting impact:

> *My geography teacher was amazing and apart from inspiring me to go on and study the subject at university she also once mentioned that teaching was never ever boring... through a few dull jobs as an undergraduate and one or two as a graduate, those words stuck with me* (S94).

I216 who had taught for fourteen years shared the importance of a conversation that they had with their teacher at a parents evening when they were eleven years old. Their teacher encouraged them to consider alternative career opportunities. They credited this conversation with giving them confidence to raise their aspirations and to have self-belief. The feedback from

their teachers increased their self-efficacy that they could pursue their ambition of being a teacher (Bandura, 1977):

> *The teacher said to my mum, '*[I216] *has a genuine interest in the subject, she loves it, she is very passionate, what is it that* [I216] *would like to do?' and my mum said, 'oh* [I216]*, would like to be a travel agent' and he said, 'well that is lovely, I spend lots of time in the summer with travel agents but actually she has got the potential to do more with the subject other than working in a travel agency'. I think that was the point that I began to have real self-confidence and self-belief really in the fact that I could do more than the thing that I wanted to do. There was nothing wrong with that ambition but actually he opened the door. I was really lucky that he was one of the teachers that I had throughout the entirety of my 7 years secondary school education career. Him and the other geography teachers I had between them were just amazing in terms of identifying where the possibilities were. I think one of the things that sat in the back of my mind was teaching and wanting to be a teacher but never felt I would be able to do that. I think it was the confidence from those conversations and then having that love of the subject that I took it through to A level and onto graduate level... I think the more I spoke to people, the more confidence I had in myself. I think that for me was the key. It was other peoples' confidence that I could and therefore allowed me to be able to do the thing that I wanted to do* (I216)*.*

4.4.4 Work Experience

In line with the literature, participants indicated that previous work experience was an important source of information for choosing their career (Castro and Bauml, 2009; Gorard *et al.,* 2021). As demonstrated by the following comments, the opportunity to experience aspects of the role was credited as an important influence in choosing to become a secondary geography teacher. Whether it was working with young people or having the opportunity to share their passion for the subject, becoming a teacher was an attainable option (Castro and Bauml, 2009). S9 who had taught for seven years gained work experience with their own teachers when they returned to their own school. S55 had taught for three years, and they had: *'[e]xperience volunteering, teaching art and drama and working in kids' clubs showed me I enjoyed working with children*

and I loved my subject' (S55). S12 had taught for four years and gained: *'Work experience within an IB revision-based company*' (S12). S6 had taught for one year and had: *'[p]revious experience working with young people of a range of ages made me realise secondary education was for me, and I wanted to share my own experiences and love for the subject'* (S6).

4.4.5 Altruistic reasons

Additional reasons were connected to intrinsic motivators connected to life goals and integrated into participants' sense of self (Deci and Ryan, 2008) such as wishing to make a difference to young peoples' lives (Day *et al.,* 2006; Gorard *et al.,* 2021; Smith and Ulvik, 2017) and giving something back to society (Gorard *et al*., 2021). S103 had taught for seven years and wanted to become a teacher of geography in order to invest in the community. S39 had taught for four years and wanted: *'…to work with children and make a difference'* (S39). For S117 who had taught for thirty years it: *'… was always about the kids; geography was secondary to that'* (S117).

4.4.6 Bursary

Bursaries have been an enabler for some participants to be able to become geography teachers (Castro and Brauml, 2009). For I241, an SCT, the bursary meant that they could finally make the career change and *'… pursue what I always wanted to do and become a geography teacher. It has just taken me twenty years longer than everyone else'* (I241). Before becoming a secondary geography teacher, I214 had:

> *… ended up helping out at my son's school and then doing a teaching assistant qualification and then I ended up running the nursery. Teaching in FE, teaching childcare and development in FE. There was lots of redundancies and FE was struggling a little bit. I*

> *just decided that I would take redundancy. I realised the bursary was quite an attractive bursary that year …* (I241).

Concerns have been raised that those who receive bursaries do not have any requirement to teach in England over the long term (GA, 2017). S110 openly admitted that they were a *'bursary hunter'* and had taught for one year before leaving teaching. Teaching became the only viable option after they were unsuccessful in the other roles than they had applied for. For S220 who had taught for one year and completed an undergraduate degree in International Politics, they choose to be a secondary geography teacher because of: *'[t]he bursary, recent redundancies in my former career and the perception that teaching is a steady job not at risk of redundancy. The pension offering'* (S220). The challenges of bursaries for those considering becoming a secondary geography teacher are explored further in 5.4.3 Teacher recruitment and retention initiatives and programmes.

4.4.7 Influence of family and friends

A large-scale survey of undergraduates in England found that when considering their future careers, following a family tradition was the least important factor (Gorard *et al.,* 2021). Yet, for many participants, family and friends have had an impact on their decision to become secondary geography teachers. I44 who had taught for twenty years commented that, *'Teaching is something that is in the family* (I44). 64% (n=99/154) of participants had family and/or close friends who worked in schools. This was over double the number who had family and/or close friends who worked in careers in geography (31%, n=47/153) (Figure 14).

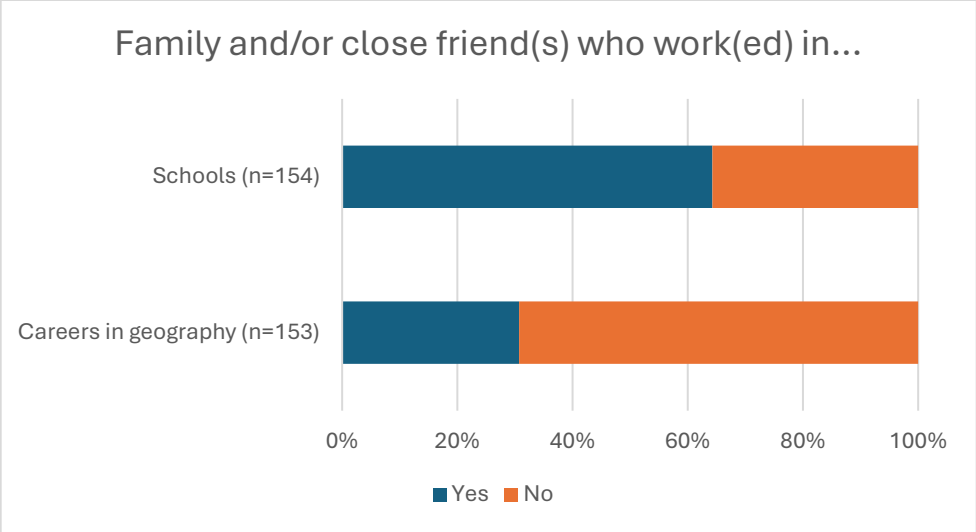

Figure 14: Family and close friends' careers

Having family and/or close friend(s) working in a school had a greater influence on participants choosing to become a teacher than those that had family and friends working in a career in geography. Overall, 61% (n=60/98) of family and/or close friend(s) who worked in schools were influential ('Extremely influential': 14% (n=14/98); 'Moderately influential': 24% (n=24/98); and 'Slightly influential': 22% (n=22/98)) over the participants' choice to become teachers. Of those family and/or close friends who worked in careers in geography, 40% (n=18/45) were influential ('Extremely influential': 7% (n=3/45); 'Moderately influential': 20% (n=9/45); and 'Slightly influential': 13% (n=6/45)) (Figure 15).

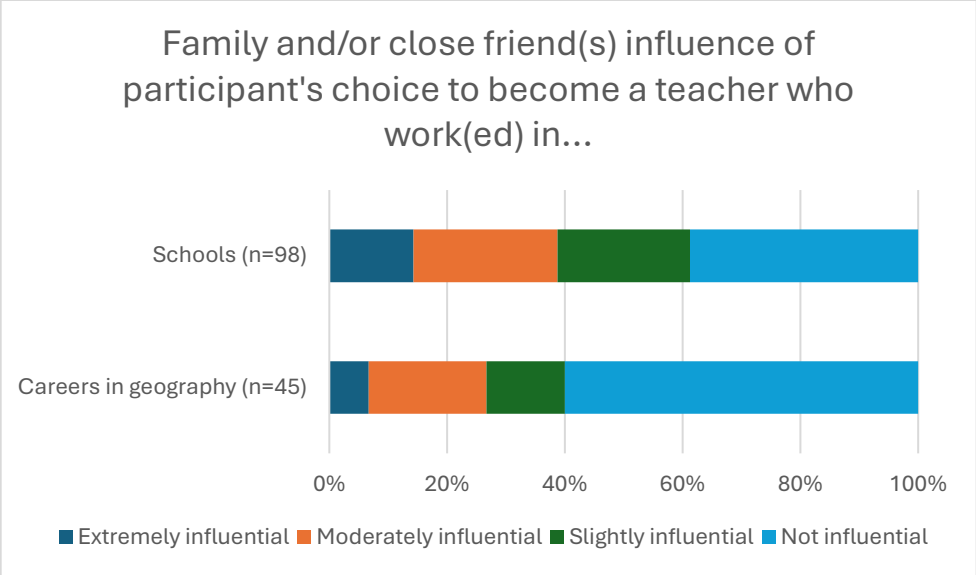

Figure 15: Influence of family and friends' careers

The support and encouragement of family and/or close friend(s) was a key factor in deciding to become a teacher (Castro and Bauml, 2009). 67% (n=100/150) of participants' family and/or close friend(s) were 'All supportive' of them becoming secondary geography teachers, with 21% (n=31/150) mostly supportive; 9% (n=13/150) some supportive and 4% (n=6/150) not being supportive (Figure 16).

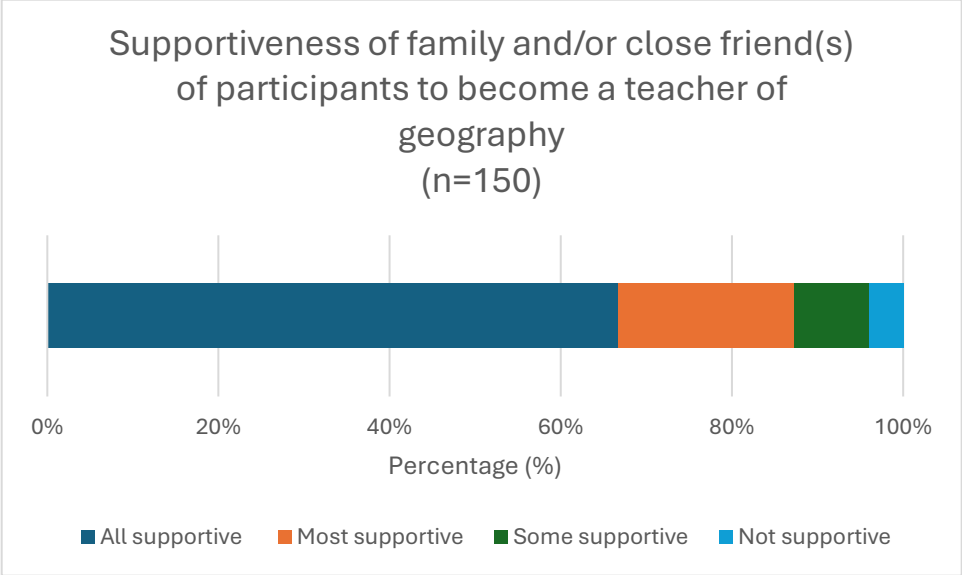

Figure 16: Supportiveness of family and friends

The following comments show the impact of having family and/or close friend(s) working in schools, and careers in geography, together with how supportive they were in the decision for participants to become secondary geography teachers. Like participants' own teachers, their family and friends were role models and advocates for the profession. S157 had taught for eighteen years. Of their family and friends *'some [were] supportive'* of them becoming a teacher. S157's mother was a teacher who was 'slightly influential' to them becoming a teacher. S157 identified their mother as a role model when they were at school because they were: *'Cool-headed, much respected and someone I look up to'* (S157).

I7 had taught for forty-one years. Their family and friends were 'all supportive' of them becoming a teacher as the *'[f]amily thought teaching was a good, respected job that also provided security*' *and they '… were very proud of me going into the teaching profession'* (I7). I7's sisters-in-law, cousins and close friends were teachers. They were 'moderately influential' to them in choosing to become a teacher. They identified that those who had joined the profession after them had an influence on them as well as those who came before them:

> *The members of the family that were in teaching already within my family were quite dedicated and so they were good role models and they were committed to the young people. It isn't always the people that go before that have an influence on me as a teacher. There are people who have come into the profession after me that have been equally as influential on how I view geography and how I kept up with the changes in geography* (I7).

I48 had taught for twenty-two years. They had two aunts who were teachers and another who was a headteacher, they were 'moderately influential' in I48 becoming a teacher. I48's family and friends were 'all supportive' of them becoming a teacher and respected the profession. They commented their aunts were role models and they were: *'… someone that I looked up to. In my*

family education was always very important and even high status in profile in that respect. It was always just part of the family' (I48).

S27 had taught for thirty-four years. Their mother was a geography teacher, who was 'extremely influential' to them becoming a geography teacher. Their family were 'all supportive' of them becoming a geography teacher. Their mother had the following impact on them when they were a pupil: *'My whole life has been geography, initially shaped by her enthusiasm and knowledge'* (S27).

Before becoming a teacher, I56 had been a chartered surveyor for four years. Their wife was a Director of Marketing in a school and was 'moderately influential' of them becoming a teacher and their family were 'all supportive' of their decision. They have taught for fifteen years. A friend and former colleague also had an influence on them becoming a teacher. I56's former colleague thought that they had: '*…the right skills to be a teacher'* (156). I56's friend who was a geography teacher provided an opportunity for them to shadow them for work experience which: *'… sealed the deal for me to change career'* (I56).

S84 had taught for three years, and their family and friends were 'all supportive' of them becoming a teacher. S84 had an aunt who was a Spanish teacher, and their father was a geologist; they were 'moderately influential' and 'extremely influential' to them becoming a teacher, respectively. S84 identified that their dad was a role model when they were a pupil because he was: *'So passionate about the world and showed me amazing things'* (S84).

I216 had taught for fourteen years, and their family and friends were 'all supportive' of them becoming a teacher. I216's husband was a teacher and a head of a key stage but was 'not influential' in their decision to become a teacher. I216 had *'[a]lways wanted to teach*' and had chosen a geography undergraduate degree because they had a '*passion and love for the subject'.* I216 was: *'… the first one to go to university in the family so everybody was very supportive. Mum and dad just said do what you enjoy, do what you are good at and things will happen that will happen. I could not have had any more support from friends and family at that time*' (I216).

I77 had taught for nine years; before becoming a secondary geography teacher, they had worked for a tech company and had been a primary school teacher. Their mum and aunt were teachers and were 'moderately influential' to them becoming a geography teacher. Her mum had been an English teacher for twenty-five years before working part time in a PRU (Pupil Referral Unit); their aunt was a primary teacher. I77 had initially made the decision not to become a teacher because they, *'saw the out of hours work and the stress'* that their mum and aunt had in the job. I77's decision to leave the tech company and become a teacher was because they wanted to do something *'more worthwhile'.* '*Most'* of I77's family and friends were supportive of them becoming a geography teacher, however their:

> *… grandparents were very much not supportive. In that they continually asked me, 'you had a very good job, didn't you, you were working for Google. Why have you quit that very good job? Are you going to go back to that one day? Is teaching just a thing that you are doing?' I don't think they see teaching as high profile as worthy as the office job that I gave up to do it. I have been asked so many times why. They clearly wouldn't have chosen that for me* (I77)*.*

This may be due to the reduced professional status of teaching caused by the higher levels of accountability and micro-managing, leading to increasing distrust in the sector and a negative public perception (Ball, 2013; Booth, Perry and Boylan, 2019; Brooks, 2016; Jerrim and Sims, 2021; Müller and Goldenberg, 2020; Towers and Maguire, 2017). As I7 commented, *'I think the standing of the professional in the 70s was slightly different than it is now'* (I7). S35 who had been teaching for forty-one years, felt that: '*[n]early all of my teaching career has been overshadowed by neoliberalism, with one of the lowest points being the use of the term "The Blob" to describe educationists and the statement that "the public has had enough of experts"'* (S35).

4.4.8 Not knowing what else to do

For others, teaching was less of a vocational decision but the result of not really knowing what career they wanted to pursue. Comments such as they *'fell into teaching'* or teaching was *'the lesser of two evils'*, may sound negative reasons for joining the teaching profession, but as the following two examples show, it meant that these participants entered the profession, enjoyed the experience and as a result became committed teachers. S206 had taught for eight years before working in Higher Education, they became a geography teacher because they, *'… didn't really know what else to do, so just gave it a go*' (S206). I48 had taught for over twenty-two years:

> *I was working in a bank and just thought I want to do something where I can use geography. I saw the PGCE and thought, I will give that a go. I didn't intend to teach long term, but I thought actually the skills that you develop in your PGCE would be really useful, very transferable. PGCE was extremely hard, in fact I probably hated it. I thought I have got this qualification, teach for a year to get my QTS and then I am going to get out. It was in that year I was at* [school name redacted] *and I just loved it. That was it. I love this. I actually thought, I am quite good at this. That was it, I was hooked. I never left* (I48).

4.5 Initial Teacher Education

93% (n=155/166) of participants completed their ITE in England. Only two participants completed their ITE outside of the United Kingdom, one in the Republic of Ireland and one in Canada. 87% (n=144/166) of participants had completed their ITE through university-led courses as shown in Figure 17.

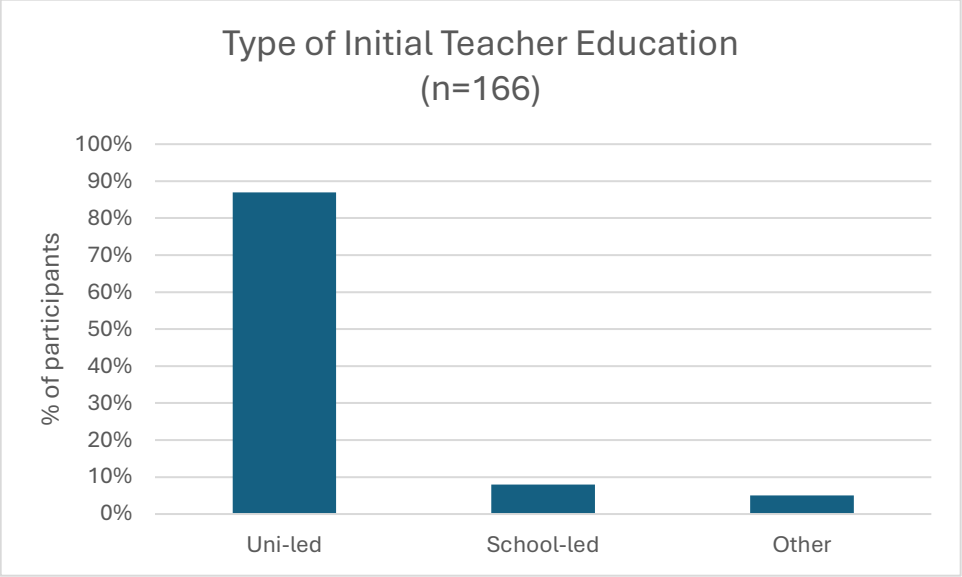

Figure 17: Type of Initial Teacher Education

The Coalition Government, which came to power in 2010, signalled a new direction for education policy (Mutton and Burn, 2024). They published the White Paper, 'The Importance of Teaching' in 2010 (DfE, 2010). The emphasis on more 'school-led' provision showed the number of providers doubling while the number of university-led provision reduced (Butterfield-Tracey and Stow, 2020). The government set a target of at least 50% of ITE provision to be 'school-led' by 2015 (Mutton and Burn, 2024). Participants' ITE year spans the past five decades (See Figure 10: Years of Service). At least 52% (n=79/152) of participants completed their ITE prior to 2010,

before there was the significant increase in the number of accredited 'school-led' providers. However, 'school-led' providers have found it considerably more challenging to recruit geography student teachers than universities, compared to other subjects such as English, history and science (Tapsfield, 2015).

4.5.1 Identity formation

During their ITE year, participants highlighted that it was challenging to move between university and schools as these spaces often required them to hold different identities, such as being a student at university and student teacher on placement in schools. Sometimes they were required to hold both identities simultaneously. This impacted the ways in which they constructed their teaching identities (Smagorinsky *et al.,* 2004). S134 commented, that their ITE: '*… was really, really hard. The toughest of my entire educational career. Stuck between being a student and facing a working life in placement schools*' (S134).

For participants, navigating their identities was sometimes made more challenging by their colleagues on placement, as they did not feel that they were embraced as colleagues but remained in their 'student' or 'trainee' identity. S128 commented that: *'[s]ome of the teachers were not very helpful and saw you very much as the student*' (S128) and S8: *'[a]lways felt like a trainee'* (S8). For S157 and S114 they felt that it was not an environment in which they were able to develop their geography teacher identity. S157 felt that: *'[b]oth schools used me as a free supply teacher*' (S157) and S114 felt that they were: *'… simply there to be another 'body', so the school avoided cover costs'* (S114). This negatively impacted their sense of belonging in their

placement schools. For S51, they felt physically isolated as they shared that: *'[s]ome of the placement schools isolated the trainees from the other staff'* (S51).

Although Smagorinsky *et al.* (2004) emphasised the importance of putting student teachers in environments that create tensions to challenge their identities; student teachers must be supported to do this. If they are given the tools to address these tensions it can lead to creativity, learning and awareness (Akkerman *et al.,* 2006; Alsup, 2006). As the following comments show, when participants were student teachers they valued being trusted and given the freedom to take risks and make *'… lots of mistakes'* (S151). This allowed them to step outside of their comfort zones, so that they could question themselves and their beliefs, finding the most appropriate methods for the contexts that they were teaching in. S6 had completed one year of teaching and identified their mentor from their second placement as a role model who allowed them to learn from their mistakes: '*[Mentor was] … really keen for me to have autonomy over classes, and learn from mistakes, happy to let me make mistakes'* (S6). S222 had taught for twenty years and credited the staff of their second placement with being supportive so they could develop as a teacher: '*… fantastic second placement school with very supportive staff who allowed me the freedom to develop as a teacher'* (S222*).* S71 who had taught for twenty-six years credited being pushed out of their comfort zone by their HoD as being a catalyst for their development: '*My first HOD taught me resilience and pushed me out of my comfort zone. Speeded up my development as a teacher'* (S71).

Working in supportive environments, where they were able to make mistakes, have freedom and were pushed out of their comfort zones were important foundational experiences whilst they were formulating their identities. S57, who had been teaching for five years continued '*… to try and test new ideas, keep my teaching fresh'* (S57) during their career.

4.5.2 Contrasting school placements during ITE

During ITE, many participants experienced contrasting school placements. Having these experiences were credited by participants as being one of the successes of their ITE year. It provided them with insight beyond their own school experience which challenged their own preconceptions. As S226, commented: *'[t]his allowed me to widen my experience of what teaching involved and how different schools can be run by leadership and management'* (S226). Contrasting school placements, such as S222, who experienced *'…an outstanding leafy green comprehensive and a challenging inner-city academy'* introduced different school cultures and demographics, providing an opportunity for participants' novice teacher identities to be shaped and reshaped (Wilkinson, 2020; Akkerman and Meijer, 2010). It offered an opportunity for participants to reflect on their practice and understand that each placement required *'… a slightly different approach'* (S218) as well as understanding that what might be effective in one context, would have to be adapted to meet the needs of their pupils in a different context (Mutton and Burn, 2024). This can be challenging for student teachers to navigate, so support structures are important for them to be able to do this as S91 commented: *'[g]reat school placements in two completely different schools, with different contexts and support structures. Mentors were*

completely different, school cultures almost diametrically oppose, but in each school, I received such superb support' (S91).

4.5.3 Subject knowledge development

Participants' expectations and experience of their teacher education varied considerably. Many participants felt that they did not learn a significant amount from their teacher education to influence their subject knowledge directly. Some commented that they did not feel that this was the purpose of the ITE year. S25 had taught for forty-two years and had completed a university-led ITE course: *'Geography knowledge? Not much from PGCE, but that's not the aim of the course*' (S25).

This may explain why there seemed to be a discrepancy in how participants categorised their ITE. Some saw this as a continuation of their geography education and classified their ITE year as their highest geography qualification, whereas others did not. It is therefore difficult to know of the 71% (n=155/219) who said that a geography qualification was the highest they held, which have included their ITE qualification. Exploring the purpose of the ITE year is beyond the scope of this research but it is important to explore participants' experiences of their teacher education to further understand how it shaped and influenced their secondary geography teacher identity.

There has been significant debate about the lack of subject knowledge development in ITE (Holbrey, 2019). When participants spoke positively about the development of their subject knowledge, it was often due to having their teacher education providers supporting them to audit

their own subject knowledge, so that they could independently address areas that they were not confident in, or had not previously studied, rather than being explicitly taught specific subject knowledge content. These participants had completed undergraduate degrees outside of geography or were SCTs. The following participants, S98, S171, and S125, did not have geography undergraduate degrees and had all completed a university-led ITE course. S98 had taught for ten years and had an undergraduate degree in social anthropology. During their course they: *'… did lots of subject knowledge development. I had to work on my physical knowledge, having not done a geography degree'* (S98). S171 had taught for two years and had an undergraduate and PhD in Archaeology. They had the:

> *Opportunity to connect with subject matter experts, really helped with knowledge - I was worried I would have gaps after coming in via a non-geography route. it reassured me that engagement was key and as the field of geography was constantly developing, I would need to keep engaging throughout my career* (S171)*.*

S125 had taught for thirteen years and had an undergraduate degree in geography and a Masters in Agricultural Economics. S125 was also a SCT and completed their: *'… PGCE 10 years after graduating, so I had to revise and revisit all of my subject knowledge. I was also at times teaching subject knowledge that I might never have actually studied myself*' (S125). Participants were encouraged to engage with their subject associations or directed to opportunities to engage with subject experts. They saw their teacher educators less as subject experts and more as experts in pedagogy and holding mentoring and coaching roles. Participants felt that their subject knowledge developed most whilst on placement and during their career, especially when they had to teach topics that they had not recently studied or previously studied. Teaching school geography requires broad subject knowledge which can be challenging, after studying geography

at undergraduate and postgraduate studies, as they require increased levels of specialism (Rushton *et al.,* 2021). The following examples from participants demonstrate areas of the curriculum that they felt less confident in and had to develop further. S47 had taught for five years, had an undergraduate degree in geography and completed a university-led ITE course: *'My teacher training forced me to research areas I was not so strong on such as weather'* (S47). S5 had taught for two years had an undergraduate degree in geography and completed a university-led ITE course. They felt that their subject knowledge, *'…improved 'on the job'. Being in schools and having to remember river processes, because I then had to go on to teach them'* (S5).

Having broad subject knowledge is important, as Mitchell and Lambert (2015) found that lacking subject knowledge significantly disadvantages prospective teachers (Holbrey, 2019) and impacts on their classroom confidence. S77 did a Natural Science undergraduate degree before training as a primary school teacher. They secured a secondary geography teaching role after undertaking a Masters in Geography Education. As can be seen from their response below, a perceived lack of geography subject knowledge has prevented them from feeling confident to teach A level classes during their career. S77 had taught for nine years:

> *My masters in Geography Education helped me secure a job as a secondary teacher so that I have something degree level with geography in the title, but it contained no useful subject knowledge for teaching KS3 and above. One influence of my lack of degree level subject knowledge is that I have so far avoided taking on an A level class, mainly due to lack of self-confidence* (S77).

In addition to broad subject knowledge, the most effective teachers have 'deep knowledge' (Kinder, 2016) and have a strong disciplinary bond (Till, 2020). It equips teachers to plan so that students can progress in their learning, allowing them to effectively evaluate students' thinking

so that they can address any misconceptions efficiently (Holman, 2020; Tapsfield, 2015). As Holman (2020, p.3) posits, '… most importantly of all, can reach into a deep reservoir of knowledge beyond the confines of the curriculum, to inspire young people in their subject'.

There was a consensus from participants that although their formal geography education may have ended once they became a secondary geography teacher, that their geography education had not. As I56 who had taught for fifteen years commented: '*I don't think you can ever say your geography education is finished*' (I56). ITE programmes were the foundation for ongoing professional learning (Mutton and Burn, 2024) and as the following comments from participants demonstrate, the development of their subject knowledge was driven by teaching new topics, developments in the discipline, examination reforms and questions from their pupils. S52 and S48 had both completed a university-led ITE course. S52 had taught for twenty-five years: *'The one year of PGCE has been dwarfed by the last 25 years of teaching!'* (S52). S48 had taught for twenty-two years and they: *'…loved exploring new topics when there have been major exam reforms or we have changed exam boards, it is good to keep refreshed and not allow the curriculum to become stale*' (S48*)*.

S91 had taught for ten years and had completed a Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) course. Their subject knowledge was kept up to date by: *'[t]he challenge of responding to student questions. The opportunity it provides for me to keep reading and thinking about geography'* (S91). Pupils will bring their personal geographies into lessons which will widen teachers' knowledge (Roberts, 2017). Being a learner is important for teacher development (Beijaard,

Meijer and Verloop, 2004) and was an enjoyable aspect of being a secondary geography teacher for participants. S77 had taught for nine years and being able to continue to learn about geography and develop their subject knowledge and was one of the reasons for them choosing to be a teacher: '*I love the subject and almost treat my job as a chance to teach myself about the world, doing more research each time I come back to the topics and my lessons are chances for me to consolidate my own learning! I think I'm a teacher because I never wanted to leave school'* (S77).

S107 and S185 both completed a university-led ITE course and had taught for twelve years and twenty-six years respectively. S107 learnt from their ITE of: *'… the incredible importance of lifelong learning*' (S107) and S185 commented that, *'learning is ongoing for us all'* (S185).

4.5.4 Pedagogy development

Generally, participants were much more positive about their teacher education developing their pedagogy. They felt their ITE provided them with a solid foundation, that they then built upon during their career (Brooks, 2017; Holman, 2020) as the following comments demonstrate. S128 and S171 had both completed a university-led ITE course. S218 had taught for twenty years*: '[m]uch of my early pedagogical understanding came from the ITE year … These have, of course, developed further but the fundamentals were learnt during this year'* (S218). S171 had taught for two years and felt that their: *'...pedagogic position developed more in my actual teaching career, but training gave a solid foundation and overview*' (S171).

There was a lack of specificity in participants' comment about the pedagogical learnings from their ITE year. There were many comments that said they had learnt, *'Plenty', 'Too much to say really!', 'Loads', 'Hugely', 'Heaps', 'A lot', 'Everything'*. Where participants provided examples, they tended to be rooted in generic teaching pedagogies rather than geographical pedagogies as the following comments demonstrate. S52, S87, S87 and S102 had all completed a university-led ITE course. S52 had taught for twenty-five years and felt that what they learned from their ITE that had influenced their pedagogy was no longer relevant due to: *'… the considerable changes which have occurred in pedagogy during my teaching career. Trends have come and gone; ideas debunked e.g. VAK etc*.' (S52). S87 had taught for ten years and felt that: *'… too many fads in teaching means what I learned in TT [teacher training] is very different to our current trainees*' (S87). S87 had taught for six years and already that they were seeing: *'a lot of traditional teaching methods coming back around so I feel as though I have had to adapt to that*' (S89). S102 had taught for seventeen years, and their pedagogy had: *'…changed so much since then [ITE year] - it was pre-internet in schools, and just at the start of 'discovery learning' and learning styles. I have disregarded quite a lot of what was covered on the course since'* (S102).

4.5.5 Role models

Participants used their mentors and colleagues on placement as role models, identifying attributes and characteristics that they wanted to emulate in their own practice (Bandura, 1977). These initial experiences had a lasting impact on them. S14 had taught for six years and had completed a school-led ITE course. Some of their colleagues were*: '…particularly excellent practitioners and I hoped to emulate them*' (S14). S218 had taught for twenty years and had

completed a university-led ITE course. Their mentor: *'… essentially modelled how I should be in the classroom'* (S218). S86 had taught for fifteen years and had completed a university-led ITE course. They had: *'… a fabulous mentor in PP1 who I still want to be like 14 years on'* (S86).

4.5.6 Outdoor learning

78% (n=124/158) of participants had experience of outdoor learning during their ITE. For many it was the first time engaging in fieldwork as the teacher rather than as the pupil. This role change was important as S118 shared that it was: *'… interesting to see fieldwork from a teacher point of view, rather than a student'* (S118). It also allowed them to understand: '*[t]he importance of fieldwork and outdoor education'* (S35) and: *'the essential role of hands-on fieldwork'* (S35). Participants: *'…enjoyed showing students 'real' geography'* (S114).

Participants highlighted that engaging in outdoor learning during their ITE year had many benefits to their practice. It developed their subject knowledge such as S93 who shared that their: *'[f]ield trip taught me about the carbon cycle'* (S93). Outdoor learning provided participants with the knowledge and confidence of how to plan and undertake fieldwork. As S89 shared, it was: *'[g]reat for simulating the kinds of activities we might plan to do with our students once we'd become qualified teachers'* (S89) and S94 stated that it was: *'…really good for considering logistics and follow-up in the classroom, the importance of integrating fieldwork in the curriculum'* (S94). S48 credited their ITE in helping them to: *'… plan trips well, we did a lot of this, both as a PGCE group and as volunteers with other schools'* (S48). These experiences were really important to develop

their knowledge, skill and confidence. Over S48's twenty-two year career they had established fieldwork for all the year groups in every department they had worked.

4.5.7 Reflection

A key aspect of any ITE course is creating space for student teachers to be able to reflect on what they have seen and what they have done throughout the year. Reflection is an important skill to develop as it helps to shape identity and can help teachers to become more aware of their sense of self and of their own values; it allows teachers to critically question their assumptions (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011; Bakhtin, 1981; Jackson, 2019). S221 who had taught for ten years shared that one of the important aspects of their ITE to be able to continue to develop was: *'[t]o experiment. To reflect. To realise that there is no such thing as 'perfect teaching', but to keep evolving and trying to improve things. The work is never done in this job!'* (S221).

Reflection continues to be important during teachers' careers as identity changes and evolves over time and in response to working in different contexts (Rushton *et al.,* 2021). Understanding of events can develop over time with the significance of events not always being valued contemporaneously (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004). S57 had been teaching for five years, they commented that they have a greater appreciation of what they learned from their ITE experiences since they began their career than they did initially: *'[t]here was so much that I learnt on the course that over time has become more and more apparent to me. Concepts that when I was learning to teach didn't make any sense, now do, when I reflect years later'* (S57).

4.6 Career of secondary geography teachers

Employment across a broad spectrum of schools (Gov.uk, 2024) is represented in the participant sample (Figure 18; Appendix 4: All types of school(s) that you have worked in: Other). Comparison between the different types of schools have not been made because participants' years of service ranged from their ECT year to over forty years of service, during which time, the types of schools have changed and evolved. For example, academies were introduced in the early 2000s, and there were participants who began their teaching career prior to their introduction (Figure 10).

Over half (58%, n=71/123) of the participants worked in one type of school during their career (Figure 19). It is important to note that participants may have worked in more than one of the same types of school during their career. Participants' experiences from the schools that they worked in may be contrasting, yet over time, their practice and approach will be an amalgamation of these experiences. Rushton and Reiss (2020, p.31) found that, *'… teachers who work in contrasting and diverse contexts frequently develop multiple, shared identities'.*

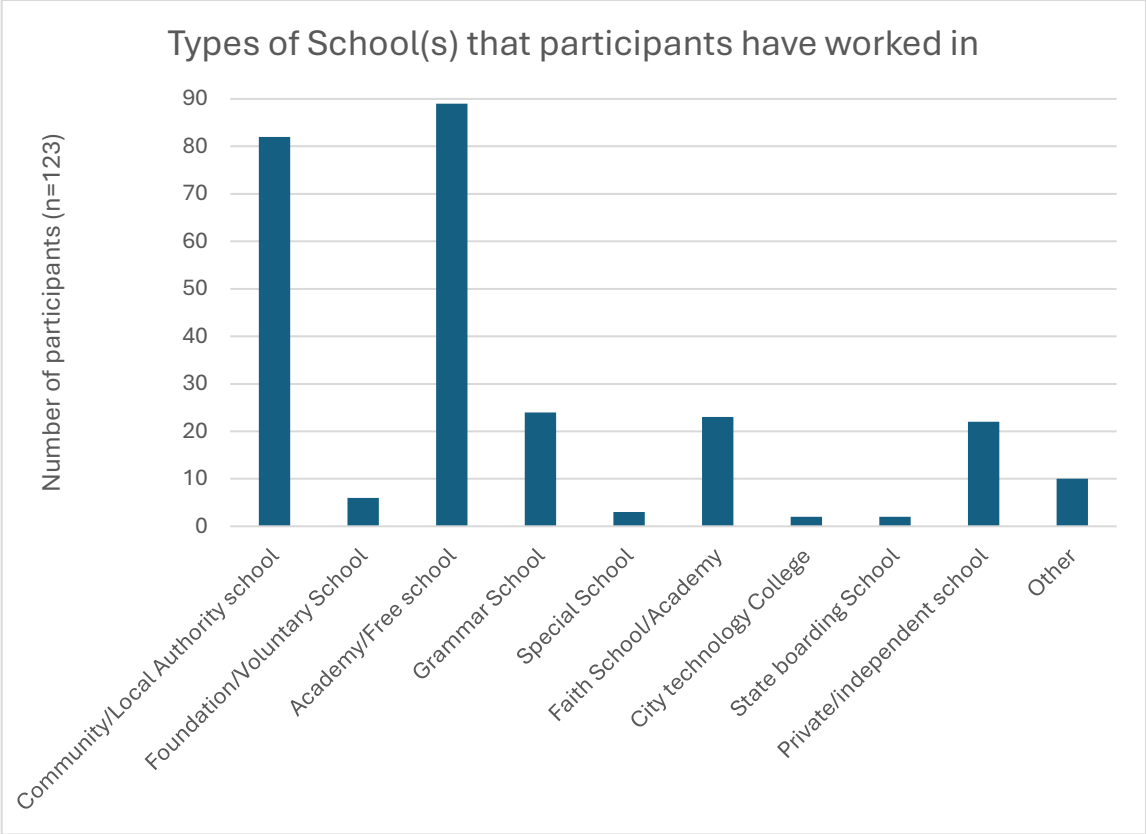

Figure 18: Types of School(s) that participants worked in

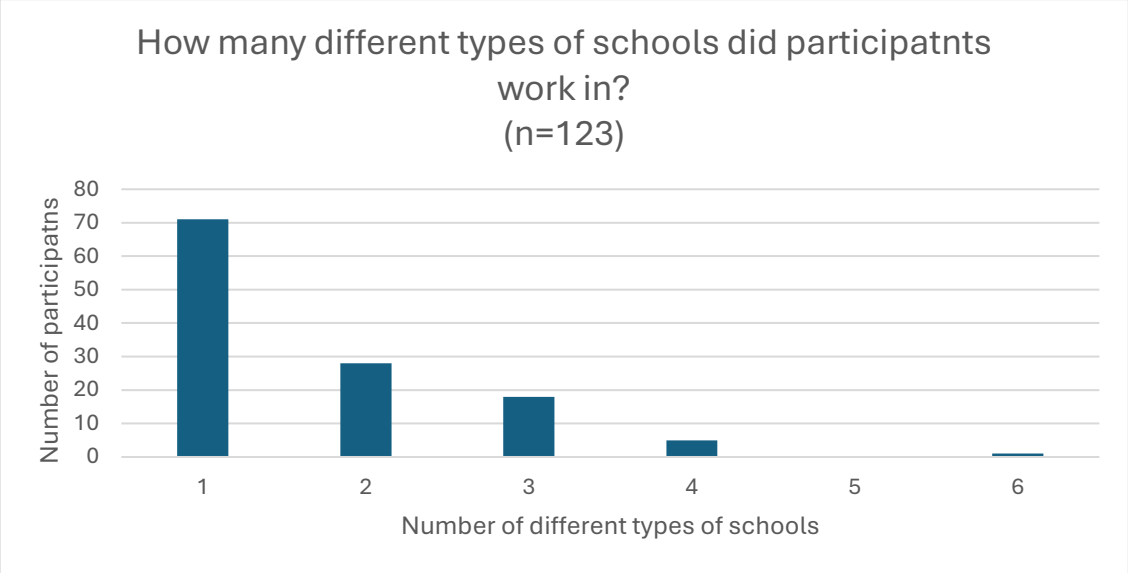

Figure 19: Number of different school(s) that participants worked in

Participants' decisions to work in a certain type of school may be because it was most aligned with their views on education, or for more practical reasons such as availability of employment in their locality. It can be a challenging balance between what is desirable and practical as I77's experience demonstrates. After having their second child, I77 wanted to reduce their commute to work and so looked at alterative employment options:

> *After having my second child, I was not sure how I could commute this distance especially as I was having to commute really early and late to miss rush hour and to make the journey manageable. If I was then trying to do it in rush hour, I wasn't going to be able to get the kids to and from nursery. My husband is a shift worker, so I have to manage care around my work because his is variable* (I77).

I77 had previously worked in an academy/free school and a faith school/academy. Prior to this employment opportunity, they had not been interested in working in a grammar school because:

> *… I was never interested in selective education. I was anti-selective education. I would certainly never work in a fee-paying school. Personally, that does not fit with my view of what the education system should be. I never liked the ideas of single sex schools…* (I77).

I77 decided to look around the school because, *'I can't just say no to a part-time geography job within 20 minutes of my door…'* (177). I77 had previously had a negative experience with a headteacher, so they knew the importance of relationships with colleagues that you work with. They visited the school and:

> *I liked the school, the feel of the school and the department … I am very much aware, the people you work with, the staff that you have to work with daily is what matters to a huge extent. I met the department and they were lovely. I realised that the feel of the school was good* (I77).

Having visited the school, I77's perception of the grammar school and single-sex education changed, and they were enjoying working in a school that they would previously not have

considered. I77 reviewed their previous experiences when making decisions about their employment, giving more consideration to its ethos. For those entering the profession they are still forming their teacher identity and consolidating their values and beliefs. It may be harder for them to consider these factors when they are deciding on their first school; their priority may be securing employment, rather than considering the school's values.

4.6.1 Perception of geography in schools

As the participants were secondary geography teachers, it is unsurprising that 91% (n=129/142) of them 'Strongly Agreed' that geography contributes value to the curriculum (9% 'Somewhat Agree', n=12/142). However, as Figure 20 shows, the profile of geography in participants' schools varied (35%, n=50/142, 'Strongly Agree'; 46% n=65/142, 'Somewhat Agree'; 18%, n=25/142, 'Somewhat Disagree' and 1%, n=2/142, 'Strongly Disagree').

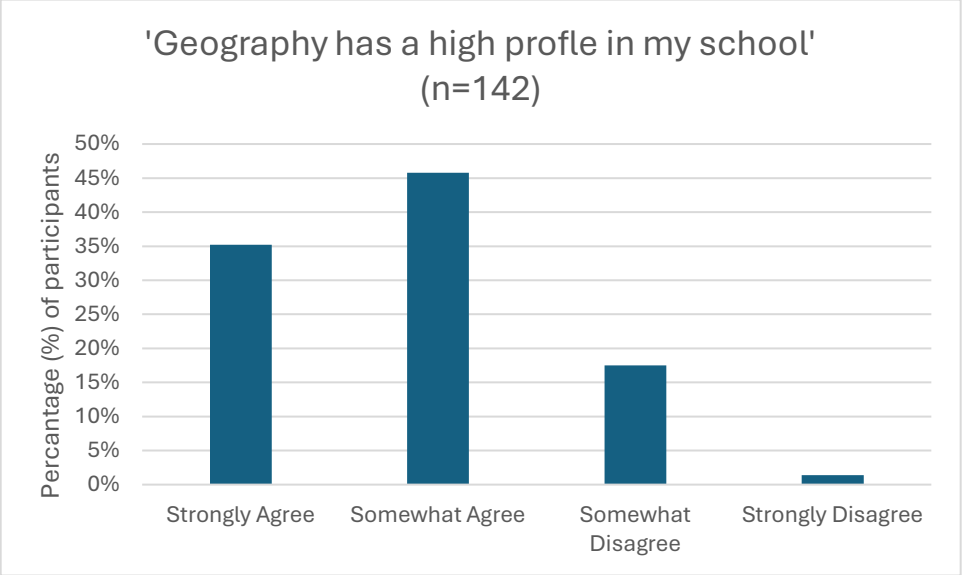

Figure 20: 'Geography has a high profile in my school'

In schools where geography did not have a high profile, there were a range of reasons. Participants were frustrated when pupils, parents, and carers had incorrect or outdated perceptions of what geography was. This can take its toll on teachers in a geography department and impact upon their energy and enthusiasm over time. It is likely to have more of an impact on ECTs who are less confident with their new professional identity. S38 had taught for two years and did not enjoy: *'[t]he negativity surrounding the subject especially from parents, they usually arrive at parents evening proclaiming they do not know flags or capitals...our subject is so much more than that!'* (S38). This could reflect the negative experiences that parents/carers had in their own geography education and show how the curriculum and geographical knowledge has changed over time. I7 had taught for forty-one years:

> *Geography to my grandma was where places were, so she expected me to know where all the countries in the world were and their capitals and rivers because to her, that is what she learnt at school in geography. She could not really understand how you could study geography for three years because apart from knowing where places were, she did not really know what geography was. Now, people think geography is just about Climate Change* (I7).

It is a challenge for geography teachers to be able to explain what geography actually is when these perceptions have become well entrenched from previous generations (Gardner, 2013). This is not helped by the perception of geography and its teachers in the media (Towers and Maguire, 2017). S51 had taught for fourteen years and wished: *'…Geography was taken more seriously by the media. Geography teachers are generally presented as being very boring and all Geography teachers I know are fun, passionate people'* (S51). I77 had taught for nine years and liked to:

> *… introduce my Oxbow Lake lesson with, just remember who taught you this because this is the bit that you will remember when you are old. … When you say you are a geography teacher it is either, 'oh gosh, colouring in' or 'its Oxbow Lakes, I remember Oxbow lakes'. There is nothing else that ever comes up* (I77).

Despite geography being a 'core' academic qualification in the EBacc (DfE, 2019b), participants still felt that other subjects were prioritised. Participants felt that pupils focused their time on other subjects over geography. S99 had taught for two years and shared that geography: *'can be seen as an in between subject. Students always prioritise subjects above Geography as it is seen as 'easy''* (S99). This may be because of the messaging that pupils receive from parents/carers or from their school. Geography continues to be marginalised in favour of STEM subjects (Trowsdale, McDonald and McCrory, 2024). This may be communicated to pupils through prioritising other subjects through timetabling, revision sessions or how other staff speak about subjects. I128 who had taught for twenty-eight years, felt: *'…it gets translated into how much money you get in your budget and the way you can resource and that effects what you can do with it. I've had conversations with heads of science, and I can't believe the financial resources that they were given to deliver their subject compared to geography*' (I128). I23 had taught for eight years. They *'Somewhat disagreed'* that geography had a high profile in their school because:

> *… geography isn't necessarily a school-wide subject, that sometimes limits how I am perceived. A lot of times as well to get into the senior leadership, you have to have a school-wide role or impact. Again, for English that is easy, everyone takes English, maths-same thing. Geography it feels a bit different, it feels like we are in this corner of the school and sometimes it is very hard for people on the otherside of the school, especially for the academy that I am at, it is quite large. There will be a few people that I work with that have no idea who I am* (I23).

Participants shared that the negative perception of geography was an aspect they enjoyed the least about being a secondary geography teacher. S89 had taught for six years: *'… schools not valuing geography as much as other subjects…'* (S89). I77 had taught for nine years and felt that:

'Other subjects are inherently more high profile in every school such as maths and English. They are the ones that people are interested in to a certain extent. I think geography is properly higher profiled than other subjects' (I77). I23 had taught for eight years:

> *I just think that because how progress 8 works, math, English, science get a lot of the focus and there is this unspoken understanding that those are the important subjects…. Even with things like interventions, maths, English science would be set in stone, and geography will get one day a week, but students will have to go to the other subjects, so it means I have no time with them. I think it has a profile in the school, but it is not an equal profile to other subjects in the school* (I23).

I7 had taught forty-one years. The first twenty-one years of their career was spent in the same school where geography was a popular subject. They then joined a *'special school'* which took young people from a variety of schools whose perception of geography was very different:

> *We had an intake of 200 pupils, and we regularly ran four groups every year to GCSE. Four groups into Year 10 and then Year 11. What astounded me when I went in to a special school and we were dealing with young people coming from a variety of schools, was their relationship to geography. There was quite a lot of negativities towards geography. A lot of people had not chosen it and that really surprised me because that had not been my experience. Young people saying that geography was boring. I just found that really, really difficult to understand and it just emphasised to me that the department and the enthusiasm of the teachers makes the youngsters enthusiastic. I think when I went into the special school I thought everybody would like geography because that was my 21 years of experience of geography. So to come across people who hadn't chosen it and weren't interested and thought it was boring was quite an eye-opener* (I7).

The profile of geography in schools was not static and can change over time. As the following comments demonstrate, to change perceptions of geography was challenging, requiring a lot of hard work, and time. I218 had taught for twenty years. When they joined their most recent school there was:

> *quite a strong negative vibe towards geography... a snobbery. Even the kids would be like, 'errrrrr, I'm not taking geography', it was really awful. … The school is brilliant, don't get*

> *me wrong, but quite toxic view of geography which I don't think was always helped by other staff in the school. I don't think that was necessarily a conscious thing but because history was held in such a high regard. I felt that we have been looked down on a little bit, because we have not been the shining beacon within the school. Slowly I do think that is changing. It has been nice to have some members of staff who are parents within the school as well, coming to see me and saying, 'so-and-so has opted for geography instead of history', so that kind of realisation that as a school the staff realise that geography is improving. That makes me feel more valued as well. They are very closely linked – the perception of geography and how staff view us really* (I218).

As I218 shared, the perception of geography in their school impacted how they were perceived by their colleagues and valued. This can impact on their sense of belonging and commitment to their school. S14 who had taught for six years also shared the negative impact of geography being perceived as a *'joke'* had on them before it had changed:

> *When I started at my school, it felt like Geography was seen as a bit of a joke subject by some of the parents, pupils, and even senior management, which hurt because I knew how incredibly important it was. This has now changed and we're one of the most popular and valued subjects in the school (a combination of our hard work and also David Attenborough I think!). We still get bantered for being 'the colouring in subject' of course...!* (S14).

I7, I218 and S14's examples show that through the hard work of their geography department, they were able to change and create a positive perception of geography in their schools. Figure 21 shows that 76% (n=106/140) (25%, (n=35/140), 'Strongly Agree'; 51%, (n=71/140), 'Somewhat Agree') of participants felt that the profile of geography influenced how they perceived their value within their school. This was particularly evident in the previous examples by participants who shared that when geography did not have a high profile in school, they found it challenging, such as I218 who said that the perception of geography and how colleagues viewed them were: *'… very closely linked'* (I218).

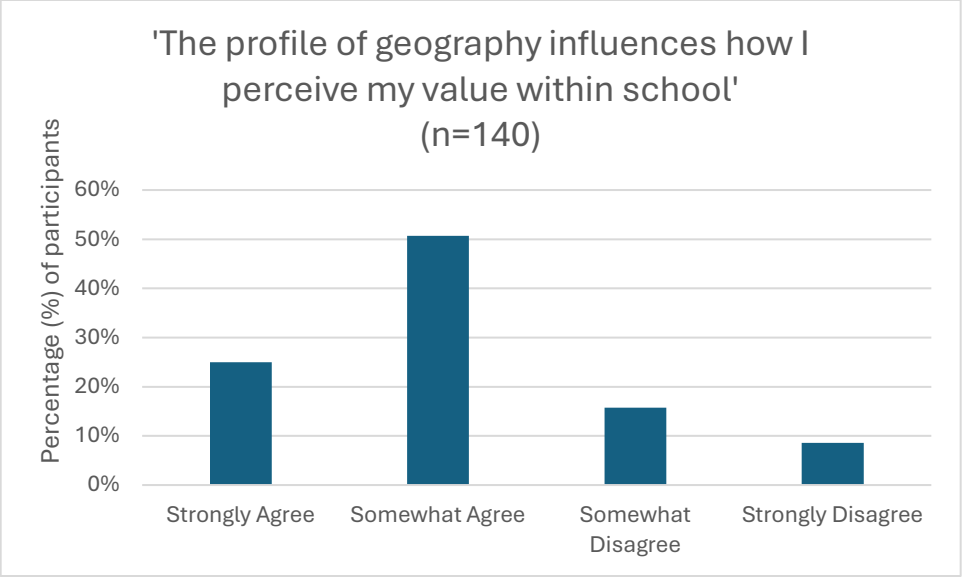

Figure 21: 'The profile of geography influences how I perceive my value within school'

I105 had taught for thirty-six years, 'Somewhat Agreed' that the profile of geography influenced how they perceived their value within their school and felt that although they were HoD, they were undermined, by those in the faculty, who were not geography specialists and had different priorities. I105 felt that geography:

> *…definitely didn't have this big profile because of the Head of Faculty and second in faculty, their interests were definitely not in geography. As Head of Geography it was very frustrating, I didn't have any influence on stuff just because of that hierarchy and who made the decisions and so on. I did feel that we were undervalued as a department* (I105).

I216 had taught for fourteen years and 'Somewhat Agreed' that the profile of geography influenced how they perceived their value within their school. They felt that in their previous employment they were known as a lead in geography. When they changed school, they also changed role to an Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) in humanities. The department that they joined had: *'three very experienced, very good geography teachers'* (I216). They felt that they were not:

> *necessarily afforded the opportunities that I had been previously to really lead and develop geography, even though it was a humanities college, and I was the humanities AST. I think that was a really difficult situation and I really lost some sort of self-belief at that time because the head didn't value the expertise that I had and therefore for me that was very much tied into my identity as a geography teacher, which I had always had, and was always afforded that respect as well* (I216).

24% (n=34/140) (16%, (n=22/140), 'Somewhat disagree'; 9%, (n=12/140), 'Strongly Disagree') of participants did not feel that the profile of geography influenced how they perceived their value in school. I7 had taught for forty-one years, and 'Strongly Disagreed' that the profile of geography influenced how they perceived their value within their school. During their career they had taught several additional subjects. As they identified as a teacher, they felt that the profile of geography within their school had less impact on them. They also held an additional role as a Deputy Head: *'[f]irst and foremost, I see myself as a teacher. I suppose because I've taught different subjects. I have taught maths, I have taught physics, PSHE, PE, careers, … So, I view myself as a teacher and that is where I get my standing from, not from the subjects I am teaching* (I7).

I56 who had taught for fifteen years, 'Somewhat disagreed' that the profile of geography influenced how they perceived their value within their school because they had held additional roles as Head of Boarding and Boarding Housemaster and taught additional subjects such as games. They felt that their pupils would not necessarily associate them solely with teaching geography:

> *I don't think people necessarily see me first and foremost as a geographer. I think that may change in the future, but I think that's only goes back to a lot of people still see me in my boarding role. Or, for example, today, I'm teaching games so I'm in my games kit. Two days out of five I'm in games kit and then usually in a suit* (I56).

4.6.2 Alignment with school's values and practices

Although 91% (n=129/142) (44%, (n=62/142), 'Strongly Agree'; 47%, (n=67/142), 'Somewhat Agree') of participants agreed with their school's policy on the teaching and learning of geography (Figure 22), only 83% (n=117/141) agreed (51%, (n=72/141), 'Strongly Agree; 32%, (n=45/141), 'Somewhat Agree') that they had the freedom to teach geography in the way that they thought was best (Figure 23).

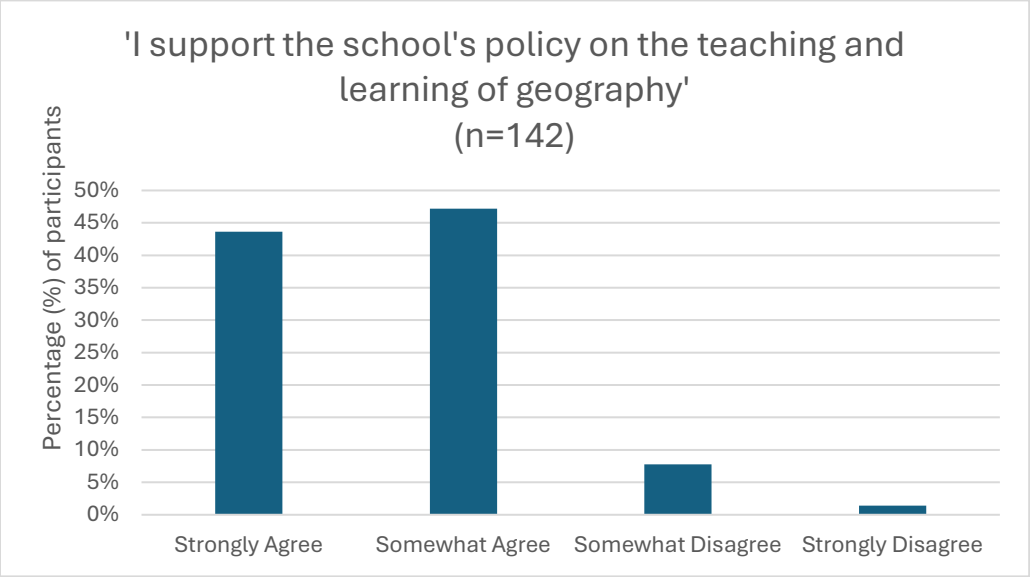

Figure 22: 'I support the school's policy of the teaching and learning of geography'

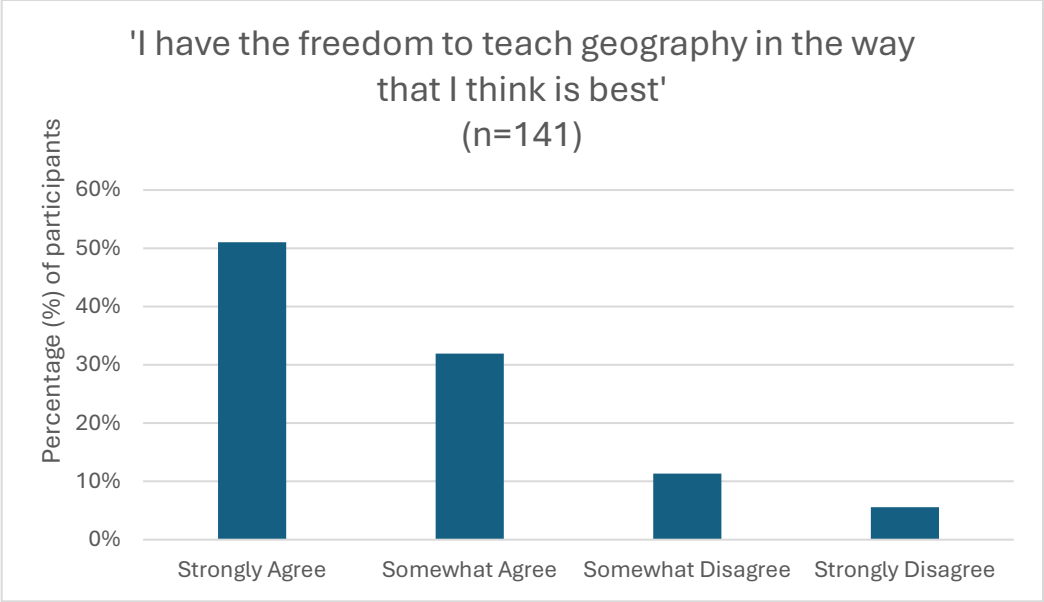

Figure 23: 'I have the freedom to teach geography in the way that I think is best'

I77 had taught for nine years. They 'Strongly agreed' that they supported the school's policy on the teaching and learning of geography, and that they had the freedom to teach geography in the way they thought was best. They felt that they were able to contribute to and be heard by their department:

> *The department I work in, has shared resources, but there is freedom to do what you want within those learning aims. It is the best of both worlds. If you just want to teach what we have got, then just go ahead and teach it. If you want to tweak it, change it, as long as they meet these learning aims. It's the right balance for me. I have made suggestions, and they have gone with it. They did not have a pure climate change module. Climate change obviously comes up everywhere, but they didn't have a pure unit on it. During one reshuffle, I suggested including one, so I have planned and included that. It has been good to be heard and to be able to change things* (I77).

I240 had taught for twenty-four years. They 'Strongly agreed' with the statement in Figure 22 and Figure 23. This may be influenced by the fact that I240 had held numerous additional roles, including most recently, being a Headteacher. They felt that their staff had: *'…an autonomous approach in school. We are blessed with lots and lots of extremely experienced and extremely capable teachers, so we don't need to micromanage at all'* (I240).

I105 had taught for thirty-six years and 'Somewhat Disagreed' with the statement in Figure 22 and Figure 23. I105 felt that they had pedagogies determined from directives at school policy level rather than supporting teachers to use the ones most appropriate for their discipline: *'…having taught for so many years and you see different ways of teaching, coming and going. I did feel we went through a phase, which is now different, of having certain styles imposed on us, by people who are not geographers, by leadership who are not geographers, doing their walk abouts and so on'* (I105).

I216 had taught for fourteen years and felt that: *'[t]here was sometimes a disconnect between what senior leaders think is right and what would a subject specialist knows is right' (I216).* School's policies and directives were distilled from what was trendy or in fashion at the time. S52 and S102 had taught for twenty-five years and seventeen years respectively and had both had to use learning styles, since debunked, in their practice. For those that had been in the profession for some time, they were aware of some policy initiatives being repackaged and reintroduced in a circular fashion. This is normal for policy as: '…new principles and innovations are merged and conflated with other rationales and previous practices. There are rarely 'clean slates' (Ball, 2013, p.63).

S19 and S105 'Somewhat disagreed' that they had the freedom to teach geography in the way that they thought was best because of the SLT in their schools. S19 who had taught for twenty-five years: *… hate[d] the constant meddling and interference from people above in the hierarchy, who know next to nothing about geography, and what makes a good geography lesson'* (S19).

S105 who had taught for thirty-six years, felt that decisions were 'top-led' and that their: *'leadership teams jumped on the latest trends, rather giving time to consolidate'* (S105). Even those who held additional role such as HoD did not feel that they had autonomy over their department. I126 who had taught for twenty-three years felt that:

> *Even when you are Head of Department you still have to ask the senior leadership team if you want to change something more dramatically. Things like timetabling was very frustrating, because you had to argue your case about how many hours geography could be taught, because you could be cut, because they wanted to change it to a two-week timetable. Those sorts of practicalities of the timetable were where those constraints were more about what I was doing within that time. KS4, how your classes are put together, how your option groups are put together. Those are the real cruxes of managing a department. I think that should not be underestimated. People need again that professionalism to manage and to be effective about what is best and knowing what is best for those pupils* (I126)*.*

Micro-managing by management can lead to a loss of teachers' autonomy and self-efficacy which can lead to a decrease in job satisfaction (Müller and Goldenberg, 2020). Participants felt that during their careers, their freedom to teach geography in the way that they thought best, and their ability to take risks, had diminished. S134 had taught for twenty-six years: '*I felt I had the opportunity to take risks in class, that skill has diminished with time not accelerated*' (S134). Teachers are not free to determine their own practice, because they need to endure the strong pressures from school and broader education cultures (Brooks, 2016). Policy directives strengthen accountability and can erode trust; prioritising control rather than integrity (Ball, 2013). This can create tensions between teachers' professional beliefs and values and the policy goals (Rushton *et al.,* 2023).

As the following examples demonstrate, within the confinement of school policy contexts, participants found ways of working that aligned with their identities (Rushton *et al.,* 2023). I218 had taught for twenty years. Despite prescription of lessons, they 'Strongly agreed' that they supported the school's policy on the teaching and learning of geography and that they had the freedom to teach geography in the way they thought was best: *'[w]e have prescribed what we would like to see in the lesson. … We have shared lessons, but I can't take anyone else's lesson off the shelf. I have always got to tweak it. I feel like I have complete autonomy over how I teach really'* (I218).

I23 had taught for eight years and 'Strongly Agreed' that they supported their school's policy on teaching and learning of geography but only 'Somewhat agreed' that they had the freedom to teach geography in the way that they thought was best:

> *…because we are a federation, we have a central geography team that will develop resources and certain units that we go through, especially at KS3. They are set and the exams come from that consultant team at the federation. While I am given the freedom to teach in the way that I want, at the end of the day, the exam is coming from those people, so I need to make sure I hit A, B and C so that the students' results reflect their abilities. In that sense, I don't have total control, but still there is a bit there* (I23).

It is not known how many schools are in I23's multi academy trust (MAT) but research found that teacher autonomy is lower in School Trusts, especially within those that have more than ten schools (Worth and Van den Brande, 2020). Over the last decade, schools and MATs have gained increased power from national and local government control (Larvin, 2021).

I241 had taught for two years. They 'Somewhat agreed' with the statements in Figure 22 and Figure 23. They felt that they had greater freedom in KS3 than in KS4.

> *I have had a little bit of freedom. I have had freedom with KS3. That is because no one else wants to teach KS3 … I have had a little bit of freedom and I have changed the curriculum for KS3. As far as KS4 goes, I have had no real say really in the type of fieldwork that they do. They have just done the same fieldwork for twenty years and that is what they do. Whatever I suggest, just falls on deaf ears, but they have allowed me to incorporate fieldwork in the school grounds for KS3* (I241).

High-stakes examinations can influence what is taught and how it is taught (Earle, 2021), reducing teachers' freedom and autonomy over how they would like to teach. The pressure of external assessments was felt by participants and was an aspect of being a geography teacher that they enjoyed the least. S86 had taught for fifteen years, and they held an additional role as a HoD, they felt: *'[t]he constant pressure for results at A level especially'* (S86). S5 had taught for two years:

> *At times I feel there has been too much pressure to meet Data Points (to have students finished assessments and for those then to be uploaded onto a database), rather than to actually inspire while teaching Geography. From my own schooling experience, I remember brilliant teachers and awe in learning how the world works, not sitting assessments and "ticking boxes"* (S5).

I44 had taught for twenty years. They 'Somewhat agreed' that they supported the school's policy on teaching and learning but 'Somewhat disagreed' that they had the freedom to teach geography in the way that they thought was best. They wanted to create extra-curricular activities for their pupils to enrich their geography learning but did not feel supported by their school: *'Unfortunately, the school that I work at, all they are bothered about is, is it on the syllabus? If it is not on the syllabus, why are we doing it?'* (I44).

I105 had taught for thirty-six years. They 'Somewhat disagreed' with their school's policy on the teaching and learning of geography and that they had the freedom to teach geography in the way that they thought was best. Over their career, they felt that there was increased pressure from the school's management to focus on examination classes which had reduced the opportunities for Outdoor Learning for their pupils:

> *… as time has gone on, it has been more difficult to do activities week because it was partly the attitude of management or the headteacher at my school. It was seen that it was more important to stay in the classroom, teach your exam classes and the pressure of crashing through geography specifications, because the content has increased but our time has been reduced. We didn't feel that we could be out of the classroom very often apart from exam fieldwork which I hope is changing at the school* (I105).

Higher levels of accountability together with lower levels of self-efficacy can cause additional pressure on teachers and compromise teachers' abilities to teach in accordance with their beliefs. This can negatively affect teachers' stress levels and emotional exhaustion (Müller and Goldenberg, 2020).

4.6.3 Fieldwork

As teachers, participants enjoyed creating new experiences for their pupils. Fieldwork took pupils out of their comfort zones and introduced them to contrasting locations from their lived experiences. Field trips enhanced pupils' learnings through challenging their preconceptions and *'brought the subject alive'* (S104), creating real world learning opportunities (Swift, 2005). I7 had

taught for forty-one years enjoyed taking their pupils into environments that they were not used to or contrasting to their own lived experiences:

> *Taking young people out of their comfort zone. Showing them things that they perhaps have just seen in a textbook and letting them see that these things exist. Being able to put things over in a non-classroom setting - teaching glaciation by sitting on a hillside in the Lake District. It brings it alive to people because they can see, they can feel, they can experience the landscape and the landscape can talk. I think the youngsters think the Lake District is a natural landscape, but once you start to say that this is all man made just like a city; that man has created the environment through agriculture, through tourism and through settlement and they begin to realise that there's very little natural world, particularly in our country* (I7).

S97 had taught for five years and enjoyed taking pupils into different environments. Fieldwork gave pupils confidence and saw them: *'take more responsibility for themselves'* (S97). Participants highlighted numerous barriers to provide outdoor learning opportunities for their pupils. There were practical barriers, such as the cost and time required to organise and to operate the trips. Sometimes the barriers had come from senior leaders who did not value fieldwork and were not supportive of outdoor learning opportunities, other than those that are for examination requirements in KS4 and KS5. If pupils have not had outdoor learning experiences during KS3 then they have not had opportunities to learn and build these skills in preparation for KS4 and KS5 examination assessment. I105 had taught for thirty-six years and they 'somewhat disagreed' that geography had a high profile in their school. As a result, they had time reduced in the timetable and:

> *…had just two hours a week to teach GCSE. We could only do fieldwork that was for the exam and absolutely no more. That was simply down to the people who were there at the time and I think it is actually different now. We were part of a humanities faculty and it was the head of faculty and their particular interest was not geography, it was history, economics, and sociology* (I105).

4.6.4 Additional Roles

In addition to teaching geography, 77% (n=108/140) of participants held additional roles and 66% (n=91/138) of participants stated that they were involved in extra-curricular activities. There was a variation in how some participants categorised additional roles and extra-curricular activities. Some included being a form tutor and contributing to extra-curricular activities as additional roles whereas others considered this inclusive to their role as a secondary geography teacher. Either of these interpretations of additional roles are valid. Whether they believe an aspect of their role is inclusive or additional to their role may be connected to their perception of what the role of a teacher of geography is. The roles and responsibilities of teachers are constantly evolving to reflect changes in policy (OECD, 2005). For example, S5 categorised being a form tutor as an additional role. They had taught for two years:

> *I enjoy being a form tutor less - it is not that I don't believe it is an important role, but I do not feel it is what I signed up for, especially as it is a full-on, time-consuming role in its own right. I feel people passionate in pastoral issues (of which there are many) would do better here. In the big picture - should teachers even be form tutors, or should this be a different, full on, job?* (S5).

For those who saw these roles as part of their geography teacher role, it may be these aspects of the role were part of the reason that they decided to become a teacher such as wanting to make a difference to young people (Day *et al.,* 2006; Gorard *et al.,* 2021); that they were part of the job description that they applied for; or were part of the wider school culture and expectations of their teaching staff. I48 who had taught for twenty-two years, ran a Model United Nations and a running club for extra-curricular activities. They did not consider extra-curricular activities an additional role as their school: *'…would encourage everyone to be involved in extra-curricular. It's just the norm, we all do that'* (I48).

The findings for additional roles and extra-curricular activities have been explored together as there are common themes that overlapped. The term additional roles will be used to refer to roles beyond teaching geography. Additional roles covered a range of responsibilities, including those which were pupil focused such as academic and pastoral roles. Other additional roles were staff focused such as training and mentoring roles. Some participants held multiple additional roles simultaneously and had held different additional roles over the course of their career. 13% (n=14/108) additional roles were not directly connected to their school employment. Some were connected to education, such as being an examiner, while others were not, such as running a craft business.

For those whose additional roles were an extension of their secondary geography teacher identity, spoke positively about their roles as HoD or Head of Faculty (HoF). As has been found with additional roles that have managerial or supervising aspects of their jobs, the participants felt they had increased autonomy (Worth and Van den Brande, 2020). As the following examples show, the participants felt they had control to lead their department and make the necessary changes to ensure that geography was taught in the way they felt was best. This increased their self-efficacy and enjoyment of the role as they could see the positive impact that their work was having on the pupils that they taught. Having autonomy and self-efficacy is important as it can increase teachers' job satisfaction which can add to a sense of belonging and their commitment to their schools (Worth and Van den Brande, 2020). S18 had taught for thirty-seven years before retiring. In addition to being a HoD, they had also been a HoY and a Headteacher. They had, *'[n]ever enjoyed a role more than being Head of Geography. Unassailable if doing the job well*

and developing a 'mini state' within the school … developing our own ethos and encouraging thousands of students to develop their futures through' (S18). I126 had taught for twenty-three years: *'[w]hen I was Head of Department, I could change things to the way that I would like them to be much more so than in the previous job that I had* (I126).

The following examples of additional roles allowed participants to explore geography's disciplinary knowledge in a new context without the confinements of a syllabus, an examination specification, or a classroom. They were able to provide students with new opportunities beyond the curriculum but still aligned to geography's disciplinary identity. I218 had taught for twenty years, they ran an Eco cub for as an extra-curricular activity. It helped to raise the profile of geography in the school:

> *I think we have pushed extra-curricular in my current school quite a lot because when I started geography was dying a bit of a death really. We had 9 options groups for history and one small option for geography … Essentially it didn't have a very high profile within the school. I have used the Eco Club and other extra-curricular activities within geography to essentially raise the profile within the school … it is just a really nice way of showing the kids that you care of providing different opportunities, whilst linking it with geography… I am going to invest time in the sorts of things that may steer kids to towards geography. Is it a little bit about marketing the subject as well I must admit* (I218).

I77 had taught for fifteen years. Before Covid-19, I77 had run a KS3 geography club. They were looking at establishing an eco-council branch of the school council. They thought the geography department was:

> *… slightly stronger in terms of its profile because of doing clubs pre-covid and fieldwork and a couple of the geography teachers are involved in DoE. At sixth form we take them to GA lectures. Across the whole school geography does more than just lesson hours than some of the other subjects maybe* (I77).

I126 had taught for twenty-three years and carried out fieldwork and informative walks on the environment:

> *I think because we were seen as leaders in our department. Our outcomes with pupils. The numbers that had chosen it at KS4. My department were heavily involved in things outside the geography department. We were GA members, we did things. We were involved in what was happening in geography. We were very positive about our subject. We went on courses. Our head was aware that we were keen to develop the subject ourselves. Parent feedback, that was very important. The Head gave me feedback, he often came up to our area because he would show our department off. He said he knew that at any time in the school I can walk through the geography department and I know there is good geography teaching going on* (I126).

S97 had taught for five years and held an additional role as a 'Duke of Edinburgh Coordinator'. Leading: *'Duke of Edinburgh allows me to see students put their Geography skills into action, as well as working in a different environment with different people as a team*' (S97). S51 had taught for fourteen years and held an additional role as an 'Educational Visit Coordinator', which provided pupils: *'…the opportunity to experience new things and places. Lots of links with Geography and requires a good understanding of health and safety and other cultures*' (S51).

I218's additional role of a geography teacher educator in a Higher Education Institute (HEI) helped them to reconnect to their geography identity and to continue to feel motivated in the profession they had worked in for twenty years. The additional role provided an opportunity for professional development and new challenges.

> *One of the things that I have loved about becoming a leader in ITT is that I feel I have learned so much in terms of education but also in terms of geography. It is never ending educational process. I hope it never ends … That has really invigorated me in terms of my teaching in the classroom and in terms of my love of geography and being able to pass that on to other people… That part of my career has given me a fresh perspective and just freshen me up really having done teaching for quite a few years* (I218).

Brooks' (2017) research with experienced secondary geography teachers found that teachers' subject identity sustained them as they developed their careers. Even when teachers applied for promotion into roles not necessarily connected to their geography teacher identity, their additional role provided a new context in which to explore and enhance their geography teacher identity. When participants were asked how being a secondary geography teacher had influenced their additional role, they found it challenging to answer initially. This may because those who remain in the profession merge aspects of their identity to a greater and lesser extent, so it feels 'natural' or 'whole' when they engage in their work (Towers and Maguire, 2017).

I56 had taught for fifteen years and had previously held an additional role as the Head of Boarding. When they were asked how their secondary geography teacher identity had influenced their approach to their role, they initially found the question challenging before being able to identify aspects of their disciplinary knowledge that they used in the role to provide outdoor learning opportunities for their pupils. It was only when they compared themselves to colleagues who had held the role before and after them, who were not geographers, that they could identify the importance of this disciplinary knowledge to how they conducted the role. Acknowledging that colleagues from other disciplines did not have the same knowledge or confidence to lead trips.

> Q: Has your secondary geography teacher identity influence how you have approached your additional role?
>
> *That's a really good question. Not enormously, no, I don't think it did do to be perfectly honest. No, I have never thought of that before. I mean it's so very personality driven being a housemaster.*

> *I suppose, I do take those kids on a lot of trips that they never usually go. We've got quite a few overseas pupils, probably about half. I did take them out walking in the Dales and talk about the limestone scenery.*
>
> *They did get out a lot of a lot more when I was head of boarding. It's just that sort of, 'right guys, let's go out to the world!'. If you have moved from Hong Kong to Yorkshire you have to go and see Yorkshire. Not just walk into Harrogate for a day and walk back. Go and see where you are.*
>
> *As a geographer we know how to put together a risk assessment. Non-geographers regularly come up to the geography department and ask, 'how do I do this, how do I do that?'. It's fairly formulaic and basic.*
>
> *I hadn't really thought of that but actually the geographer in me did mean that those children got out an awful lot more than they did … After I left, they didn't go out nearly as much and I suspect it is just confidence from the geographer doing what they are doing* (I56).

For the participants whose additional roles were not directly connected to geography, it was easier for them to able to identify how aspects of their disciplinary knowledge was utilised for their additional role. As Roberts (2017, p.8) argues:

> …although enquiry skills can be developed in other subjects, school geography can make a major contribution to their development because of the range of questions it addresses, its varied sources of information presented in different formats, sometimes from different viewpoints, and its use of different analytical and interpretive techniques. Everything studied in geography in the classroom and in the field requires the use of some skills.

As the following examples show, the skills that I218, I240 and I7 had developed as geographers had been of value to their senior leadership roles and how they approached the role. I218 had taught for twenty years and had held additional roles as a deputy head before becoming a geography teacher educator in a HEI. They used, *'… the fact that geography had such a broad skill set*' (I218) to support their deputy head role. I240 had taught for twenty-four years and held several leadership roles as UCAS Co-ordinator, HoY, Director of Sixth Form, Deputy Head and was

currently a Headteacher. They valued: *'…the academic skills that I have as a geographer. That fairly wide sweep of skills of analysis and evaluation and data handling and so forth … Not the knowledge so much but the skill set that geography develops* (I240).

I7 had taught for forty-one years and held an additional role as a Deputy Head teacher. I7 felt that geographers: *'…are used to looking at big pictures and seeing how things fit together. Those kinds of skills are useful in a school environment because we look at the bigger picture. … I think geographers are perhaps, more open to change'* (I7). Participants were vague about the specific geographical skills that they used and the context in which they are applied. Skills are used for many different activities and practices, but the term is hard to define (Wood, 2013). What was consistent from participants was being a secondary geography teacher provided them with knowledge and skills that were of value to be able to hold and carry out the responsibilities of the additional roles. Further research would be needed but there was a perception from participants that geography departments tended to have a higher proportion of teachers with additional roles because of the transferable skills that geographers had. I126 had taught for twenty-three years before leaving teaching to work as geography teacher educator:

> *… a large number of geography departments have senior members. Geography seems able to promote people into managing other people. You have a lot in the subject, more than most subjects, where there are senior members as colleagues and because of their roles as senior members, they may be good geographers, but they just can't allocate their time or preparation time so much. Often, they want to come in and teach the lesson and then they have to go off and they can't sit around the table and plan and prepare the subject in perhaps a way that a lot of departments would normally like to do that. That is definitely something I have seen through my Higher Education Career* (I126).

I218 had taught for twenty years and had held additional roles on SLT before taking on a part-time role as a geography curriculum leader for a university-led PGCE programme alongside teaching geography part-time:

> *On our SLT it was a bit of a running joke that we were all essentially geography. What I thought was really apparent was the fact that geography had such a broad skill set that. Geographers are just really good at leading because we have that experiences of a little bit of everything* (I218).

I240 had taught for twenty-four years and held several leadership roles as UCAS Co-ordinator, HoY, Director of Sixth Form, Deputy Head and was currently a Headteacher. Reflecting on the first department that they worked in: '*…there were five of us in the geography department, three of us are now heads. One of those three left is a deputy head at a local school and will be a head before too much longer*' (I240). I57 had taught for five years and held an additional role as a lead practitioner and a HoD:

> *As a group of us, there are six of us. One of them is the DSL, I'm a middle leader, I have two other middle leaders in my team so actually there are quite a lot of middle leaders. I think that raises the profile. They get out to do other things, but they are known as geography teachers because they still come back, just to teach their subject. So, X is a geography teacher, but she is also the DSL. She hasn't lost the geography teacher front of her which I know sometime people do as they rise through the ranks. You forget which subject was their babies. We haven't managed to lose that here* (I57).

A common theme from participants across the range of additional roles was that they enjoyed the greater impact the role allowed them to provide. As geography is a non-statutory subject at KS4, participants may only teach some pupils in KS3. The additional roles provided an opportunity of *'[i]nfluencing more and more of the school community for the good; developing the strategic direction of the school'* (S240). The aspects of the additional roles that participants enjoyed the most were often connected to the reasons as to why they wanted to join the teaching profession

initially, such as wanting to work with, and making a positive difference to, young people (Gorard *et al.,* 2021; Day *et al.,* 2006), as the following examples demonstrate.

S117 had taught for thirty years, held a variety of additional roles during their career and at the time, were CEO of a MAT. The aspect of the role that they enjoyed the most was: '*…making a difference'* (S117). S108 had taught for fifteen years and was a HoY. They most enjoyed: '*[h]elping children to mature into adults, seeing them start to believe in themselves and overcome barriers'* (S108). S33 had taught for two years and was a form tutor. They most enjoyed: *'[e]ducating young people about the wider aspects of life'* (S33).

As well as having a positive impact on pupils, some participants held mentoring and coaching roles where they supported student teachers and colleagues. Participants enjoyed the positive difference they could make to colleagues by *'[h]elping others to become effective geography teachers'* (S218). For S218 this drive was rooted in their own personal experiences as they wanted their colleagues to have a better experience than they had at the start of their career.

Working with student teachers and ECTs also encouraged the participants working in the mentoring and coaching roles to reflect on their own practice (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011; Schön, 1983). Baker (2020) found that vicarious experiences are most powerful when observers see similarities between those they are observing and themselves, for example, age, knowledge, and skill level. However, the following examples show how student teachers can also shape the practice of experienced colleagues and can have a legacy on departments beyond their

placements (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011). This can create an enriching community of practice between student teachers and their placement schools (Rushton *et al.,* 2021). The following three participants all held additional roles as mentors. S128 had taught for twenty-eight years. The aspect of the role that they enjoyed the most was that: *'Mentoring keeps you constantly reflecting on best practice'* (S128). S23 had taught for eight years, and they enjoyed: *'[w]orking with people new to the profession. Keeps me current and using best practice in my teaching as well*' (S23). I126 had taught for twenty-three years. They enjoyed supporting a student teacher as it gave them: *'… so much knowledge about myself as a teacher. The mentoring of someone else really does highlight your own skills and it makes you think about your own subject and how you are teaching it and question things that you just do*' (I126).

Observing others can have a powerful influence on self-efficacy beliefs, providing comparisons against one's own performances along with the message that skills are learnable and that difficult tasks are surmountable. In their additional roles, S225 and I57 had the opportunity to observe their colleagues which influenced their practice. S225 had taught for thirty-five years and held additional roles as a Senior Housemaster and Assistant to the Director of Studies. They valued being able to observe colleagues because they could: *'… take the best of their skills and adapt them to your own teaching. Being willing to learn from other teachers is important'* (S225). I57 had taught for five years and held additional roles as a lead practitioner and HoD. They valued being able to go and observe their colleagues because: *'… you are reflecting on what you are seeing and bringing it back into the classroom'* (I57).

4.6.4.1 Challenges of additional roles

Additional roles did lead to some challenges and tensions for participants as those roles negatively impacted workload. This resulted in participants having less time and energy available for their geography teacher role which had a negative impact on the quality of their teaching. S108, S16 and S14 all held additional roles as HoY. S108 had taught for fifteen years, and they felt that their HoY role: *'… takes up all my time and then some and I have to squeeze in lesson prep in the gaps'* (S108). S16 had taught for thirty-seven years and found that there were*: '… relentless challenges that you can never resolve - just create a 'temporary fix'. Endless succession of 'issues' to deal with - at the expense of your own quality of teaching*'(S16). S14 taught for six years and found that their HoY role:

> *… did take up a lot of time, which meant that I didn't have as much time for planning and marking. I didn't like this as it made me a less effective teacher, which is ultimately why I stepped down after 2 years - I'd rather have fewer roles and be better at them. Bit of a perfectionist!* (S14).

I240 was a Headteacher and felt that they were unable to teach as well as they knew they could due to the demand of their position of being a Headteacher. They had taught for twenty-four years and held several additional roles during their career. They had been a UCAS co-ordinator, HoY, Director of Sixth Form, Deputy Head and were currently a Headteacher. Their additional role had the following impact on their geography teaching:

> *I don't teach as well as I used to… Every year I say to the Head of Geography, put me down for a couple of classes and I say I don't mind what, but I always have my fingers crossed behind my back that he gives me Year 7. I know I can turn up and teach that without feeling too guilty if I haven't given it too much thought and they won't suffer for that. I would love to teach GCSE or A level again and I am sure one day I will, but I would need to commit a bit more time* (I240).

I56 had taught for fifteen years. During their career they had held additional roles as the Head of Boarding and Boarding Housemaster. They also coached a range of sports such as cricket, rugby, hockey, tennis, and basketball. They shared the following conflict with coaching sports teams:

> *I am first and foremost a geography teacher. I love taking kids out and I love going off to matches but there are certain times where you think I actually need to take my Year 10 class. In a year's time or six months' time, they are going to be sitting their GCSE, and I don't want them to sit with a cover teacher. I have had times in the past when I have said, 'look I'm not going to take the sports team'. My first priority has to be to my geographers. Exams are ultimately what they're all in school for isn't it? We've got to get them through it. There are times sometimes when you just get a bit stretched. You take this cricket team off and then you get back late, and you think that you've got to get those papers marked to give back tomorrow, so it does take time out of your day. I think that sometimes gets a little bit forgotten. … On the whole, the positives far outweigh the negatives* (I56).

The common theme with additional roles was that participants felt that they did not have sufficient time which led to frustration and job dissatisfaction over time, as participants felt that they were not able to complete their roles to their desired standard. S128 had taught for twenty-eight years before retiring and held additional roles as HoD and a pastoral Head (HoY): *'… being asked to do Head of Geography and pastoral Head meant I was frustrated that I didn't do either role as well as I would have liked to'* (S128). I23 had taught for eight years and ran a geography club as an extra-curricular activity:

> *I just don't get the time to do it as well as I would like. So, because there is no additional time given for planning that it sometimes does feel really frantic. I would love to have an extra hour. Obviously in teaching, even if I had that hour someone would take it away from me* (I23).

For some participants, their additional roles took time and energy away from the initial reasons why they decided to teach and from the aspects of their identity that were important to them. S16 had taught for thirty-seven years and was currently a Headteacher. Their additional role

meant that they felt they were: '*… losing contact with why you went into teaching in the first place and too many stakeholders to be able to keep them all happy'* (S16). I7 had taught for forty-one years and held an additional role as a Deputy Head Teacher:

> *So, the reasons that I came into the profession, I just got further away from it. The odd lessons that I do teach tend to be covering if someone is away. It gives me a real buzz because it makes me remember why I actually joined the profession. Sometimes after those lessons, I really miss it* (I7).

This can have a negative impact on well-being and mental health over time (HSE, no date).

4.6.5 Additional subjects

Just over half of the participants taught additional subjects (55%, n=85/155). Generally, the participants felt negatively about having to teach additional subjects. They felt that they were allocated additional subjects due to annual timetable needs and having the capacity in their own timetable. They felt that little time was given to the allocation of additional subjects and there was often little consultation about which subjects and topics they would be teaching without ultilising their previous experience or expertise. Some were only informed about teaching additional subjects when they received their timetables for the next academic year leading them to feel a loss of autonomy and agency over their time (Tracy and Childs, 2021). I241 had taught for two years and had taught history and Health and Social Care during their career: *'I haven't really been asked what history I would like to teach or what I feel comfortable teaching'* (I241). I23 had taught for eight years and had taught religious studies, history and food tech during their career. They: *'…hated teaching history so I went to the principal and said, instead of doing history*

can I do food prep. They were struggling to get a food prep teacher, and I had done a lot of work in kitchens through school' (I23).

There is often little formal support provided for teaching additional subjects. The onus lies with the individual to develop the required subject knowledge and pedagogical approaches. This is usually in addition to their current workload and without any additional time allocation (Shreeve, 2018). This can be concerning for teachers, especially if it is a subject or topic is one that the teacher does not have knowledge of, or confidence in delivering.

I241 had taught for two years during which time they had taught history and Health and Social Care as additional subjects. They felt confident to teach Health and Social Care because they had taught this subject in a Further Education (FE) institution before becoming a secondary geography teacher. Other than a personal interest in history, they did not have any specialist teacher education in the subject. They shared that they felt more confident to teach some topics more than others in history, but there had been no consultation with them as to what year groups or topics they were teaching or with what they would feel more confident. Their experience of teaching history was that they: *'… just get given the powerpoints and I read through them and made sure I understand them and then deliver them. I don't have any input really in planning and creating them. I just deliver and mark their work from a marking scheme that I get given'* (1241). When asked if they received any support or training to teach history I241 shared:

> *I have fed back that it is ok having the powerpoints but in history there is quite a lot of discussion things or sources that they put on like images and pictures. I fed back that actually it would be quite nice if in the notes part of the powerpoint, you write down what I am expecting the kids to say or what I am expecting to get out of looking at that source.*

> *… otherwise I think that maybe I'm not getting out of it as much as a history teacher would get out of them. She has sort of tweaked them slightly and started putting some guidance in for the teacher underneath. So that is good. Sometimes you just don't know what the teacher was thinking. I mean she has been quite responsive to things like that, obviously she is looking at it from a subject expert and I am looking at it thinking, 'oh my goodness'* (I241).

I241 felt that the students would have had a better experience if they had been taught by a subject specialist as they felt they did not have the knowledge and that the pedagogical approaches in history were different to that of geography. This can exacerbate feelings of not being an effective practitioner and reduce educational outcomes for students (Tracy and Childs, 2021).

Over time, the additional workload that teaching additional subjects has on teachers may have a negative impact on the teacher's job satisfaction as too much of their time and focus is taken away from teaching geography. There can be a sense of loss of their geography teacher identity, and they may feel undervalued as a geography teacher. As I216 explained, it can have a negative impact on teacher retention in schools and the teaching profession (Lynch *et al*., 2016). I216 had taught for fourteen years before leaving teaching to work as a Teaching and Learning Consultant and a PGCE course leader for geography: *'It was actually one of the reasons for leaving the job that I had because there were just so many other subjects appearing on my timetable. For me that was the deal breaker'* (I216).

4.7 Communities of practice

The consensus from participants was that the geography community was a supportive space. I44 had taught for twenty years: *'I think in geography we do help each other out as a profession .... I do not know about other subjects, but I don't think any other subject has anything like the support structure or network that helps each other out'* (I44). It may be that geography departments tend to be smaller so secondary geography teachers may seek to collaborate and provide support beyond their schools more than other disciplines. Participants were positive about their engagement with networks throughout their career and stated how valuable and important they were. These communities were multifaceted and provided different things at different times and dependent on which part of participants' identity/identities they were using to access these communities. As Hammond *et al.* (2022, p.x) posits these communities enable us to: '…seek support; to engage in critical discussion, practitioner inquiry and research; to challenge one-another's thinking and (potentially) to develop shared philosophies and practices; and to advocate for change where needed'.

The communities evolved over the participants' careers from local, in-person networks to being able to connect with networks beyond their own geographical location. Due to the development of technology, their communities increasingly occupied virtual spaces. I126 had taught for twenty-three years. At the beginning of their career, they had to travel a lot to be able to access and maintain networks as where they worked was *'a very remote county'* (I126). As technology developed, they were able to maintain these networks through online platforms, saving themselves time and the cost of travel. I126: *'… felt it was very important in my teaching career*

to making those links with people. Now with email and Zoom it is easier. In my day, you had to travel a lot to get to see people. That is so important still. Networking is really valuable' (I126).

4.7.1. Social Media

When some of the participants began teaching social media platforms did not exist, for example, Facebook was created in 2004, X (formerly Twitter) in 2006 and Instagram in 2010. Participants utilised these platforms in a variety of different ways (Forte, Humphreys and Park, 2012). Participants utilised organised 'teacher communities' such as Facebook groups (Bergviken Rensfeldt, Hillman and Selwyn, 2018). These groups were predominately a space where participants were engaging with colleagues as learners and sharing best practice. The groups they engaged with were often closed, private groups with gatekeepers who set guidelines for users, and monitored the space. There was usually a specific scope for the group, such as a particular examination board. Participants engaged in these spaces with their professional identity of a geography teacher. The perceived privacy of the groups meant that participants felt comfortable being learners in the space, seeking advice and sharing experiences as the audience had a shared identity. I57 and I105 both found the space positive and supportive. I57 had taught for five years and was a lead practitioner and HoD. They found the AQA teachers' group a: '*…really positive place for teachers to ask questions. I have really enjoyed the sharing of resources. Sharing ideas or news articles or videos that people have found. It is really nice because you can take it or leave it, it is not intrusive*' (I57). I105 had taught for thirty-six years and was a geography mentor before becoming a course tutor at university. They found the Facebook groups: *'…have been really useful*

in getting an understanding about how teachers were approaching curriculum planning to actually sharing specific resources. They have been invaluable in helping me' (I105).

X (formerly Twitter) was also a space that participants used to ask and receive support from colleagues in the geography community and wider domestic and international education networks (Forte, Humphreys and Park, 2012). In addition, it was used to engage and communicate with different stakeholders such as pupils and parents/carers. For pupils, relevant subject knowledge and opportunities that supported and enhanced their learning were shared. For parents and carers, it was used as a communication and promotional tool for sharing what was happening in lessons and during field trips and advertising upcoming events. The platform provided a quick and straightforward way to engage with them directly as the following comments demonstrate. I57 had taught for five years and held an additional role as a Lead Practitioner and Subject Leader: *'[c]ertainly, the parents love it when we put stuff up about trips. That then goes on the school's website and helps to promote all the wonderful things that we are doing'* (I57). I56 had taught for fifteen years and had held additional roles as Head of Boarding and boarding housemaster: *'[i]t was very good if we took a trip, we could put a photo on there and parents can engage*' (I56).

Social media platforms provide a global network for participants to engage with. This is especially helpful for those working in small departments which is common for geography departments (Brooks, 2017) or in rural locations, to access a shared group membership to develop their identities (Rushton and Reiss, 2020). I48 had taught for twenty-two years and was a deputy head.

They had used X (formerly Twitter) to stay connected to their geography teacher identity and to connect with other senior leaders:

> *I try and follow quite a different group of people; I don't agree with all their views, but I just find it very useful. Even as a deputy head, it's still good to hear the voice of the teacher because I follow quite a few senior leaders, and you could be in that bubble but it's quite good because some geographers that I follow have a very different viewpoint* (I48).

I77 had taught for nine years and used social X (formerly Twitter) to connect with a range of geography teachers and those in the profession:

> *I follow as many geography teachers as I can and organisations and people that I think are related to teaching geography, or teachers that are interesting in terms of their blogging about their teaching in general … that is how I have found various virtual things and also the Teach Meet Icons. I went along to one of those in Birmingham. Being able to meet some other teachers in real life and some ideas to come back and try and apply* (I77).

I218 joined X (formerly Twitter) when they became a geography teacher educator at university to connect with colleagues at other institutions as they were the only subject specialist in their institution: *'I have only been on Twitter when I got my university job. It has been absolutely brilliant for making connections'* (I218).

Social media platforms can facilitate teachers' voices through expressing their opinion and engaging in discussions (Thomson and Riddle, 2019). However, participants seemed to not engage with this aspect of using X (formerly Twitter). There was a perception that it could be a negative space, although, none of the participants had shared that they had experienced this firsthand. I57 who had taught for five years had not found X (formerly Twitter): *'… to be a negative experience. I know that can be what some people have. Maybe, that's not posting enough or doing anything controversial'* (I57). Participants seemed less likely to participate in the

discussions and were instead 'lurking' – observing the debate but not taking part. I240 had taught for twenty-four years:

> *I potter about on Twitter, but I wouldn't describe myself as an active member of the Edu twitter community. So much of what happens on there is just so polarised it would just drive me around the twist to get involved with a discussion. Chip in very occasionally but certainly found it useful in terms of picking up interesting things to read both about geography education and education more broadly. As an informal network, that's great, but I suppose one of the things about Edu twitter, and I know there are various Facebook geography teacher communities, they are enviably partial. They are enviably constructed only by other people involved* (I240).

For 'hot' issues, Watson (2020) found that there were only around thirty or forty participants that engaged in debates. As I216, who had taught for fourteen years, shared about their experience of X (formerly Twitter): *'I think it just becomes a little bit dull. It is the same people with the same message, spouting that with the same echo group of people and for me, it is like, come on, let's just move beyond that now please'* (I216). I23 had taught for eight years:

> *It is honestly just for ideas, I don't really like doing any sort of communication through social media with other teachers. It just seems like a lot of talk sometimes. It's not like a real conversation. … Sometimes I feel like the people that are doing most of the talking are just the people that are the most out of touch with actually what is going on* (I23).

Despite the value that online platforms provide, as some of the previous comments have shown, participants still value meeting and interacting with colleagues. Teaching is a social endeavour (Rushton *et al.,* 2021; Sayer, 2000) and online platforms could not replicate this aspect completely. I23 did not feel that discussions online could replace in-person interactions as social media is *'…not like a real conversation'.* I77 found the 'Teach Meet Icons' event through X (formerly Twitter) and valued '*[b]eing able to meet some other teachers in real life.* Despite I26

working in a remote county and online technologies would have saved them travelling time, they still valued being able to travel to see people as they felt it was *'… so important still. Networking is really valuable*'.

Social media platforms are also beneficial for developing participants disciplinary knowledge as they provide a space to hear voices and experiences beyond their own lived experiences. As Hubbard (2008, p.5 cited in Farrell, 2020) identifies, 'geography as a discipline is based on a hierarchy of knowledge which privileges particular views of the world… and marginalizes other viewpoints'. Our knowledge of the world is always from a certain standpoint (Roberts, 2017). I7 had taught for over forty-one years and had become increasing aware that they taught geography *'from a very white lower middle-class viewpoint'* (I7), they realised that they needed: *'…to see things beyond that and try to see things from other peoples' point of view. Geography through others' identities. So, perhaps I am beginning to realise differences whereas I have never before thought there was a conflict because I thought we were all geographers' (I7).* I7 credited X (formerly Twitter) as providing them with the opportunities to engage with the discipline from different viewpoints:

> *I have actually learned about other people's geography. By following people through Twitter I've realised that people are specialised in all kinds of things. The way that they come at it from different areas, so people from other ethnic minority groups, their attitude to geography, I have considered that because of following people through Twitter. It's made me more aware of the textbooks that I bought for the unit which I would not have done had it not been for Twitter* (I7).

Since social media platforms have been established, how these platforms have been used has changed. Over time, schools moved to centralised accounts, ensuring a consistent message and

branding to represent the school with clear communication guidance. This made it more difficult for individual teachers and departments to communicate directly with parents, carers and pupils as the centralised accounts were focused on promotion and events rather than subject knowledge. I56 had taught for fifteen years and had held additional roles as Head of Boarding and Boarding Housemaster: *'I think it's because they felt they didn't have control over what people were putting on there'* (I56). Coupled with this, I56 shared that, '*... when we set it up, I think quite a few of the pupils were using Twitter but they don't really use it nowadays'* (I56). Pupils have begun to move away from some of these platforms, in favour of new ones being established, such as Instagram and Snapchat.

4.7.1.1 Negative impacts of social media

There was a concern amongst participants about the potential impact of social media on teachers as they compared themselves to what they saw on different platforms. Perfectly curated timelines of displays and resources provided no context of the cost or time that went into producing them. This may have a negative impact on teachers' self-esteem and add pressure to some teachers who were already struggling with their usual workload (Parkin and Spear, 2021) as they make comparisons between their own resources and those produced by the teachers online. I216 shared their concern about the impact that social media would have on student teachers and those who have recently joined the profession as they do not yet have the experience to appreciate the context and the workload that had gone into the creation of the images. I216 had taught for fourteen years before working as a Teaching and Learning Consultant and PGCE course leader for geography:

> *I do wonder what the role of it is in their* [student teachers] *identities and the way that it affects their views of teaching. Particularly if they haven't necessarily got the experience of the perspective from a range of different institutions, organisations, ideas, ideologies…The images that they see is the very best of everything or the very best of thinking or the best of ideas. What is hard for some of those trainees to understand is that it might have taken 6 months to get to that point, but nobody is telling you that and you just have to be quite realistic about some of these things as well. I do wonder the role that social media will play moving forward* (I216).

I23 shared how X (formerly Twitter) highlighted the disparity between school resources and their own school's capacity to be able to provide opportunities for their pupils. I23 had taught for eight years:

> *I remember when I saw this one teacher who was in the richest place in town, he got his students to learn about, it was either the Lake District or Snowdonia by using Minecraft on Nintendo Switches. That sounds great but I just got laughed at by my headteacher when I tried to get virtual reality headsets … sooo … great* (I23).

For geography, the issues of access to technology in schools may impact pupils' opportunities to engage with academic geographies such as global positioning systems (GPS) to geographic information systems (GIS) and their attainment (Hagge, 2023).

4.7.2 Professional bodies

Participants engaged with a range of professional bodies. 55% (n=77/141) of participants belonged to one or more professional bodies associated with geography. Only 22% (n=31/141) belonged to one or more professional bodies that were not connected to geography. This covered teaching professional bodies such as the CCoT, trade unions and other subject professional bodies. The high number with membership to geographical professional organisations suggests that this is an important part of participants' identity. Participants shared

that professional bodies provided them with community, networks and friendships beyond their own colleagues and departments. This can be especially valuable for geography teachers, as they tend to be smaller departments (Brooks, 2017). Keeping up to date with subject and pedagogical developments were also credited as having a positive impact on their practice.

The two main cited geographical professional bodies were the GA and the RGS. 61% (n=59/96) had GA membership and 39% (n=37/96) had RGS membership. Of those that specified, 34% (n=23/68) had membership of both the GA and RGS. I216 had taught for fourteen years before working as a Teaching and Learning Consultant and PGCE course leader for geography. They held a position on the Committee for the GA and was a Chartered Geography Teacher through the RGS, and one of their Fellows. 1216 valued the community networks stating, that, '… *having a foot in both camps is really important for my professional identity'* (I216).

The higher number of GA members (61% n=59/96) may be attributed to how the GA and the RGS position themselves and how participants self-identify. The GA is a professional body for teachers of geography and 58% (n=83/142) of participants identified 'Teacher' as being the term that they most associated with. The RGS is a professional body for geographers and 'Geographer' was the second highest term identified by participants with 35% (n=49/142). This may explain why GA membership was higher. 'Geographer' was still an important aspect as 49% (n=70/142) said it was their second most important identifier and 32% (n=46/142) used 'Teacher' (Aspects of identity are explored further in 4.10). However, I240, who had taught for twenty-four years, and belonged to both professional bodies, commented that there is often confusion and

misunderstanding on the work that these two professional bodies do, but they felt that they: *'... do a cracking job of providing resources and networks in their own slightly different ways … they have very, very different histories and backgrounds although there is a heck of a lot of synergy between what they do and overlap between what they do and an overlap of people'* (I240).

Of those that stated professional bodies that were not geographical professional bodies, 18% (n=26/141) of participants belonged to the CCoT. A professional body open to all teachers across all sectors. Membership to CCoT provided participants with access to research, CPD and a greater understanding of the broader sector policy and climate. Like trade unions, participants commented on the value that the CCoT was contributing to the profession. I240 who had taught for twenty-four years felt that the CCoT had: *'… a lot of potential to be a force for good in teaching. I like their blend of advocacy for the profession and rigor about professionalism and professional development. I think that is a really good combination that they are establishing there'* (I240).

It is interesting that only fourteen participants identified their union as a professional body that they belonged to, considering that in the last government-commissioned research, 97% of teachers in England belonged to a union (Ager and Pyle, 2013), making it the most unionised job sector in the UK (Coughlan, 2015). Teacher unions have a dual function in that they operate as professional associations and trade unions. The fact that participants did not classify their union as a professional body may be because belonging to a union is seen as a necessity and they may have a passive relationship with their union. Those that engage with their Union's CPD provision

may be more likely to consider it as a professional body such as S35, who had taught for forty-two years and was a member of the National Education Union. They had: *'… found their recent training sessions on the mental health of children and young people to be excellent; I am not aware of such training being available anywhere else, so I consider my Union membership to be akin to membership of a professional body'* (S35).

Those who were members of professional bodies generally spoke positively about the benefit of their membership. Some participants had allowed their membership to lapse because they felt they were not utilising it enough to justify paying the subscription fees. For others, they had stopped their membership, as they felt they were no longer aligned with the philosophy of the professional body. For some, they had cancelled their membership when they had retired from the profession.

4.8 Relationships

The reasons that some participants wanted to become secondary geography teachers was that they *'[w]anted to work with people'* (S105, who had taught for thirty-six years) and have a positive impact of them (See: 4.4.5 Altruistic reasons). Teaching is a social endeavour and requires working with a range of people (Rushton *et al.,* 2021). A lot of the successes and positive experiences identified from participants' education, their ITE and their career were rooted in the positive relationships that were established during these times. The collaborative process of education was prevalent in their responses (Rushton and Reiss, 2020). In their education it was their positive relationships with their teachers that inspired them to love geography, securing a

commitment to the subject and to continue to study it. During their ITE, it was their ITE tutors, their school mentors, colleagues from their placements and their peers who were fundamental to their positive experiences. During their career it was colleagues who helped them to develop their senses of belonging in their schools. These interactions shaped and reshaped their identity (Mann, 2018; Rushton *et al.,* 2021).

Participants credited their colleagues on placement in helping them to feel welcome and part of the team. As teachers begin to formulate their teacher identity, it can be difficult, as they move between difference spaces, such as university and schools. Colleagues play an important role in supporting student teachers to feel welcomed and part of the team; developing a sense of belonging to the placement school and to support the formation and development of their teacher identities. As S144 shared that: *'[s]upport from school and uni staff was excellent – made me feel like a real teacher'* (S144). The relationships established during their teacher education were highlighted as a positive. S38 had taught for two years and completed a university-led course and felt they were: *'…welcomed whole heartedly into my first department and it made that first placement a lot less daunting!*' (S38). S224 had taught for nineteen years and had completed a school-led course; they were: *'…in school from day one. I felt part of the team*' (S224).

To sustain relationships with others requires a good relationship with themselves (hooks, 2005). The following examples show that relationships that were established during their ITE year continued to be important relationships during their careers (Rushton *et al.,* 2021). S115 and S95 had both completed a university-led course. S115 had taught for twenty years, their: *'[m]entor*

at my second placement was fantastic and I learnt so much from her. She is still a friend to this day, 20 years on' (S115). S95 had taught for eight years, their mentor: *'…was amazing. He had been teaching for ages and still to this day we are friends and meet up a few times a year. He let me do things and make mistakes without judgements'* (S95).

School based mentors and teacher educator tutors play a key role in establishing student teachers' self-efficacy. Those who hold these roles should have prestige, credibility, expertise and trustworthiness, as they will be providing feedback and assessing the student teachers which will inform their development (Bandura, 1977).

In addition to the support received from tutors and mentors, student teachers highlighted the importance of their peers with whom they completed their ITE. The dialogue they participated in with peers was low-stakes and helped them to reflect and to share ideas (Bakhtin, 1981). This helped them to develop their competence and confidence (Mutton and Burn, 2024; Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004; Schön, 1983). Providing an opportunity to develop self-talk, defined as an individual's ability to regulate their own thought processes and in efficacy terms, convincing themselves that they can achieve a task (Baker, 2020). S90, S51, S226, S68 and S47 had all completed a university-led ITE course. S90 had taught for seven years and had a: *'[c]lose group of friends to share experience*' (S90). S51 had taught for fourteen years and: *'…loved the time in Uni where we practiced teaching each other, we really bonded as a group and supported each other'* (S51). S226 had taught for three years and: *'…benefitted hugely from speaking to my fellow course mates, in finding out what worked for them and sharing good practice*' (S226). S68 had taught for eight years and: *'… appreciated being able to work through the experiences as a*

member of a larger group' (S68). S47 had taught for five years and: *'[w]orking together with other geography trainees aided in shared pedagogy and subject knowledge'* (S47).

Friendships formed during their ITE lasted throughout their career. They had a shared purpose of becoming geography teachers, being tied together, through a mixture of chance and design (Massey, 2005). S99 who had taught for two years and completed a school-led ITE course, felt that their peers were: *'likeminded'* (S99). S157 had taught for eighteen years and had completed a university-led ITE course: *'[p]eople on our course bounced off each other. We are still in touch nearly 20 years later'* (S157).

For student teachers, field trips provided an important space to learn and socialise (Dunphy and Spellman, 2009). 78% (n=124/158) of participants experienced outdoor learning or fieldwork during their ITE, building strong networks amongst the cohort. S89 had taught for six years and had completed a university-led ITE course. Their field trips provided an opportunity for: *'[g]reat team building with others on the course'* (S89). S15 had taught for four years and had completed a university-led ITE course. They: *'…enjoyed having time with the other ITT students on the course as this was something we hadn't been able to do much'* (S15).

One of the important motivators for becoming a teacher is wanting to work with young people (Day *et al.,* 2006; Gorard *et al.,* 2021). It is perhaps unsurprising that participants shared that one of the aspects of being a geography teacher they enjoyed the most was the positive relationships

that they established with their pupils. S39 had taught for two years and enjoyed the: *'[i]nteraction with pupils, building relationships, seeing pupils' enjoyment*' (S39).

Participants enjoyed sharing their passion for their subject and helping students to be successful and reach their potential. S226 had taught for three years and enjoyed: *'[f]orming relationships with pupils that enables them to succeed'* (S226). S224 had taught for nineteen years and enjoyed: *'[s]haring my interest and knowledge of the world with my students'* (S224). S116 (did not share how long they had been teaching) and: *'… love*[d] *watching pupils enjoy my subject as much as I do*' (S116). S218 had taught for twenty years before retiring and enjoyed: *'[h]elping students to reach their potential and spark interest in the world around them*' (S218). S134 had taught for twenty-six years and enjoyed, *'[s]eeing kids inspired and taking Geog onwards from your class 9 into 10, 11 into 12 and 13 and into uni*' (S134).

Participants took great enjoyment from the moments when pupils had a breakthrough in their learning, resulting in those: *'a ha moment'* (S69)*, 'The 'ohhhhh!' moments'* (S68)*, 'wow moments'* (S217)*, 'lightbulb moments'* (S24; S93; S127)*, 'the penny drop'* (S79). S171 had taught for two years and enjoyed: *'[t]he ah-hah moment when students understood why something about their world is the way it is. And their awe and wonder at amazing things about our planet - like stunning landscapes or huge megacities*' (S171).

As teachers, field trips provided opportunities to build positive relationships with their pupils (Swift, 2005). They felt that they had time to get to know and understand their pupils better, rather than simply transmitting knowledge to pupils, which can be an outcome of a restrictive

school day and curriculum (Smagorinsky *et al.,* 2004). S134 had taught for twenty-six years, field trips: *'…helped me understand students better, it is easier to teach in 50cm of freezing cold water because kids enjoy it more!'* (S134). I128 had taught twenty-eight years before retiring. Field trips provided an opportunity for I128's pupils to: *'…see the human side of you which is not so easy to do in the classroom. I think the relationships that you can build up are far more positive and useful* (I128). S125 had taught for thirteen years. Field trips were: *'[g]reat to get students out of the classroom and see them interact when they are not stuck behind the desk. An opportunity to get to know the students a little bit more and find out what their other interests are'* (S125).

Beyond their role as geography teachers, participants' additional roles and extra-curricular activities gave them a new context in which to develop positive relationships with students. Not all students will enjoy studying geography or find success in a geography classroom. Participants shared the joy they felt at forming positive relationships with pupils they had not taught or had yet to establish a positive professional rapport within a geography classroom. Additional roles and extra-curricular activities also gave the participants an opportunity to share other knowledge, a personal interest, or hobbies with their pupils, allowing pupils to see other aspects of the participants' identity. S6 had taught for one year and their additional role of being form tutor provided them with the opportunity to get to know their pupils more, which they felt had a positive impact on teaching them. S6 *'loved'* their pastoral role because: *'…it's difficult to know the children properly and to teach them to the best of their ability if I don't know them well enough*' (S6). I128 had taught for twenty-eight years, and their extra-curricular activity of rugby provided an opportunity to build stronger relationships with their pupils:

> *It helped me to build stronger relationships. It seemed that when I was a young teacher, I got a lot more challenging behavioural boys really, under my wing. I think because they saw me outside of the classroom, on the rugby field and I was giving up my free time; it influenced how they were with me. That was good to see. For me to be giving them an opportunity to be successful in something even if they aren't academic. To share in that was quite nice* (I128).

During their career, the positive relationships that they established with their pupils, colleagues and wider communities sustained participants' commitment, resilience and motivation (Day *et al*., 2006). Strong relationships develop resilience as they enable teachers to cope with work challenges, which sustains their commitment (Beltman, Mansfield and Price, 2011). These connections are important because it makes them feel like they belong and are part of something. This helps them to develop resilience when they feel supported (Daisley, 2022). Participants valued the knowledge, expertise, advice, and support that these relationships provided, which encouraged help-seeking behaviour (Rushton *et al.,* 2021). I77 who initially started their teaching career in primary schools, remained in a challenging school for longer because they had supportive colleagues. This negative experience informed them of the importance of colleagues and informed their decision making, when applying for future jobs. I77 had taught for nine years:

> *The people that I work with is so important because the reason that I have crashed and burned out of primary was because of a really difficult head teacher and a really horrible time working for that head teacher. The reason that I stayed so long in primary was because in my first job, the staff were so supportive. So, I am very much aware, the people you work with, the staff that you have to work with on a daily basis is what matters to a huge extent* (I77).

4.9 Change

As has been seen throughout this chapter, the formation of a secondary geography teacher's identity was not a linear process (Akkerman and Meijer, 2010) and is influenced by personal, professional and situated identities (Day *et al.,* 2006). Secondary geography teacher identity is not static and continues to change over time, as new experiences and perspectives are gained and perhaps a teacher's 'ideal self', the target set by the individual for the future, changes (Lauriala and Kukkonen, 2005). Priorities of participants changed during their careers; sometimes these were driven by professional changes, and sometimes they were personal.

Participants who had become parents during their career raised the issue that it was a challenge to balance professional lives with family responsibility (Porritt, Hannay and Plummer, 2021). Trying to navigate their role as a parent alongside their role as a teacher, required a high level of corporeal and temporal discipline, which can add to their workload (Drozdzewski and Robinson, 2015). I23 was in their first year following maternity leave. They had taught for eight years and had returned to teaching part-time:

> *The biggest thing is being a new mum, ... I have these two priorities that require 100%. Obviously, my daughter wins. I do feel that pressure and I have felt like I have had to pull back in some places and this has made me question my effectiveness. My ability to do my job well, because before, I put in the hours. I would work weekends. I would make sure these resources were perfectly polished and now I only really have between 8 o'clock and 5:30. I need to make the most of my time, so I find that I am using my time a lot better, ... That has been a real struggle this year. I think I have found a good balance. There are certain crunch points where it is like, oh dear, something has to give. I think I have finally found my footing* (I23).

I128 had taught for twenty-eight years, and their comment shows how they felt their role had changed during their career and the impact this had on his ability to be a parent and the impact on their family:

> *I got to a stage when I was a young family man, I thinking, the teaching profession changed and that to be a successful geography teacher, I thought it was becoming for someone who was very young and enthusiastic and energetic and had got a lot of stamina and doesn't have many family commitments. I thought that was a sad thought really. There is almost an argument for when you become a family person you go down to four days a week instead of five and get some extra time and spend time with the children that you can never get again* (I128).

The demands of care-work have both physical and emotional labour, which can transgress the boundaries of home life and work, which in turn can impact identity. Identity cannot be picked up or put down as an individual moves between the spaces of home and work (Davidson and Milligan, 2004). As I23 above says: *'I am expected to parent like I don't have a job and work like I am not a parent. I have these two prioritises that require 100%'* (I23). It is important to highlight that caring responsibilities go beyond that of just childcare, for example, teachers may have caring responsibility for elderly parents/relatives.

The following participants highlighted that they could no longer give the same time and energy to the job that they could previously. I218 highlighted that extra-curricular activities were now difficult to maintain. I218 had taught for twenty years. Having previously been a Senior Leader, they were teaching part-time in a school whilst also working as the geography teacher educator at a HEI. They led geographical extra-curricular activities but: *'[i]t takes up time which is valuable. Only working two days a week in school, if one of those after school days is doing a club it only*

leaves me one other night after school. I am not shy of work, by any stretch of the imagination, but I am of an age where I do try and do less at home then I once did' (I218).

I105 had taught for thirty-six years. They were a geography educator at a HEI and no longer teaching in schools. Their extra-curricular activities had been leading international school trips and residential activity weeks. I105: *'…did them when I was younger, you need a bit of energy to be able to do those things. You are leaving your family and stuff like that*' (I105).

4.10 Aspects of identity

Participants were asked to rank the aspects of their identity as a geography teacher in the order that they were most important to them. The options they were provided with were in Figure 24. Participants also had the option to add three of their own labels to describe their identity as a geography teacher which they could include in the ranking. 142 participants answered the question, 13% (n=19/142) of participants provided one of their own labels, 8% (n=11/142) of participants provided two of their own labels and 4% (n=5/142) of participants provided three of their own labels (Appendix 5 provides a list of participants' own labels together with their ranking positions).

- Teacher
- Geographer
- Human geographer
- Physical geographer
- Environmental geographer
- Blank: (Option 1)
- Blank: (Option 2)
- Blank: (Option 3)

Figure 24: Aspects of identity

The question asked participants to focus on their identity of being a geography teacher, yet some participant responses included additional aspects of their professional identity such as their additional roles and aspects of their personal identities such as being a parent. This suggests that dimensions of identity interact and do not operate in isolation (Day *et al.,* 2006) as participants bring their whole selves into their work as: 'we teach who we are' (Palmer, 1997, p.15). It is important to highlight that the language participants used to describe themselves is important and personal to them. It is not neutral as it will be influenced by the contexts that they work in and the experiences that they have had (Enfield, 2022; Williams, 2014).

Participants' rankings were included ahead of their quotes. When participants included their own labels, they were identified with '(own label)' as shown in Figure 25. S107, who had taught for twelve years, had completed the ranking with the addition of three of their own labels, 'Lover of the planet (6^{th}); 'Lover of learning (7^{th}); Educator (8^{th}):

S107:

Ranking: 1st: Environmental geographer; 2nd Teacher; 3rd: Geographer; 4th Physical geographer; 5th Human geographer; 6th Lover of the planet (own label); 7th Lover of learning (own label); 8th Educator (own label).

Figure 25: Ranking of Aspects of identity example

58% (n=83/142) of participants ranked 'Teacher' as the most important aspect of their identity and 35% (n=49/142) of participants ranked 'Geographer' as the most important aspect of their identity (See Appendix 6: Aspects of identity for a full breakdown of results). Participants were asked to provide a rationale for their rankings. Participants justified their ranking in a variety of ways. Including:

- 4.10.1 Initial reasons why participants became secondary geography teachers or joined the profession
- 4.10.2 The amount of time participants spent on aspects of role
- 4.10.3 The aspects of the role(s) that participants enjoyed the most or were most passionate about
- 4.10.4 Seniority of the role(s)
- 4.10.5 Change over time
- 4.10.6 Participants' 'Core' identity
- 4.10.7 Aspects of identity that participants held in tandem

As S220's justification demonstrates, there were sometimes several reasons contributing to their ranking. They added three of their own labels: 3rd Politics Teacher; 4th Mental health advocate and 5th Environmental advocate. S220's pathway into teaching meant that they identified less as a 'Geographer' as they had completed an undergraduate degree in International Politics. Their teaching time was not just spent teaching geography, they also taught politics as an additional subject. They also included the interests that they were passionate about, such as 'Environmental advocate' and 'Mental health advocate' that they brought to their role and geography teacher identity. S220 had taught for one year:

> *Ranking: 1st: Teacher; 2nd Geographer; 3rd: Politics Teacher (own label); 4th Mental health advocate (own label); 5th Environmental advocate (own label); 6th Human Geographer; 7th Physical geographer; 8th Environmental geographer.*
>
> *I am a teacher and most strongly identify with all teachers. As I teach multiple subjects and do not have a geography degree, I identify less as a geographer (though I am one) and am passionate about other things too like political activism, mental health and environmental activism* (S220).

4.10.1 Initial reasons why participants became secondary geography teachers or joined the profession

For some, the initial reasons why they became a secondary geography teacher were to give back and to support young people (Day *et al.,* 2006; Gorard *et al.,* 2021). S226 had taught for three years and had taken on an additional role as joint Head of Sixth Form. Their first identity ranking was 'Teacher' followed by 'Mentor' (own label) as their second ranking.

> *Rankings: 1st: Teacher; 2nd: 'Mentor' (own label); 3rd, Geographer; 4th: Human Geographer; 5th: Physical Geographer; 6th: Environmental Geographer.*
>
> *I see my role primarily as a teacher, supporter, encouraging voice for young people... I love my subject, but I went into teaching to work with young people and empower them primarily* (S226).

The role of a teacher encapsulates more than teaching a specific subject. There has been an increased widening of the role (OECD, 2005) for example, teachers offer emotional and pastoral support to their students. Participants identified the pastoral aspect of their identity in their own labels such as Form tutor (S45; S76; S93; S100); Social worker (S103; S134) and pastoral (S6; S7; S106) (See Appendix 6 for full list of participants' own labels).

S76 had taught for twenty-eight years before they had retired. During their career they had taught additional subjects (PE, economics and religious studies) and held additional roles in school such as HoY and as a Deputy Head.

> *Rankings: 1st: Teacher; 2nd: Geographer; 3rd, 'Trainee Teach Mentor' (own label); 4th: Human Geographer; 5th: Physical Geographer; 6th: Environmental Geographer; 7th 'form tutor' (own label).*
>
> *Being a teacher is more than just teaching your subject. It's about helping children to understand their wider social, emotional and physical developments* (S76).

4.10.2 The amount of time participants spent on aspects of role(s)

Becoming a teacher is an identity-forming process (Danielewicz, 2001). For ECTs, chosen subject disciplines are often a key motivating factor in deciding to become a teacher (Rushton *et al.,* 2021) and remain an important for their self-efficacy (Brooks, 2017). Their identity as a teacher develops over a longer period (Rushton and Reiss, 2020), however, both S15 and S99 who were both ECTs chose 'Teacher' as the most important aspect of their secondary geography teacher identity. The reason for the rankings of S15 and S99 seemed to be because of the time they spent on the different aspects of their roles beyond teaching geography. S15 had taught for three years, they had an undergraduate degree in geography and held an additional role as a 'Head of Year'. Their rankings were: *1st: Teacher; 2nd: 'Head of Year' (own label); 3rd, Geographer; 4th: Physical*

Geographer; 5th: Human Geographer; 6th: Environmental Geographer. Based on the: *'[t]he time I spend on each 'role'* (S15). S99 had taught for two years, they had an undergraduate degree in geography and had held roles as a 'progress and achievement leader' and 'deputy house head'.

> *Rankings: 1st: Teacher; 2nd: Physical Geographer; 3rd, Geographer; 4th: Environmental Geographer; 5th: Human Geographer.*
>
> *I have other roles in the school that take away from my role as a geography teacher to make me just 'teacher'* (S99).

4.10.3 The aspects of the role(s) that participants enjoyed the most or were most passionate about

S14 had taught for six years and had had completed a geography undergraduate degree. They were a SCT and brought that life experience and skills into their role (Frison *et al.,* 2023). Participants' previous careers had an impact on their identity and helped to shape the teachers they became. S14 held additional roles as HoY, Deputy Housemistress and Acting Housemistress but they chose their rankings based on their interests.

> *Rankings: 1st: Geographer; 2nd: Teacher; 3rd, Physical Geographer 4th: Environmental Geographer 5th: Human Geographer.*
>
> *Having worked in research, I'd consider myself to be a Geographer first and foremost, then a teacher and then the others are my order of preference, in terms of interest* (S14).

S23 had taught for eight years. Geography was the reason that they joined the profession and enjoyed all aspects of geography equally.

> *Rankings: 1st: Geographer; 2nd: Teacher; 3rd, 'Role Mode' (own label); 4th: 'Listener' (own label); 5th: Human Geographer; 6th: Environmental Geographer; 7th Physical Geographer.*
>
> *If it weren't for geography, I wouldn't be a teacher. I appreciate the subject more than the profession mostly because it is set to an exam which is very limiting. I also care about the students I teach more than the type of geography I'm teaching. It's all geography so even though I ranked them I think they're all equally important* (S23).

S5 had taught for two years and being a geography teacher was what they were most passionate about.

> *Rankings: 1st: Geographer; 2nd: Physical Geographer; 3rd, Environmental Geographer; 4th: Human Geographer; 5th: Teacher.*
>
> *I personally believe the best teachers are 'Subject Experts' - I am fully aware others will disagree, but I have less interest in the pastoral issues and never saw myself so much as a 'teacher', but as a 'geographer'. I do believe students who buy into my ethos get the most out of my lessons - in my classroom I am there because I was hired as a geography expert and I can pass what I know onto the student, so that they can be inspired and ultimately get their qualifications. Although I do (because it's my job), I have less interest in chasing up homework, or doing detentions, or being a form tutor. I am much more interested in teaching geography to a high standard and am very passionate about my subject* (S5).

S222 had taught for twenty years:

> *Rankings: 1st: Geographer; 2nd: Teacher; 3rd, Human Geographer; 4th: Physical Geographer; 5th: Environmental Geographer.*
>
> *I am a geographer who teaches not a teacher who knows some geography* (S222).

As the social identity approach suggests, these participants felt that they belonged and most identified with being a 'geographer'. They identified less with the other aspects of identity and saw them as 'outgroups' such as S5 who: *'never saw myself so much as a 'teacher''* (Rushton and Reiss, 2019).

4.10.4 Seniority of the role(s)

S119 had taught for twenty-eight years and had ranked their aspects of identity based on the seniority of the roles. They were no longer teaching and were employed as an examiner.

> *Rankings: 1st: Geographer; 2nd: examiner (own label); 3rd, Human Geographer; 4th: Teacher; 5th: Physical Geographer; 6th, Environmental Geographer.*
>
> *My assessment roles are more senior than my teaching roles, so in terms of career hierarchy I guess I think of myself as a geography assessor first and geography teacher second* (S119).

Although they justified their ranking based on seniority, it would be interesting to further understand whether the fact they were no longer teaching had any influence on their ranking.

4.10.5 Change over time

It is important to note that these rankings reflect a moment in time for participants and therefore, rankings may change over time. This may be due to professional changes over their career, as shown in the comments by I218, I105 and S48, or due to personal changes, as shown in the comments by S57 and S50.

I218 shows how their relationship with geography has changed over their twenty-year career. They had held additional roles as a HoD before becoming a senior leader. They were currently teaching part-time in a school and were a geography teacher educator in a HEI.

> *Ranking: 1st: Geographer; 2nd 'educator' (own label); 3rd: Teacher; 4th Environmental Geographer; 5th Physical Geographer; 6th Human Geographer.*
>
> *As I have got older, I think my passion for geography has grown. I have always loved geography.... I became a Head of Department and then SLT and kind of fast tracked pretty quickly through that progression and then took a step back and went back into the classroom and obviously now I am doing the PGCE work as well. I think that step back in the classroom, which I did for a number of reasons, one because I had a family.... That's really reconnected me with geography... I love geography more now than I have ever done really. I have been teaching for a long time, more than twenty years. I feel like that in the last six-seven years I have really reconnected with it really* (I218).

I105 had taught for twenty-six years. They had taught geology, maths, history and PSHE as additional subjects and held additional roles as a geography mentor and geography teacher educator in an HEI. Although physical geographer was their *'first love'*, their appreciation of human geography had grown:

Ranking: 1st: Teacher; 2nd 'Geographer; 3rd: Physical Geographer; 4th Environmental Geographer; 5th Human Geographer

… my first love was in physical geography and geology and stuff. As I have moved on in teaching, I have become more interested in various aspects of human geography (I105).

S48 had taught for twenty-two years. They had taught RS, PSHE and EPQ as additional subjects and held an additional role as a Deputy Head. It was important for them to be perceived as a physical geographer but over time this has become less relevant as they have enjoyed human and environmental geography.

Ranking: 1st: Teacher; 2nd 'Geographer; 3rd: Physical Geographer; 4th Environmental Geographer; 5th Human Geographer

I used to really care about being seen as a physical geographer but as my career progressed and I taught more human geography I realised that I loved both physical and human geog as well and environmental (S48).

S50 had taught for eleven years with a nine-year gap for having a family. They had added three of their own labels, 'Being a mum' (3rd), 'Role model' (4th) and 'Being in the community' (5th). Becoming a mum had influence their rankings, especially since their own children were the same age of those that they taught (Beijaard, 1995).

Ranking: 1st: Teacher; 2nd Geographer; 3rd: Being a mum (own label); 4th Role model (own label); 5th Being in the community (own label); 6th Physical Geographer; 7th Human geographer; 8th Environmental geographer.

Maybe strange but my approach to teaching is really different now I have kids the same age as I teach. It shapes a lot of how I do things and helps me to understand their needs better than before. I am more sympathetic to the trials of teenager hood and that comes above the type of geog. But my love of teaching and my subject are above that in terms of my geog identity (S50).

S57 had taught for five years:

Rankings: 1st: Teacher; 2nd: Geographer; 3rd, Human Geographer; 4th: Physical Geographer; 5th: Environmental Geographer; 6th 'Mother' (own label).

> *I chose mum, as since having my baby it has changed my views on so many of my students and their progress* (S57).

4.10.6 Participants' 'Core' identity

For some participants despite the changes that were happening they felt that their core identity was not influenced by these factors such as S52 whose core identity was a 'teacher' despite the additional subjects and the additional roles that they had during their twenty-five-year career. Despite S240 holding several additional roles and little of their time was spent teaching geography, they still held being a 'geographer' as their core identity. Their core identity held them more uniformly over time and across contexts (Akkerman and Meijer, 2010).

S52 had taught for twenty-five years during which time they had also taught business and economics. They had held several additional roles within school, such as an educational coordinator and compliance officer and beyond their school role such as an author and an educational consultant.

> *Rankings: 1st: Teacher; 2nd: Geographer; 3rd, 'Expert teacher' (own label); 4th: Human Geographer; 5th: 'HoD' (own label); 6th: Physical Geographer; 7th, Environmental Geographer.*
>
> *My core identity is that I am a teacher and can deliver knowledge and understanding to pupils in a variety of ways which support learning. The subject happens to be Geography, which I believe is vital to understanding the modern world* (S52).

S240 had taught for twenty-four years. During their career they had held several additional roles including, UCAS Coordinator, HoY, Director of Sixth Form and deputy head before their current role as a headmaster. Their first ranking was still 'Geographer' despite the fact this took less of their time.

Rankings: 1st: Geographer; 2nd: 'School Leader' (own label); 3rd, Teacher; 4th: Physical Geographer; 5th: Environmental Geographer; 6th: Human Geographer.

My work is now in leading my school, but I remain a geographer at heart. I do less teaching than I might like, but I feel I still represent the subject in my work and enthusiasms (S240).

4.10.7 Aspects of identity that participants held in tandem

A limitation of the question was that participants were required to rank the aspects of identity as more or less important in relation to each other, which did not allow them to provide joint rankings. The format of the question did not provide space for the complexities of participants' identity, that they can be both unitary and multiple (Akkerman and Meijer, 2010), as S23 demonstrates previously: *'[i]t's all geography so even though I ranked them I think they're all equally important'* (S23). Participants held aspects of their identity in tandem, with equal value. As Smagorinsky *et al.* (2004, p.12) posit: '… knowledge is whole and connected, rather than being isolated into subject areas, parcelled into curriculum strands and divided into components parts.

S224 had taught for nineteen years:

Rankings: 1st: Teacher; 2nd: Geographer; 3rd, Physical geographer); 4th: Environmental Geographer; 5th: Human Geographer.

I would say I have an even spread of the physical/human/environmental (S224).

S141 had taught for thirty-six years:

Rankings: 1st: Teacher; 2nd: Geographer; 3rd, Environmental Geographer; 4th: Human Geographer; 5th: Physical Geographer.

Educating young people was the priority; I would place ranks 3 [Human geographer], 4 [Physical geographer] and 5 [Environmental geographer] all within rank 2 [Geographer] - I am a geographer who is passionate about all aspects of the subject. In the department where I spent most of my career - we all taught everything, swapping round at A level to teach both physical and human (S141).

S106 had taught for ten years.

Rankings: 1st: Teacher; 2nd: Geographer; 3rd, 'BAME representation' (own label); 4th: 'Form Tutor' (own label); 5th: Physical Geographer; 6th: Human Geographer; 7th Environmental Geographer.

The different strands of Geog feel less relevant as the subject as a whole is important and those three aspects are interweaved within my identity (S106).

4.11 Reason why participants considered leaving and left the profession

Figure 26 shows the completed number of Years of Service of the participants who had stopped teaching (21%, n=33/156). Of those that were no longer employed as a teacher, but still employed, just under half (48%, n=15/31) were working in the education sector. They had moved into Higher Education roles, such as geography teacher educators on ITE courses. Others had roles that took them out of the classroom day to day, but still worked within secondary schools, through consultancy roles or working across schools in MATs. The NFER's nationally representative Teacher Voice survey of teachers who had recently left, or were considering leaving the state sector, found that more than half of the teachers remained in the education sector; in roles such as teaching assistants, non-teaching roles in schools or teaching in private schools (Lynch *et al.,* 2016). Of those that were not employed in the education sector 67% (n=10/15) of participants had retired. This is much higher than the wider teaching population where only 15% of 'Qualified leavers' 2020-2021 (the year the data for this research was collected) had retired (DfE, 2023a).

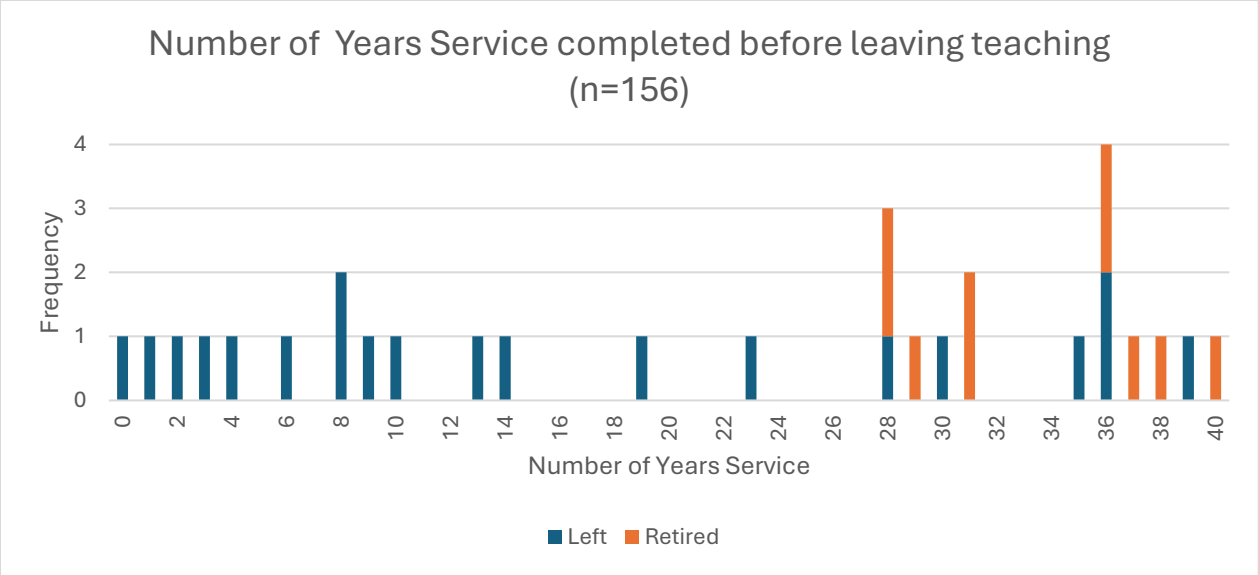

Figure 26: Number of Years service for those who no longer teach.

4.11.1 The challenges of recruiting participants who had left the profession

It was challenging to recruit participants who were no longer teaching. As Gorard (2013, p.166) states, missing participants are not usually a random sub-set of the population: '… there are no valid technical methods for replacing these cases or overcoming the deficiencies caused by their absence. Replacing them with other cases who do participate will lead to bias, since these replacements are less likely to have those characteristics leading to non-response in the first place'.

I cannot speak to those voices that I was unable to capture but can only speculate as to why; maintaining contact with the profession or ex-colleagues may have caused them distress and they did not feel comfortable to discuss their experiences. It may be that the survey reached them, but as they had left the profession, they did not see the value in contributing to the

research (Sheenan, Saunders and Wang, 2015) especially if they no longer identified as a secondary geography teacher.

It may have been that my method of recruitment, using snowball sampling for the first phase of data collection, the survey, was a limitation as it did not reach those teachers who had left the profession. It is acknowledged that those that have left the profession are a hard-to-reach population, as maintaining contact is challenging (Buchanan, 2013) as there are no formal attrition databases. There are also ethical considerations of approaching non practising teachers (Smith and Ulvik, 2017). The low response rate in the survey from those who had left the teaching profession had an impact on my ability to be able to recruit this population in the second phase of the data collection, the interviews.

4.11.2 Policy

Participants felt that during their careers there had been increasing attention on measurable outputs such as: '*data points'* (S5) and assessments, both internally and externally, which had led to a narrowing of the focus of geography and of education (Arthur *et al*, 2015; Standish and Perks, 2021). Participants felt '*constrained'* by this and frustrated by what they felt was the constant disruption and *'interruptions'* to education by changes in policy both at the national level and how this was translated into their school context. S128 who had taught for twenty-eight years commented that they did not enjoy the: *'[i]nterruptions by politicians, who cannot leave education to the specialists'* (S128). S126 had taught for twenty-three years and did not enjoy the: *'constraints of the curriculum imposed by Government*' (S126). S13 had taught for thirty-five

years and did not enjoy the: *'[c]onstraints from government re syllabi, the machinations of exam boards, timetabling…'* (S13).

Policies and directives meant that participants often had to teach within the confinements of specifications rather than what participants considered as good and interesting geography. As S134 described it: *'[t]he straight jacket of the exams'*. This had a negative impact on participants' enjoyment of their role and their freedom to teach geography in the way that they thought was best. S134 had taught for twenty-six years and did not enjoy: *'…the total lack of time to reflect, to check learning, to explore a tangent*' (S134). S6 had taught for one year and did not enjoy:

> *Having to teach within the confines of a specification which is so tight to time constraints, means we can't always teach what is current or could add greater breadth/depth as there is so much content to get through. It ends up feeling like we are teaching to the exam as there is little time to explore anything other than the specified content. Students have expressed a dislike for this also* (S6).

Participants felt that the prescription of what and how they had to teach was compounded by Ofsted. S117 had taught for thirty years and felt that: *'Ofsted made us all teach to their formula'* (S117). S132 who had taught for twenty-six years, felt that: *'[t]he Government and OFSTED have had the greatest influence on the culture and methodology that I use today'* rather than their practice being informed by advances in their subject discipline. S117 who had taught for thirty years, tried to navigate the restrictions they felt by: *'[m]aking sure that I constantly evaluated my own practice as research shaped the ways in which we teach. Mitigating the worst excesses of Ofsted as they constantly redefined their myopic view of what makes a good lesson'* (S117). However, it is challenging for participants to resist policies and directives because as Ball (2013, p.57) states:

> … the issue of who controls the field of judgement and what is judged, what criteria of measurement are used or benchmarks or targets set, is crucial…there is a sense of being constantly judged in different ways, by different means, according to different criteria, through different agents and agencies.

The excessive emphasis on data and examination results means that educators feel that they must spend their time on outcomes rather than quality education (Ofsted, 2019). Over time this can lead to teachers' satisfaction decreasing. S125 had taught for thirteen years before leaving the profession. They were still employed but not working in education. Over time they stopped enjoyed the job and lost their enthusiasm:

> *I loved the job for 12.5 years and then I stopped loving it. I was always a "high energy" teacher (direct quote from an OFSTED inspector!) & I think I ran out of energy …I became increasingly despondent about students expecting you to do EVERYTHING for them - including revision???* (S125).

S119 had taught for twenty-eight years before leaving the profession. Since leaving the profession they continued to work in the education sector as an examiner. Over time they found they had lost autonomy as their time was being filled with tasks that they had to do from their SLT:

> *Bored after 25 years, not enough challenge. No longer enjoyed belonging to an institution - too many emails, forms to fill in, Senior management initiatives (from an ever-growing team of assistant heads, all trying to demonstrate impact, by changing school systems prior to applying for their eventual headships* (S119).

4.11.3 Workload

Heavy workload is the most frequent professional challenge to teacher resilience, which is key to staying in the profession (Day *et al.,* 2006; DfE, 2019c). For participants, heavy workload meant that they were often not spending time on what they believed were the important aspects of

their job, which are often the reasons why they become teachers. This can mean that not only are participants having to compromise their time but also their values and beliefs. Lower levels of control over workload can diminish self-efficacy which can negatively affect teachers' stress levels and increase emotional exhaustion (Müller and Goldenberg, 2020). S103 had taught for seven years and felt that they did: *'[n]ot have the time to work to the level that I want to, due to pointless distractions that teachers have to deal with'* (S103). S51 had taught for fourteen years and did not like the time spent on meetings and meeting accountability measures as they, *'…add little to students but overwhelm workload and take you away from improving subject conten*t' (S51). S83 had taught for two years and felt the:

> *Pressure to progress and a huge workload to produce lessons. A typical day consisted of an early start (leaving the house by 7am) then returning in an evening to start work straight away and I would spend at least 3 hours each weekday evening planning lessons and marking. It's incredibly full on and can take a toll on your mental and physical health* (S83).

For participants to complete their work to the standard they want to, it can mean that they must complete this work outside of working hours. It can impact upon personal lives as work has to be completed in free time during evenings and, weekends, and during holidays (Ofsted, 2019). S83 who had taught for two years, they felt that they: *'…go above and beyond what's required to provide interesting and detailed lessons for students. This eats up time during the evenings and weekend, my work-life balance is definitely not balanced*' (S83). Being able to switch-off from work can therefore be challenging and whether it is consciously or unconsciously the boundaries between work and life beyond can be reduced (Towers and Maguire, 2017) such as I7 who had

taught for forty-one years: *'[w]herever I went, I always collected leaflets I thought might be useful, even if I didn't know how it was going to be useful'* (I7).

For secondary geography teachers, field trips can add to workload. It can also be challenging and draining for those who are planning and leading fieldwork. There is a huge amount of time and energy that is required before and during outdoor learning (Swift, 2005). There can often be little respite, especially on residential field trips (Nairn, 1999). I128, who had taught for twenty-eight years, commented that*: [w]hen you take groups away and you are with them. You are eating with them. You are socialising with them* (I128).

4.11.4 Lack of fieldwork opportunities

In addition to the workload of planning field trips, some participants experienced unsupportive school management which made it challenging to be able to take pupils out of the classroom for field trips. S41 had taught for fifteen years and commented that there were: *'[d]ifficulties in the organisation of the trips and gaining support of school management'* (S41). S141 had taught for thirty-six years and had to: *'…fight hard for time out of the classroom for field courses'* (S141). Fieldwork can be perceived by school management as expendable and desirable but not a core requirement (Lambert and Reiss, 2014). It can be expensive in terms of the monetary cost of the trip, the cost of cover, as well as curriculum time. The perception of risk may stop field trips from happening, or impact on what can be done such as S115 who had taught for twenty years and were: *'[n]ot being able to get them [pupils] out of the classroom due to health and safety madness*' (S115). When S93 was a pupil themselves, they were on a field trip to a river and they

had*: '…to guess the width, depth, velocity etc. of the river as we weren't allowed anywhere near it due to health and safety'* (S93).

For some participants the lack of fieldwork had been an issue from when they had been a pupil of geography and continued to be an issue as a geography teacher. S38 had taught for two years and felt that they had a: *'…lack of trips to different places at all levels of my education, and now the lack of trips we can offer to students'* (S38).

4.11.5 Inflexibility of teaching

One of the reasons given by participants who were no longer in the profession was that teaching was inflexible. S217 had taught for six years before leaving teaching and felt that teaching was not compatible with: *'[s]chool runs with my children'* and that there was a *'lack of flexibility'* (S217). Since returning from maternity leave S217 had worked as a lecturer at a HEI. S12 who had taught for four years left teaching: *'…to have a family and start a PhD, plus boarding school commitments were not conducive to family life*' (S12). S217 and S12 did not indicate whether they intended to return to the classroom in the future. Half of all teachers who have left teaching to raise families have not returned (Marsh and Derbyshire, 2019). This is concerning as 74% of the school workforce in England is female (DfE, 2023b) and 27% of all leavers are women aged 30-39 (Simons, 2016, p.17). The perception that a teaching career is not compatible with family life must be addressed by employers (Marsh and Derbyshire, 2019). S83 had taught for two years and was already concerned and questioning whether the profession would be viable with starting a family in the future: *'I have been questioning whether my role as a teacher is a sustainable one.*

I'm in my late 20s and over the next 10 years expect my life to change e.g. having a family. I currently don't see a sustainable way of making that work alongside the long hours of teaching' (S83).

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION captured participants' experiences of being secondary geography teachers. This chapter will summarise the key findings from participants' experience and will be structured by the three Research Questions. By answering the three research questions, greater understanding of the construction of secondary geography teacher identity can be established. The research questions are centred around three key stages of a secondary geography teachers' career:

- becoming a secondary geography teacher;
- being a secondary geography teacher; and
- leaving the teaching profession.

By identifying how and why participants became secondary geography teachers, these shared reasons can assist in understanding the contributing factors for establishing secondary geography teacher identity. Understanding why secondary geography teachers remain in the profession establishes the important reasons that support their secondary geography teacher identity. Finally, identifying the reasons that lead to secondary geography teachers leaving the profession uncovers the causes that may create tensions and conflicts with secondary geography teacher identity.

5.1.1 Lost Voices from geography and secondary geography teaching

The research does not capture the voices of those that were lost from the geography pipeline at a stage that would prevent them from becoming secondary geography teachers. Although I cannot speak for these missing voices, it is important to acknowledge that these groups are not a random sub-set of the population (Gorard, 2013). As May (2011, p.53) states: '… what may be a problem to one group is not a problem to another'. The issue is more complex than, *'… not everybody likes Geography!'* (S34). The reasons for those that did not carry on studying geography and/or did not become secondary geography teachers will be multi-layered with a range of contributing factors. Where possible and appropriate, data captured from participants was used to illustrate issues that they faced, together with additional literature. The hope is that by acknowledging the issues, they can be addressed so that more individuals will consider becoming a secondary geography teacher and that the profession is able to retain more secondary geography teachers.

5.1.2 Recommendations

When relevant, issues raised by participants will be included in the subsequent RQs sections to the impact that they had and could potentially have on future prospective secondary geography teachers. As can be expected, participants still had negative experiences during their statutory education, their ITE and during their career. Recommendations will be included that hope to support and secure future passionate, effective and diverse geography teachers that are reflective of the pupil cohorts that they are teaching.

5.2 RQ1: How and why does an individual become a secondary geography teacher?

Participants had positive statutory education experiences, including, academic success, enjoyment of the subject and experiencing geography through fieldwork. They wanted to continue to study geography and share their love of the subject with pupils. Participants' teachers were inspiring and acted as role models for them. They had gained knowledge of teaching from friends and/or family or through relevant work experience. Not all participants went straight into teaching from their undergraduate studies.

5.2.1 Statutory educational experiences of geography

Participants had positive experiences of geography during their statutory education. Participants' teachers had a lasting impact on them, influencing their choices and pathways. Participants had enthusiastic teachers who shared their passion for geography with them, developing and/or building on an interest in the subject further. Participants were proud of their academic successes in geography which was a motivator to continue to study the subject when they had the option at KS4, KS5 and beyond because they had developed efficacy and resilience for the subject.

The following sections explore some of the aspects of participants' geography education that negative. Participants' experiences when they were secondary geography teachers were included where appropriate for example, S77 and I26 had relevant experience to comment on primary geography from their profession experiences.

5.2.1.1 Experiences of geography in primary school

Participants' positive experiences of their geography education at school focused on their secondary geography education with little acknowledgment to their primary education experiences. Ofsted (2021) posits that an area that needs developing is to ensure a clearly mapped curriculum is in place, beginning in Early Years, to support the development of geography subject experts. This may ensure that experiences of geography throughout statutory education are positive and support pupils' commitment to geography.

A recent positive development is the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, which was introduced in September 2021 (Rotchell and Owens, 2021). Having a foundation in geography at a crucial stage of education is important because it '… ensures a global perspective, fosters a sustainable mindset, and empowers agency' (Owens *et al*., 2022, p.19). Previously, in the EYFS, geography may be hard to identify as it was not specifically mentioned. It only had identifiable geographical themes and concepts such as 'understanding the world' (DfE, 2021a).

Few participants could recall their own educational geography experiences from their primary education. When they did share their experiences, it was usually to highlight the lack of geography that they had received. S14 who had taught for six years, shared that their primary school experience was a disappointment of their geography education as it: *'…was pretty awful ... the only topic that we studied was 'maps' and most primary school lessons involved drawing and then colouring in a map of the UK... we never covered anything about the physical world around us or the environmental issues that needed dealing with at this age'* (S14).

Poor geography provision in primary schools led to some participants feeling apprehensive about studying the subject when they began secondary school. Feeling underconfident in geography in Year 7 could reduce an individual's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). S100 had taught for ten years and remembered finding geography: *'…daunting in Year 7 as we had not done much at primary school'* (S100).

In primary schools, experiences of geography are variable, even though it is a statutory subject in England (Ofsted, 2021). Geography has not had a stable place in the primary curriculum and the amount of time spent on geography has been declining (Ofsted, 2021). The curriculum in primary is taught by the classroom teachers, who are unlikely to be a geography specialist (Goddard, 2021). This may be because very few primary school teachers had received teacher education in teaching geography (Freeland, 2021). In 2002, the requirement to train all primary teachers to teach a specialist subject ceased. This resulted in the closure of most courses of specialist primary geography ITE. The average course time during teacher education for geography has been reported as below eight hours (Tapsfield, 2015, p.4). Geography tends to be overlooked by policymakers and in ITE, as funding tends to be focused on literacy, numeracy, or digital learning (Dolan, 2022). This may explain why geography often has a low status in primary schools (Martin, 2013, p.18). Without specialist geography education, primary teachers may not draw out important geographical concepts and/or might introduce misconceptions (Freeland, 2021).

Currently, very few secondary schools work closely with primary schools on their geography curriculum (Freeland, 2021). This has a negative impact for both primary and secondary schools. Primary pupils may not be properly prepared for the next phase of geography education in secondary schools. Secondary schools can be guilty of assuming pupils do or do not have specific knowledge and skills which can undermine their progress. It is important for primary and secondary schools to develop an understanding of each other's curriculums, to support a smoother transition and to ensure that progress continues.

S77 and I26 both had insight into the benefits of understanding primary schools and their curriculum for their teaching of geography in secondary schools. Prior to becoming a secondary geography teacher, S77 had trained as a primary school teacher. As a primary teacher, they had experienced the variable provision of primary geography during their career, providing them with useful insight for teaching in secondary schools. Although S77 had taught for nine years in secondary schools, their primary PGCE made them: *'… more aware of what pupils will have studied in geography once they get to me now, I am in secondary although I am also aware that coverage is really variable*' (S77).

I26 was an AST) and HoD. An AST: '… is an excellent teacher who achieves the very highest standards of classroom practice and who is paid to share his or her skills and experience with other teachers' (DCSF, 2009, p.4). ASTs roles were introduced in maintained schools in England and Wales between 1998 and 2013 as a: '… response to a growing recognition of the need to attract and retain excellent classroom teachers, as well as raise student attainment by

broadening the skills and knowledge base of schools' (Fuller *et al.,* 2010, p.2). Through I26's AST role, they were aware that primary teaching was poor in the area and spent some time with KS2 teachers to assess what geography was being taught. As a result, they altered their Year 7 programme: *'… by making it more linked to what they had done in their primary and highlighting what they had not done so we made much more of a serious note of what they did do and what they didn't do. There is the issue, that we forget what they have done at KS2 and start again at KS3. That is a mistake'* (I126).

5.2.1.2 KS4 geography

Numbers studying GCSE geography were at their highest for twenty years in 2020 (RGS, 2022b). The growth in GCSE numbers has come from those groups who were previously less likely to study geography: Black, Asian and ethnic minority pupils, pupils with lower prior attainment, those from a low-income background, and/or pupils studying in comprehensive schools (Brace, 2020; Dorling, 2020). It could be argued that the issues previously raised are not having a significant impact on the geography pupil pipeline. However, the introduction of the EBacc in 2010 may have created a false narrative. The EBacc is an accountability measure for schools. It stipulated that students should study a combination of the subjects of English, mathematics, science, a modern or ancient foreign language, and either history or geography. By 2025 the government's target is to have 90% of pupils studying the EBacc (DfE, 2019b). Since 2011 the number of learners studying GCSE geography rose from 180,000 in 2010 to 281,741 in 2022 (RGS, 2022b). Growing pupil numbers in the secondary phase have also contributed to this figure.

S114 who had taught for ten years, highlighted that for some students, choosing geography was not necessarily a positive decision but rather a necessity or *'the less of 3 evils'* as it was slightly better than the alternative EBacc choices: *'[t]he fact children take GCSE geography as it is the less of 3 evils in terms of the Ebacc subjects does not help with this. Students don't care about geography; it is hard to motivate them when they have been 'forced' to take it for GCSE*' (S114). Concerns have been raised that EBacc is not suitable for a considerable proportion of pupils, and it excludes subjects such as religious studies, art, and music (Long and Danechi, 2019).

5.2.1.3 KS5 geography

At A level, the growth in the underrepresented groups in geography pupils has not continued. The number of pupils from lower socio-economic backgrounds, Black, Asian and ethnic minority pupils are lower than expected (Brace and Souch, 2020; Dorling, 2020; Milner, Robinson and Garcia, 2021; RGS, 2022a). Lower numbers from lower socio-economic backgrounds at A level may be attributed to their experience of lower-quality teaching during KS3 and KS4. There is a statistically significant gap between the most and least deprived schools, in the proportion of teachers with a relevant degree. For the least deprived schools, approximately 80% of the GCSE hours are taught by subject specialists, but only 70% among the most deprived schools (Sibieta, 2018). High-quality teaching has been found to have the most important influence on pupil attainment, particularly for disadvantaged pupils (EEF, 2022). Participants credited academic success as one of the reasons that they continued to study geography, as this developed their confidence and self-efficacy (Gardner, 2013; Gorard *et al.,* 2021; RGS, 2022a).

Lower than expected numbers of Black, Asian and ethnic minority pupils (Brace and Souch, 2020; Dorling, 2020; Milner, Robinson and Garcia, 2021; RGS, 2022a) may be attributed to the fact that they do not see their community represented in the teaching workforce (Milner, Robinson and Garcia, 2021; Seleznyov, 2021). There is further variation in location and between types of schools. About 60% of state-funded schools do not have a single ethnic minority classroom teacher. The issue is particularly acute in the north-east and south-west, where 81% and 80% of schools respectively, do not have any ethnic minority teachers (Savage, 2022). Although the positive impacts of a diverse teaching workforce have been recognised, there have been no rigorous studies in England as to how this could be achieved (Demie and See, 2022). There are also a limited number of teacher identity studies that centre on teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds (Rushton *et al.,* 2023).

This shortage is compounded by the lower retention of ethnic minority teachers (Allen *et al*., 2018; DfE, 2018a). The reasons will be varied, such as school demographics, culture and opportunities for career progression into senior leadership positions (Tereshchenko and Mills, 2021) and unique issues related to racial inequality and racism in their careers (Haque and Elliot, 2016). This results in a 'catch 22' situation where geography and the profession's whiteness dissuades ethnic minorities from choosing geography and/or the teaching profession, perpetuating a lack of diversity in the future (Hesslewood, 2023).

This will also influence the geography knowledge that is produced, as it privileges particular views of the world and marginalises other viewpoints (Farrell, 2020). As Dorling (2022, p.3) identified:

'if a particular social group becomes increasingly likely to be more and more represented among those scholars in those times and in that place, that too will have a large effect on what is produced'. During their career, I7 and I23 became increasingly aware of the need to interrogate their initial beliefs of geography knowledge and how they have taught the subject. I7 had taught for forty-one years, and the following comment was in response to a question during their interview about whether they thought their teacher identity conflicted with any other aspect of their identity:

> *… the way that I deliver geography and way that I see my identity is from a very white lower middle-class viewpoint. The conflict is probably that I need to see things beyond that and try to see things from other peoples' point of view. Geography through others' identities. So, I am beginning to realise that, whereas I have never thought there was a conflict because I thought we were all geographers* (I7).

I23 grew up and completed their education in Canada. Their comment was in response to a question about whether their perception of geography had changed over time:

> *When I went to university, they had a class ... something like … First Nations education. In Canada, there is a huge population of First Nations, who historically have been oppressed. Especially now, it is in the news. I remember when I was taking that class, I didn't get why, because of white privilege. I was very defensive about it being like, 'I have First Nations friends, and they do normal stuff, and they get degrees…'. Thinking about myself then, the teacher came back at me and was like, 'well, actually, it's about, understanding and making yourself educated'... and I verbally expressed my opinion and now thinking back, I am embarrassed that that is what I thought. Again, I am from Saskatchewan, Canada which is mostly German and Ukrainian immigrants from the early 1990s so diversity in any sense is not a thing. I didn't have the exposure that I do now in London, with multiple cultures coming together, multiple religions. I have changed my opinion a lot* (I23).

Teachers need to ensure that they are representing places and people accurately, to ensure that their teaching is not excluding any voices. This is especially important as increasingly, teacher-centred approaches are taking precedent over student-centred approaches (Stillman and

Anderson, 2015). In a study of ethnic minority teachers, concerns were raised: '… that their white peers failed to grasp the importance of a broader, less Eurocentric curriculum, thus not reflecting the learning needs and interests of a diverse pupil population' (Haque and Elliot, 2016, p.15).

5.2.1.4 Higher Education geography

At university, geography is one of the lowest ranked subjects for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. To address this, Dorling (2020) calls for admissions officers to make lower tariff offers to students that are from schools, neighbourhoods and social groups that are traditionally at a disadvantage. This system has already been adopted in Scotland.

The under representation of Black, Asian and ethnic minority pupils widen further in Higher Education (Brace and Souch, 2020; RGS, 2022a), for example, Black students represented 7.2% of the undergraduate cohort in 2018-2019 but it was only 1.7% for geography students (Black Geographers, 2020, p.2). This translates into a very white undergraduate cohort (Hesslewood, 2023). Under representation is also reflected in the teaching staff in higher education (Okoye, 2021). This has negative impacts on the experiences for Black, Asian, and ethnic minority geography students who do not find themselves reflected in the staff body. As Milner, Robinson, and Garcia (2021, p.59) state, '[w]e are failing to support a 'pipeline' of ethnic minority staff into the discipline'. Radcliffe, (2017, p.7) identifies that academic geography faces an 'uphill struggle' as, '…privileging is often found in student selection and progress; course design, curriculum content; pedagogies; staff recruitment; resource allocation; and research priorities and debates'.

As I7's comment above shows, *'I see my identity is from a very white lower middle-class viewpoint',* we know that positionality matters about ourselves, but the effects of our collective positionality are rarely considered (Dorling, 2022). The collective positionality of geographers matters because this will influence what is deemed to be important in the future, impacting what is decided to be researched and concentrated on most (Dorling, 2022). For example: '[s]chool geography in England has been largely silent on issues around race, which stands in contrast to important strands of thought in the discipline' (Puttick and Murrey, 2020, p.126). As Milner, Robinson, and Garcia (2021, p.59) posit: 'As a subject at the forefront of representing a richly diverse world, geography should have a fundamental grounding in diversity. The power of diversity in geography serves to tackle stereotypes, dismantle dominant narratives, improve representation of places in people, and empower students from all backgrounds through developing a multi-faceted view of the world and their place within it.'

There have been positive actions and initiatives such as Black Geographers within geography, yet there is more work to do as there is an ongoing underrepresentation of ethnic minority perspectives and people within geography, in the school curriculum and among those who teach the subject (RGS, 2021).

5.2.2 Fieldwork

Participants identified fieldwork as a positive of their geography education, providing them with new experiences beyond their everyday experiences. Fieldwork helped participants to contextualise their learning in the classroom and to make a commitment to the subject. Beyond

developing their geographical knowledge and skills, fieldwork provided an environment in which to be social with their peers and their teachers.

Participants would have liked to have experienced more fieldwork opportunities in their own education. The fieldwork experiences they shared tended to be focused on KS4 and KS5. Ofsted (2023) found that in some secondary schools, pupils did not carry out fieldwork in KS3 or KS4, and in KS5 it rarely went beyond the minimum requirement of the examination boards (Ofsted, 2023). As Lambert and Reiss (2014, p.11) state: '[f]ieldwork for assessment purposes is not necessarily the same as fieldwork that is good for geographical understanding'.

Research found that fieldwork was much stronger in the early years and KS1. At KS2, it was found that although pupils visited various places, there was a scarcity of meaningful fieldwork and geographical skills were weak (Freeland, 2021; Ofsted, 2021). Fieldwork has rarely been a strong feature of the curriculum historically and this was evident in participants' comments about the negative and disappointing experiences of their own geography education. An issue with fieldwork was the: *'[l]ack of organised fieldwork'* (S127) especially: '*before A level*' (S129) and *'[n]o residential trips!'* (S50).

Taking pupils on field trips is not sufficient if meaningful fieldwork is not conducted at the location. Another negative factor of fieldwork, that participants shared, was the inferior quality of some of their fieldwork experiences that left them uninspired and bored. S86 had taught for fifteen years and had experienced: *'[s]ome dull fieldwork'* (S86). S89 had taught for six years and:

'[a]t A level, we were unable to do physical fieldwork … so our teachers had us mimic a river study on the school field. We used two trees to represent each bank of an imaginary river' (S89).

If the basis of fieldwork is to meet the requirements of national qualifications, it relies less on the epistemological dimensions of fieldwork enquiry and as S12 raised, there can be, '*[t]oo much focus on "fieldwork" that was not relevant to the courses merely skills focused*' (S12). Fieldwork that is focused on skills can become '… predictable, 'safe' and formulaic' (Lambert and Reiss, 2014, p.11).

5.2.2.1 Barriers to fieldwork

Field trips can act as a barrier for disadvantaged pupils to access geography. Schools' budgets are finite and asking families for financial contributions can limit field trips to those that can afford it. The following participants highlight the impact of the cost of the GCSE geography field trip and the impact that it has on pupils choosing to continue to study geography. I241 had taught for two years and found that*: '[a]s soon as they [pupils] find out that they have to pay £280 to do GCSE geography* [fieldwork] *then they don't do it. The letter for that gets sent out at the end of Year 9 which is when they are choosing their options. It just puts people off*' (I241). I105 had taught for thirty-six years and their: *'…biggest problems with fieldwork and residential trips are students who cannot do it. I would love to find a way of making residential trips more accessible to students who cannot go …. A major downside is that a lot of fieldwork is not accessible apart from the exam fieldwork which we pay for'* (I105).

British Geography departments in HEIs are the: '…least likely place to find students from disadvantaged or even average income backgrounds' (Dorling, 2022, p.125). By the mid-2010s, undergraduate geographers were the least likely to have qualified for Free School Meals (FSM) and to have low mobility (Dorling, 2022; Dorling, 2020). Eligibility for FSM at sixteen is used as an indicator of disadvantage in education. Mobility is based on adult earnings at age thirty, allowing time for careers to stabilise (The Sutton Trust, 2021). For pupils who cannot afford to participate in field trips, their exclusion from green space is twofold, as Jones (2020, p.125) shares:

> Children who live in deprived areas are nine times less likely to have access to nature, through green space and places to play, than children in affluent areas, who may also have access to private gardens. Children living in the poorest homes are six times more likely to have never set foot in a wild open space than those in more affluent circumstances.

In addition to the upfront cost of field trips, there are the hidden costs that can be associated with kit lists that are needed for pupils to participate in fieldwork. It may be that pupils do not have these items, cannot afford them, or simply forget them. If schools do not have spare kit to lend to pupils, then these experiences can be negative. S66 who had taught for nineteen years still recalls as a pupil *'standing near a river watching a few pupils who had remembered wellies in my leather jacket in the rain…'* (S66).

Fieldwork has come under scrutiny from feminist and postcolonial scholars (Bracken and Mawdsley, 2004). The question of how inclusive fieldwork is has been explored with higher education and deserves more attention in the school context (Brace, 2020). The legacy and imagery of geographers with masculinist ideals, being tough, youthful, predominately white, able bodied, still endures (Dorling, 2019; Hall *et al.,* 2002; Nairn, 1999). As Owens (2022) posits, '[t]he

philosophy seemed to be that if students had chosen to study geography they would have to 'tough it out' peeing in bushes and yomping across the landscape'. Greene *et al.* (2020) published guidelines surrounding toilet stops on field trips in HEIs as the topic is rarely discussed; the aim of these guidelines is to minimise stress and anxiety for all parties.

If forms of geography knowledge are dependent or require physical ability, then it will exclude those who do not, reinforcing the able-bodied discourse (Nairn, 1999). As posited by Nairn (1999, p.274), '[a]ny disadvantage, the disabled person might face within the physical environment, is then explained as the problem of the person, not the environment'. Ensuring accessibility for all students is essential.

In addition to accessibility of locations, there needs to be consideration as to how pupils will experience fieldwork space. It may be that they have no previous lived experiences of accessing these locations which may impact upon how confident they feel in these locations. For example, only 1% of visitors to UK national parks come from ethnic minority backgrounds despite making up approximately 14% of the general population (Booth, 2019). Reasons are complicated but barriers include: 'language, awareness, safety, culture, confidence and perception of middle-class stigma' (Parveen, 2020). This is not limited to rural locations as S91's comment demonstrates, their pupils' experience of an urban environment was *'mainly shaped by fear'* which: *'[o]pened my eyes to the extent to which racism could structure some young people's sense of place and lived experience of the world'* (S91).

If this is not addressed it can have detrimental impact on individuals' enjoyment, learning, safety, and commitment to geography. The positive and negative issues associated with fieldwork have been highlighted by the participants as well as its central position in helping then to choose the subject and to form their identity. Consequently, the position of fieldwork must be considered when we discuss the reasons for choosing the subject and its impact on how secondary geography teachers view their identity.

5.2.3 Career guidance for geography

There are many positive outcomes of continuing to study geography in Higher Education. Research states that five years after graduation, geography graduates have an above likelihood of gaining employment. HEI students of geography are more likely to complete their degree; geography has the third lowest dropout rate of all subjects and have some of the highest National Student Satisfaction scores. This success in employment across a wide range of sectors may be why only 5% of new geography graduates choose to become geography teachers (Tapsfield, 2015) and why it is becoming increasingly harder to attract geographers into the teaching profession. I218 who had taught for twenty years and in addition to teaching in schools was a PGCE geography lead at a university, commented the following when they reflected on the issues of recruitment to their ITE course: *'… geographers are coming out of university, and they are so well-rounded. They are very employable people, and they get nicked by banks and all of those kind of things and teaching isn't always the best paid profession'* (I218).

In finance, almost 70% of graduate employees have a humanities background (Bennett, 2020). An area that needs developing is ensuring that pupils have clear career guidance, highlighting to them the opportunities that studying geography can provide for them, including teaching. S14 had taught for six years and completed an undergraduate degree in geography. S14 shared that one of their disappointments of geography as a pupil was the lack of career guidance about the opportunities that geography provided: *'[t]here wasn't ever any info of where you could go with Geography post school and uni, which is something that I've addressed at my school and regularly touch on in lessons as a teacher'* (S14).

Research by RGS found that most young people chose their A levels based on ideas about their future careers (RGS, 2022a). They found that 67% of students believed that a different subject would be better for their future career and 43% of students were unsure what career path they could take with geography (RGS, 2018b). Although S22 did an undergraduate degree in economics and geography, they did not choose geography at A level because: *'I choose subjects based around a job I thought I wanted'* (S22).

Both S14 and S22 would have been in education before the Gatsby Benchmarks (Gatsby, 2014) were introduced in 2014, as they had taught for six years and seven years, respectively. The eight Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance are outlined in Figure 27. Through high quality careers education and guidance, pupils will be able to: 'acquire the self-development and career management skills they need to achieve positive employment destinations' (DfE, 2023c, p.8).

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experience of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

Figure 27: Gatsby Benchmarks

Hopefully, current geography students will gain more insight and knowledge during their education to the opportunities that continuing to study geography will provide.

5.2.3.1 Informal career guidance from participants' teachers

Participants credited their own teachers as one of the most key factors for choosing teaching as a career. Their teachers were advocates for the discipline and the profession. Participants identified attributes and values in their teachers that they used as a foundation to their own practice and that they referred to throughout their career for guidance.

Being able to see themselves in the teaching workforce of their school, beyond just a passion for the subject or profession, made a difference to participants. It proved to be especially important for those who felt they were underrepresented and struggled to identify with their teachers. For example, male teachers only account for 35% of the teaching workforce in England (DfE, 2023b). The decline has been driven by the most experienced teachers leaving (Savage, 2022). S221 saw

relatable characteristics in their teacher's age and gender and identified them as a role model: *'I had a great sixth form geography teacher who was young, male, and inspiring. I saw parallels between him and me and hoped to have knowledge like his in the future'* (S221).

5.2.3.2 Informal career guidance from participants' family and friends

Participants' family and friends also had an influence on their decision to continue to study geography and to join the profession. More participants had family and/or close friend(s) who worked in schools compared to those who had careers in geography (Figure 14). Family and/or close friend(s) who worked in schools had more influence over participants than those who had careers in geography (Figure 16), both positively and negatively. After seeing the impact that teaching had on their family members, I77, initially made the decision not to enter the teaching profession as they saw the commitment required of them. It was only after experiencing a similar workload in another profession that they wanted to instead give their time to something 'worthwhile' (Day *et al.,* 2006; Gorard *et al.,* 2021). I77 who had taught for nine years:

> *Influenced by the fact that I saw my mum and my aunt having to commit a lot of their life to teaching not just their working careers so that did put me off a lot. I found the job that I was doing in London still expected you to be on your emails until late at night. I felt that if I am going to commit my life to something I want it to be worthwhile so let's go into teaching* (I77).

It is important that the current workforce is supported to be able to thrive in the profession as they are advocates for the next generation of teachers. As I77 raised, concern about workload is a key factor in dissuading prospective teachers from entering the profession (Barmby, 2006). In addition, the perception of the profession has deteriorated and although 67% (n=100/150) of

participants' family and/or close friends were 'all supportive' of them becoming a teacher (Figure 16), participants acknowledged that although they were supportive at the time of making the decision, their family and/or close friends would perhaps be less supportive today. Partly to do with the reputation of the sector and partly to do with the other career opportunities that are now available.

5.2.4 Work experience and knowledge of teaching

The examples of work experience from participants give little indication that they are from formalised programmes. They are opportunities that they sourced themselves, through their own networks. During my own undergraduate degree, I had been fortunate to be involved in the SAS, a government funded programme by the Teach Training Agency (TTA). It was advertised at a careers fair I attended at my institution. The SAS aimed to attract more undergraduates into the teaching profession, particularly those who were studying in shortage subject areas (Hooper and Clare, 2005). At the time of doing the SAS in 2008, I was considering becoming a secondary mathematics teacher so undertook my placement in a secondary mathematics department. Although the SAS was not confined to shortage subjects, I do not know whether I would have been successful in gaining a place on the programme had I applied to do geography, as at the time, geography was not considered a shortage subject. It was not until 2017-2018 that geography was classed as a shortage subject, when only 80% of its recruitment target was achieved (DfE, 2018a; RGS, 2018a). The SAS programme no longer operates.

Like some of the participants' work experience, my work experience was not in a geography department, however, the opportunity to work in a school and to gain a greater understanding of the profession, contributed to my decision to apply to a teacher education programme. The programme was closely aligned to the standards for QTS. I undertook training prior to a fifteen-day placement which was flexible around my undergraduate course commitments. An additional incentive was that I received payment for undertaking the course (Bevins, Brodie, and Broadie, 2010). The completion of school experience was a condition of my application to train to teach; school experience can no longer be specified by ITE providers as a condition to an offer. There are advantages to this, as it can be challenging to secure school experience without an established connection to a school network and it will not be possible for some to be able to undertake unpaid work experience. Yet, it has been demonstrated that those who have had work experience related to teaching and gained knowledge of the profession have found this informative and a positive experience which contributed to them joining the profession.

5.2.5 Recruitment of secondary geography teachers

79% (n=174/219) of participants studied geography at undergraduate level. 28% (n=62/219) of participants studied geography at Masters or equivalent level. 6% (n=14/219) participants studied geography at PhD or equivalent level. In the future the percentage of those applying to ITE with a geography degree may decline as the DfE simply specify that a student teacher must have graduate status (Frison *et al.*, 2023) through the award of a degree (or recognised equivalent qualification), but do not require that degree to be in the subject which the student teacher wishes to teach. The guidance in Figure 28 is used to establish if applicants have 'good

knowledge'. The expectation is that student teachers will meet the Teachers' Standards, including those that relate to subject and curriculum knowledge, by the end of their teacher education so that QTS can be awarded (DfE, 2021). This is a requirement of all teachers in state funded schools.

Your degree can be in any subject to teach primary or secondary. For secondary courses, your provider will also want to make sure you have a good knowledge of the subject you're applying to teach.

This could be through having a degree in the subject, or having:

- an A level in the subject
- a degree related to but not in the subject – for example, your degree is in engineering, but you'd like to teach physics
- an unrelated degree but relevant professional experience

(DfE, no date)

Figure 28: What can you teach?

Subject knowledge of teachers cannot easily be measured, so often degrees or other post A level qualifications in a subject are used as a proxy measure (DfE, 2016a). When some school-led providers first introduced that applicants were no longer required to have a geography degree, the GA raised concerns that this would undermine '…teaching as a high-status profession with a clear professional identity' (GA, 2017, p.3). The concern for those that do not have a geography background is that they may not have understanding in the '… fundamentals of geography and the high-level organising concepts that underlie a geographical way of understanding and investigating the world' (Shreeve, 2018, p.99). Geographical key concepts such as space, place, earth systems and environment, are not explicitly taught in secondary schools but are: '…the

overarching ideas of the subject that geographers agree lie behind all the varied content' (Rawling, 2022, p.7) and are the foundations to thinking geographically. Without the grounding and understanding of these concepts, non-specialists may not be aware of the significance or knowledge of these concepts and undermine and compromise the development of pupils' geographical thinking (Shreeve, 2018).

An initiative to address the lack of subject specialism of student teachers has included Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) courses. These range from eight to twenty-eight weeks in duration and are usually a condition of starting ITE for those who would benefit from developing their subject knowledge. S226 who had taught for three years and had completed a university-led ITE course, shared the benefits of undertaking a funded SKE:

> *…it was helpful to meet people who were on my course beforehand. During the course we had opportunities to fill in gaps of subject knowledge through doing a review of our subject knowledge. We were also given the opportunity to share resources of topics we had not taught before* (S226).

79% (n=174/219) of participants studied geography at undergraduate level and in 2015, 89% of geography teachers held a relevant post A level qualification. This figure has been declining since 2010-2011 (DfE, 2016a). Having potentially fewer geography graduates becoming secondary geography teachers is also a concern for the 'gap' between school and academy geography as each student teacher: '… acts as a conduit, bringing aspects of recently acquired geography content from their university courses into schools' (Butt and Collins, 2013, p.298).

5.2.6 Second Career Teachers (SCTs)

For some, teaching was not their first chosen profession; they were SCTs. It is currently not possible to identify who are SCTs in the workforce in England as they are not recorded on the ITT census as a separate category (Frison *et al.* 2023). It would be useful to know who are SCTs as they are an important group. They bring skills such as time management, work habits, problem-solving, maturity, self-confidence, and assertiveness to the profession (Castro and Bauml, 2009). For those whose previous career was connected to geography, they would also bring applied knowledge of the subject matter to the teaching profession (Watters and Diezmann, 2015). Currently the induction process and professional development for SCTs does little to acknowledge their previous professional life (Watters and Diezmann, 2015).

Further research is needed to understand the reasons for SCTs choosing teaching, as there is currently limited research in the English context (Frison *et al.,* 2023). Any assumption of linear career stages is often criticised as it does not acknowledge the changing demands of the system or the cyclical nature of learning and skills development (Müller *et al*., 2021). For SCTs there is a 'period of vulnerability' so knowledge of factors that enable or inhibit them to join the profession will inform both recruitment and retention of SCTs. Their unique challenges are often overlooked by administrators and colleagues (Watters and Diezmann, 2015). Their ability to adapt will influence their development and outlook about the career change (Castro and Bauml, 2009).

Participants were not explicitly asked if they were SCTs. It could only be inferred by some of their responses to questions. Further research would be needed to establish the professional identities

of secondary career geography teachers. Bursaries have been found to be an enabler for individuals changing careers, providing them with access to funded teacher education (Castro and Brauml, 2009). Several participants cited that the bursary was a factor that made it easier for them to be able to make the transition into the teaching profession.

5.2.7 Where geography teachers are completing their ITE

93% (n=155/166) of participants completed their ITE in England with only two participants completing their ITE outside of the United Kingdom. This may change as from 2023 teachers from any country will be able to work in schools in England if they have at least one year of experience. Previously, only applications from thirty-nine countries qualified (Woolcock, 2022). Although this may have limited impact for geography as it is only taught in a 'tiny minority' of universities around the world (Dorling, 2019, p.6). 87% (n=144/166) of participants had completed their ITE through university-led courses as shown in Figure 17.

5.2.8 Summary

There are a variety of reasons why participants became secondary geography teachers because they are individuals with their own subject story. Participants' statutory education provided many positives which developed their commitment to geography. Academic success was important for their identity as it provided confidence and resilience in geography. Their own teachers were passionate and knowledgeable about the subject and the profession which inspired participants. Fieldwork was a key element of their geography education. A highlight of their geography education was experiencing geography through fieldwork. Although there was

limited formalised career guidance and work experience opportunities for geography and teaching, participants could identify with the subject and the profession because they had friends and family who worked in related fields.

5.3 RQ2: Why do secondary geography teachers remain in the profession?

Participants enjoyed teaching geography because the discipline was dynamic as it continued to develop and evolve. Even if they took an additional role(s) beyond geography, their geography identity remained important to participants. Education is a collaborative process. Participants worked with pupils, colleagues and parents/carers within their schools. These relationships supported participants to feel committed to their schools. Providing fieldwork opportunities for their pupils was fulfilling for them and provided a new environment to build constructive relationships with pupils and colleagues. Communities of practice supported their geography teacher identity especially for those in smaller departments to keep up to date with developments in their subject and profession. When participants were pupils themselves, it was important for them to be able to see themselves in the workforce. It was important that they now held this role for their pupils. This was especially important for those who felt underrepresented.

5.3.1 The importance of geography

35% (n=49/142) of participants ranked 'Geographer' as the most important aspect of their identity and 49% (n=70/142) ranked it as the second most important aspect of their identity. For

some participants, geography was the reason that they decided to become a teacher, and the reason for choosing secondary teaching over primary teaching. They wanted to share their passion and the importance of the subject with young people.

Participants enjoyed that their geography education never ended as the subject continued to develop. This enabled them to learn and develop their own subject knowledge during their careers as the following comments show. S128 had taught for twenty-eight years before retiring: *'[h]ard to believe for a young teacher but 'new to us' topics e.g. globalisation, sustainability, climate change, pandemic response .... keeps us on our toes*' (S128).

I7 had taught for forty-one years and when asked about whether their perception of geography had changed over time, they responded that: *'… geography has changed. We are talking about a span of fifty years since I was in Year 10 to now. You cannot really compare the subject at all, it is different'* (I7). Geography is a dynamic subject. We can see this as the world faces complex challenges such as climate change, global pandemics, and conflict.

Over the last five decades, government initiatives, inspection frameworks, public examinations and development in digital technologies have changed and influenced subject pedagogy. Sometimes this is building on current practices with greater rigour and precision and sometimes it has required revisiting previous ideas. It is important that over time, subject teachers are confident in a range of pedagogical approaches that make geography accessible and meet the needs for their pupils (Martin, 2021). I216 had taught for fourteen years:

> *We never stop learning about geography. The more you think about it, the more you have to re-evaluate your understanding, because you are working with different audiences, with early years and KS1 children all the way through to trainee teachers and actually the subject and the content but how you go about exploring that, engaging with that and interacting with that, I think is very different depending on what it is that those people are interested in as well* (I216).

I128 had taught for twenty-eight years before retiring:

> *I think the nature of geography in secondary schools is so fast changing that it was a continuous process up until the day I had to retire. There was always a new focus and a new approach, and the syllabuses were being rewritten that often. You had to get your head around how to teach this stuff and rightly so. I am old enough to be from that generation that can remember that it was a factual subject when I was at school. If you learnt the facts and could regurgitate them in an exam, then you were successful* (I128).

Demonstrating to pupils a teacher's commitment to lifelong learning was also viewed as being important to participants. S115 had taught for twenty years: *'[y]ou can't pretend to students that you know it all either, much better to find things out together if you don't know and admit that to them. That way they are not afraid of failure if they get something wrong, if they understand that there are things about the world that you don't know either!'* (S115).

Having in-depth subject knowledge is important to ensure that misconceptions are not introduced from inaccurate teaching, and it enables teachers to identify any issues that students may bring to the subject (Kinder, 2016; Ofsted, 2021). Teachers' subject knowledge is essential for high-quality geographical education (Ofsted, 2021). It enables teachers to plan for progression and to evaluate students' thinking and learning effectively (Kinder, 2016).

It is also important that teachers feel confident in their subject knowledge and have access to CPD. For those considering joining the profession, the funding for SKEs for geography ended in

2021. Biddulph and Kinder (2020) raised concerns that this may impact the number of people that are able to take the course and subsequently apply to ITE and is only a short-term solution to relieving the pressure on schools and does not address the concern of the quality of geographical thinking among future generations.

The need to maintain both up-to-date subject knowledge and to engage in discourse about the nature of the subject and pedagogy is key (Ofsted, 2021). Teachers should therefore be given space and time to ensure that they can continue to develop their subject expertise as this will better prepare our students and benefit our society (Rushton *et al.*, 2021). The DfE (2021, p.5) has acknowledged, '… that in the past, too few teachers have had access to structured support or dedicated time for evidence informed professional development'. High-quality, subject specific CPD has been found to improve both teacher retention and pupil attainment (Rushton and Reiss, 2019).

5.3.2 Positive relationships

Relationships were important for participants during their own education, their teacher education and throughout their career. Their relationships and interactions had a lasting impact on their secondary geography teacher identity. As pupils, their teachers inspired them to love geography and to continue to study it. Participants identified their teachers as role models and identified attributes that they wanted to recreate in their own practice.

As student teachers, participants' tutors, school mentors, and peers were all important in supporting them to become secondary geography teachers. Participants shared that their ITE year was challenging as they navigated the different spaces of university and contrasting placements. They credited those around them, especially their mentors as helping them to feel part of the team and the wider school community. S171 had taught for two years before leaving teaching, sharing the value of their PGCE coordinator and their school mentors as they: *'… were both invaluable... From practical classroom strategies to work life balance. They made the experience the positive one it was. I missed this a lot when I entered school as a NQT and felt more on my own'* (S171).

S171 completed their ITE before the changes to induction, which were introduced in September 2021. ECTs joining the profession are now entitled to two years of induction, underpinned by the Early Career Framework (ECF). The purpose of which is to provide ECTs with a structured programme of development, training, and support. Transforming support was central to the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy (DfE, 2019a) as it was acknowledged that in the past, too few teachers had access to structured support (DfE, 2021c). Those who received support, progress faster and are more likely to remain in the profession (Papay and Kraft, 2017; Smith and Ingersoll, 2004; Watters and Diezmann, 2015). To support the formation of ECTs' teacher identity, they should be offered supported reflection that is not linked to assessment (Rushton *et al.,* 2022).

During their career, the relationships that participants had with their pupils and colleagues sustained their commitment to their schools and provided them with a sense of belonging. Participants enjoyed being able to develop positive relationships with their pupils, whether this was in a geography lesson, during fieldwork, through an extra-curricular activity or as part of an additional role that they held. One of the reasons that participants decided to become secondary geography teachers was to work with young people and to make a difference to them (Day *et al.,* 2006; Gorard *et al.,* 2021).

Teachers are the most valuable resource to the profession. They are role models for pupils and colleagues, and advocates for the disciplines that they teach and for the profession. Over time, participants felt there was increased accountability and prescription through national and school policies and directives which led to a loss of autonomy. Workload had increased, which had a negative impact on their mental health, well-being, and enjoyment of the role.

5.3.3 Fieldwork

Fieldwork continued to be important to participants when they became secondary geography teachers and was an aspect of their job that they enjoyed. They enjoyed creating new opportunities for their pupils and having time to build positive relationships with them, beyond the classroom. Fieldwork provided an opportunity to spend time with their colleagues which could be difficult to do during a normal school day. Participants utilised extra-curricular activities and additional roles in schools to provide further opportunities for Outdoor Learning for their pupils, without the restrictions of a curriculum.

Fieldwork is a specialist aspect of engaging in curriculum making (Hammond, 2018), requiring disciplinary knowledge and skill. Teachers' own values and experiences of fieldwork, together with their subject identity and geographical interests, will influence how they approach it (Hammond, 2018). These experiences will be gained from their own education, ITE and the schools in which they work. Continual professional development is required as '[i]t 'takes time to become a teacher who can ensure that students have an outstanding fieldwork experience' (Lambert and Reiss, 2014, p.5).

This may become increasingly difficult as participants raised concerns that the opportunities that they could provide for their pupils were often compromised by what was possible rather than what was theoretically desirable. Senior leaders did not always value fieldwork or understand its importance to the subject and to pupils' learning. There was little acknowledgement of the time and energy that was required of participants to organise and to deliver fieldwork and there was no compensation for their time. A further challenge for teachers is that young people are feeling less confident is fieldwork environments as S217 shared: *'[c]hildren less willing to get involved than when I was at school. Disconnected with benefits of nature*' (S217).

S217 may be speaking of the depressing concept of the 'extinction of experience' (Gaston and Soga, 2019) which is the progressive loss of human-nature interactions over time. The argument being that fewer children connect with nature, so that when they themselves become parents their children, will in turn, have less connection with nature (Jones, 2020). This results in an

apathy and lack of caring for nature and conservation and as the participant states, a disconnect with nature.

Compared to fifty years ago, children today have significantly reduced opportunities to connect with nature (Jones, 2020). A survey conducted by Natural England (2016) found that three-quarters of UK children (aged five to twelve) spend less time outside than prison inmates and on an average day, a fifth of the children did not play outside at all. Fewer than one in ten children now regularly play in wild spaces (Jones, 2020, p.55). Parents who were polled said that their children had fewer opportunities to play outside than they did when they were young. This has been attributed to parents' fears for their child's safety, lack of green spaces and the increased use of digital technology (Carrington, 2016).

Having time in nature is important as humans 'have an evolutionary need to connect with the natural world for cognitive, mental, emotional, and spiritual development, growth, meaning and fulfilment. Without contact with the natural world, we become impoverished' (Jones, 2020, p.38). It is therefore important that pupils have opportunities to engage with nature as part of the curriculum. As S66 shared, as a pupil they enjoyed the walking aspect of their river study fieldwork as it was not something that they would usually do with their family: *'…it was a classic 'how it changes downstream'. Apart from the boring job of recording the results as others took measurements, I enjoyed it. I enjoyed the walk. It wasn't something I would have done with my family'* (S66).

In response to the changing and challenging educational landscape, Hammond (2017, p.181) posits that: '… geography teachers need to draw upon their discipline, subject identity and subject community, to ensure that fieldwork is maintained within the enacted school curriculum'. This has becoming more challenging since Covid-19, as fieldwork has been slow to return to schools. Research from the RGS (2024) found that 40% of teachers reported that they were offering less fieldwork than before the pandemic which was estimated to be to be approximately 1500 secondary schools. A decline in fieldwork was more pronounced in smaller schools and those serving more deprived areas.

5.3.4 Communities of practice

Participants felt that the geography community beyond their own departments was supportive. As geography teachers, their departments tended to be smaller (Brooks, 2017) so their communities of practice were important for them to stay up-to-date with developments in geography and to connect with those that had the shared identity of secondary geography teachers.

Participants engaged in different communities of practice that supported them in a range of diverse ways. With the development of technologies, new communities of practice were established such as those on social media platforms. By being able to access communities of practice digitally, it allowed participants to be able to engage with colleagues beyond their localities and have greater control over how and when they engaged. These digital spaces,

although valued, did not replace participants wanting to be able to meet in-person at conferences and events.

5.3.5 Representation in the workforce

It was important for participants to be able to see themselves in the workforce when they were pupils themselves and this continued once they had joined the profession. S125 had taught for thirteen years before leaving the profession. As a student teacher, they identified that their mentor in their first placement was a role model. They valued that they could identify similar characteristics with their mentor such as age and life experiences: *'[m]y mentor at my first school was very good. It helped we were similar ages and had similar life experiences. She pushed me hard, but I think helped me to become a better teacher*' (S125).

5.3.6 Summary

Geography continued to be important to participants during their careers. They enjoyed sharing their knowledge with their pupils and inspiring them to be passionate about the subject too. Participants valued that geography was a dynamic subject which meant that they had to continue to develop their subject knowledge. Fieldwork continued to be an important part of the subject discipline for participants, and they wanted to create as many opportunities as possible for their pupils. Positive relationships were fundamental during ITE and ECT years. Participants' mentors, tutors, peers, and colleagues were influential during the formation of participants' secondary geography teacher identity. Being able to see themselves in their workforce was important for them to be able to envision their future geography teacher identities. Positive relationships

continued to be important to participants during their careers and they enjoyed working with pupils, colleagues, and those in their wider networks. They enjoyed collaborating with professionals through their communities of practice.

5.4 RQ3: What are the reasons that lead to secondary geography teachers leaving the profession?

Some participants had left the teaching profession because they had retired. Other participants initially became secondary geography teachers because of the available initiatives at a time when they could not secure other employment. As there was no commitment to the profession once they received the initiatives, some pursued other careers when opportunities arose. Others left teaching because of negative relationships with colleagues and unsupportive senior leaders. Issues around workload and well-being were raised together with a lack of flexible working in teaching.

5.4.1 Retirement

Of those who had left the profession, 67% (n=10/15) were because of retirement (Figure 26). The challenges of recruiting participants who had left the profession for reasons other than retirement was explored in greater depth in '4.11.1 The challenges of recruiting participants who had left the profession'.

It is noted that the figure of 67% (n=10/15) is considerably higher than would be expected for the teaching profession as a whole. For example, for the academic year of 2020-2021 (the year the

data for this research was collected), the figure for retirement was 15% of the teaching workforce (DfE, 2023a).

5.4.2 Covid-19

The impact of the pandemic on secondary geography teachers and the wider teaching profession is beyond the scope of this research, but it is important that it is acknowledged. The data for the research was collected from 16 October 2020 – 2 March 2022 when there were national lockdowns taking place (Figure 3).

For ITE providers, a 'worryingly high' number of schools withdrew from offering placements during 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 (Whittaker, 2020, n.p.). Many schools stated that they did not have the capacity to offer placements to student teachers as they were adapting to teaching in a pandemic. Concerns have been raised that the 2019-2020 cohort may have had insufficient experience and could rapidly leave the profession as a result (Rushton, Gibbons and Hesketh, 2021). These difficulties included a reduction in face-to-face teaching and peer support, as ITE programmes were delivered online. Engaging pupils who had spent multiple lockdowns studying at home, some of whom did not have adequate access to technology and/or a productive learning space, would have been particularly difficult for an inexperienced student teacher to manage.

5.4.3 Teacher recruitment and retention initiatives and programmes

Some of the participants were able to become secondary geography teachers because of the initiatives available to them. The DfE have acknowledged that despite considerable investment in initiatives, they have not been able to solve the problems or even improve the issues of teacher recruitment and retention (House of Commons Education Committee, 2017). Some of the initiatives and programmes that participants had access to are no longer running, such as the GTP, which was a programme in England and Wales for graduates who wanted to gain QTS while working. It ran from 1998 to 2013. I was fortunate to benefit from the SAS scheme which provided useful work experience, that informed my decision to pursue a career in teaching and it is no longer running. Most of these initiatives have not been robustly evaluated (See *et al.,* 2020). Initiatives such as adverts, media stories, and government websites were considered the least important sources of information for choosing a career (Gorard *et al*., 2021).

As previously discussed in RQ1 (5.1.6 SCT) bursaries have been an enabler for SCTs to join the profession. There has been a call for the DfE to do more to demonstrate the effectiveness of bursaries (Ward, 2016) as evidence of their effectiveness is unclear (See *et al.,* 2020). The value of bursary can change year-on-year, which can make it hard for SCTs to be able to make plans to change careers and to have access to up-to-date information. The bursary amount each year is dependent on the Teacher Supply Model (TSM) which is used by the DfE to monitor recruitment and set targets to determine the number of teachers that should be trained each year to meet the current and future demands of the subject and/or phase of education. It is calculated on an annual basis and is reflective of what is happening at the time; for example, prior to the

pandemic, unemployment was at its lowest rate since the 1970s and employment was at a record high making teaching a less attractive option (DfE, 2019a). As a result, the bursary for secondary geography was set at the highest they had been with recipients receiving £26,000 between 2018-2020. In 2021-2022, the bursary was removed for secondary geography because of Covid-19 and national lockdowns. There were low levels of hiring and job security in the wider labour market which provided a short-term boost to recruitment and retention for the teaching profession (Worth, Tang and Galvis, 2022). Data from May 2020 showed that the number of applicants was the highest that it had been since 2014 (Fullard, 2020). Table 4 shows the annual bursary amounts to train to become a secondary geography teacher since 2013 together with conditions stipulated to be able to receive the bursary.

Academic year	Bursary for training to be secondary geography teachers
2013 – 2014	£9000 (1st) £4000 (2:1)
2014 – 2015	£9000 (1st) £4000 (2:1)
2015 – 2016	£12000 (1st /PhD) £9000 (2:1/Master's) £4000 (2:2)
2016 – 2017	£15000 (1st/PhD/2:1/Master's/2:2)
2017 – 2018	£25000 (1st/PhD/2:1/Master's/2:2) Scholarship: £27500
2018 – 2019	£26000 (1st/PhD/2:1/Master's/2:2) Scholarship: £28000
2019 – 2020	£26000 (1st/PhD/2:1/Master's/2:2) Scholarship: £28000
2020 – 2021	£15000 (1st/PhD/2:1/Master's/2:2) Scholarship: £17000
2021 – 2022	£0 Scholarship: £0
2022 – 2023	£15000 (1st/PhD/2:1/Master's/2:2)
2023 – 2024	£25000 (1st/PhD/2:1/Master's/2:2)
2024 – 2025	£25000

Table 4: Geography Bursaries 2013-2025

(DfE, 2013; DfE, 2014b; DfE, 2016b; DfE, 2017; DfE, 2018c; DfE, 2019d; DfE, 2022b; DfE, 2022c; DfE, 2022d; DfE, 2024c)

Table 4 demonstrates the difficulties that SCTs encounter in trying to plan to enter the profession. This is further exacerbated by the variations in the annual bursaries between secondary subjects and phases. Some subjects also offer scholarships from organisations and professional bodies. For geography, the Royal Geographical Society has previously provided a scholarship with recipients receiving a bursary and additional subject specific support, mentoring and networking opportunities.

Some bursaries will be greater than eventual starting salaries for ECTs which is not a good motivator to enter and remain in the profession. It is important therefore that initiatives that are introduced should be closely monitored to ensure that they are effective (Barmby, 2006). Ovenden-Hope (2021) argues that the teacher supply crisis cannot be solved by financial incentives alone and See *et al.* (2020) posit that the money used for the incentives could be better channelled through other more effective programmes.

Interventions and analysis cannot just focus on recruitment as there needs to be greater emphasis on improving teacher retention (House of Commons Education Committee, 2017; Lynch *et al.,* 2016) as there are currently more qualified teachers out of the classroom than in them (Marsh and Derbyshire, 2019). There are significant costs of not retaining teachers within the education system and the community (Buchanan *et al.,* 2013). Improving retention would also strengthen the pool of leadership positions (House of Commons Education Committee, 2017).

Within the first two years of teaching, over 20% of teachers leave the profession and 33% leave within their first five years (DfE, 2019, p.10; Education Support, 2018; Lynch *et al*., 2016, p.3). There will be a variety of reasons that will contribute to this, but underpinning them all, is that becoming a teacher is challenging, as the following comments show. I48 had taught for over twenty-two years and had completed a university-led ITE course. They found their: *'PGCE was extremely hard, in fact I hated it. I thought I have got this qualification, teach for a year to get my QTS and then I am going to get out. It was in that year, I was at* [school name redacted] *and I just*

loved it' (I48). I105 had taught for thirty-six years and had completed a university-led ITE course. They found: *'it was a hard journey; I did not enjoy my PGCE and my first couple of years, but it all fell into place after my third year*' (I105). It is not known specifically why I48 and I105 persevered and remained in the profession when others have not. They perhaps had access to some of the factors highlighted in RQ2 and they felt supported to remain in the profession.

5.4.4 Those who decide not to teach

Work on teacher supply ignores the key groups of those who might have become teachers but decide against it (Gorard *et al.,* 2021). The participants of this research all had experience of being secondary geography teachers. Although, 21% (n=33/156) of participants were no longer secondary geography teachers, they had still decided to enter the teaching profession and had not initially been deterred from this option. To improve the recruitment of new teachers, attention for policy and research must be focused on those students who never considered teaching as an option and those who considered and rejected the profession.

5.4.5 Changes in ITE provision

Teacher education has been conceptualised as a 'training problem', a 'learning problem' a 'policy problem' and now a 'professional problem' (Cochran-Smith, 2023, pp.127-128; Mutton and Burn, 2024, p.227). The government's aim to increase school-based ITE may also add to the issue of recruiting secondary geography teachers. Historically, school-based ITE providers have always struggled to fill small cohorts, and they never recruited well to the GTP scheme, compared to

other subjects (Tapsfield, 2015). If these trends continue, further research would be needed to understand why school-based ITE programmes struggle to recruit geographers.

The loss of university-led ITE providers may result in a loss of potential teachers who want to stay at the same institution once they had completed their undergraduate study, such as S30 and I128 who had both completed their ITE through a university-led course. S30 had taught for nineteen years and had completed an undergraduate degree in geography, they: *'…wanted to stay at university for a 4th year. Wanted a post graduate qualification*' (S30). I128 had taught for twenty-eight years and had completed an undergraduate degree in geography and geology with a subsidiary in biogeography and political geography. They: *'…thought I am enjoying being a student, so I'll do teacher training … That's why I ended up there. I feel very fortunate that I stumbled into this career because I loved it*' (I128).

Moving forward, the implications of the Market Review of ITT (DfE, 2021b) will have to be reviewed. There were significant concerns raised about the level of prescription and the limits to academic agency and the implications this would have on the status and professionalism of geography teaching (Hammond *et al.,* 2022). ITE should resist the reductive model of teaching (Arthur *et al.,* 2015; Mutton and Burn, 2024; Palmer, 1997) because for a strong teaching workforce we need strong teacher education programmes (Sachs, 2005).

5.4.6 Negative Relationships

Negative relationships can have a negative impact on the development of teacher identity, the enjoyment of being a geography teacher and can impact individual resilience to the job. There were few participant responses about poor behaviour of pupils, but it has been cited in the literature as a cause for teachers leaving the profession (Barmby, 2006). Other negative professional relationships seemed to have a greater and lasting impact of participants, in particular their ITE mentors and parents/carers.

5.4.6.1 ITE mentors

Some participants highlighted that the relationship they had with their mentors were negative experiences and disappointments of their ITE. As Ofsted no longer reports on geography in either schools or ITE providers, it is difficult for (new) ITE providers to make decisions about school placements based on mentoring capacity in geography or evidence of teaching excellence (GA, 2017). As geography departments tend to be smaller (Brooks, 2017), capacity for mentoring can be reduced. It can take many years for high-quality partnerships between universities and schools to develop (GA, 2017). S51 had taught for fourteen years and had completed a university-led ITE course: *'[t]he departments were often small, so the Head of Department didn't always have the time to support me as a trainee. Other subjects had more staff to share the workload. I often felt like I was a burden to the department*' (S51). S33 had taught for two years and had completed a school-led ITE course: *'[o]verworked and stressed-out mentors in school, who had very little time to help develop my skills as a professional'* (S33).

The impact of these negative relationships at the beginning of teachers' careers can have a lasting impact on confidence and self-efficacy whilst they are formulating their teacher identity. S160 had taught for six years and had completed their ITE through a School Direct ITE course. The negative relationship S160 had with their mentor had a lasting impact on their self-efficacy. A *'[d]ifficult mentor who pushed me too hard, never praised me, left me thinking I wasn't good enough. 6 years later I still question my ability!'* (S160). S107 had taught for twelve years and had completed a university-led ITE course. They were: *'[t]reated very badly by one of my school mentors and almost gave up, kept being told I was useless'* (S107).

Without positive relationships, teachers struggle to develop affirming identities (Watters and Diezmann, 2015). Fortunately for some participants who had challenging relationships with their mentors, they could turn to other members of the department for support and encouragement as shown by S224 and S115. S224 had taught for nineteen years and had completed a school-led ITE course: '*I had a mentor who was not always very encouraging but thankfully the rest of the department were supportive*' (S224). S115 had taught for twenty years and had completed a university-led ITE course: *'[m]y first mentor, at my first placement, was highly negative about the profession. Luckily, there was a good NQT in the dept who helped me along'* (S115).

There needs to be a greater recognition of the moral importance of mentoring in teaching (Arthur *et al*., 2015). For those at the beginning of their career, the support they receive is important as they are more likely to stay in the profession, than those who do not have such support (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004).

5.4.6.2 Parents/carers

Participants commented that dealing with parents and carers was one of the things that they enjoyed the least about being a geography teacher. Ofsted (2019) found that additional pressure from parents and carers has been found to cause stress. This could be attributed to the introduction of parental choice by the Conservatives in the 1980s (Ball, 2013). This initiated a sequence of measures intended to provide information about the academic performance of children, most notably Standard Assessment Tests, from which league tables were compiled (Arthur *et al*., 2015). The public discourse around them brought a notion of 'good schools' and 'bad schools' (Ball, 2013). Empowering parents and carers to have a greater voice as there has been a general shift to consumer power. This can be felt across the entire school staff. A participant who was a Head Teacher commented that dealing with parental complaints was what they enjoyed the least about their role. Another participant commented that they had to do additional administrative work for field trips as the support staff would not chase parents about trip payments as they do not want to 'damage' the relationships with parents and carers (S6).

5.4.7 Lack of representation in the workforce and discipline

Being able to 'see yourself' in the workforce was identified as a key factor in deciding to become a secondary geography teacher. When participants saw others, like themselves, as role models, they modelled their practice on them. For some participants it was difficult to see themselves in the workforce in school and in the discipline. S106 had taught for ten years and identified that an important aspect of their geography teacher identity was 'BAME representation' because they

felt there were few role models for ethnic minority pupils in the workforce (Haque and Elliot, 2016).

Rankings: 1st: Teacher; 2nd: Geographer; 3rd, 'BAME representation' (own label); 4th: 'Form tutor' (own label); 5th: Physical geographer; 6th: Human geographer; 7th: Environmental geographer.

> *Being a teacher is the most important aspect of my identify as it defines me as a person, I love my job. I love geography and I enjoy being a form tutor. Being from the BAME community is also important as the subject does not get many people from my background teaching it* (S106).

The underrepresentation of ethnic minority teachers is an issue faced by geography and the wider teaching workforce (RGS, 2021). Although the number of teachers from an ethnic minority background are increasing each year, the pace is slow (Savage, 2022). From 2010 to 2023 the ethnic diversity in the education workforce had risen from 11.2% to 16.2% (DfE, 2023b). In England, 31% of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds whereas most school leaders (93%), teachers and teaching assistants (86%) and other staff (87%) are White British (Demie and See, 2022; Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022). Ethnic minority pupils do not see their community represented in the teaching workforce (Seleznyov, 2021) and most staff do not feel their workforce reflects their pupils (Ozolin *et al.,* 2021).

Research has shown that schools with more ethnic minority leaders have a higher overall ethnic minority teacher retention rate (Tereshchenko and Mills, 2021). There are a limited number of teacher identity studies that focus on teachers for ethnic minority backgrounds (Rushton *et al.,* 2023). Representation is a starting point, not the end point. There needs to be greater emphasis on and consideration into reshaping institutional policies and practices so that these openly visibly promote equity, opportunity, and inclusion (Harrowell and Banton, 2021, p.21).

It is important to acknowledge that our identities are not one dimensional (Harrowell and Banton, 2021) and aspects of our identity such as: '…class, race, sexual orientation, age, disability and gender, do not exist separately from each other but are complexly interwoven' (Choudry, 2019, p.57).

5.4.8 Teaching additional subjects

It is important that ECTs feel confident in their own subject. Ensuring student teachers can maintain engagement with and enjoyment of their subject discipline is important for their self-efficacy (Brooks, 2017). Subject expertise is an important part of the professional identity of teachers and subject knowledge matters otherwise it can significantly impact on student teachers' classroom confidence (Mitchell and Lambert, 2015). Holman (2020, p.15) asserts that,

> Evidence shows that deploying teachers in the main field helps them become good more quickly and keep some in the profession for longer by reducing their workload, further increasing their self-efficacy and confidence. Effective deployment also increases the opportunities for students to experience the best quality teaching available in their school.

Once a strong subject identity is established, a positive relationship with the subject can then help teachers to make practical pedagogical links to other curriculum subjects and develop their confidence when teaching other subjects (Till, 2020). Additional subject allocation should therefore avoid ECTs where possible.

Just over half of the participants (55%, n=85/155) had taught additional subjects during their career. Participants that did not have to teach additional subjects said they felt 'lucky'. They felt

that the allocation of additional subjects tended to be driven by the annual timetable demands and whether they had capacity within their timetable rather than their individual expertise. Generally, participants did not enjoy having to teach additional subjects. They felt that their lessons lacked passion, and they did not have the same depth of subject knowledge as teaching geography. This may lead to misconceptions being introduced in lessons as teachers may not have the subject knowledge to be able to simultaneously 'reflect-in-action' and address misconceptions straight away (Schön, 1983).

I216 had taught for fourteen years and during their career they had taught, English, history, religious education, PSHE, citizenship and integrated humanities. They credited having to teach additional subjects as '*one of the reasons for leaving the job I had because there were just so many other bits of subjects appearing on my timetable. For me that was the deal breaker'* (I216). I216 had left teaching and was working as a Teaching and Learning Consultant and a PGCE course leader for geography. I216 commented on having to teach additional subjects that they had: *'…not really got any interest in the breadth and depth of the other subject. For me teaching those other subjects, I did it to the best of my ability, but I didn't have the subject knowledge, the enthusiasm, the curiosity to bring to those subjects that I would bring into geography'* (I216).

I57 had taught for five years and during their career, they had taught history. They did: *'…not know the broader knowledge and that is what really made me realise that subject specialists are so important because you read round the subject. … There is only so much you can do when it is not your subject, and you teach that one hour per week'* (I57).

Although participants were sharing their experiences of teaching additional subjects beyond geography, it can be inferred that the issues they faced teaching beyond their specialism could be felt similarly by colleagues who were teaching geography as a non-specialist. With a growing demand for secondary geography teachers (DfE, 2019b) it can be assumed that there will be non-specialists teaching geography. The concentration of non-specialist geography teaching will be most acutely felt in KS3, as pupils usually experience a higher proportion of 'specialist' teaching in higher years (Shreeve, 2018). The DfE (2016, p.9), speculated that this may be because schools believed that various levels of specialism are needed at different key stages; with GCSE and A level classes requiring greater specialism. However, with the number of specialist teachers falling (Shreeve, 2018), schools may be prioritising specialist teachers for examination groups, as they are perceived as higher stakes for accountability measures, which will contribute to league tables and have been shown to incentivise targeted teaching (Larvin, 2021).

KS3 suffers disproportionately from the shortage of geography specialists (Shreeve, 2018) and the curriculum in primary school is taught by the classroom teacher who is unlikely to be a geography specialist (Goddard, 2021). A result of which maybe that more students may '…start their GCSE years without having benefited from the depth and breadth of knowledge of a specialist teacher, or the enthusiasm for the subject that a specialist could have inspired' (Shreeve, 2018, p.98). However, as participants have shared, one of the reasons that they decided to continue to study geography was the passion and knowledge that their geography teachers had, and that when they had to teach additional subjects, they lacked passion.

Participants stated that they did not have in-depth subject knowledge for the additional subjects. These two factors result in a greater concern that pupils may decide not to continue to study geography into GCSE and beyond. It was also challenging for those who had to manage non-specialist teachers in their departments. I126 who had taught for fourteen years and was a HoD raised the concern that: *'[t]here are a lot of views that anyone can teach KS3 geography. Yes, everyone can teach it but whether they can teach it well is the question. So, I had a lot of problems with people slotting in and out of it for a few years. I had to persuade the powers that be that I wanted someone who was committed to teaching the subject*' (I126).

For participants who did enjoy teaching additional subjects this was usually because the subject was one that they had expertise in or was connected to an interest. For example, I105 who had taught for over thirty-six years, enjoyed teaching geology which they felt had a positive impact on their geography teaching and that: *'[g]eology was a real interest. I did it as a secondary subject at university. I just love the way that you teach geology. Every lesson is a puzzle to be solved. I just love that approach which affected a great deal the way that I taught geography*' (I105).

As with I105, I56 had taught additional subjects connected to their interests and expertise. I56 had coached a range of sports and taught Games. They commented it was '*… just quite nice to have a break from the classroom'* (I56)*.* When I56's geography department had extra capacity, I56 taught Classics for two lessons per week. I56 had no expertise in the subject and commented on teaching Classics that: *'… you are just learning something brand new. I .... talk about Zeus, and the Year 9 kids know way more than I do sometimes. It is quite nice. Just something to keep*

us on our toes. I'm going to teach the classics at GCSE next year, which will be terrifying, but I'm looking forward to it' (I56).

It is important to note that I56 had fifteen years of teaching experience and had held additional roles as Head of Boarding and boarding housemaster. They most strongly identified as a 'teacher' followed by a 'geographer.' Teaching an additional unfamiliar subject returned the participant to the status of novice. They acknowledged that they were daunted by the prospect of teaching GCSE but had enjoyed the experience of being the learner. This was a common theme that ran through their reflections of their career.

These examples show that senior leaders should consider expertise and experience when allocating additional subjects. It is important that medium or long-term planning decisions are made for additional subjects ensuring that teachers have an opportunity to consolidate and improve the provision for the following academic year. If teachers are teaching various additional subjects each year, it may negatively impact how they approach planning and preparation. This is an important issue for geography departments who have members of other departments teaching geography. Non-specialist teaching tends to be more acute in KS3, and as geography is an option subject, it is important that those who are teaching geography as an additional subject are doing this well. As S77 shared, who had been teaching for 9 years: *'I think KS3 is so important to get right, partly to encourage more students to continue to study at KS4 and beyond but mostly because for many students that is the last time they will study what I increasingly think … is the most important subject of all*' (S77).

Where non-specialist teachers must be used, up-skilling staff to teach additional subjects is beneficial for the school, especially when recruitment is challenging. I128 who had taught for twenty-eight years: *'…was very lucky that the math's teachers that I worked with* [in location] *met me at 7:30am to go through the lessons for the day and shared their resources. The maths that I learned is so different from what youngsters are doing. This was in a middle school. I didn't know about chunking*' (I128). The successful collaboration between I128 and the mathematics teacher benefited I128, the mathematics department and the learning experience and outcomes of the pupils that I128 taught. Senior Leaders need to ensure that time and space is created within the working day to support those teaching additional subjects.

5.4.9 The importance of being in the 'right' school.

If teachers understand who they are and who they would like to be, it will help them when applying for teaching roles, which can be a complex process. They will be better positioned to identify the types of schools that would complement their professional values and identity. They will also be able to identify when the environment they are in is not aligned with their beliefs and values, which will motivate them to find a new school, rather than leaving the profession completely. Being able to navigate different challenges over their career will hopefully mean that teachers are better placed to remain in the profession in the long-term (Mutton and Burn, 2024; Rushton *et al.,* 2021). As I44 explained, they are considering leaving their current school as they wanted to move schools to be able to have more freedom to teach geography in the way that they thought was best.

I44 ‘somewhat disagree[d]’ that geography had a high profile in their school and that they ‘somewhat agree[d]’ that this influenced how others perceived their value in school. Although they ‘somewhat agree[d]’ that they supported the school’s policy on the teaching and learning of geography, they ‘somewhat disagree[d]’ that they had the freedom to teach geography in the way that they felt best. They felt that: *‘[i]t has got worse and worse recently but whenever I try to suggest an idea, I just get stamped on. Hence, more reason to move. I have had enough’* (I44).

The following example from I126 shows how the school’s priorities were different to their own. I126 wanted to teach geography yet the school wanted to ultilise other aspects of their skills. They explained how their timetable evolved in different school settings depending on the school’s priorities, before utilising I126’s strengths. When I126 took on an additional role as a HoD, their timetable was focused on geography and they no longer taught additional subjects. They saw this as a positive change because of their strength and passion for their subject. This may lead to a feeling of greater autonomy and job satisfaction as they were spending time committed to their subject which they enjoyed. I126 had taught for twenty-three years and had taught history and physical education as additional subjects. They had held additional roles as a HoD:

> *I did more history in my first job, simply because I had to slot into a humanities teaching role. Then they realised that geography was my strength so shifted me to the geography. I moved to a couple of schools where I became a geography teacher, but they wanted my PE background, so I did geography with PE. Then I became Head of Department and took on the geography and I still kept my PE. Obviously as I became Head of Department, I had to take less active role in the PE side. Because I was at a school that was small, I had all geography teaching because of my strength in the subject they didn’t want to use me for other things. I was not someone who was passed around. I kept my subject which was good* (I126).

Choosing the right school that is aligned to teachers' values and beliefs is important as it can promote a sense of belonging and security which means that teachers feel committed to the school. Having a keen sense of belonging benefits overall well-being (Collis, Elsom and Smithson, 2021). To do this, teachers need to have a clear understanding of their teacher identity.

5.4.10 Lack of flexible working in teaching

Flexible working arrangements are becoming more common in teaching; however, it is still a long way away from reflecting practices in the wider graduate labour market (Patience, 2021). In the UK, 28% of female teachers work part time, compared with 40% of all female employees. For male teachers it is 8% compared to 12% nationally (Carr, 2020).

The 'location' of teachers' work is different from that of many graduates. In 2022-2023, 46% of graduates reported that they mainly worked from home and 65% reported they worked either fully remotely or in a 'hybrid' arrangement. In 2021-2022, just 1% of secondary teachers reported that they had a formally agreed arrangement to work remotely (McLean, Worth and Smith, 2024, p.8).

Flexible working has increased further in other professions since the Covid-19 pandemic and teachers may be attracted to change careers due to the possibility of working flexibly elsewhere. Many teachers and school leaders felt that the experience of lockdown had shown that aspects of their job could be carried out effectively from home, and that this should be considered as a

future possibility, bringing teaching in line with other industries which promote flexible working. Increasingly flexibility and work-life balance would improve teachers' well-being, recruitment, and retention of teachers, as well as, attracting returners and career changers. Flexible working is also cited as cutting costs and creating greater efficiency and productivity (DfE, 2019a; Müller and Goldenberg, 2020).

5.4.11 Summary

The argument could be that RQ3, the reasons that may lead to participants leaving the profession, is the absence of, or the lack of the factors that were indicated in RQ2, the reasons why participants remained in the profession. This is true to an extent; positive relationships support participants to remain in the profession while negative relationships can lead to participants leaving the profession. However, it does not answer the question fully. The research question focuses on those that have become secondary geography teachers and the reasons that have led them to leaving the profession. It does not capture the voices of those that never entered the profession. Those who decided not to teach are acknowledged together with those who may be lost from the geography pipeline at various stages, such as those who may not feel represented in the geography curriculum and in the teaching profession.

This section also highlights the issues that may make it harder for those considering becoming secondary geography teacher in the future. Changes to ITE provision may make it harder for prospective secondary geography teachers. The shift from university-led ITE to school-led ITE has seen smaller geography student teacher cohorts, which cannot support specialist geography

teacher educators, leading to generic teacher education. RQ2 highlights the importance and the lasting positive impact of peers, mentors, and tutors in developing their secondary geography teacher identity.

It was challenging to recruit participants who had left the profession. Most participants who had left the profession had retired. Although the impact of Covid-19 on the participants is not known because of when the data collection took place, it is important that it is acknowledged as the repercussions of the pandemic will continue to be felt. Further research is needed to understand whether teacher recruitment initiatives have enabled those who wanted to become secondary geography teachers or have attracted those who have no intention of remaining in the profession in the long-term. Some of the initiatives and programmes that were utilised by some participants to make the career change are no longer options for future secondary geography teachers, for example, the GTP.

Over time, as participants' secondary geography identity develops and consolidates, they have a greater understanding of their values and beliefs. It is important they find a school that is right for them rather than thinking that the profession is not for them. As policies and directives evolve, those who have been in the profession for some time can become increasingly apathetic to those changes and their job satisfaction may reduce. Participants raised concerns that teaching was not flexible enough and tensions and conflict grew in relation to their careers. Their professional identities were at odds with their personal identities. When some participants became parents, they found that they it was challenging to juggle both aspects of their identities.

As some participants grew older, they did not feel that they could give the same time and energy to their job that they could when they were younger. These reasons contributed to some of participants leaving the teaching profession, whilst often remaining in the education sector more broadly, in other roles. These subsequent roles continued the meet the needs of the initial reasons that they become secondary geography teachers.

5.5 Conclusion

Now, more than ever, we need to support and enable secondary geography teachers to thrive in the teaching profession (Rushton *et al.,* 2021). The demand for their expertise is expected to grow in England due to geography's prominent standing within the curriculum and school demographics (Biddulph and Kinder, 2020). I7, who had taught for forty-one years highlighted, *'…the issues that young people are concerned about are topics that we cover in geography'* (I7). Young people need to be provided with a geographical education that enriches them and the wider society; to be able to understand the complex challenges that face our societies both locally and globally such as the climate emergency, resource security and global inequalities and global pandemics (Rushton *et al.,* 2021). These topics are more likely to be studied in geography than in any other subject. School geography has the power to enable pupils to think more clearly about issues they encounter both now and in future (Roberts, 2017).

The importance of secondary geography teachers to inspire pupils to love the subject and to act as role models has been prevalent throughout this research. Those who are currently in the profession, and those that went before, are advocates for the subject and the profession.

Secondary geography teacher identity is multifaceted and individual, and the temptation to reduce its complexity should be resisted. It is a construction of an individual's personal identities, professional identities within the contexts that they engage with. It is not a linear process, and aspects of identity will be more and less prevalent at different times as identity changes over time as demonstrated in Figure 2 where I shared how my geography teacher identity had developed and changed over time.

Providing secondary geography teachers with the knowledge to understand their own secondary geography teacher identity will support them throughout their careers. It should instil a strong awareness of the need to understand and develop teachers' own professionalism and professional identity (Rushton *et al.,* 2023), rooted in learning, collaboration and risk taking (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009; Sachs, 2005); that respects the diversity of teachers as well as disciplines (Palmer, 1997). This will enable geography teachers to nurture their professional compass, which in turn will support them to be able to adapt and develop their professional practice throughout their career (Brooks, 2017). Supporting them to navigate ongoing shifts and conflicts in their identity may help to retain geography teachers in the profession. To do this, Rushton *et al.* (2023, p.18): '… calls for greater emphasis on building bridges between scholarly research of teacher identity, policy, and practice to ensure that 'teacher identity' genuinely informs policy making concerned with supporting and enabling flourishing professional lives for all teachers.'

5.6 Unique Contribution

This research contributes to the understanding of the construction of secondary geography teacher identity which is a currently an under-researched area within theorisations of teacher identity (Rushton *et al.,* 2023). Prior research identifies that specialist teachers have complex identities (Brooks, 2016) given their social, spatial and disciplinary experiences and knowledges. This research, however, presents a deep dive into geography teacher identity and therefore offers new knowledge into an under-studied discipline. There has been a call for more research into identities within situational contexts (Collie *et al.,* 2016); roles and identities are deeply intertwined within the spatial environment. The approach and perspective in this research opens up understandings of what it means to be a geography teacher and the challenges they face, through a lens of identity.

A further unique contribution of this research is the collective narratives of participants, and the emphasis on the voices of geography teachers. There is a tendency for narratives in education research to focus on small sample sizes with participants at a particular career stage. However, the approach taken in this research was constructed around the voices of 237 secondary geography teachers, and included those who were in their ECTs years, through to those who had been in the profession for over four decades. This methodological approach and particular lens of identity is a unique contribution, offering a new temporal perspective on the shifting identities of geography teachers as they progress through their career. For example, those that had been teaching longer had developed their disciplinary knowledge, or had taken on additional roles, which enabled them to reflect on their ITE experiences through a new lens. Within a new school

context or having taken on a role as a mentor themselves they understood the value of the approaches of their own mentors previously. By focusing on a particular career stage, this insight would be lost. It is also important that experiences should be described as recent memories rather than a collective memory. This is especially significant for moments when identity is in conflict, or moments of tension, and how this impacted on participants' everyday experiences.

This research has enabled a deeper understanding of the importance of personal and situated and professional identities in the context of geography education. Studying the different aspects of identity are important as 'we teach who we are' (Palmer, 1997, p.15), and shift over time. For many participants in this research, an important aspect to their identity was their own geographical education and their experiences of fieldwork. How fieldwork is perceived, valued and integrated into the curriculum is embedded within participants' own identities, experiences and life stage.

It is intended that the findings of this research will support those joining the geography education community as well as those already in the teaching profession. In encouraging teachers to think about their own shifting identities in practice, this will open up new conversations, and with the right support will encourage teachers to remain in the profession for longer (Rushton *et al.,* 2023; Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009). Of course, it is not the sole responsibility of teachers, they operate in a web of school leadership and local and national policies all of which have a role to play in acknowledging and supporting the everyday construction of secondary geography teacher identity.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Survey

Education: part a

Education

The following set of questions are about your educational qualifications.

At what level(s) have you studied or are studying geography? (Please select all that are relevant)

- ☐ Key Stage 3 (age 11-14)
- ☐ Key Stage 4 GCSE/equivalent (age 14-16)
- ☐ Key Stage 5 A Level/equivalent (age 16-18)
- ☐ Undergraduate/equivalent
- ☐ Masters/equivalent
- ☐ PhD/equivalent
- ☐ I have not
- ☐ [ ] Other. Please state in the box below

Is your geography qualification the highest that you hold?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

What is your highest qualification that you have or are studying? (that is not a geography qualification)

- ○ [ ] Undergraduate/equivalent
- ○ Post graduate qualification e.g. PGCE. Please state in the box below [ ]
- ○ [ ] Masters/equivalent. Please state in the box below
- ○ [ ] PhD/equivalent. Please state in the box below
- ○ [ ] Other. Please state in the box below

Education: part b

Did you attend university?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

What subject(s) did you study at undergraduate level?

Why did you choose to study this subject(s) at university?

The following set of questions are in regard to your experiences of geography when you were a pupil.

Please describe your positive experiences and/or successes of geography as a pupil yourself

Please describe your negative experiences and/or disappointments of geography as a pupil yourself

Please describe any outdoor learning or fieldwork you experienced as a pupil yourself

Did you have a particular role model(s) as a pupil who inspired you? What impact did this have?

ITE: part a

ITE

The following set of questions are about your route into teaching.

Did you train to teach in England? (Please select from below)

- ○ Yes
- ○ [ ] No. Please state where in the box below

What route into teacher training did you take?

- ○ Undergraduate
- ○ Post graduate fee paying
- ○ Post graduate salaried
- ○ [ ] Other. Please state

What type of course was your teacher training?

- ○ Uni-led
- ○ School-led
- ○ [ ] Other. Please state

Please describe the positive experiences and/or successes of your teacher education training?

[ ]

Please describe the negative experiences and/or disappointments of teacher education training?

ITE part b – current teacher: part a

What do you feel you learnt from your teacher education that has influenced your subject knowledge

What do you feel you learnt from your teacher education that has influenced your pedagogy

Did you experience any outdoor learning or fieldwork during your school teacher training experience?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Please describe the positive experiences and/or successes of any outdoor learning or fieldwork during your school teacher training experience.

Please describe the negative experiences and/or disappointments of any outdoor learning or fieldwork during your school teacher training experience.

Did you have a particular role model(s) during your own teacher training experience? What impact did this have?

Current Teacher

Current teacher: part b

The following set of questions are about your current employment

Are you currently employed as a teacher?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

How many years have you been teaching?
(Completed years taught including NQT year)

Do you teach another subject(s) other than geography?

- ○ Yes. Please state subject(s) in the box below
- ○ No

Are you currently employed full-time or part-time? (Please select)

- ○ Part time
- ○ Full time

Please select all of the types of school(s) that you have worked in (including your current school).
https://www.gov.uk/types-of-school

- ☐ Community / Local Authority school
- ☐ Foundation / Voluntary school
- ☐ Academy / Free school
- ☐ Grammar school
- ☐ Special school
- ☐ Faith school / Academy
- ☐ City technology college
- ☐ State boarding school

Current teacher: part d – Left profession/retired: part a

- [ ] Private / Independent school
- [ ] [ ] Other. Please state

Please select all of the Key Stages to which you have taught geography

- [ ] Early Years (age 3 - 5)
- [ ] Key Stage 1 (age 5 - 7)
- [ ] Key Stage 2 (age 7 - 11)
- [ ] Key Stage 3 (age 11 - 14)
- [ ] Key Stage 4 (age 14 - 16)
- [ ] Key Stage 5 (age 16 - 18)
- [ ] Higer Education (age 18 ->)
- [ ] [ ] Other. Please state in the box below

Left Profession/retired

How many years in total did you teach for?

[ ]

Did you teach any other subject(s) other than geography?

- ○ [ ] Yes. Please state subject(s)
- ○ No

In your last employment were you teaching ...

- ○ Part time
- ○ Full time

Please tick all of the types of school(s) that you have worked in.
https://www.gov.uk/types-of-school

Left profession/retired: part b

- [ ] Community / Local Authority school
- [ ] Foundation / Voluntary school
- [ ] Academy / Free school
- [ ] Grammar school
- [ ] Special school
- [ ] Faith school / Academy
- [ ] City technology college
- [ ] State boarding school
- [ ] Private / Independent school
- [ ] _____ Other. Please state

Please tick all of the Key Stages that you have taught geography to

- [ ] Early Years (age 3 - 5)
- [ ] Key Stage 1 (age 5 - 7)
- [ ] Key Stage 2 (age 7 - 11)
- [ ] Key Stage 3 (age 11 - 14)
- [ ] Key Stage 4 (age 14 - 16)
- [ ] Key Stage 5 (age 16 - 18)
- [ ] Higer Education (age 18 ->
- [ ] _____ Other. Please state

Are you currently employed in the education sector

- ○ _____ Yes. Please state your employment
- ○ No

Have you retired?

- ○ Yes
- ○ _____ No. Please state your employment

Please explain why you no longer teach

Left profession/retired: part c – External influences: Family and/or close friends: part a

External influences: Family and/or close friends

The following section of questions is about the factors that may have influenced your decision to be a geography teacher

Do you have any members of your family and/or close friend who are currently or have worked in schools (for example teachers, administration staff etc.)

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Please state what your family and/or close friend do/did within schools

Please state what their relationship is to you

How influential were they in your choice of becoming a teacher

- ○ Extremely influential
- ○ Moderately influential
- ○ Slightly influential
- ○ Not influential

Do you have any members of your family and/or close friend(s) who have a career related to geography?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

External influences: Family and/or close friends: part b – Career: part a

Please state what they do/did

What is their relationship to you

How influential were they in your choice of becoming a teacher

- ○ Extremely influential
- ○ Moderately influential
- ○ Slightly influential
- ○ Not influential

How supportive were your family and/or close friend(s) in your decision to become a teacher of geography

- ○ All supportive
- ○ Most supportive
- ○ Some supportive
- ○ Not supportive

Were there any other influence(s) that lead you to choosing to be a teacher of geography?

Career

The following section of questions are about your role as a teacher of geography

How would you describe your teacher self in 5 words?

Career: part b

Please rank the importance of the following aspects of your identity as a teacher of geography
(1 being the most important. Drag and move to the correct order)
(Blanks included for you to add your own sub-identities)

Teacher

Geographer

Human geographer

Physical geographer

Environmental geographer

Other:

Other:

Other:

Please provide a reason(s) for your ranking order

Please describe what you do/did enjoy the most about being a geographer teacher?

Please describe what you do/did enjoy the least about being a geographer teacher?

What has influenced your subject knowledge during your career?

Career: part c

What has influenced your pedagogy during your career?

Do you or have you had any additional roles other than teaching geography?

- ○ [ ] Yes. Please state the role in the box below.
- ○ No

Please describe what you do/did enjoy the most about your other role(s)?

Please describe what you do/did enjoy the least about your other role(s)?

Do/did you deliver any activities beyond the curriculum (such as extra curricular acitvities)?

- ○ [ ] Yes. Please state below.
- ○ No

Please consider your current or most recent school that you are/were employed in

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Geography has a high profile in my school	○	○	○	○
The profile of geography influences how I perceive my value within school	○	○	○	○
The profile of geography influences	○	○	○	○

Career: part d – Professional bodies: part a

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
how others perceive my value in school				
I support the school's policy on the teaching and learning of geography	○	○	○	○
I have had freedom to teach geography in the way that I think is best	○	○	○	○
Geography contributes value to the curriculum	○	○	○	○

Professional bodies

The following section of questions are about professional bodies

Are you a member of any geographical professional body such as the Geographical Association/Royal Geographical Society?

○ [ ] Yes. Please state in the box below

○ No

What impact has this professional body/bodies had on your practice?

[ ]

Are you a member of any other professional body such as the Chartered College of Teaching?

○ [ ] Yes. Please state

○ No

What impact has this professional body/bodies had on your practice?

Professional bodies: part b – reflections – further participation

Block 9

If there any other thoughts or reflections that you would like to share, please comment in the box below

Further participation

Should you wish to be considered to participate in the second phase of the data collection process please provide your details below. This will consist on an interview.

Full name of participant (with title)

Contact email address

Appendix 2: Phase 1: Survey Participation Information

An investigation into the construction of secondary geography teacher identity
Participant Information:

What is the research about?
The study investigates the experiences of secondary geography teachers. It aims to understand why geography teachers have chosen to become a geography teacher, remain a geography teacher and may have potentially left the teaching profession.

Who is the researcher?
My name is Ruth Till and I am a Post Graduate Researcher in the School of Education at the University of Birmingham. I have been a secondary geography teacher for ten years and during this time I have been a Subject Leader of Geography and worked with Early Career Teachers in several mentoring roles.

Why have I been invited to take part?
You have been invited to participate in this research because you are currently a secondary geography teacher or have previously been a secondary geography teacher and your experience is important to this research.

Will my data be kept confidential?
Yes. All information obtained during the study will be kept strictly confidential. Data submitted through the questionnaire will be anonymous. The researcher will be the only one with access to this data. Data will be kept for 10 years and then destroyed in line with the University of Birmingham's policies.

Are there benefits or disadvantages of taking part in this study?
Your data is valuable because the project will help understand the motivations and beliefs of secondary geography teachers. It is also hoped that you will enjoy sharing your experiences, however, questions may require you to reflect on past experiences that may be difficult for you to revisit. You have the right to decline any question(s), additionally you do not have to share any information or experiences that you do not feel comfortable about sharing.

What will happen to the information I provide?
The data you provide from the questionnaire will be analysed along with the responses from other participates. Results will be used in the first instance for a doctoral thesis. It is hoped that findings will be shared with colleagues and intuitions in education and geography education.

Can I withdraw from the study?
Yes, you can withdraw from the questionnaire before submitting, and you do not have to give a reason. Note that after you have submitted the questionnaire your data will be anonymised it would be impossible for your data to be removed.

Who has reviewed the study?
This study has received ethical approval from the University of Birmingham on 4/9/2020

Who do I contact if I have any questions or concerns about this study?
Please contact the researcher or the Supervisor:
Researcher: Ruth Till: [redacted] School of Education, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT
Supervisor: Dr Adam Cooke: [redacted] School of Education, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT

- I have read and understood the Participant Information.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I am free to withdraw at any time, without any reason before I submit my questionnaire responses.
- I understand that I do not have to answer any questions I do not want to.
- I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, and other research outputs.
- I understand that my data will be processed for the purposes detailed above, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Based on the above information, I give consent for my questionnaire data to be used in this study.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Appendix 3: Phase 2: Interview Participation Information

An investigation into the construction of secondary geography teacher identity
Participant Information:

Introduction
You are invited to take part in a research study. This information sheet explains the study and what it would involve for you. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Contact details are at the bottom. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part.

What is the research about?
The study investigates the experiences of secondary geography teachers. It aims to understand why geography teachers have chosen to become a geography teacher, remain a geography teacher and may have potentially left the teaching profession.

Who is the researcher?
My name is Ruth Till and I am a Post Graduate Researcher in the School of Education at the University of Birmingham. I have been a secondary geography teacher for ten years and during this time I have been a Subject Leader of Geography and worked with Early Career Teachers in several mentoring roles.

Why have I been invited to take part?
You kindly provided your contact information after when you completed the questionnaire for the first phase of the data collection for this research. You have been invited to participate in this research because you are currently a secondary geography teacher or have previously been a secondary geography teacher and your experience is important to this research.

How will the interview be conducted?
The interview will take place on Zoom at a mutually convenient time. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed.

Do I have to take part?
There is no obligation for you to take part and participation is voluntary. You will be asked to complete the attached consent form to say that you are happy to take part in the research. You can stop your involvement with the research at any point.

Will my data be kept confidential?
You will choose how your information is presented:
· If you want to remain anonymous, your identity will be kept strictly confidential. Your data will be stored, identified and presented using a code and pseudonym. Your name will only be recorded on the consent form, which will be stored securely and will be accessible only to the researcher.

· If you want recognition as the author of your information, you can provide us your preferred author name. Your data will be stored, identified and presented using your author name.

Are there benefits or disadvantages of taking part in this study?
Your data is valuable because the project will help understand the motivations and beliefs of secondary geography teachers. It is also hoped that you will enjoy sharing your experiences, however, questions may require you to reflect on past experiences that may be difficult for you to revisit. You have the right to decline any question(s), additionally you do not have to share any information or experiences that you do not feel comfortable about sharing.

What will happen to the information I provide?
The data you provide from the interview will be analysed along with the responses from other participates and data collection through the first phase of the data collection of the questionnaires. Results will be used in the first instance for a doctoral thesis. It is hoped that findings will be shared with colleagues and intuitions in education and geography education.

Can I withdraw from the study?
If you wish to withdraw from the study during the interview, just let the researcher know. You will not need to provide a reason. You can withdraw by midnight on the 28th day after your interview by contacting the researcher. After this deadline it would be impossible for your data to be removed as it will have been anonymised (if you request anonymisation) and data analysis will have begun. If you withdraw, your data will be destroyed.

Who has reviewed the study?
This study has received ethical approval from the University of Birmingham on 4/9/2020

Who do I contact if I have any questions or concerns about this study?
Please contact the researcher or the Supervisor:
Researcher: Ruth Till: [redacted] School of Education, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT
Supervisor: Dr Adam Cooke: [redacted] School of Education, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT

· I have read and understood the Participant Information.
· I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I am free to withdraw at any time, without any reason.
· I understand that I do not have to answer any questions I do not want to.
· I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, and other research outputs.
· I understand that my data will be processed for the purposes detailed above, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Based on the above information, I give consent to participating in the interview and for my data to be used in this study.

- Yes
- No

Appendix 4: All types of school(s) that you have worked in: Other

Other:	Total
Sixth Form College/Higher ed college/academy/free school/independent (not fee paying)/Maintained, no part of a MAT	6
International	2
Independent full boarding	1
University and FE	1
Total	10

Appendix 5: Aspects of identity (own labels)

Participant	Blank (option 1)	Blank (option 2)	Blank (option 3)
S6	Pastoral (5th)	-	-
S7	Approachable teacher (4th)	Pastoral supporter (5th)	-
S8	Mum (1st)	-	-
S15	Head of Year (2nd)	-	-
S19	Citizen (6th)	-	-
S23	Listener (4th)	Role Model (3rd)	-
S27	Mentor (2nd)	-	-
S29	Geologist (7th)	Teacher of Geography (1st)	-
S30	Teacher educator (3rd)	-	-
S35	Outdoor worker(4th)	Learner (2nd)	-
S44	Human being (3rd)	-	-
S45	History teacher (6th)	Form tutor (7th)	-
S50	Being a mum (3rd)	Role model (4th)	Being in the community (5th)
S52	HoD (5th)	Expert teacher (3rd)	-
S56	Games teacher (6th)	Classics teacher (7th)	-
S57	Mother (6th)	-	-
S70	HoD (6th)	-	-
S75	Geologist (5th)	-	-
S76	Form tutor (7th)	Trainee Teacher Mentor (3rd)	-
S81	Head of Department (3rd)	-	-
S86	Female human being	-	-
S93	Form tutor (3rd)	-	-
S100	Form tutor (4th)	BAME representation (3rd)	-
S103	Social worker (6th)	Researcher (7th)	-
S106	Fieldwork specialist (1st)	Pastoral care (5th)	-

S107	Lover of the planet (6th)	Educator (8th)	Lover of learning (7th)
S119	Examiner (2nd)	-	-
S121	Assistant Principal (2nd)	-	-
S124	Development geographer (3rd)	-	-
S126	Adaptable to situations (3rd)	Caring for all on the planet (4th)	Resilience (5th)
S134	Social worker/counsellor (3rd)	-	-
S218	Educator (2nd)	-	-
S220	Politics teacher (3rd)	Environmental advocate (5th)	Mental health advocate (4th)
S225	Empathetic (2nd)	Supportive (3rd)	Interested in subject (4th)
S226	Mentor (2nd)	-	-
S237	Other (4th)	-	-
S238	Leader (3rd)	-	-
S239	Scientist (6th)	-	-
S240	School Leader (2nd)	-	-

Appendix 6: Aspects of identity:

Rankings of Aspects of identity.

Other are participants' own labels which can be seen in Appendix 5